"THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS":

bilingual family life according to Finnish and English-speaking

parents in Finland and the United Kingdom

Master's Thesis

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract

Tämän laadullisen tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on tutkia Suomessa ja Isossa-Britanniassa asuvien eri kieli- ja kulttuuritaustaisten pariskuntien näkemyksiä kaksikielisyydestä perheen arjessa ja millä keinoin lasten kaksikielistä kasvua edistetään. Lisäksi selvitetään miten kaksikielisyys ja monikulttuurisuus vaikuttavat perheenjäsenten välisiin suhteisiin sekä perheiden lasten identiteetin rakentumiseen. Yhtenä tutkimuskohteena on myös vanhempien käsitys näiden kahden yhteiskunnan osallistumisesta kaksikielisten perheiden elämään.

Tutkimusta varten haastateltiin kahta Isossa-Britanniassa ja kolmea Suomessa asuvaa kaksikielistä pariskuntaa, joilla kaikilla on lapsia, jotka olivat haastatteluhetkellä 1–9-vuotiaita. Pariskuntien äidinkielet olivat suomi ja englanti ja perheiden kotona käytettiin molempia kieliä, lasten siten kasvaessa kaksikielisiksi. Suomessa asuvat pariskunnat haastateltiin kasvokkain ja Isossa-Britanniassa asuvat Skypen välityksellä hyödyntäen teemahaastattelun periaatteita. Haastattelut litteroitiin ja analysoitiin käyttäen sisällönanalyysiä sekä vertailevaa tutkimusaspektia. Pienen otannan vuoksi tuloksia ei ole tarkoitettu yleistettäväksi, mutta tutkimus tuo silti arvokasta lisätietoa kaksikielisyyden ja -kulttuurisuuden kokemuksista kahdessa eri kulttuuriympäristössä.

Haastatteluista kävi ilmi, että vanhemmat molemmissa maissa näkivät kaksikielisyyden luonnollisena asiana perheessä. Tästä huolimatta Isossa-Britanniassa asuvien perheiden kaksikielisyys vaati enemmän toimia vanhemmilta, kun taas Suomessa lapset kasvoivat kaksikielisiksi vaivattomammin. Kummankaan maan vanhemmat eivät kuitenkaan mielellään seuranneet mitään tiukkoja käytänteitä lasten kasvatuksessa, vaan kokivat pelkästään molempien äidinkielten käytön riittäväksi kaksikielisyyden tueksi. Vanhemman oma äidinkieli nähtiin tunteiden kielenä ja sen koettiin mahdollistavan syvempi yhteys lapsen kanssa. Siksi vanhemmat kokivat tärkeänä, että lapsi oppii molemmat kielet. Lisäksi vastoin aiempaa tutkimustietoa kaksikielisyyden ei nähty määrittävän lasten identiteettiä, vaan vanhempien mielestä se oli vain ominaisuus muiden persoonallisuuden piirteiden joukossa.

Asiasanat – Keywords
bilingualism, biculturalism, multiculturalism, identity, family, language policies, thematic interviews, comparative research, content analysis

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1   INTRODUCTION

Multilingualism happens around the world and it is an undeniable phenomenon. As Latomaa (2004: 25) reports, the majority of the world's population uses more than one language in their everyday life. Multilingualism can occur within one nation state for instance, if a nation state promotes bilingualism or multilingualism in its policies and people grow up with two or more languages in their lives. Alongside with these multilingual people, on the other hand, monolingual people can also expand their worlds of experience by reaching out to other languages, cultures and countries. As a result, international migration is on the rise according to several sources (e.g. Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain 2000: 375; Latomaa 2004: 25) due to globalization, the increased mobility of people and working abroad, for example. According to Latomaa (2007: 317), however, the most common reason to migrate for is family relations, and Reuter and Kyntäjä (2006: 104) also support this by reporting that international marriages have increased over the years. As a result of these multilingual, multicultural relationships, parents with different mother tongues are then faced with the decision of which languages to acquaint their child with. Crystal (2003: 17) estimates that of the world's children, two-thirds grow up bilingually. Bilingualism, therefore, is not a rare phenomenon of a selected number of countries which enforce state bilingualism or multilingualism, such as Canada or Switzerland, as Grosjean (1994: 1656) points out – instead, it is taking place globally on individual, family and communal levels. Therefore, the importance of studying these bilingual, bicultural families cannot be underestimated, as populations with multicultural background are globally becoming more visible a proportion in societies.

For the present study, three bilingual and bicultural couples with children in Finland and two in the United Kingdom, whose combination of mother tongues was Finnish and English, have been interviewed. The aim of the present study is to answer the following questions: firstly, in the parents' opinion, how are bilingualism and biculturalism present in their families' lives? Secondly, how do they affect their families and the family members? Thirdly, what is the relationship like between the host societies and the families? The focus is on the family life, how the families include bilingualism and biculturalism in their lives and their relationship with the two societies, Finland and the United Kingdom. The present study focuses on five aspects of the interview families' lives: bilingualism, biculturalism, the children's language and cultural identities, the

families' language policies and bilingual family life. Thematic interviews have been used as the method for gathering the data and the results have been analysed with combining content analysis and comparative analysis.

As bilingualism and bicultural relationships are becoming increasingly common since the world is more mobile than ever, the topic of studying bilingual families in two countries is relevant for multiple reasons. First of all, the topic will provide fresh information about bilingual family life and its practicalities and perceptions of it, presented from the parents' personal points of view. The experiences of bilingualism and biculturalism are vast and can differ from family to family, individual to individual. Therefore, it is justified to take a close-up look at bilingual families in order to be able to appreciate the full range of their perceptions and understand how bilingualism is lived in different ways. Secondly, the children of these bilingual families also provide a fascinating target for further inspection, as they have the potential to be truly international from infancy with the help of their multicultural background. As parents discuss their children's developing bilingual and bicultural identities, parental observations about childhood bilingualism can be recorded at close quarters, thus supplementing the research on bilingualism and biculturalism within a family setting, where possible. Parents are very observant of their children and their development, and interviewing the parents can thus be considered a reliable, in-depth source on those individual children's bilingualism. Thirdly, thematic interviews, which are used in the present study, allow profound narratives and analysis that are valuable to the field of research, even when the results cannot be generalised because of the limited sampling. Nevertheless, this enables us to better understand the concept of bilingualism, how parents personally experience it from day to day and what phenomena are related to it.

The following chapters of the present study consist of chapters for theory, methodology, results, discussion and conclusion. Chapter 2 is a literature review, presenting previous research findings and theory on the topic of childhood bilingualism and biculturalism, with further focuses on bilingual family life, bilingual and bicultural upbringing and the effects of bilingualism and biculturalism on a child's identity formation. Bilingualism and biculturalism as phenomena within the two societies, Finland and the United Kingdom, will also be briefly presented. Furthermore, chapter 3 introduces the aims of the present study in detail and how the present study was executed. It presents the

research questions, the interviewees and their families as well as the methods of data collection and analysis. Consequently, chapter 4 presents the results that were discovered through the analysis process, including topics of bilingualism, biculturalism, the children's language and cultural identities, family language policies and bilingual family life. Chapter 5 further critically discusses the results and the present study as a whole. Finally, chapter 6 concludes the present study, summarising the most important findings along with suggestions for further research.

2 CHILDHOOD BILINGUALISM AND BICULTURALISM IN FAMILIES AND SOCIETY

The key terms for the present study are *identity*, *culture*, *multiculturalism*, *biculturalism*, *monoculturalism*, *bilingualism* including *childhood bilingualism* and *family bilingualism*, *majority language* and *minority language*. The key terms for the present study are first of all explained in chapter 2.1, as there are several theories and descriptions for them over a range of disciplines, such as linguistics, sociology and anthropology. The chapters that follow expand from chapter 2.1's terminology introductions and bilingualism and biculturalism are considered from various aspects. Firstly, bilingualism will be given its societal contexts in the two countries that the present study focuses on, namely Finland and the United Kingdom (chapter 2.2). Secondly, acquiring childhood bilingualism, biculturalism and identity will be studied, including discussing what issues and factors may affect one's bilingual identity development (chapter 2.3). Thirdly, issues faced in and reasons for bilingual upbringing in families will be viewed (chapter 2.4). Finally, in relation to the previous chapter, chapter 2.5 shall look at bilingualism and biculturalism within a community and a family setting as well as the values and attitudes that are involved. In other words, after explaining the key terms necessary for understanding the present study, bilingualism and biculturalism will first be given their country-specific contexts, and then be looked at from individual and family points of view.

2.1 Defining key terms

Identity means one's perception of oneself, but also how one sees oneself in relation to his or her family, some social, cultural or ethnic group, the local community and society at large, as Field (2011: 86) describes. Therefore, identity also implies "a degree of sameness" and "a sense of belonging" to some group (Field 2011: 86–87). How people

act and think, however, is not necessarily a direct and mechanic result of their culture. Some groups and individuals are expected to express their ethnic identities in a fixed manner, as Goulbourne et al. (2010: 119) point out, but the actions, opinions and thoughts – and thus, identities – of individuals are never static or invariable – although neither is culture (Hall 1997: 61). Moreover, Goulbourne et al. (2010: 119) believe that constructing one's cultural identity involves a continuing negotiation with "transnational family networks, communities [and] regional and diaspora racial connections." This view is supported by the fact that social identity categories take different meanings and forms at different points in time and in different situations, as is argued by Bailey (2007: 344). Therefore, Bailey (2007: 345) states social identity to be "not what one *is*, but what one *counts as* in a particular time and place." This is echoed by Baker (2000: 70–71), who believes it to be natural for an individual to have multiple identities and sub-identities for different situations, and those identities to reshape over time. As for having a bilingual and bicultural identity, rather than meaning returning to the roots, "[c]ultural, ethnic or language identity is ... making sense out of our past, present and future routes," as Baker (2000: 70–71) argues, through which the individual can shape his or her identity accordingly. In the present study, the concept of identity is specifically looked at in terms of the bilingual and bicultural identity.

When defining what *culture* means, Carrol (1982, in Sahaf 1994: 85) points out three important features. First of all, culture is something which is shared by the majority or all members in a social group. Secondly, it can also be described as what is passed on to children by elder members of a community. Thirdly, culture is said to shape one's behaviour and understanding of the world. Martikainen, Sintonen and Pitkänen (2006: 13) also agree with this view, as they introduce the term "humane culture" which refers to the ways in which people understand, articulate and communicate about the world, each other and themselves. Furthermore, countries, ethnic groups, organizations and different parts of a city can all have their own cultures, and an individual can feel to be a part of several cultures in different situations. Huttunen (2006: 56) further explains the idea of belonging to several cultures by arguing that culture or community are concepts not limited to any geographical boundaries, but cultural space is rather something "born [and] lived." In addition, culture involves both visible and invisible features: the visible features include, for example, customs in relation to dining and dressing and customs, manners and habits, and language. Invisible features deal with values, moral and

religion of the community. In the present study, culture is studied through a combination of all of these views: through involving the invisible and visible features in culture; through seeing culture as a community and the feeling of belonging to one or more cultures; and on the humane level, as it is interested in individual experiences and identities.

Multiculturalism can be defined, first of all, as the existence of societies with variable cultural roots around the world, or secondly, as the coexistence of these groups with different cultural heritages within society (Martikainen, Sintonen and Pitkänen 2006: 14). The latter view has been adopted for the present study to describe multiculturalism. A related concept is *biculturalism*, where two cultural heritages live side by side within a family, for instance, as is the case with the interview families in the present study. According to Grosjean (2010: 109), bicultural people are those who "take part, to varying degrees, in the life of two or more cultures ... [and] adapt, at least in part, their attitudes, behaviour, values, and languages to their cultures" and "combine and blend aspects of the cultures involved." What is notable is the fact that being bicultural is a unique experience which is established differently according to the individual, as can be seen from Grosjean's (2010: 109) expressions "to varying degrees," "at least in part" and the action of "blending" cultures together in individual amounts. Finally, the opposite of multiculturalism and biculturalism is *monoculturalism*. As Bussmann (1996: 311) describes monolingualism as "a command of only one language as opposed to bilingualism or multilingualism," similarly, monoculturalism is a scenario in which only one culture is considered to be present or prevalent. It is possible for bilinguals to live in mainly monolingual and monocultural areas, in which case interacting with other minority language speakers is often done by travelling or via the Internet or phone. The interview families of the present study live in fairly monolingual and monocultural environments in the sense that neither of the minority languages, Finnish and English, have an official status in the host societies, the United Kingdom and Finland respectively. These concepts are also relevant in understanding a bilingual and bicultural child's language development and identity formation.

The definition of *bilingualism* and who is bilingual has changed over time. Hamers and Blanc (2000: 6) define bilingualism – or bilinguality, as they call individual bilingualism – as "the psychological state of the individual who has access to more than

one linguistic code as a means of social communication," or, in other words, a bilingual person is someone who speaks two languages; to what extent and with what kind of ability, has been argued about for decades. The current approaches set somewhere in the middle ground between the earlier, more extreme views (see e.g. the native-like control approach in Bloomfield 1933: 56; and the minimal competence concept in Diebold 1964: 505), while appreciating the special nature of bilingualism. Furthermore, the present study will focus on simultaneous or *childhood bilingualism* with the children in the interview families, in contrast to sequential or consecutive bilingualism. According to Baker (2006: 4), simultaneous or childhood bilingualism can mean children who have acquired two languages at the same time before the age of 3;0, but often already from birth, whereas consecutive or sequential bilingualism occurs when a child starts learning a second language after the age of 3;0. Moreover, bilingual development can take two forms: ascendant bilingualism, when the languages are developing, or recessive bilingualism when one of the languages is atrophying with temporary or permanent consequences in language skills. In addition, Lanza (2004: 14) describes *family bilingualism* as a situation in which one of the languages – that is, the minority language – of the family is not spoken outside home. This means that the minority parent and his or her family, which may or may not live in the same country, are the major, and sometimes the only, source of input of the language for the child. This is also the case with some of the interview families of the present study. A more detailed look at bilingualism will be taken in chapter 2.3.

Finally, in the present study, the two mother tongues of interview families will be frequently referred to as the *majority language* and the *minority language* within society, the community and the particular family setting. Therefore, in the case of the interview families, in the United Kingdom, English will be considered the majority language and Finnish the minority language, as the former one holds an official status in society and the latter one does not. Similarly, in Finland, Finnish will be treated as the majority language and English as the minority language. Furthermore, the parents will be referred to as majority or minority parents based on their mother tongue's status in the society in question. The term "minority" does not refer to official minority status in society in the context of the present study, but has been chosen for use for easier distinction. These distinctions have been made to ease the reading experience and avoid

confusion, although it has been acknowledged that the two languages may also hold an equal status at least within family use.

2.2 Bilingualism in Finland and the United Kingdom

In this chapter, the contexts for bilingualism will be given in both of the interview societies, namely Finland and the United Kingdom. The statistics in regards to the bilingual population in both countries will be viewed in order to proportion the phenomenon of bilingualism in these countries. Moreover, bilingual education and foreign language lessons in these societies will be discussed.

Martikainen, Sintonen and Pitkänen (2006: 9) report that although still rather homogeneous in global terms, the population of Finland is nowadays more diverse than ever before. According to Statistics Finland (2009), in 2008, over 143,000 people (2.7%) were foreign citizens of the population of 5.3 million inhabitants. This number does not include the immigrants who have gained a Finnish citizenship, so the number of inhabitants with a multicultural background is higher in reality. Nowadays, more people immigrate to than emigrate from Finland: Kanerva (2010: 12) reports of statistics according to which there were over 13,000 people who emigrated from Finland but over 29,000 who immigrated to Finland in 2008. As a result of globalization, multicultural couples and families are on the rise as well: Duo (2013) reports that in the past years, the number of intercultural relationships has risen globally, including in Finland. For example, the number of intercultural families has increased four times in comparison to what it was less than 20 years ago. According to Duo (2013), there were over 58,500 intercultural couples in Finland in 2009, while in 1990 the number was still only approximately 12,500 couples. Moreover, according to Kanerva (2010: 13), there are approximately 160,000 children living in bicultural families in Finland. In contrast, according to the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain (2000: 372), in 1998, over 10 per cent (5.75 million at the time) of the population of the United Kingdom had a background other than British-born. It can confidently be said that the percentage is higher nowadays, as the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain (2000: 375) itself said in its future projections at the beginning of the millennium that the section of the population with immigrant background is going to increase since the population in communities with backgrounds outside Britain is younger in proportion than in those from within the United Kingdom.

According to Statistics Finland (2008), of all foreign language groups in Finland, that is, not including any of the national languages, the English-speaking is the third largest one after the Russian- and Estonian-speaking groups. Although English does not hold an official language status in Finland, its position is still strong and the level of knowledge of English among the original population is high. One of the reasons for the general good knowledge of English among Finns is the fact that English typically is the first foreign language children learn at school, usually starting in the third grade of comprehensive school: Taavitsainen and Pahta (2003: 5) report that in 2000, 87.6% of pupils chose English as their first foreign language in comprehensive school. Thus, modern Finnish society and its inhabitants prepare well from an early age for the wide-spread use of English. Indeed, the acknowledged status of English as the current lingua franca has definitely played a role in English gaining its prestigious status in Finland as well, as Leppänen and Nikula (2008: 12) believe. A *lingua franca* is "a contact language," as described by Jenkins (2007: 1), that is, it is the common language of choice among people with different mother tongues. The role of English as lingua franca is prevalent and robust all around the world. In Europe, for instance, English is the most widely known foreign language and 38% of the population in the European Union speak it (Hajek 2008: 172). Consequently, Leppänen and Nikula (2008: 10) believe that having English as the lingua franca has promoted international mutual understanding and cooperation and eased the work among politics, companies and even in ordinary life.

Finnish, like English in Finland, does not hold any official status in the United Kingdom – however, the Finnish minority group has not stayed idle in regards to maintaining the language. Baker (2000: 143) confirms that among other minority groups, Finnish-speaking immigrants in the United Kingdom have supported and attended Finnish Saturday Schools around the country (see e.g. The Finnish Saturday School in the East Midlands, 2013; or Finland in Bristol, 2010). These take place typically every fortnight, during which different age groups of children – and adults learning Finnish as a foreign language in some Finnish schools – gather for both language and culture lessons. The Finnish language is maintained through Finnish games and songs with infants and through more traditional class-like action with older children, learning grammar and writing, for example. Through the Saturday Schools, children are given another input domain of Finnish and they also have the chance to gain new Finnish-speaking friends,

while the parents also have the chance to meet other Finnish-speaking parents. It can thus be confidently argued that such an activity has the possibility to strengthen the minority language.

In language education, Finland acts according to a common system in the European Union in which pupils with immigrant or bilingual background are offered lessons of their mother tongue within the resources of the school (Finnish National Board of Education 2010: 8). Typically this is two hours of lessons per week on top of the standard curriculum. Eurydice (2009a: 3) reports that it is widely thought to be essential for pupils to be proficient in their mother tongue (L1) because it helps them to learn the second language (L2) as well. Moreover, it helps to build the pupils' self-esteem and identity positively. However, these lessons in L1 have been found to be better integrated within the school days rather than be offered outside the standard curriculum (Eurydice 2009a: 3). Having to attend extra lessons in comparison to the majority of students can lead to feelings of both rejection and stigmatization which can result in impeding the learning of the L1, and in turn, the L2. In contrast to Finland, Hajek (2008: 173) argues that against the general trend of increasing "multilingual ability" across Europe, the opposite kind of action is occurring in the United Kingdom. Due to long-term failure to support learning foreign languages in schools, foreign language lessons and schooling is not supported or funded by the UK government (Eurydice 2009b: 24) but is generally based on a voluntary or private initiative (Eurydice 2009b: 22), as the Finnish Saturday Schools are, for instance. However, the Finnish government does financially support the Finnish Schools abroad.

2.3   Childhood bilingual and bicultural acquisition

As the previous chapter provided an understanding of bilingualism as a nation-wide and even borders-crossing phenomenon, this chapter will move closer to the individual and study the effects of bilingualism and biculturalism on a child. In this chapter, a child's bilingual development starting from infancy and the meaning of including both parental cultures in the child's life will be explained. Furthermore, a child's identity formation and how it is affected by bilingualism and biculturalism will be considered (chapter 2.3.1). Moreover, as there are different views about the effects of bilingualism and biculturalism, especially on a young child, chapters 2.3.2 and 2.3.3 will discuss the disadvantages and advantages of bilingualism respectively.

Lanza (2004: 325) stresses that bilingual language acquisition does not involve "stages" specific to bilingual development, but bilingual children use the same strategies in acquiring their two languages as monolinguals do in acquiring the one language. What matters in bilingual acquisition is the amount and type of input a child receives, but it is also important to consider language acquisition from the point of view of language socialization. That is, a child is also acquiring communicative competence at the same time with the linguistic form, as language carries social meaning as well as Lanza (2004: 325) argues. Letts (1994: 353) agrees with this view by also pointing out that bilingual language acquisition does not happen "in a vacuum," but in interaction with the individual's surroundings. Thus, one of the languages will always be available for more skilful usage under certain circumstances at a given time. Indeed, often the languages have their different purposes and occasions of usage in an individual's daily life, such as using one language at home, and the other at school or with society, as Baker (2006: 4) reports. However, the dominant and minority roles of the languages in various domains may also switch over time.

Baker (2006: 4), too, argues that the two languages are seldom in a balance, but one of them is usually more dominant, in its input and output. Indeed, especially with childhood bilingualism, it is natural to have one well developed language while the other is in an earlier development stage. Moreover, the levels of language proficiency are dependent on the context and frequency of usage (Baker 2006: 12). This view is in agreement with that of Paradis (2007: 15), who argues that it is common for one of the two languages to be in the position of a minority language for the child. Furthermore, Paradis (2007: 17) argues that it is difficult, if not impossible, for the child to receive equal amounts of input of both of the languages, and therefore it is likely that one of the two languages will develop into a dominant or more fluent language, and that the languages will be at different developmental stages. In cases of family bilingualism, as Lanza (2004: 14) explains, this is due to the fact that the minority language may not be spoken outside home, leaving the family as the major, and sometimes the only, source of input of the language for the child.

Tikka (2004: 12–13) claims that culture is inevitably passed on from one generation to the next, and many parents find it important to acquaint their children with the traditions connected with the culture. Tikka (2004: 26) continues that it is important to enable the

child to create a positive connection to both the minority and the majority culture of the family. Baker (2000: 72–73) accompanies Tikka in these views and further explains that both of the mother tongues and cultures need to be presented to the child in a wide repertoire of customs. Baker (2000: 72–73) emphasises that this will allow a "high self-esteem, a positive self-concept, an optimistic outlook on the future and a potential for choosing for oneself which cultures to accent in the future." Thus, knowledge of one's roots helps the child feel secured and understand his or her place in relation to the past and the present which in effect assists the child to build his or her identity accordingly (Tikka 2004: 26). Like with being bilingual, Baker (1992: 78) points out that being bicultural is not to own two monocultures but the cultures are "blended, harmonized and combined" uniquely. Moreover, culture is very personal: as Weckström (2011: 148) notifies, what is the embodiment of being Finnish for someone, for instance, may not represent the Finnish culture to someone else at all. Furthermore, Weckström (2011: 148) continues that the meaning of culture will take different forms according to the situation for all individuals, as was argued above. Therefore, there are as many ways to experience biculturalism as there are bicultural people.

2.3.1 Approaches to bilingual and bicultural identity

There are and have been several theories how a bilingual identity is formed (see e.g. Roos 2009: 137–138). One modern approach is one in which a bicultural child goes through various phases in their identity formation until early adulthood, as Roos (2009: 138) reports. During these phases, firstly, a child goes from not understanding of having an identity to, secondly, experiencing a crisis and shame after learning about having two cultural backgrounds. Thirdly, the child tries to choose a single identity and experiences feelings of guilt and confusion for denying a part of him or herself. Finally, the child will have integrated the two cultures into his or her identity and sees himself or herself as a balanced whole. However, it must still be emphasised that the ways identities are built are unique and there are unique factors affecting the process with each individual. Roos (2009: 139), too, states that bicultural people reform their identities throughout their lives, negotiating with different customs, cultural conceptions and expectations and reflecting the cultures against themselves, and thus these phases cannot be considered to be absolute and strict. Nevertheless, although the theory will not be directly applied to the present study, the phase theory presented here does serve the

point of proving that identities evolve and change over time, at different times and places.

Identities, thus, evolve throughout one's lifespan. Burck (2005: 173) reports of her research participants who said that the language they were using was in agreement with their identity – in other words, as language works as a cultural marker, individuals used the language choice as a way to claim identities, making those identities salient through the language. Therefore, identities are built in social interaction, as has been confirmed by Bailey (2007: 346). It is, thus, through these interactions that one's own identities are realised. Irvine (2001: 34), too, describes identities, as well as ideologies and speech styles, to be formed as a reaction to other identities. Lanza (2007: 51) confirms this view by arguing that language ideologies "reflect issues of social and personal identity." Moreover, Edwards (2004: 23) believes that even idiolects, personal speech styles, are a social phenomenon, because Edwards (2004: 23) argues that "all language implies someone to talk to, a communicative intent, a linking of the individual to others." As a result, an individual's personality is embedded in social context through speaking a particular language or using a specific speech style. If biculturalism is balanced within an individual, it is possible to move fluently between the two languages and cultures, without having to question one's identity. Baker (2000: 17) notes that in balanced bilingualism and biculturalism, it is possible to have separated cultures and integration, with distinct mother tongue varieties, that are nevertheless uniquely combined.

The attitudes and preferences an individual has towards a language will affect their choice of language, as well as their perceptions about language and identity. As Baker (1988: 114) says, attitudes are not inherited by genetics but are learned, and are thus open to change. Baker (1988: 114) thus continues that this means that attitudes regarding a minority language, acquiring it and participation in both of the cultures can be affected both positively and negatively. In addition, parents also can consciously or unconsciously influence their child's attitudes towards their two languages and pass on attitudes and values related to these cultures. Baker (2000: 49) emphasises the importance of a child having a positive self-concept about his or her two languages, as the family is only one source of language attitudes for the child. If a child is discriminated or bullied because of his or her multicultural heritage or his or her minority language, it can seriously affect the development of a healthy bicultural

identity as well as the willingness to converse in the both of the languages. Baker (2000: 48) warns that if a child's attitude towards, motivation for and interest in his or her languages are not inspired, it is possible that bilingual development will not take place despite parents' efforts, as the child is likely to see bilingualism as a negative part of his or her life. The perceived negative aspects of bilingualism will be taken a look at next.

2.3.2   Disadvantages of bilingualism

Heller (2007: 546) states that "[t]he reality of multilingualism is that it is about not only diversity, but also about inequality and struggle." Although bilingualism is generally seen as a positive part of one's life, bilinguals themselves also experience disadvantages about it. It is important to realise that first of all acquiring, secondly maintaining and thirdly simply possessing two or more languages is not always completely trouble-free. Grosjean (2010: 102–104) has discovered that bilinguals may, for example, get tired or frustrated using their weaker language and mistakes occur in their speech or writing. Moreover, it was found that their stronger language influences the weaker one which can result in involuntary code-switching. An alarming discovery that Grosjean (2010: 103) has made is the fact that language "contamination" is such a big worry for some that they have deliberately ceased learning another language despite encouragement received from the environment, which has resulted in abandoning bilingualism due to misconceptions. Furthermore, some bilinguals do not feel at home with either of their home cultures.

It should be noted that bilingualism in itself can be a vehicle for an identity conflict (Baker 2000: 62). On the one hand, feelings of being an "outsider" in society can either be forced on individuals by the surrounding, non-accepting community or by their extended family who cannot accept the bicultural roots and characteristics a person bears (Goulbourne et al. 2010: 115). On the other hand, the person can himself or herself notice a feeling of not belonging or feeling comfortable in either of the home cultures. If an individual feels at loss with one or both of the cultures and cannot identify with them, this can raise uncertainty about one's lingual and cultural identity. As a result, Goulbourne et al. (2010: 99) suggest that bicultural children may not feel strongly attached to either of their home cultures, be it the one of residence or their minority home country. Goulbourne et al. (2010: 11) have observed that individuals who feel discriminated or face racism in their society because of their bicultural

background wish to build even stronger ties to their other home culture abroad, and reconstruct their cultural identity into that direction. However, Goulbourne et al. (2010: 112) continue that an immigrant or multicultural family background can affect how one is treated even by the extended family, and how, as a result of a personal identity crisis, an "outsider" identity is then adapted in both of the home countries. In other words, bicultural individuals sometimes fall in between, or even out of, their two home cultures and they therefore have to form their own, fluid, multicultural identities in order to try to adapt. Nevertheless, it should also be emphasised that generally, the advantages of bilingualism are seen as greater than disadvantages (Grosjean 1994: 1660). These advantages will be discussed next.

2.3.3 Advantages of bilingualism

Bilingualism has been found to have temporary and permanent social, cultural, economic, personal and communication advantages for individuals, as well as advantages on their thinking. Plenty of benefits of bilingualism have been listed by for instance Burck (2005: 15), but only some of them will be mentioned here as examples of the great variety. Auer and Li Wei (2007: 4) argue that parents themselves usually have several reasons to maintain their child's bilingualism: firstly, and possibly most importantly, they are both mother tongues of the child and thus strongly connected to the child's developing identity. Language is a way of passing on cultural heritage, as well as creating a stronger bond with the child than what would be possible if the parents had to communicate in a foreign language with the child – nuances and tones of language would then be lost in translation. Secondly, bilingualism also enables communication in their native languages with both of the parents' families and communities, who might not know the other mother tongue of the child at all. Edwards (2004: 83) reports that children who are fully bilingual remain closer to their elders than children who have not been taught or have lost one of their mother tongues. Thirdly, as for the economic advantages, managing two languages fluently, as well as being culturally competent, can be an advantage in the global job market, as Baker (2000: 4–5) calculates.

Fourthly, psychologist Oksi-Walter (2009: 100) argues that a bilingual child has the advantage of having more varied structures in the development of their cognitive skills. Yelland et al. (1993, in Baker 2000: 39) argue that even with limited experience of a

second language, the child is still at an advantage over monolinguals in terms of thinking and learning to read. Their cognitive development is likely to happen faster, for instance. Moreover, having to deal with two mother tongues simultaneously, an individual will have two mental representations for each word, which enables the bilingual speaker to be more elaborate, flexible and fluent in their creative thinking, and not be as fixed with sounds of words as well as be more focused on the meanings. Baker (2000: 4) predicts that this could lead to a greater sensitivity towards language and communication. Bilingual individuals will have more options and means to negotiate in social situations and they are more likely to experiment with the different methods more than a monolingual child, therefore having better abilities for problem-solving. Finally, a bilingual person is more likely to have a better ability of putting himself or herself in another's position and his or her social skills are more diverse, as she or he has acquired them from two cultures. As a result, bilingual people can be expected to be more open towards multiculturalism and people with different backgrounds and to be less racist. Baker (2000: 5) describes bilinguals as the symbol of the "essential humanity of building bridges between peoples of different color, creed, culture and language," therefore being able to lower prejudiced barriers within and between communities and societies.

2.4   Bilingual and bicultural upbringing: reasons and consequences

As bilingualism within the context of the societies significant for the present study as well as bilingualism on an individual level have now been discussed, it is also worthwhile to discuss bilingualism within the family environment in the next chapters. This chapter will focus on bringing up a child bilingually and the reasons behind the decision. Moreover, the meaning of that decision for the relationship between the child and the parents, in addition to the issues that follow from that decision and their possible effects, will be reflected on as well. Furthermore, society's involvement in the bilingual upbringing will be part of the discussion.

Bilingual identities are formed on the footing of both the local surroundings as well as the connection to the transnational family. Families can thus have a crucial role in constructing the changing and various bilingual identities. Oksi-Walter (2009: 100), talking from personal experience of living in a bilingual family, discusses "invisible cultural heritage" and argues that by talking in the parent's mother tongue to the

children, the parent transfers that legacy to the children. The two home cultures involve two worlds of experience, teaching the child how to perceive the world and organise those experiences, different forms that social relationships take, and so on (Baker 2000: 17). To further exemplify the matter, Baker (2000: 4) has compiled a list which, although extensive, still probably not exhaustive, gives examples of these world's different cultural systems. These include

> behavior, folk sayings, stories, histories, traditions, ways of meeting and greeting, rituals of birth, marriage and death, ways of conversing (cf. Italians, Arabs, English), different literature, music, forms of entertainment, religious traditions, ways of understanding and interpreting the world, ideas and beliefs, ways of thinking and drinking, crying and loving, eating and caring, ways of joking and mourning.

As can be understood from the list, matters that are linked with culture and language are practically infinite and touch all areas of life, thus emphasising the importance of passing on the said cultural heritage via language.

Oksi-Walter (2009: 100–101) emphasises the importance of the parents interacting in their own mother tongue and creating an emotional as well as functional bond with the children in order to ensure a stable development of the child's emotional life. As Oksi-Walter (2009: 100) puts it, "language colours the identity." This view is supported by Baker (2000: 1) as well, as he believes communicating with the child in the parent's mother tongue will allow a more "subtle, finer texture of relationship" to develop with each parent, and a different level of intimacy can be reached than when having to converse in a foreign language. In order to achieve communication on a deep level with the child, Baker (2000: 15) urges to ensure a richness of experiences with the languages, in a variety of contexts, in pleasurable atmosphere and in a participative manner rather than by learning drills. These kinds of positive, varied experiences are especially important with the language not used in the community and when the only constant source of input comes from the home. Through meeting different kinds of people, a larger variety of speech styles and pronunciation will become familiar to the child. A rich language experience will, according to Baker (2000: 17), essentially teach the child "a whole way of life."

Lanza (2007: 45) deduces that parents who choose to bring up their child bilingually can be assumed to have a positive attitude towards bilingualism. Nevertheless, they are also an essential part of the environment, the local community and society at large, and cannot be separated from it. Society, the surrounding community and the extended

family can affect both the parents' views on bilingualism even when they have intended to bring up their child bilingually, as well as the child's views when he or she is old enough to differentiate between languages and understand the relationships between them. Edwards (2007: 448) says it to be common for one language to have a predominant status, with additional social, economic and political power, even in countries where more than one language holds a legal status. Burck (2005: 13) warns that it is difficult for children to become sustainably bilingual if the language does not receive support outside the family or if it carries a social stigma. In addition, if the use of one of the parental languages, usually the one without any official or social status in the community, does not receive support from the community, it may affect the parents' ideas about their own language practices and bilingual upbringing in general. Such attitudes may reinforce the natural difficulties parents face while attempting to raise their child bilingually, as there may be lack of support or misguided, often negative, advice about bilingualism (Lanza 2007: 46).

As a result, poor knowledge about the effects of bilingualism on a child may result in parents abandoning bringing up their child bilingually, or will lead to lack of support from the families of the parents, for instance. Further consequences of the decision to renounce conversing in one of the child's mother tongues can be, for example, the inability to communicate with family abroad, as well as dents in the child's identity. As Harding and Riley (1986: 25) state, "someone will lose their linguistic identity" as a result of such actions. To counteract the negative attitudes the community may exhibit, De Houwer (1999: 92) claims the best possibility for a family's active bilingualism to take place is when the parents strongly believe in their roles in their child's language acquisition process, as well as convey a general positive attitude towards languages and bilingualism. Moreover, Lanza (2007: 51) also points out that parents may have different beliefs, attitudes and ideologies on language and language learning even between themselves. These views are then reflected in the parents' language use.

2.5   Families' position in bilingualism and biculturalism

In the final chapter of the literature review of the present study, the bilingual family as a unit is in the focus. The relationship between a child and the parents in relation to bilingualism and biculturalism will be looked at. Furthermore, the focus will be

expanded from the bilingual nuclear family to also include the extended family and the attitudes they portray towards a family's bilingualism in chapter 2.5.1.

Goulbourne et al. (2010: 99) emphasise the importance of family as the arena of expressing and constructing one's changing ethnic and national identities. Bilingual families have to deal with simultaneous, overlapping networks of more than one nation-state, their vast social relations and the customs and procedures that follow. Inarguably this is not an easy task, which is why Grosjean (2010: 212–213) stresses that bilingual children are not the only ones needing support – so does the whole family. Attitudes and support received from relatives, friends as well professionals, such as teachers, doctors, speech therapists and psychologists also can affect both the child's bilingual identity formation as well as the nuclear family's motivation to maintain bilingualism in their family.

Without the contact to the minority country and its culture through family or minority community in the new home country, the child is more likely to feel like an outsider to the minority culture. Therefore, it is also important to have consistent and solid contact to the family of the parent from the minority culture. In addition, for a bilingual child, the knowledge and understanding of their own roots can positively affect the development of their identity, something which can be achieved through healthy relationships with the extended family living abroad. Nevertheless, Weckström (2011: 149) also reports of her bicultural respondents who felt that not knowing the minority language is not necessarily an obstacle to feeling as part of the culture. As Merle Benbow (2008: 89) also phrases it, "language is just one part of belonging" and there are other matters than just language affecting the relationship with the minority family and culture, and – more importantly – the feeling of belonging is highly individual.

As culture can be experienced in different ways, parents may encounter disagreements with their children on the different cultural identities they possess in comparison to the parents' identities (Huttunen 2006: 62). It is common for the migrated parent to want to speak their native country's language to and with the children, while the children may feel more comfortable with and be more fluent in the community's majority language. Moreover, the children are bound to have different perceptions and ties to the migrated parent's home country than the parent does: it is possible for the child to completely

lack any personal memories about the country. The minority home country may only be present in the parent's stories or the destination of infrequent holiday visits. Huttunen (2006: 62) thus argues that although the two countries may be linked and overlapped, their meanings are interpreted differently between the parent and the child. This might be stressful for the parent who might feel that the child is not involved in or exposed enough to the minority culture.

Although it is important to ensure the child's contact to the minority culture in which the family is not living, it is also essential to ensure that the child is able to embrace all the aspect of their bilingualism, and accept the majority culture as part of their identity as well. Oksi-Walter (2009: 103) argues that a parent who feels negatively about the country they live in or who does not know the culture well enough subconsciously affects the child's view on the culture as well. As a result, as the child has grown up in that culture and created bonds with it that the parents may not have, such negative feelings can affect the child's identity and self-image. On the other hand, Oksi-Walter (2009: 116) believes that if the child constantly sees the minority parent failing to manage with the daily life, for instance by struggling with the language, work or social norms, the child will find it difficult to respect and appreciate the parent, and their culture. Indeed, Oksi-Walter (2009: 116) discusses some sensitive issues, such as the minority parent possibly feeling inadequate and facing challenges for their self-esteem as a result of being in a minority position and therefore being an "outsider" in the culture.

2.5.1 Extended family

Baker (2000: 11–13) believes that in addition to the nuclear family, extended families also play an important role in childhood bilingualism. On the one hand, if the extended family is not supportive of bilingualism, the child may be aware of the disagreements that are taking place within the family. This can be debilitating for the positive construction of the child's bilingual identity. On the other hand, ideally, for example minority grandparents are another source of language for the child that promotes the child's language development, acting as a model for it. For the minority parent, teaching the language and culture of his or her home country is usually part of constructing and maintaining transnational, cross-cultural relations to the relatives and family living abroad. In order to maintain family networks, the participation of individuals within the

family is needed in family rituals, cultural customs and community happenings specific to the ethnic group. According to Goulbourne et al. (2010: 101), these include a variety of rituals, from every-day practices, such as eating together, to festival and holidays and how they are celebrated. For attending these family rituals, trips to the minority home country are also experienced to be somewhat stressful, as the children may feel guilty or sad for having to leave their family time after time and feel unsettled after the visit. However, the positive feelings typically outnumber the anxiety.

Goulbourne et al. (2010: 100) have found that participating in transnational family gatherings and social rituals strengthens the family ties, upholds the cultural identities and helps to understand one's own ethnic identity as well as the idea of "home and belongingness." For instance, interaction between grandparents and grandchildren, who live in different countries, is deemed as reciprocally educative: grandparents teach their grandchildren the customs and norms of their culture, involving them in daily activities, while the grandchildren help the grandparents with modern innovations, such as the Internet. Consequently, both participants can feel useful and appreciated (Goulbourne et al. 2010: 88). In addition, it is often considered important by the extended family as well that the child knows the minority language, as the extended minority might not know the majority language. Without a mutual language, close bonds are more difficult to form (Weckström 2011: 149). Moreover, Weckström (2011: 62–63) believes that wanting to bond with the child in one's own mother tongue can also be a matter of preference and priorities rather than language skills. Even in situations where the minority extended family fluently knows the majority language, it is common for individuals to prefer to use the minority mother tongue because one's mother tongue is "the language of the heart," as Weckström (2011: 149) and Taavitsainen and Pahta (2003: 10) remark.

3   THE PRESENT STUDY

The data for the study was gathered by performing thematic interviews, thus setting the topic of the conversation for the parents to freely discuss. In order to ensure enough data for the analysis, ten parents that formed five bilingual and bicultural couples between them were interviewed about their families' bilingualism and biculturalism. The study did not aim for generalization, but rather for an in-depth view at the experiences of some representatives of the phenomenon. In this chapter, the research questions (chapter

3.1), the participants with their families (chapter 3.2) and the methods of the data collection and analysis (chapter 3.3) of the present study are presented.

3.1 The research questions

The present study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. How do the parents view bilingualism and biculturalism and what measures do they take to ensure their children grow up bilingual and bicultural?
2. How does bilingualism affect the family: the children, the parents, and their relationship with the extended family?
3. How is bilingualism received by society in the parents' point of view?

In order to answer these research questions and to fulfil the aim of the present study, some more detailed explanatory questions rose to attention to further explicate the research questions. As for the first research question, what does bilingualism and biculturalism mean to the parents and how much are they present in the daily family life? Parents were asked to discuss their own attitudes and feelings about bilingualism and their values regarding it. What do they see as the advantages of bringing up their child as a bilingual? Are there any disadvantages or difficulties they have encountered while trying to provide a bilingual family setting for their children? How do the parents in practice promote the bilingualism and biculturalism for their children? How do the parents make sure their children are kept in connection with the minority language and culture in their country of residence? All this involved discussing their everyday practices of bilingual upbringing and involving both languages and cultures in their daily lives. In relation to the second research question, how do bilingualism and biculturalism affect the family on different levels: on individual and inter-parental levels and in regards to the extended family? That is, do bilingualism and biculturalism shape the children's identity in any way? How does the choice of bringing up children bilingually affect the parents' mutual relationship? What is the extended families' response to bilingualism and biculturalism in the interview families? Finally, for the third research question, it was relevant to discuss the parents' views of the role of and attitudes towards bilingualism and biculturalism on societal level, as society can affect the role of the minority language within the family as well. The parents may, for instance, struggle to teach their children the minority language because of lack of support from the community or limited access or contact with other families with the

same minority language. Thus, it was asked how the interview families were received in different host countries and with different minority languages and cultures.

Although the present study specifically sought for actively bilingual families as participants, it was also considered possible that the parents would know some technically bilingual couples who are not eager to support bilingual upbringing or have given up bilingual upbringing for other reasons, such as learning difficulties, and have not acquainted their children with both languages. This would provide an interesting counter-argument against active maintenance of childhood bilingualism. Finally, although the study did not aim to generalise its results, it was nevertheless considered interesting to see if bilingualism was experienced or viewed differently in the two countries, in which English is the majority language in one of them and the minority language in the other – that is, the former in the United Kingdom and the latter in Finland.

3.2   The interview families

The interview families that took part in the study were selected based on a number of criteria, because sharing similar qualities were considered to guarantee the study to be a more relevant and reliable presentation of a certain type of a bilingual family. Firstly, the interviewees had to be in a bilingual relationship, that is to say, the persons had different mother tongues – single-parents could not be included in the study, because it would have shifted the focus point of the study. Secondly, one of those two mother tongues had to be Finnish, and the other English. The native country of the English-speaking parent was not deemed relevant, as long as English was in the position of a mother tongue for the parent. Thirdly, the couples had to have children, because it was the bilingual and bicultural family life and how bilingualism is maintained with the children and how it affects the whole family that were in the interests of the present study. Couples in the United Kingdom, where English is the majority and official language, were interviewed and these findings were compared with the bilingual couples interviewed in Finland, where English does not hold an official status, although it is still widely spoken as a foreign language.

Interviewees were sought through several sources, but eventually only four sources that are presented here proved successful in securing participants for the present study.

When searching for participants from Finland, an announcement was placed in a Facebook group called *Foreigners in Jyväskylä*, in which Finnish-English couples with children were asked to participate in an interview on bilingualism. One of the Finnish couples and the pilot couple were found through this source, the second Finnish interviewee couple was found through the contacts of the first interviewee couple. For the British participants, two sources proved successful: one British couple was chosen from the volunteers who enrolled after a message was sent through the mailing list of the parents of the Finnish Saturday School in the East Midlands, and the other couple through the mailing list of the Finnish Saturday School in Bristol. Parents were thus kept in contact with and the dates and locations of the interviews were decided in cooperation with the parents either via email or Facebook.

The functionality of the interview questions was tested with a pilot family to make sure the interview questions were deemed understandable by the interviewees. As the pilot family provided functioning and satisfactory answers in relation to the interview questions, the interview questions were proved working and it was possible to go forward with the study, and the pilot family could be included in the analysis.

In the following, the interviewee couples and their families are briefly introduced in the order that they were interviewed in.

- Pilot family: Finnish-British couple with 3-year-old non-identical twin boys and the father's 10-year-old son on a visiting basis (not included in the analysis) at the moment of interviewing. Father British, mother Finnish. Father knows Finnish on a very good level, but the parents use English as their mutual language. Residence in Central Finland. The family has not lived outside of Finland with the twins. Interviewed at their home in February 2013. The individual identifiers used in the analysis for the father and mother are FiPFa and FiPMo respectively and the identifier FiP is used for both of the parents.

- Family 1: Finnish-British couple with a 9-year-old daughter and 7- and 5-year-old sons at the moment of interviewing. Father British, mother Finnish. Parents use English as their mutual language, father cannot converse in Finnish but understands some. Residence in Nottinghamshire, United Kingdom. Have not lived outside the United Kingdom as a family. Interviewed via Skype in

February 2013. The father and mother will be referred to as UK1Fa and UK1Mo respectively and as UK1 as a couple in the analysis.

- Family 2: Finnish-Irish couple with a 7-year-old son and a 3-year-old daughter at the moment of interviewing. Father Irish, mother Finnish. Father knows very good Finnish but the parents converse mainly in English. Residence in Central Finland, where they have lived for two years, have lived in Scotland and Ireland before as a family. Interviewed at their home in March 2013. In the analysis, the father and mother will be referred to as Fi1Fa and Fi1Mo respectively and as Fi1 when considered simultaneously as parents.

- Family 3: Finnish-British couple with two sons aged 5 and 1. Father British, mother Finnish. Father does not know Finnish except for single words, parents use English as their mutual language. Residence in Gloucestershire, United Kingdom. Have not lived outside the United Kingdom as a family. Interviewed via Skype in March 2013. In the analysis, the father and mother will be referred to as UK2Fa and UK2Mo respectively and as UK2 when including both of the parents.

- Family 4: Finnish-Canadian couple with a son aged 5 and a daughter aged 2 at the time of interviewing. Father Finnish, mother Canadian. Father knows English and the mother knows Finnish, use Finnish as their mutual language. Residence in Central Finland. Have not lived outside of Finland as a family. Interviewed at their home in March 2013. In the analysis, the father and mother will be referred to as Fi2Fa and Fi2Mo respectively and as Fi2 as a couple.

As can be seen above, the names of the interviewees and any identifiable references have been changed in order to guarantee their anonymity. The interviewees have been given individual identifiers to make it easier for the reader to distinguish them from one another. Finally, all the parents signed a written consent form (see Appendix 1) that gives rights for the interview data to be used for research purposes.

3.3   The methods of data collection and analysis

The methods used for the data collection and analysis in the present study are presented here. The interviews were performed through the means of a *thematic interview* (chapter

3.3.1) and after that analysed by combining the methods of *qualitative content analysis* (chapter 3.3.2) and *comparative analysis* (chapter 3.3.3).

3.3.1 Thematic interview

The interviews were performed through the means of a *thematic, or semi-structured, interview*. Methodologically, these fall in between open and structured interviews. Thematic interviews were chosen as the method of data collection, because as Dufva (2011: 131–132) puts it, they are useful for allowing the opinions and perceptions of the research subject, that is, the interviewees, to be voiced. Moreover, Byrne (2004: 182) argues that responses are more considered with open-ended and flexible question, thus accessing the interviewees' interpretations and understandings, as well as achieving depth and complexity in the data. Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2001: 34) say that as thematic interviewing involves direct language interaction with the interviewees, it is possible to ask for details and confirmation for the motives behind answers, as well as influence the direction of the information gathered, unlike in questionnaires for instance. The method is thus more flexible and allows more chance for interpreting the answers. In addition, Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2001: 36) defend thematic interviewing as a method for its convenience of gathering descriptive examples on phenomena.

The views on how to perform a thematic interview and how structured it should be vary between researchers. For instance, Eskola and Suoranta (2008: 86) suggest that the interviewer only holds a list of central topics, usually three or four of them, with respective further questions that have been identified prior to the interviews. Moreover, Dufva (2011: 133) reports that the questions do not have to be performed to the interviewed parents in the same form or order, and parents are given these topics to discuss and the interview is allowed to evolve as a conversation. The interviewer may ask defining questions and provide clarification, but the interview is not to be strictly controlled or directed. Dufva (2011: 133) continues that this allows the parents freely to talk about the topic they find important and relevant to their families. As a result, the contents and the order of the topics as well the extent to which they are discussed can vary greatly from one participant to the next, according what the participants find significant for themselves. On the other hand, Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009: 75) believe the relationship between the interview questions and the framework of the study is dependent on how open the interview is wanted to be: either intuitive, empirical notions

are allowed or the interview is kept within the frames of the known questions. Finally, Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2001: 47) note it to be specific of semi-structured methods to have some aspects of the interviews finalised while others are left open and to be decided in the interview.

In the case of the present study, the interview questions (see Appendix 2) were shown to the parents prior to the interview in order to provide them with more time to process the topics, give the parents a chance to discuss them privately and therefore allow more thorough answers. Moreover, even though the questions had set forms on the question form, the actual uttered forms of the questions varied depending on the interview, and some suggested questions were answered by the parents without having to separately prompt them. In addition, it was emphasised to the parents that not all questions needed to be answered if they were considered irrelevant. Thus, although the question form had more questions on it than what is considered to be the practice in thematic interviewing, the interviews were still allowed to evolve in the form of a flowing conversation, and therefore, the large number of interview questions was seen as unproblematic.

The parents were asked to be interviewed together, as the study discusses bilingual families as a unit, and it is only natural then to include both of the parents in the same discussion about *their* family. This is supported by Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2001: 61), who report couple interviewing to be useful in research regarding families and when the couples are interviewed about something concerning them both. Furthermore, it was presumed that it would make the parents more relaxed about talking into a tape recorder when being in the situation with a familiar person, and it would possibly encourage them to discuss the topics for longer and more in-depth, as they would be able to comment on the other person's thoughts, as Dufva (2011: 135) points out to be one of the advantages of group interviews. With the parents living in the United Kingdom, the interviews were performed via Skype, as this was seen as requiring the least effort to perform the interviews on both parts. Organising face-to-face interviews overseas would have been time-consuming and expensive, and the interview dates available would have been perhaps crucially limited, risking the participation of the parents. In addition, Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2001: 65) defend phone interviews, which Skype calls can be seen as, as an acceptable way of interviewing for example when the interviewees are busy or live far away, which was the case in the present study. Moreover, it was

possible to use the web camera in addition to the audio with one of the couples in the United Kingdom, which added an element of face-to-face, personal interaction.

Each of the interviews, which were held in English, was hoped to last for an hour, making the total of the length of the interviews approximately five hours, providing sufficiently data for the analysis. Altogether, the lengths of the interviews varied from 48 minutes to 97 minutes, totalling in five hours and 35 minutes of data. The interviews were tape recorded, because as Silverman (2005: 183–184) justifiably argues, relying on the interviewer's recollection of the conversation is unreliable. Moreover, recording allows the researcher to "focus on the 'actual details' of one aspect of social life" (Silverman 2005: 183–184) and they can be listened to multiple times, enabling discovering fresh points of view. In addition, recording the interviews enabled *transcription*, the factual saving of the speech that could be improved and analysed in a variety of ways. Therefore, it was part of the present study's research process to also transcribe the interviews.

The interviewees' speech was transcribed in their original form which means that any grammatical errors or mistakes were left uncorrected. In the analysis, however, when there is an error which would hinder understanding the meaning of the utterance, clarifications have been given. Although Lilja (2011: 70) argues that all verbal and non-verbal action may hold significance and meaning, the present study did not go this deeply into conversational analysis, but focused on the content, and therefore, the verbal output, instead. In other words, as the focus of the analysis was indeed on the contents, *what* was being said rather than *how,* it was seen as unnecessary to transcribe intonation, volume or speed of speech, just to name a few of the conventional transcription elements in conversation analysis. Finally, it must be acknowledged that it is impossible to capture all the verbal and non-verbal nuances of the conversation, thus making the transcription an imperfect representation of the actual conversation, and only the result of the observations and choices made by the researcher in regards of the transcription, as Nikander (2010: 433) has noted.

As the themes of the present study also touch the lives of the children of the interview families, it may be questioned why they were not directly included in the study about their bilingual identities. Children were not interviewed because of the chosen methods

were not seen as suitable for small children, and any activity-based research, such as drawings, would have been too vague and open to the researcher's interpretation. It can be argued that interacting directly with small children would not have revealed as analytical results as was achieved with the parents, although admittedly, interacting directly with children has its advantages – however, for the present study, such method was not considered suitable. The data was less likely to be misinterpreted when the parents could provide direct, actual and sincere information about their thoughts and feelings on the topic. The parents were expected to know their children very well and having been observant of their development which would guarantee a profound and reliable source of data.

3.3.2 Content analysis

The interviews were analysed by combining *qualitative content analysis* and *comparative analysis*. Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009: 104) describe content analysis to look for humane meanings from the data and thus, this method aims to give a condensed and general description of the phenomenon (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 103). Furthermore, Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009: 95–98) define content analysis to have three different approaches: data-based, theory-guided and theory-bound content analysis, of which *theory-guided content analysis* will be used in the present study. Theory-guided content analysis is allowed to present connections to earlier theories without the aim of testing their validity – rather, previous research is used to support the findings of the study in question. Moreover, in theory-guided content analysis, items for the analysis are chosen freely from the data independently from theory, like in data-based content analysis. However, in theory-guided content analysis, previous research can be used to assist the analysis process to find new ways of thinking and seeing the data (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 96–97). The findings and interpretations made from the data are looked for support in previous research, or, in contrast, for proof that such phenomena has not been presented in research before. Thus, theory-guided content analysis differs from theory-bound content analysis which aims to confirm previous research and also strongly leans on previous research for example when determining the items to be analysed from the available data. Theory-guided content analysis, therefore, is defined as being "abductive" by Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009: 97), that is, as being in between inductive (data-based content analysis) and deductive (theory-bound content analysis) reasoning, as the data and earlier models alternate in the researcher's analysis process.

3.3.3 Comparative analysis

As Pöntinen (2004: 44) points out, it is necessary to use *comparative analysis* in order to discover if different societies and thus different cultures share mutual phenomena, and to see if it is possible to hypothesise any theories from any discovered consistencies or differences in the parents' opinions and practices. The same is believed by Gordon and Lahelma (2004: 99), who say that that in cross-cultural studies, the same phenomenon is analysed in different contexts. Moreover, Jokinen and Kovala (2004: 83) also believe that due to the increasing globalization and interaction between different language and cultural groups, it is important to critically reconsider the relationships between the local, national and global cultures through the comparative method. Therefore, the present study forms its conclusions through qualitative comparisons as this is a typical procedure for cross-cultural studies, as is described by Gordon and Lahelma (2004: 100).

Therefore, after the interviews had been transcribed, they were carefully looked for *central themes* which the parents had found important for themselves. Connections between the couples' conversations were looked for through intensive transcription reading, note-taking and visualizations with the help of mind maps of the topics that were discussed to find themes with further sub-topics and how they related to one another. These notes were revisited and referred to throughout the analysis process in order to allow possibilities for ideas and connections to appear. Although it had been initially expected that the focus of the present study would be on the children's bilingual identity, it was discovered that the parents had several other topics that were also considered current and complex in their daily lives. Therefore, the focus shifted from fully focusing on the children to include the whole nuclear family, extended family and their relationships with society in regards to bilingualism. Although the parents' conversations touched several interesting topics, including bilingual politics and their own bilingual identity, the themes for the analysis were eventually limited to topics related to family bilingualism in order to suit the research questions. The results discovered from the interviews through the analysis process will be presented and discussed in the next chapter.

4 FAMILY BILINGUALISM AND BICULTURALISM

In the analysis, five main themes emerged from the interviews with the parents:

1. bilingualism,
2. biculturalism,
3. children's language and cultural identities,
4. family language policies and
5. bilingual family life.

These main themes have their own chapters, each of which has been divided into subchapters with further related themes in order to offer a deeper understanding of what kinds of issues and aspects affect the interview families' views on bilingualism and biculturalism and the topics related to them. Some of the analysis chapters focus on bilingualism from the child's point of view, while in some, the parents and their experiences are highlighted more. For instance, in chapter 4.4, it is the parents' opinions that are being looked at when discussing the families' language policies, while in chapter 4.3 that discusses the children's language and cultural identities, parents had a chance to analyse their children's bilingual development, culturally and linguistically.

4.1 BILINGUALISM

Four major findings were discovered through the interviews regarding bilingualism. First of all, bilingualism was generally seen as a private, family matter by all the parents, and parents seemed to have a strong need to be in control of their children's bilingualism and of how to promote it. Furthermore, parents seemed to act defensive over their choices of maintaining the children's bilingualism if they felt their practices were criticised and threatened. Secondly, bilingualism was seen as a natural state of being in the world, and therefore almost taken for granted within the families. Thirdly, and linked with the second result, the experiences of whether bilingualism was occurring consciously or unconsciously within the family varied between the two countries: in general, parents living in the United Kingdom were more conscious of the presence of bilingualism than Finnish parents were. Yet all parents seemed rather passive about their actions towards bilingualism. Finally, bilingualism was seen as an adult decision. Interestingly, while bilingualism was not seen as a conscious effort by most parents, at the same time, it was seen as duty towards the children to provide them with both of the mother tongues. These findings will be analysed in detail next. In addition, in the following chapter 4.1.1, how society is involved in bilingual families'

lives in the two countries is taken a look at, along with how the interview parents view the interaction with authorities that deal with their bilingualism. Furthermore, while parents were reluctant to see any disadvantages or hindrances bilingualism could cause either to the children or to practical, everyday life, they mentioned several positive aspects of bilingualism that were seen as beneficial to the children. These benefits will be presented and discussed in chapter 4.1.2.

Firstly, bilingualism was generally seen as a private, family matter. Fi2Mo, for example, said that bilingualism should be a personal matter for each family and everyone should be allowed to deal with it as they see suitable. This opinion is similar to Fi1Mo's, who voiced her annoyance about any involvement from official levels in their family life. It was agreed that any decisions regarding the language choices for the children and the practices chosen for maintaining the languages should be made and controlled by the parents in question only. Any instructions or guidelines on how to best manage a young child's bilingualism were unwanted. Thus, bilingualism was seen as a matter that should be dealt with privately within the family, and the parents felt the need to be in control of it. Moreover, as another form of bilingualism losing its private nature, politicization of bilingualism was also considered unnecessary. Fi2Fa thought that for some families, bilingualism was a "political" matter to which he objected doing it "out loud." Thus, even advice and comments received from other bilingual families, if not asked for, could be seen as intruding. It can be argued that due to bilingualism's nature of how it affects the communication and relationships within a family and between a family and society, many parents felt protective over their own practices and thought of it as very personal. Therefore, any intervening in the bilingual practices of the families could have been seen as a threat and as questioning parenting skills.

Secondly, by most of the parents, bilingualism was seen as something almost taken for granted, as a natural state of being above all. It was acknowledged that globally, bilingualism is a natural phenomenon. Bilingualism mostly simply presented itself in the choice of using two languages in the family. For example, Fi2Mo felt there was no need to see bilingualism as "a big question [because] on one level it's very important and on another it's so natural [that] it's just like a way of life that it doesn't even come into question." Thus, parents generally did not ponder bilingualism too strenuously: for instance, UK2Fa thought that "on a day-to-day basis, it's just more language," a

statement which all of the families seemed to agree with. Nevertheless, when expecting their first child, one of the couples in the United Kingdom reported having read books on bilingualism and cautions about the possibility of the children objecting to using two languages at home. It could therefore be argued that they were conscious about that, or at least felt like, they were in a special, non-normative position in relation to other families in society, which argues against the claim of taking bilingualism for granted.

Thirdly, the parents were contradictory in their comments that on the one hand, they claimed maintaining bilingualism was a conscious effort to some, and on the other hand, they were "passive" (Fi1Mo) about it and let it develop on its own accord with little effort. As UK2Fa said, "on a day-to-day basis, it's just more language." Other parents agreed with this by saying that the most important thing in their opinion for ensuring their children's bilingual growth was simply to continuously use both of the languages in the daily life. However, not even this was completely trouble-free for all families. With families living in Finland, maintaining the children's bilingualism was reported to be getting easier and thus less conscious as the children got older, while it was the opposite in the United Kingdom.

Childhood bilingualism was seen more as intriguing development than a time-consuming operation by parents in Finland, and generally, they claimed it was not consciously present in their families. Bilingualism seemed like a natural affair for them which would take place unprompted if it was going to, without the need to make extra effort. For example, Fi2Mo said that bilingualism was not paid attention to in their family because it was so natural. Thus, it was not necessary to see it as a "priority" or to be "fought towards." For the parents in Finland, the explanation of bilingualism being seen as requiring less effort could be the fact that due to the global status of English, the language combination of Finnish and English was seen as trouble-free in comparison to other languages. For example, one parent explained her relaxed attitude as follows:

> (1) I don't really count England being that strongly another culture as it's accepted here [in Finland]… Obviously if the language combination was Polish and Finnish you've got more pressure maybe to make sure the kids come in touch with that culture, [but] with English it's so everywhere from TV and you just are immersed in English culture in Finland so maybe that's the main difference. With rarer languages there's more pressure to make sure the kids learn that language and get used to that culture. (FiPMo)

In her comment above, FiPMo is including both English language and culture in her discussion, and considers both effortless because of the influence of Anglo media and

the constant presence of the English language even in Finland. Other families in Finland agreed with the view of Finnish and English being an "easy combination" for bilingual families to have, because of the prominent role English has as the global language of communication and because it is spoken widely and taught at school in Finland as well. However, although the attitudes towards bilingualism were generally relaxed, even among the Finnish families bilingualism had had to be considered consciously in some occasions. The FiP couple said that they had made "big decisions" in regards to their family's bilingualism, as they had mutually decided that the minority father should stay at home instead of the more traditional choice of the mother doing so in order for the children to hear more of English. Nevertheless, even the FiP couple said that even by the time of the interview, when their sons were three of age, bilingualism was already getting easier.

Conversely, as FiPMo points out with "rarer languages," the role of Finnish as a minority language in the United Kingdom is more complicated and requires more effort to be introduced and present in a child's life. The minority mothers in the United Kingdom struggled to systematically use Finnish with their children and reported it to be a conscious, constant effort to be consistent with it. UK1Mo, for instance, said that maintaining Finnish with the children had not lost its importance but it had become "practically more difficult" as the children grew older, because English became a more prominent language in the children's lives as their habitats expanded through entering school. Moreover, English was considered the family language in both UK interview families, that is, Finnish was only used between one parent and the children while English was used in conversations in which the whole family was included. Therefore, English also had a stronger role within the families, simply because it was heard and used more and as it was the language of the surrounding society as well. The children's levels of English were thus improving more rapidly than their Finnish was. Yet however, despite the struggles, the UK couples did not report to make extra effort at the present to change the situation. Most of the language enforcing practices that the families employed (see chapter 4.4.3 for details) could be seen as typical to any family, monolinguals included, such as reading bedtime stories, watching films and listening to music with the children. In conclusion, on the one hand, some parents claimed bilingualism not to be a conscious effort in the family but still to have made family decisions based on it and to have discussed how to deal with it. On the other hand, other

parents claimed that bilingualism was consciously present in the family, but still no effort other than using both of the languages with the children was made. The interview parents' attitudes and practical takes on bilingualism thus varied rather drastically.

Finally, the consensus among the interview parents was that it is a duty towards the children to teach them both of the mother tongues of the parents. It was emphasised that bringing up the children is an adult, parental decision until the children are old enough to decide for themselves whether they wish to maintain both of their mother tongues. The importance of bilingualism, biculturalism and their impact on the children's identity can be seen from the following quote from one father:

> (2) I think if I was from Gabon or wherever I would still like them to speak whatever language they speak in Gabon ... because it'd be fun and it'd be only right for [the children], they'd want to know more about my culture ... [And] when you think what family is, it's sort of like passing on whatever things you've learned and they obviously accompany your own culture so you'd have to do that, I think. (FiPFa)

The father thus thought that bilingualism was important to be maintained in all families around the world and among all cultures, because passing on one's culture and heritage is part of what being a family means. One interview mother gave an example of an acquaintance's 5-year-old child who had decided not to use Finnish as a minority language anymore, to which the parents had agreed. The interview mother felt that this was unjustifiable if a child later in life regretted the fact that he or she had not been taught both of his or her mother tongues, based on an uneducated and infantile decision. Instead, by bringing the children up bilingually the mother felt that the children will have a choice later on in life, but without a bilingual childhood, learning the other mother tongue would be more difficult and possibly less fluent as an adult than if acquired as a child. Moreover, another parent felt that abandoning one of the mother tongues would mean that the child

> (3) didn't want anything to do with [the parent in question] anymore ... [because] the relationship with the language is the relationship, … the thing that binds the relationship [of a parent and a child]. (Fi2Mo)

She thus, first of all, would find such an event upsetting and secondly, found it emphasising the emotional communication that is achieved through the use of a mother tongue. Therefore, parents felt strongly about wanting to be in charge of the decisions regarding their child's bilingualism and ensuring it would take place, at least in the childhood of the children.

4.1.1 Society's support for bilingual families

Generally, official support was seen as less desired and less important than peer support and some parents had even encountered issues with the authorities in regards to the family's bilingualism. When asked if the parents felt they had received enough social support and help in regards of maintaining their children's bilingual upbringing, it was said that social help is needed amongst bilingual families but it does not necessarily have to come from official levels, such as health professionals or social work. All the interview parents agreed that they did not wish for society's involvement in the upbringing of their children or its bilingual aspects, meaning that they wanted to make the decisions themselves in regards to their children's bilingualism and how to promote it. Although the experiences of help from official levels was generally positive with few exceptions, unasked advice from the government, child health experts or social work, for instance, were mostly seen as intervening in the lives of the bilingual families. Instead, unofficial help from support groups and peer support were deemed more important. For instance, the FiP couple mentioned that for example Facebook groups formed by bilingual people themselves were helpful in different situations in life. These notions further support the earlier finding of the present study presented above that bilingualism within a family is seen as a private matter, in which intervening from official levels is not desired. The Fi1 couple even voiced their annoyance about Finnish society acting as a "nanny state" and getting involved in the parents' lives and decisions too much. Parents thus wish to independently decide the best way to enable their children's bilingualism, for their personal needs and in their individual circumstances.

Parents generally had not experienced any prejudice from any official directions and felt that their attempt of raising their children bilingually was being supported. One mother felt that awareness of cultures as well as knowledge about bilingualism's effects on stimulating the brain were better in the present day than perhaps before. For example, the mother reported having worried about the speech development of their youngest child:

> (4) [The youngest child] was quite late in speaking compared to the other two, he didn't really speak properly until he was maybe three and a half, towards four, so then I started thinking, is it because of the bilingualism? But for example a health visitor was reassuring me that it's often [so that the] third children do that often anyway, because other people speak for them. ... I think it just took him longer to process it all but it didn't ... stop me [from] speaking Finnish because I was really sure ... that's not the reason why he was being slow. (UK1Mo)

Therefore, UK1Mo thought that "things have moved on" with beliefs about bilingualism and its effects on the children's intelligence and language learning. The mother's partner supported her in her views and also had similar, positive and trusting sentiments:

> (5) Because language development is so varied with the youngsters, all the [health visitors] are all very open to what's going on and keep telling you not to worry if they don't speak for a long time. (UK1Fa)

However, one couple living in Finland had the opposite kind of experience of health experts' advice in regards to their children's bilingualism. The mother said that their youngest one's speech development had seemed delayed at first which had prompted nurses in Finland to advice against using English with her because it was seemingly costing the child her knowledge of Finnish. The parents received a similar reaction at the kindergarten their daughter attended where the child-minder had asked the mother in what language is the daughter spoken to at home since her Finnish did not seem developed enough to the child-minder. The interview mother expressed annoyance about these reactions and had chosen to class them as uneducated. Therefore, not all parents had positive, supporting experiences about health advisors when discussing their children's bilingualism. These negative experiences could further strengthen the parents' need to be in control of their children's language upbringing if the opinions of official levels clash with those of the parents, as was the case with the interview couple in question and as was discovered above.

On the other hand, with couples with less secure ideas about bilingualism, negative opinions from official levels could as well lead to abandoning family bilingualism. Baker (2000: 87) encourages questioning local professionals, for example doctors' or teachers' advice against bilingualism, as he does not consider them to have a suitable education to make the judgment whether or not a child's bilingualism should be intervened or not. Instead, Baker (2000: 87) urges parents to look for information among linguistics, for instance, and ask for expertise help from

> the local linguistics department of a university or college, among specialist language teachers, among those in education specializing in bilingualism and bilingual education, among psychologists who have a special interest in languages or bilingualism, among teachers who have followed courses on bilingualism and bilingual education, and increasingly amongst speech therapists who have taken a course in bilingualism.

Thus, above all, Baker (2000: 87) encourages parents to be critical towards any negative advice they receive about bilingualism, and secondly, to do research on the topic before

rushing and dropping one of the languages. Abandoning a language could result in worse issues on the child's identity and self-esteem than what language learning difficulty would impose, as Baker (2000: 81) believes.

4.1.2   Parents' ideas of benefits of bilingualism for a child

The interview parents claimed not to see any real disadvantages in bilingualism; the closest the parents came to pointing negative aspects of bilingualism was to say that communication sometimes took a long time when having to have conversations in two languages simultaneously with different members of the family, in addition to misunderstandings because of the different languages spoken within the same conversation.

In contrast, they considered bilingualism to have several positive effects. First of all, bilingualism and biculturalism were both seen to raise awareness and increase tolerance in the children towards different kinds of people, languages and cultures. It was believed that through the child's awareness of his or her own biculturalism and the different customs in the two cultures, they were able to accept others' beliefs. Furthermore, bilingualism was seen to offer an entryway into other people's mindsets:

> (6) to speak two languages, it is like changing perspective in some ways when you change the language ... [You are] being international and being in touch with other people. (FiPMo)

Thus, it was believed by the parents that bilingualism and biculturalism help their children to be more tolerant towards diversity among people, as well as understand and appreciate the presence of it. In addition to the effect of a child's own bilingualism, the environment they interacted in was also seen to affect the child's views towards others. In the case of the interview families, most of them were surrounded by a multicultural environment. For example, the UK1 parents reported their children's classes to be multicultural with several mother tongues, and many families had bilingual friends or friends from other cultures. Indeed, school has its role in introducing children to bilingualism and multiculturalism. The UK1 couple felt that bilingualism and multiculturalism were accepted and welcomed at their children's school:

> (7) [The] school collects information for each child before they start and there's a box where they ask what languages are spoken at home, and for example our school had ... a poster in the library area [that said] "all these languages are spoken at our school" and ... it had the language[s] and the flags, and it was quite nice to see the Finnish flag in there. So they had

> connected the information that we told them into practice and telling children about it so I think that was really nice. (UK1Mo)

The school was therefore doing their part in educating the children and raising awareness and acceptance towards different kinds of people and schoolmates by showing the variety that was present in every pupil's daily life. Thus, the children at said school are learning to accept different kinds of background from early childhood. Moreover, as a result, the bilingual children of the interview families did not feel like outsiders in their everyday life either because they had other bilingual children around them.

Secondly, the effects of bilingualism on foreign language learning and brain development were mentioned as an advantage, although this advantage also divided views. Some parents went to the extent of mentioning this as an irrelevant factor in their decision of having brought up their children bilingually, while others felt that bilingualism enables "dexterity of the mind" (Fi2Mo) for the child. Most of the parents thought learning foreign languages would be easier for the children as their brains had already adjusted to dealing with two ways of patterning languages. This has also been proven in research, for example by Edwards (2004: 86), who says that when learning a second mother tongue, bilingual children are also developing transferable literacy skills which can be used in learning to read and write another, foreign language. Therefore, bilingualism was seen as "useful for many forms of communication" (FiPFa) by the parents: bilingual children are able to express themselves with more versatility because of their flexible brain processes as well as communicate with a wider set of people with their different languages.

Thirdly, ensuring the child acquires two mother tongues was seen as creating more options for the child later in life in terms of home country and languages. Knowing two languages was seen as widening the child's options of choosing a future location to live in: essentially, the parents were open about the idea of their child moving to the minority home country, and considered knowing the language and culture of that country to be important for that opportunity to stay open. Moreover, parents felt that they had a duty to ensure that the child learned at least basics in the minority language in order to give them the opportunity to further study the language if they wanted to when they were older. This was based on the view that learning languages is easier for

small children, and not giving the child that ability was seen as hindering their further acquaintance with their roots in their adulthood. This is thus linked with the finding already mentioned above that parents thought that childhood bilingualism was a parental decision.

Finally, bilingualism was seen as essentially enabling emotional communication between the minority parent and the child, which could not be achieved to the same extent if the minority parent was communicating in his or her L2 with the child. L1 is typically considered the "language of emotions" (Multicultural Association Familia Club 2010: 26–27) even among speakers with a high level of fluency in L2, as Grosjean (1994: 1660) has reported: individuals often instinctively revert back to their mother tongue, when they are feeling stressed, tired, angry or excited. Thus, especially strong emotions, such as anger and sadness, were seen as difficult to be expressed in L2 by interview parents as well. Parents thus thought that communicating in one's L2 left gaps in the communication and therefore, the relationship between the parent and child could not reach its full potential because of difficulties in fluently expressing oneself. This is why parents felt strongly about the importance of both of the parents speaking in their mother tongue with the children. One parent emphasised the importance of using one's L1 with the child by saying that the "relationship with the language is *the* relationship" (Fi2Mo), meaning that the relationship between the parent and the child is defined by the language they are using together for communication. Moreover, another parent felt that it is important for both of the parents to be able to communicate in his or her native tongue with the children because "it's important that the kids learn to speak both languages because otherwise one parent would feel really left out" (FiPMo). Another interview mother thought that speaking in her mother tongue allowed her to speak without a "filter" in her speech. In other words, in families in which the parents have different mother tongues, the child acquiring both of the languages was seen as important for better parent-child relationships and emotional communication with both of the parents. However, interestingly, both of the minority mothers residing in the United Kingdom reported that they struggled to discuss some areas of their lives in their mother tongue with their children because it was not the language they associated with those topics. Thus, although important, the minority language was not entirely unproblematic even for the parents whose mother tongue it was.

4.2 BICULTURALISM

Interview parents felt that biculturalism took place more naturally and less consciously than bilingualism did in the families. It was claimed that there was no conscious "cultural education," unlike there were some conscious efforts in strengthening the bilingual abilities of the children in terms of language, which will be discussed in chapter 4.4. Culture, instead, was naturally embedded in the family life. Yet, parents were able to name cultural aspects that they thought were important to be introduced to the children, which questions the claim of biculturalism occurring without any consciousness about it. One interview mother, for example, reported to have tried to include some Finnish cultural knowledge in the children's schoolwork, for instance by helping one of the children to make a presentation on an Olympian and having suggested a Finnish athlete to be presented in class. Biculturalism, nevertheless, included only the aspects that were deemed important for the families. In this chapter, interview parents express their thoughts on biculturalism, its meaning and presence in the families, while chapter 4.2.1 discusses the concrete cultural aspects that were present in the children's lives with further reasoning for them by the parents.

The parents claimed they did not act out cultural traditions as "education" but because they felt "important" and came "naturally" to the family, as UK1Mo put it. Including bicultural features thus was not a daily, conscious effort for the parents, although it could be argued that they were aware of them, and these features were deemed even easier and less conscious to be included in the children's lives than minority language was. Overall, the parents did not seem to think about their background cultures much and it was not a conscious consideration to immerse the children in both of the cultures equally. The reason for this seemed, once again, to lie in the fact that their language combination of Finnish and English was seen as a trouble-free combination by the parents in comparison to other possibilities. For instance, UK1Mo felt that Finnish and British cultures were rather similar, and did not require "different worlds to merge" but instead, they blended in together in their daily lives. Therefore, culture was not presented to the children because of educational purposes, but because both parents' customs are ingrained in the parents' roots and heritage and like any other parent, bilingual parents wish to share their own traditions with their children. Furthermore, one mother mentioned that for her, passing on her own national identity was not that important because her own family roots came from various places. As the mother did

not have a strong national identity tied to one place herself, culture tied to that nation state was not seen as a significant matter to be passed on to the next generation. Instead, it was family values that were regarded important: the sense of belonging came through the family members and their history, rather than a physical location. Thus, the parents' own relationship with their home country affects how important they deem their own cultural roots to be and which aspects of them need to be imported onwards to the children.

One parent raised an important notion about the different roles of English as a language and culture:

> (8) Whether [our children]'d live in England or not they'll probably ... learn English isn't about England at all, increasingly ... There's English culture and there's English language and obviously they will have this language [and they] could live all over the world really with it. (FiPFa)

In other words, the father believed that as their children grow up, they will be aware of the role of English as a global language and will not bind it to a specific geographical location, and that there are many English cultures. The fact that even among the English-speaking interview parents, there were at least three representations of Anglo cultures, namely Irish, Canadian and British with further family links to at least Wales, not to mention further personal differences and perceptions of one's culture, emphasises this point. Therefore, as there is not just one static idea of a culture but many interpretations of it (Hall 1997: 61), it is understandable that each couple only included cultural features that were deemed significant for the particular family, and that the experience of biculturalism changes from one family to the next.

4.2.1 Aspects of cultural heritage

Parents had a variety of cultural aspects that were important to their families and many aspects served more than one purpose in the families' lives. For example, different cultural traditions were combined in the form of holidays and customs from both parental cultures were mixed. One family, for instance, mentioned that at Christmas, they open some presents on Christmas Eve according to the Finnish tradition and leave some for Christmas Day morning as is done in the United Kingdom. Moreover, her husband mentioned the Finnish tradition of celebrating name days in the United Kingdom as another example of including both cultures in their lives. However, any

differences in cultures were not seen as an issue, but rather, as UK1Mo put it, families "take the best of both worlds" and combine those cultural aspects and traditions that are seen as worthwhile and important, and parents thus seemed happy to make compromises together.

Like language in its different forms, visits to the home country also served another purpose other than only strengthening a child's language skills. Although these trips were useful for language development because the child was immersed in the minority language, visiting the minority home country was an important part of biculturalism. The UK2 couple said that one reason for visiting the minority home country was to familiarise the children with the different weather and wildlife of the country because they offered different activities for the children, such as fishing trips and walks in the forest. Moreover, the Fi2 couple mentioned that visits to the minority home country, as well as conversing in the language in general, helped the children to acquire conversation styles and manners typical to Anglo conversations which were deemed important in global interaction: that is, politeness and small talk. In addition, the Fi1 parents wished the children to know about the folklore and history of the minority home country which was realised through visiting places in the minority home country which held historical or cultural historical value. The parents liked to drive around the minority country and introduce the children to the country's history through famous, historical places and telling the children about the events that took place there. Therefore, both visits to the minority home country and different forms of media were seen as holding cultural content, on top of developing the child's language skills.

Media were also seen as useful and important for cultural heritage. Aside from using different media such as television, films, music and books as a tool to help a child acquire the language and to learn to read, they were also seen to carry cultural content that the parents wanted the child to be familiar with. Thus, language was seen as a way of learning about culture and history as well. One mother believed it was important for the children to learn both of their mother tongues because

> (9) it's difficult to separate the culture and the language because culture doesn't always translate very well and things like understanding … the sense of humour … For example we were watching [a] Risto Räppääjä [Ricky Rapper] film at [UK1Fa's] mum['s house] and she thought the characters were very weird because they don't really open to you, and same with the Moomins because she was thinking, "why is Pikku Myy [Little My] always so angry" and if you don't … know the context and realise people are like that then it's difficult ... to open to

people just with the subtitles, even though you translate what happens, if you don't understand the context. (UK1Mo)

Therefore, language can be seen as a central entrance to culture, and although language and culture can also be seen as separate items, bilingualism and biculturalism still often go hand in hand.

Acquainting oneself with the minority culture happened growingly of children's own accord as they grew up. For example, one mother reported that as the children were younger, the parents would play Finnish children's music and nursery rhymes to them. As their children were getting older and getting interested in music and books independently, the parents wished to introduce music to them "at their level [and make it] more interesting" (UK1Mo). For example, the children's Finnish grandmother had bought them CD's by Finnish youth artists, such as Robin and Tuuli, to introduce Finnish language and youth culture to the children at a level they might find more enjoyable and directed at their ages. Moreover, the children were able to influence the kinds of cultural items they were being subjected to as they grew older, as they were growing more as their own individual personalities as well, increasingly developing their own preferences.

4.3 CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL IDENTITIES

The present study discovered a rare way for the parents to see their children's identities. Above all, parents felt that their children were their own personalities with their individual tempers and characters, and bilingualism was only an attribute to that personality, not a defining feature determining the child's identity. In relation to this, the parents could not see their children to have clear bicultural identities and most lacked a strong sense of belonging to the minority home countries. Moreover, some of the children even experienced mixed feelings about being bilingual, as they had had feelings of both pride and embarrassment caused by it in the past. In these cases, parents bore significance in convincing the child of the meaning of bilingualism in his or her life. Finally, despite the lack of a clear presence of a bicultural identity, most children were still told to be processing their bilingualism at their own level. These findings will be further explained in this chapter.

For the parents, bilingualism was a secondary characteristic in their children. Children were first of all their own individuals and only then bilingual. Instead, bilingualism can be seen in relation to the child's personality, as an attribute to it and complementing it, rather than as a defining characteristic. For example, the FiP couple had noticed differences in their sons' identities and thus in their attitudes towards speaking either Finnish or English: one of the twins was reportedly more eager to please others, both adults and children, and was thus also more likely to repeat words and consciously try harder in terms of language. Therefore, one of the twins was considered to have a more eager attitude towards and to be more prone to learning languages quicker than his brother, who was seen more as "his own man" (FiPMo) and kept to himself more. As a result, identity can be seen to be affected by attitudes and personality, as has also been noted by Baker (2000: 72–73). Above all, parents saw their children "as a whole" (FiPFa), and bilingualism as "an ability with other abilities" (Fi1Mo).

In the case of the children in the interview families, their bicultural identities were not particularly clear or strong and there was lack of a sense of belonging to the minority home countries. Although most children acknowledged their two origins and some even sometimes identified themselves as members of both nations, the minority home country was not seen as "home" according to the interview parents. One explanation is that the children were so young at the time of the interviews and their exposure to the minority home country could have been limited thus far. For instance, one couple explained that they had never lived in Finland as a family, and the children had only visited Finland on holidays. Therefore, there had never been "a routine" (UK1Mo), such as going to school, with them when they had been in Finland, which the parents considered important when setting roots somewhere. Moreover, the lack of routine in the minority home country was also one reason for parents finding it difficult to compare and discuss children's bilingual and bicultural identities. Nevertheless, there were also instances of parents reporting their children to have strongly missed the minority home country or the people there, or to have asked to move to the minority country. Therefore, it is possible for the children to have felt a connection with the minority home country and culture, even if the interview parents could not recognise them seeing it strictly as home.

Although parents felt positively about bilingualism, they thought some children had shown mixed feelings about it. For example, Fi1Fa said that sometimes his son had asked him to speak Finnish, the majority language, in public when he had walked his son to school because of feeling embarrassed of seeming "different." Fi1Mo continued that on the one hand, their son felt proud of knowing English because it impressed his friends as it was the language of TV and games that they played, but on the other hand, he just wanted to be seen as "a normal boy," that is, of all-Finnish origins. Moreover, a father in the United Kingdom suspected that their son's reluctant phase with Finnish had been caused by the fact that the son had recently started school and had started hearing more English and got aware of the fact that they are using a different language with their mother. Grosjean (2010: 214) also urges parents to accept the fact that the phase of denial is natural because the child does not want to be seen as different from other children. Therefore, a change in the environment and in the balance of the languages can perhaps trigger the child to become confused and feel their minority language to be out of place in the new, larger social context, until he or she becomes more confident with the importance of the minority language in their lives.

It would seem that the parents have a role in promoting a child's healthy relationship with his or her bilingualism. Parents reported to have discussed bilingualism with their children, helping their children firstly, to be aware of the different customs that exist around the world and secondly, to embrace their two origins of roots. It could thus be argued that for children, bilingualism did not necessarily come as unconsciously and effortlessly as for the parents, and they felt the need to question it which then required adult involvement. For example, one mother said that she had had to explain and defend the use of the minority language to one of her children:

> (10) he would say "but we're in England, why do we have to speak Finnish?" and then we've had conversations like this from quite early on and I'd say something like, well, I think it's important that you learn Finnish [because] my parents don't speak any English, so that is one big incentive but that's not the only incentive I would like them to have. (UK1Mo)

Another couple also agreed that by immersing the children in the minority culture by regular visits and introducing cultural aspects in the children's daily lives, the children would receive "the background" why they are bilingual, and that they were "trying to reinforce and show [the eldest son] why he might actually want to use and want to learn the language and what benefits it might have knowing it" (UK2Mo). Family and one's roots were indeed one reason why the parents felt it to be important to bring up their

children bilingually, but UK1Mo's previous excerpt would also imply that giving family as the reason for the children is considered an easy explanation, while there are other more in-depth issues and incentives, perhaps too complicated to be explained to young children.

Nevertheless, none of the children in the interview families had strongly objected to their minority roots and generally agreed to use the minority language after possible temporary resistance. It could thus be said that the phases of reluctance that some of these children have faced are a part of natural identity construction, as identities change over time, and as Roos (2009: 138) notes, this change can involve denying a part of one's heritance as well. However, like UK1Mo said, their children had been proud of their two mother tongues and had "taken it to [*sic*] their stride," meaning that they had eventually accepted bilingualism as a natural part of their life. Moreover, some bilingual children also showed signs of open pride about their two mother tongues and cultures: UK2Mo reported that their eldest son has

> (11) stood up in front of his class before and [shown] pictures of him on a boat on a lake, and he has spoken about Finnish and said some words in Finnish and explained about [Finnish] food, so people know that he does have that background. (UK2Mo)

Moreover, the son's most prized possession was told to be a jumper with the text *Suomi* 'Finland' printed on it, which he had even chosen to wear to school on a non-uniform day. Therefore, children's reactions to bilingualism in relation to their surroundings are individual and they deem it differently.

Children were reported to be working on understanding their identity and bilingualism even if they did not show any clear signs of a bilingual identity as such at the present. For example, one mother also reported the children to "process" their heritage:

> (12) Quite often they go [and] throw it out loud and they say "mummy, you are Finnish because you were born in Finland and daddy's English" and they do process it. (UK1Mo)

These children had interpreted bilingualism through linking it with their parents' geographical origins. Moreover, another interview couple's son was also actively working on understanding his bilingualism by discussing himself in terms of others who were bilingual or talked in a foreign language. The parents thought that their son was interested in the fact that he had two mother tongues and was reported to always notice other bilingual or foreign people around him, "paying attention to who is speaking what

language and try and figure out what language that is" (Fi2Mo). For example, the son had reportedly got excited about another Finnish-English bilingual boy in his music class, and the mother believed such awareness would probably not be present as strongly in their son if he was monolingual. Furthermore, the parents recalled an amusing incident with their son working on his bilingual identity:

(13) We were driving somewhere, [the son] was sitting in the backseat and then he said "I can speak three languages" and we asked well what and he said "suomi, englanti and Hämeenlinna" [Finnish, English and Hämeenlinna, a town in Finland] and he hasn't even been in Hämeenlinna so far. (Fi2Fa)

And then ... we said well how do you say hello in Hämeenlinna and he said "buongiorno." (Fi2Mo)

Although the son had not yet fully grasped his background and bilingual identity, it was certainly in the process and in the son's mind. Currently, he was seeing it to equal the languages he could speak, even if he could not name them properly and had associated the town of Hämeenlinna with his own identity without any correlation to their actual domicile. Similar actions could be found to be done by other children as well: UK1Mo remembered the children having listed the family's acquaintances and the languages each person speaks: "so-and-so speaks Finnish and so-and-so speak[s] English." The above examples about children processing their bilingualism support research, for example, Goulbourne et al. (2010: 119), in which it has been noted that identities develop and change throughout one's lifetime. Thus, as society and one's surroundings shape one's identity as well, bilingualism can be experienced in plenty of unique ways and given varying emphases by people at different times in life, as they gain more both cognitive and social tools how to process it.

4.4 FAMILY LANGUAGE POLICIES

The interview families generally did not follow any strict language policy. Before the interviews were performed, it was expected that the parents would have plans for how to ensure their children would acquire both mother tongues to a satisfactory extent. Instead, most families felt they did not have any strategy or "master plan" for bringing up their children bilingually. Baker (2006: 116) mentions the so-called "one person, one language" strategy to be one of the best-documented and a successful strategy for bilingualism, nevertheless, only one interview family out of five claimed to strictly abide by it, even if some others said to loosely follow a similar practice. Rather, what

was claimed to be the most important factor affecting the child's bilingual abilities was simply using both mother tongues with the child. Especially with the UK families, consistency was seen as key to this – however, the fact that only one out of five families followed any strategy with their bilingual upbringing can be seen to be in contrast to the idea of staying consistent. The reasons for choosing either to follow or not to follow a language strategy and the decision's effects on the parents will be discussed next in this chapter. Moreover, parents present stories from friends and acquaintances who have lost one of their mother tongues for various reasons, and discuss how these stories have affected their ideas about bilingualism in 4.4.1. Furthermore, in 4.4.2, the minority language education the children receive and the relationship of formal language education and minority language will be observed. Finally, 4.4.3 introduces practices that the parents felt enforced their children's language development.

Baker (2006: 102) suggests a policy called "one person, one language" (1P1L) to be one commonly successful language strategy among bilingual parents. The term is used in cases in which both parents only speak their own mother tongue and do not mix the languages when talking to the child. As mentioned above, only one out of five of the interview families reported to be strictly using the 1P1L practice. It was the two families in the United Kingdom that supported the practice more which is in accordance with the result discussed above that bilingualism takes seemingly more effort for the couples living in the United Kingdom because of the less secure status of Finnish as a minority language. The UK families' use of the strategy was validated by the fact that the mothers feared the takeover of English over Finnish would happen easily if they were not strict with the practice. One of the mothers reported to have even processed thoughts in English at the time their eldest child was born, thus fearing that switching into English with the child would happen unnoticed and automatically if she was not cautious. This was something the other UK mother reported to experience from time to time. The mothers' use of English, the majority language, with the children was considered bad because it would deprive them of one of their major sources of their minority mother tongue. Nevertheless, for the children, the practice was not as strict: they regularly addressed their mother in English to which the mother would reply in Finnish. However, the UK2 parents also reported that they ensured the eldest son continued to use Finnish in addition to English in certain situations, such as thanking for his food or asking to leave the table when dining, and, as UK2Fa explained, "if he wants

something we make sure that he asks in Finnish, otherwise he doesn't get it." Therefore, although the 1L1P practice was not perhaps completely reciprocal between the parents and the children, mixing the languages with the mother was not seen as a problem, and UK2Mo said that she was at least content with the eldest child's level of understanding of Finnish thus far.

In contrast, many parents agreed the 1P1L policy was difficult to strictly follow in practice and did not suit the families' needs. For example, one point against the 1P1L was pointed out by one interview father: although his wife had

> (14) been speaking to [their son English] from the beginning, ... as soon as the kid learns that she can understand Finnish, then they keep on speaking Finnish and she speak[s] English. (Fi2Fa)

A similar phenomenon had been experienced in another family:

> (15) If we've got Finnish friends staying over [our son]'ll say something to me in English and then he'll go into their room and then say the exact same thing in Finnish, so he's obviously used to speaking English to me and I do respond, [because] otherwise it gets a bit tedious if he has to repeat every single sentence. (UK2Mo)

It is fascinating that although the son knew that the mother preferred speaking in and knew Finnish, he still felt accustomed to speaking to her in English, even in situations in which there were other Finnish speakers present and he clearly possessed the Finnish vocabulary necessary for expressing his thoughts. Another point against the 1P1L practice was the fact that bilingualism was not seen as black and white by the parents and there were certain situations where languages needed to be allowed to be mixed. For example, it felt unnatural for some interview parents to reply back in another language than the one the child wanted to converse in, and it was also a concern that commanding the child to use a specific language would affect his or her feelings towards that language negatively. Moreover, it was thought that translating every conversation would complicate and prolong the communication process. Fi2Mo reasoned their take on the children's language use by saying that she "didn't want to play dumb [although] a lot of people said you have to, you have to pretend like you don't understand [the other mother tongue] but I couldn't do that." Furthermore, many parents knew both Finnish and English: in Finland, all the parents knew both languages and in the United Kingdom, the minority parents knew English as well as Finnish. Therefore, what seemed to be common in the interview families was the practice of allowing languages to be mixed in family conversations, even if the parents were not

consciously using it as a strategy. Baker (2006: 116) confirms the parents' thoughts by saying that other strategies than just 1P1L, such as both parents using both of the languages with the children, can lead to equally successful bilingualism.

Parents thought it was important for their child's bilingual development to use both mother tongues actively. For this, consistency especially with using the minority language was essential. However, although parents valued the idea of frequent minority language use within the family, it was difficult to realise in reality. For example, one UK father added that he often had to remind the mother to speak Finnish with the children, because speaking English had become such a natural part of life for her that it escaped her awareness that her private conversations with the children were occurring in English. The minority mother in question admitted that although she had intended to consistently speak Finnish with the children, she found it challenging because the children would often try to speak English with her to begin with. Therefore, the mother acknowledged the importance of both of the mother tongues to the child and she expressed her personal feelings of disappointment and guilt about her own actions in regards to bilingualism. She felt she had not been as adamant with the practices that the parents had together agreed on in regards to bilingualism. Moreover, another minority mother also felt that there was room for more use of Finnish with the children. This, first of all, suggests that although parents claim that bilingualism is natural in their families, they have in fact discussed the practicalities of promoting it at some point. Secondly, failing to abide to the agreement between the parents can cause feelings of guilt and letting down the family in the minority parents. On the other hand, such worries were not reported among the families living in Finland. Families in Finland commonly reported to allow the children to choose which language to use and minority parents did not seem as worried about using the majority language with the children as did the parents in the United Kingdom. This is presumably because of the fact that English has a more secured status as a minority language in Finland than Finnish does in the United Kingdom.

Perhaps as a result of the difficulties of ensuring the sufficient use of the minority language and feelings of inconsistency with the languages, parents in the United Kingdom reported to have settled for aiming for "basic abilities" in Finnish with the children in order for them to have a base to build their skills on later in life. For

example, UK1Mo wanted to ensure the children understood Finnish and "they could build up the speaking later on." The same idea was shared by UK2Mo who also implied that she felt that the foundations of Finnish were already built, on which her eldest son could build his further language skills in the future if that was his wish. This was indicated in UK2Mo's statement of "I just feel the Finnish is there, if he ever needs to learn it more, he'll get it." However, UK1Fa seemed to disagree with both of the mothers' view on this, as he added to UK1Mo's comment that learning to pronounce language-specific letters or sounds, such as the Finnish *ä* and *ö*, and reaching a native-like accent in the language will be difficult unless learned as a child, and thus speaking in Finnish should be pushed more when the children are still young and more prone to learning. Indeed, research also suggests that maintaining one's language ability requires constant work: Baker (2000: 34) reports that people tend to acquire pronunciation the better the younger they start learning the language. Moreover, Letts (1994: 353) argues that it has been "well documented" that ceasing a child's language input will quickly deteriorate the language into attrition. Thus, if supporting the child's language is neglected without frequent tending, it could hinder its further development. Experiences of neglected languages through stories from acquaintances of the interview parents are presented next.

4.4.1   Lost language: acquaintances' experiences

The interview parents had several recollections of stories from friends and acquaintances that had either lost one of their two mother tongues, who had never been given the chance to learn it despite having bilingual parents or who had themselves chosen not to bring up their children bilingually despite the parents having two different mother tongues. Reasons behind these decisions varied from wanting to blend in the majority population to misconceptions about bilingualism's effects on the child. It was obvious from their talks that the interview parents thought that losing one's language was a shame, a wasted opportunity and should not happen. Not being able to acquire both of one's mother tongues was seen as denying the person part of his or her heritage and culture. With some of the interview parents, it seemed to even more strengthen their own perceptions of their children's bilingualism and their decisions about how to maintain it.

Baker (2000: 4) believes that it is essential to know the language of a culture when participating and becoming involved "in the core of [the] culture." Therefore, as Oksi-Walter (2009: 100) argues, a child will miss a part of his or her cultural heritage if he or she is not assisted in acquiring both of the mother tongues in the family. This could arguably result in anger or bitterness as an adult, as these people will feel they have been denied a part of their heritage and culture. Moreover, they are disadvantaged because learning a foreign language is easier in early childhood and thus naturally acquiring a language as a child is the most plausible way of reaching a fluent, native level in the language, as has been pointed out by Baker (2000: 34). Therefore, not being able to use the minority language as a child was also seen as a wasted opportunity by the interview parents. These cases of denying a child of his or her mother tongue were generally based on misconceptions of bilingualism: badly informed health visitors intimidated parents into not using two languages with their child as it was claimed that bilingualism was to slow down language learning and result in learning difficulties, or parents themselves had had presumptions that bilingualism would lead to two languages that are not fully developed. Baker (2000: 78–81) has many excellent points favouring bilingualism, proving that there are other options than simply drastically abandoning one of the mother tongues even if a child is diagnosed with language difficulties, especially since "intuition and guesswork rather than 'science' often occurs" when deciding about bilingualism (Baker 2000: 79). Moreover, in cases in which one of the parents is against bilingualism and the children are consequently not spoken to in one of the languages, insecurity and distrust in the relationship may play a role in the parents taking a position against bilingualism. Finally, it can also be said that when bilingual parents discuss bilingualism with other parents or children of bilingual couples, they reflect their experiences on their own and learn from those experiences as they see suitable. In general, the stories of people who had lost one of their mother tongues seemed to have strengthened the interview parents' views about the importance of bilingualism in the life of their own children.

4.4.2   Minority language education and emotional attitudes

How the minority language was present in a child's life was thought to affect the child's emotional attitudes and feelings towards it. For example, it was mutually agreed by the parents that forcing the child to speak the minority language against the child's wishes would affect the child's feelings towards the language negatively. This was also why

extracurricular minority language lessons were seen as damaging to the relationship with the language, as it was thought that the child would learn to connect the stress and fatigue caused by the after-school lessons with the minority language. Therefore, pushing the child to learn the language in a formal setting was considered a bad practice and uninspiring – instead, natural acquisition of the language was seen to produce a more positive and attached relationship with the language.

Almost all the parents in Finland and the United Kingdom had taken their children to extracurricular minority language lessons and later stopped because of dissatisfaction with their quality. One interview mother was unsatisfied with the level of teaching at their local Finnish Saturday School in the United Kingdom, as well as worried about her young son's school week prolonging onto Saturday. She was thus concerned that the stress and fatigue connected with the school could affect the boy's attitudes towards the language as well, thus making more damage than good. In addition, another mother in Finland also thought after-school lessons could negatively affect the relationship the children have with the minority language, possibly because of the formal environment or the extra effort that it meant for the children. Moreover, she felt that the "academic information" the children could achieve through those lessons was less important than the positive attitude towards the language. She further argued that the children could focus on grammar and writing skills later on in life if they so wished but they were not considered a priority at the moment. In relation to this, another couple reasoned that there was no consistency in the syllabus or quality in their school's Finnish lessons, and that they have occasionally done Finnish workbooks and reading at home instead. The mother thus thought that the time commitment of the Saturday Schools was too big in relation to the benefit for the children. The mother's thoughts receive support from Baker (2000: 143), who on the one hand admits that Saturday schools can be excellent for improving a child's language abilities as well bicultural identity. On the other hand, Baker (2000: 144) has found that these schools often lack continuity in style and content and therefore have a number of problems:

> a lack of trained, qualified teachers; poor working conditions and facilities; outdated, imported materials (e.g. books); large classes; poor attendance and demotivated children; rote-learning rather than activity methods; dogmatic teaching; and few financial resources to pay teachers and buy equipment.

Nevertheless, the interview mother in question admitted that if there was a Finnish school of better quality locally, they would be more likely to attend it regularly. Furthermore, one interview father did not believe in the quality of the English-speaking

day care that was provided in their hometown in Finland, as he said that the staff was mostly native Finnish-speaking, and thus the children would have to hear "Finglish," a mixture of Finnish and English or broken English, instead of native-level English. As a result, these parents' comments imply that the parents hold a certain linguistic standard which they expect or wish their children to reach, and feel assured that on top of the cultural knowledge, they can provide that standard and the best linguistic example themselves rather than the children receiving teaching at school. Holding a certain linguistic standard also contradicts the earlier finding of the parents arguing that bilingualism happens naturally and is taken for granted in their families.

In conclusion, the distinction between conscious *learning* a language in a formal school environment was seen as discouraging in comparison to *acquiring* the language naturally at home with family and friends. Moreover, families seem to have had certain expectations prior to taking their children to the extracurricular lessons but once those expectations were not met parents had decided to attend to their children's language development themselves. This, therefore, questions the earlier claim that bilingualism is taken for granted and takes place unprompted in the families. The practices how parents enforce their children's language development are further covered in the next chapter.

4.4.3   Language enforcing practices

As discovered above, unofficial learning was seen as more effective in guaranteeing the children's minority language acquisition than attending minority language lessons. For example, UK2Mo reported that "the main thing is I stick to the [*sic*] Finnish which I have done so far," thus suggesting that consistent language use at home is the best guarantee for successful bilingualism. Moreover, aside from conversing in both of the mother tongues with the child, the parents had other ways to support their children's bilingualism at home. Literature, films, songs, nursery rhymes and children's TV programmes in the minority language were all mentioned as significant from the point of view of language. For instance, one couple mentioned that their children watched an English children's show *Alphablocks* in Finland, which had helped them understand the letter-sound correspondents and learn to read in English. Furthermore, one mother said that she tends to read long bedtime stories for the children, as she saw it as a benefit that reading "also brings up things from the culture and different kind[s] of sense[s] of humour and it's got ... different kinds of levels to it" (UK1Mo). Thus, different media

were also seen as educational and children were able to learn different aspects of language through these activities.

Parents were able to extend their children's bilingual environment outside immediate family if they so wished. For example, having speakers of the minority language as friends was seen as an addition to the variety to the sources of the minority language for the children. For instance, one interview family had hosted Finnish au pairs in the United Kingdom in order to increase the language input for the children, and one child of that family fortunately had got another Finnish child in his year at school and was therefore able to converse in Finnish even in the school environment. Moreover, the family in the United Kingdom had some Finnish family friends living in the country who they met regularly, which provided another source of Finnish for the children and a chance for them to talk and play in Finnish as well, while hearing adult discourse styles in Finnish. The mother argued that having minority friends "compensates a little bit [for not attending Finnish lessons], even though it's not a lesson as such, but the kids can play and talk to each other" (UK1Mo). Nevertheless, not all families were consciously looking for their countrymen's company for language purposes: one couple in the United Kingdom reported not knowing any Finnish people in the area, for example. The mother felt that there had not been a need to look for Finnish friends simply for the sake of the children, and thus the mother's family was the main source of Finnish for the children. This feeling was shared with one family in Finland who reported that they were reluctant to contact the Irish people in their area just because of their nationality – then again, they knew other English-speaking people from countries other than Ireland. Thus, while some parents wished to offer their children new sources of the minority language through same-speaking friends, it was not a crucial factor in some families' lives. Moreover, there is no country-specific pattern in the decision either: there were parents from both countries who had decided there was no need to look for new friends with the same mother tongue for the sake of the children's bilingualism.

Many parents felt that the children's minority language skills had also improved after visits to the minority home country. Staying in the minority country aids the children to give a purpose for the minority language, when in an environment where that language is needed in order to be able to communicate and express oneself. For example the Multicultural Association Familia Club (2010: 27) supports the idea that having a

meaningful purpose for learning the language – communicating with one's family, for instance – increases motivation and thus alleviates the learning process. It could thus be argued that frequent enough visits to the minority country help to maintain the language as the child is immersed in the minority language to a completely different extent than in their everyday life, helping the child to find new dimensions in which and reasons for why to use the minority language. Moreover, especially for families who did not have friends who spoke the minority language in their majority home country, going to the minority home country offered the children a full immersion in the minority language and its conversation patterns in a way that could perhaps not be achieved in conversations only between the parent and the child.

4.5   BILINGUAL FAMILY LIFE

All the families seemed settled in their present location and were reluctant to move to the homeland of the minority parent. Reasons for preferring their present home countries included better education for the children, a more balanced ratio between work and family life and language barrier. These thoughts about living between two countries and the choice of settling down in their current location will be taken a better look at in this chapter, while chapter 4.5.1 observes the significance of extended families to bilingual families, as well as how extended families react to bilingualism in the family in the parents' opinion. Further, chapter 4.5.2 introduces how bilingualism affects parents' relationships, reasons for conflicts bilingual couples may encounter because of their different backgrounds and interview parents' suggestions how to tend to these disagreements.

Families were settled in their current home countries and no one was considering moving to the other home country. Moreover, all the parents were confident they could bring up their children bilingually without having to move to the other country permanently, even if some parents appreciated the thought of living in the minority home country temporarily in order to reinforce the children's minority language and cultural identity. Some of the children in the interview families were reported to have asked about the chance of living in the other home country before and parents had had to then explain the reasons behind their decision to the child as well. In general, practicalities weighed more and made moving to the other country unlikely. These were, firstly, education-related issues. For two families in Finland, for instance, it appeared

that a major reason behind the decision was the fact that they found the school system to be inferior in the minority home country because of high competitiveness, early school starting age or school fees. Moreover, one of the families actually moved within Finland to be closer to a more suitable day care for their bilingual needs, although this decision was also partly affected by the mother's working conditions. Therefore, parents can let issues that they deem as important to their children, such as early childhood education and comprehensive education, affect their choice of location.

Secondly, some families found a better balance between work and family life in their current location than what they expected to be the case in the other home country. For example, one couple had lived in the other home country with children before and had felt they had had to work longer days and commute for longer, which shortened the time spent with the family. Thus, moving back to that country would have felt like a step back in terms of the quality of family time. Finally, language barrier was a crucial factor when choosing a location to live in for some. Especially with the UK families, the fact that the majority parents did not understand Finnish made it impossible for those families to seriously consider living in Finland. One interview father thought the living expenses were too high in Finland, while another explained that he would not be able to employ himself or socialise in Finland without the language skills. However, his wife also said that she did not miss living in Finland anyway so it was not seen as an issue in the family as they were happy in their current hometown. Moreover, another Finnish mother said that she has been away from Finland for so long that she doubted she would be able to adjust to the lifestyle anymore. Therefore, parents decided together where they resided and most of the time their current location was not seen as an issue at all in either of the interview countries.

4.5.1   Extended families' role in bilingualism

Extended families played a significant role in the bilingual families' lives. All the parents agreed their extended families were supportive of and impressed by bilingualism in the family which was seen as positive. For example, UK1Mo felt that her husband's family had been very positive about the couple's choice to use two languages in the family. Furthermore, she felt that bilingualism had always been seen "as an extra, rather than a hindrance" by the father and his extended family, and that

(16) they haven't been threatened by the fact that they might not know what I'm talking to [the children] about, which I think makes a big difference. (UK1Mo)

Moreover, extended families abroad were missed both by the minority parents as well as the children, and regular contact was thus kept either online or through visits to the minority home country. These overseas contacts were also considered important for the children's language development as the extended family was seen as an added dimension to the language acquiring, as another environment where the children could both hear and speak the minority language. For example, one mother reported that although her Finnish parents knew English, they followed the 1L1P strategy with their grandchildren in order to support their minority language skills. However, some grandparents also mixed both of the mother tongues in their speech like the parents did and so these decisions were individualistic among the families.

Nevertheless, although extended families were positive about the interview families' bilingualism, some parents felt they also presented pressure on the parents to ensure that the minority language was acquired well enough. One mother, for instance, said to feel pressured by her own family in Finland to bring up their children fluently bilingual, and felt that she received negative feedback if her children did not speak enough Finnish with their grandparents in the grandparents' opinion. She argued that her parents did not understand the depth of the difficulty of bringing up children bilingually in the United Kingdom. In conclusion, mutual understanding and support from the families of the parents can have a positive effect on how successfully bilingualism in a family surrounding is executed, while feelings of different expectations, pressure and negative feedback may make the process emotionally tougher.

4.5.2 Relationships between bilingual parents

There were no reports of encountered conflicts in the mutual relationships between two parents that would have been caused by bilingualism – instead, any arguments were simply considered a result of different personalities of the parents, in a similar way as bilingualism was only seen as an attribute to a child's personality and not as a defining characteristic. However, for example the Multicultural Association Familia Club (2010: 6–7) does consider a bicultural relationship to be affected by both personalities and cultural backgrounds in its guide for intercultural couples, thus suggesting that disagreements and clashing views between couples can have cultural grounds as well.

Nevertheless, understanding and appreciating the partner's different mother tongue was seen as significant by the interview parents in helping the members in both the relationship and the family to remain equal. Moreover, majority language partners played a role in ensuring that bilingualism does take place in their family. Especially Finnish-speaking minority parents had experienced feelings of isolation caused by their minority mother tongue, as it was difficult to find other Finnish parents, and using Finnish in public was considered awkward or inconsiderate in some situations. Therefore, these parents found the encouragement from their partners essential in continuing using Finnish with the children.

In addition, parents reported to have discussed bilingual relationships with their friends and acquaintances and had heard of conflicts that different mother tongues could cause in a relationship. For example, if one person in a bilingual relationship did not know the other mother tongue used in the family, it was told to have caused tension among some couples. Indeed, even one minority father admitted having initially felt concerned when his children were born because the mother started using Finnish with the children, while the language of the house had only been English between them two before. There had also been worries about the children not learning English because of the predominance of Finnish and that the parents would have to compete about their languages. Nevertheless, these fears had since disappeared and dealing with bilingualism in practice had got easier as the children had grown older. The father described his initial feelings as follows:

> (17) At first it was perhaps a little, not threatening, but sort of I'd feel like I've been kept out of the loop, but obviously it's not difficult for me to understand what they're talking about [in Finnish], and it's a good way for me to learn Finnish ... (FiPFa)

Therefore, it could be argued that initial feelings of concern are natural – what matters is the manner in which these fears are dealt with between the parents. In this case, the father had made the effort to learn more Finnish in order to understand family conversations better although he still continued to use English with the children himself. Moreover, the majority parent's reaction in cases like this also matters: in some acquaintances' relationships reported by the interview parents, the minority language or culture were seen as unimportant by some majority parents, which inhibited the minority parents' efforts in acquainting their child with the language and culture, resulting in disagreements between the parents.

As one of the partners in a bilingual relationship is forced to speak in his or her L2, miscommunication can occur as all the nuances of the language are not being able to be expressed by the minority partner. One mother said to know a Finnish-Swedish couple for which language had caused arguments:

> (18) They speak Swedish at home [and] her husband was complaining that she's so... almost like rude sometimes in Swedish, probably because it's not her first language so then she doesn't get all the fine tones. (FiPMo)

One interview couple reported similar experiences between themselves, although it did not gain a big emphasis in their answers and thus did not seem to be considered a major issue. It is likely that language proficiency matters in cases like these, but what is also important is a mutual understanding between couples with different mother tongues. It can be argued that the person conversing in a foreign language may be, or at least feel to be, in a weaker position in terms of expressing themselves clearly in the relationship because of possibly lesser language abilities. Thus, it would be important for the person who speaks in his or her native language to be understanding towards the partner for whom conversations and expressing themselves may not be as straightforward and cannot be taken for granted because of a possible language barrier. In conclusion, emotional communication was seen as important not only between a parent and a child, but also between the two partners, as it was seen as the solution to all types of conflicts. Therefore, what was seen as important in creating a functioning bilingual relationship was mutual support between the partners, as has been discovered by Multicultural Association Familia Club (2010: 14) as well.

5   DISCUSSION

Before performing the interviews and gathering the data, several hypotheses were made in relation to the research questions (see chapter 3.1) of the present study. First of all, it was expected that although the parents who volunteered to participate in the research would find supporting their children's bilingual and bicultural roots important, it was also hypothesised that especially in the families in which Finnish is the minority language, bilingualism would be seen as causing more issues than in those families where English is the minority language. Even though English does not have any official status in Finland, English is still widely spoken in Finland and therefore it could be hypothesised that the role of English within the family as well as on societal level is strong. In contrast, it was hypothesised that having Finnish as a minority language in the

United Kingdom would require more procedures in order to ensure that the children learn the language, as society does not guarantee as stable a position for it. Secondly, it was hypothesised that all the parents would have some kind of a plan or strategy how to ensure their children would acquire both mother tongues to a satisfactory extent. Thirdly, it was hypothesised that if the society in question had negative attitudes about bilingualism and did not support it, it would complicate the family's attempts to both bring up their children bilingual as well as adjust in the society as a bilingual family, with an immigrant parent as a part of it. Finally, another preliminary hypothesis was that bilingualism and biculturalism would affect the nuclear family: the identities of the children in the interview families were expected to be shaped as a result of the two cultures and languages in the family. The results to these tentative hypotheses and to the research questions will be discussed in the following.

Therefore, chapter 5.1, firstly, will discuss the most important findings about the parents' views on bilingualism and biculturalism, as well as their practical measures on them in order to raise a bilingual family. Secondly, the contradictions in the parents' comments about whether or not bilingualism and biculturalism happen naturally and unconsciously in the families will be further analysed, as this inconsistency was present throughout the interviews and the analysis. Thirdly, in chapter 5.2, the discussion will continue onto how the two societies, namely Finland and the United Kingdom, received the families and what kind of attitudes they portrayed towards the families in terms of their bilingualism and biculturalism. Fourthly, the relationships between family members in the nuclear family and the extended family as well the effects of bilingualism and biculturalism on the children of the families will be studied in chapter 5.3. Moreover, throughout the chapters, the parents' experiences in the two interview countries will be compared. Finally, an ultimate, critical look will be taken at the present study as a whole in chapter 5.4.

5.1   Parents' attitudes and actions on bilingualism and biculturalism

In answering the research question *how the parents view bilingualism and biculturalism*, it could be confirmed in accordance with Lanza's (2007: 45) conclusion that the parents who choose to bring up their children bilingually have positive attitudes towards bilingualism and biculturalism. Biculturalism and bilingualism were seen as a positive addition to the family, and parents wanted to "take the best of both worlds"

(UK1Mo) and combine and support their cultural roots and mother tongues in the children's lives for a balanced identity development. The fact that bilingualism was seen as occurring naturally and thus as stress-free in the families could be one reason why it was taken to so positively. Moreover, Bailey (2007: 355) argues that one's self, identity and linguistic styles are seen as the norm from the individual's point of view, thus making it difficult to be actively aware of them. This is presumably why Grosjean (1994: 1660) also states that bilingualism does not raise strong feelings in bilinguals themselves, as it is simply "a fact of life" for them. Furthermore, this could result in the fact that bilingual families tend to see more advantages than inconveniences in bilingualism, because it is such a natural matter for them. Another argument is that because all the parents thought bilingualism and biculturalism were important for its various positive effects and benefits (see chapters 2.3.3 and 4.1.2) and parents wanted to support them taking place in their children, it was not seen as worthwhile to pay attention to the possible disadvantages of them or to put them in a bad light. However, seeing bilingualism only as a positive thing without causing any, even minor, difficulties or compromises in the families' lives could be seen as another possible defence mechanism, similar to being protective over the family's language policies and being reluctant to societal, official interference. Moreover, it is an interesting contradiction that parents still strongly voiced their opinions about parents who did not bring up their children bilingually, while they themselves did not want others to intervene in their decisions regarding bilingualism.

Although most interview parents felt that bilingualism occurred effortlessly in their families, its value was not questioned. On the contrary, parents found bilingualism very important for their families. The most important aspect of bilingualism for the parents could be argued to be the fact that using one's mother tongue with the child enabled the full potential of a close relationship and being able to "communicate with full intimacy, naturally and expressively," as has been described by Baker (2000: 1) as well. Therefore, parents in both of the countries believed that this enabled emotional communication between both of the parents as well as the extended family. Moreover, bilingualism also provided the opportunity to better study one's roots and culture and offered a better understanding of oneself as well as a wider view to the world, among other benefits.

Although there are certain universalities about bilingualism that held their place in both of the interview countries, it was discovered that to some extent, the bilingual family experiences differed in Finland and the United Kingdom. As was hypothesised beforehand, in the case of the families living in the United Kingdom, bilingualism was more of an effort to the families, although they did not seem very distressed about it. It was said by the parents that English was becoming the stronger language with all the children as soon as they entered school and their worlds of experience expanded through it. Another reason why Finnish was losing its stronger role in families was the fact that Finnish-speaking parents themselves seemed to be struggling with their mother tongue. A prolonged stay in the foreign country and working in a foreign language had affected their thought processes and the parents said to be often thinking in English nowadays, thus making discussing certain areas of life difficult in their mother tongue because they lacked the suitable vocabulary. Nevertheless, Finnish was still used in the families, even if the parents admitted some setbacks or feelings of disappointment in themselves for not having persisted with Finnish better. Therefore, it cannot be said that bilingualism was considered strenuous in the United Kingdom either: it seemed to take more thought than in Finland, but it was still occurring. The parents in the United Kingdom did not seem too unhappy with their children's language development, although they would have wanted their children to use the minority language more themselves, even though they knew the children understood it to a satisfactory level. The fact that bilingualism seemed to require more effort from the parents in the United Kingdom can also be explained by the stronger status of English in Finland than what Finnish in the United Kingdom possesses. It was thus rightly hypothesised beforehand that the minority languages would be experienced differently and that English as a minority language would produce fewer mentions of difficulties because of its strong, global role.

It was in the interests of one of the research questions of the present study to find out *what measures parents take to ensure their children grow up bilingual and bicultural.* None of the interview parents had any "master plan" or language policy in regards to their children's bilingualism and they did not feel that they had to go to great lengths in order to promote it either. Instead, the interview parents only reported to use both mother tongues in the family, to different extents, and felt this was sufficient. As for biculturalism, it was not given any special attention either, and was said to happen even

more naturally than bilingualism did in the course of everyday family life. These findings were against the original hypothesis of the present study. However, it cannot be known at the present what kind of an effect the lack of a language policy in a family will have on the children of the families, especially on the youngest ones. As the children's worlds of experiences expand, the majority language may conquer some domains in which the minority language had been dominant before. Therefore, it cannot be predicted whether the families will continue with not needing a policy, or whether there will be a need for the parents to revise the practices as the children grow older.

Despite not having agreed to a language policy among themselves, the interview parents had discussed bilingualism with people who had either lost one of their mother tongues themselves or with parents who had decided not to bring up their children bilingually, and the parents had taken a lesson from these conversations with them. As a result, the parents had become growingly adamant to bring up their children bilingually after these conversations. Therefore, the conversations may have acted as a pre-emptive action for interview parents, as the parents could then identify possible mistakes they could make in raising their children bilingually and biculturally, and avoid those same mistakes. In other words, these conversations can be seen as a type of an informal language policy, based on which the parents have been able to motivate themselves about the importance and effects of bilingualism on individuals and to strengthen their own ideas of what is the best practice for bilingual upbringing.

The ostensibly biggest discrepancy of the present study was thus the results related to whether bilingualism takes place consciously or unconsciously in the families' lives, which were confusing and contradictory. On the one hand, even though most parents claimed that bilingualism was natural and taken for granted in their families, especially the parents in the United Kingdom also reported that continuously using Finnish caused problems for them and they had to make the effort not to slip into speaking English with the children. Their spouses then had had to remind the Finnish-speaking parents to use more Finnish with the children. Furthermore, some parents said that they had failed to follow the agreement the parents had mutually made when their children were still young in regards to bilingualism, suggesting the parents had discussed their bilingual practices among themselves. In addition, parents in both countries reported to have stopped taking their children to minority language lessons because they did not meet

their expectations, suggesting that the parents hold some linguistic standard that they want their children to hear and acquire, despite claiming that they think bilingualism occurs naturally. All these notions argue for bilingualism being consciously present in the families' lives. On the other hand, it could be argued that although parents did have to make conscious decisions about their children's bilingualism and how to best assist them in acquiring the minority language, it was not seen as an endeavour to do so. Family life was deemed such an always present, everyday activity for the parents and bilingualism as a natural part of it that maintaining bilingualism was not considered as an extra effort to it. Rather, the parents practised it to their best abilities, through trial and error, and making decisions and changes along the way, as to any other part of raising their children. In other words, although parents were *aware* of the presence of bilingualism and biculturalism, and they hoped their children to grow up bilingual and bicultural, their everyday activities were so normal to themselves that they were not considered as *conscious efforts*. In this sense, the parents' persistent claim that bilingualism happened naturally and unconsciously in their families held true. Moreover, it is possible that parents did not go to great lengths with promoting the minority language for their children, as it was a mutual concern that pressuring the child to use the minority language or go to minority language lessons would cause the child to learn negative connotations with the language. Thus, being seemingly passive and allowing bilingualism to develop rather "free-flowingly" (Fi1Mo) could actually have justified grounds in the families' lives.

5.2   The two societies' reactions to family bilingualism

Another research question aimed to find out *how bilingualism is received by society in the parents' point of view*. While answering this, a topic of prejudice faced from professionals, such as teachers or nurses, was discovered. This proved to be another topic in which the parents' experiences were different in the two countries. None of the couples in the United Kingdom had experienced prejudice and negative attitudes towards their family's bilingualism from professional levels, while one couple in Finland reported so. It could be argued that because the United Kingdom is a more multicultural country with a longer history of immigration and thus multilingualism, bilingualism is deemed as more ordinary even from society's point of view. Finland, in contrast, has only in the past few decades opened its borders for immigrants, and thus multiculturalism and multilingualism is a fairly new phenomenon that not everyone may

be comfortable with yet. However, Finland itself as a nation is bilingual with Finnish and Swedish as its official languages – therefore, it seems odd that bilingualism is frowned upon by some professionals dealing with children. Perhaps bilingualism as a national policy is taken to more openly than bilingualism within a family, as arbitrary governmental policies may not be seen as actually affecting individuals' lives. Instead, the concrete results of active family bilingualism are present in the children of the family and officials lacking knowledge of childhood bilingualism may find the seemingly half-developed languages alarming. Salo (2012: 35) reports that this kind of behaviour, in which institutions, kindergarten included, try to control the language use of individuals, has been recorded in Finland and elsewhere. Salo (2012: 35–36) continues this to possibly be the result of aiming for "order and purity in the name of survival," that is, trying to control the language use for purposes of accommodation of the individual into the society. Although Salo (2012: 36) believes that the purposes of the officials are likely to have been "well-meaning and innocent," the fact that the individual's right to his or her mother tongue is then violated cannot be excused. Such attitudes seem particularly potentially harmful to have been experienced during the day care age for the interview family's children. As Latomaa (2007: 324) argues, a child is the most receptive for acquiring a second language during the years traditionally spent in kindergarten in Finland, that is, until the age of six. Furthermore, this kind of practice is also in conflict with the current national educational policy guidelines which claim that an individual with multilingual background must be able to maintain his or her mother tongue alongside with Finnish or Swedish in Finland (Ministry of Education 2008: 47). This includes early childhood education, namely kindergartens. Nevertheless, in terms of serious discrimination, families in neither of the countries had faced such because of their family's biculturalism. Part of this good reception and integration is likely to be due to the fact that Finnish and Anglo cultures were considered to be similar to one another and thus easy to meet and combine in both countries. As FiPMo believed, with "rarer languages" as the minority, bilingualism and integration into society could be experienced as more difficult.

It was in contrast to the present study's original hypothesis that parents did not seem bothered by the few negative attitudes they had faced about their family's bilingualism. The interview parents' opinions also spoke contrary to Lanza's (2007: 46) argument that parents' ideas of their own bilingual language policy can be affected by negative

attitudes from the surrounding community, and lack of support can reinforce experienced difficulties with family bilingualism. Although one Finnish couple's decision to bring up their children bilingually had been questioned somewhat, the parents had decided to continue using both of the languages. All of the interview parents seemed adamant to continue with the usage of the languages and spoke negatively of any intrusion from professionals and official levels in the families' lives. Thus, Lanza's (2007: 46) results do not receive support in the present study. Furthermore, official support and involvement in the families' bilingualism was not desired in general but parents wanted to make the decisions themselves. Instead, peer support from other bilingual parents was seen as more helpful. A similar attitude has been found by Baker (2000: 19) who says that bilingual parents may provide information and help as well as act as encouragement for one another. In conclusion to the research question about society's reception of bilingualism, it could thus be said that generally, both societies in Finland and the United Kingdom had received the interview families' bilingualism well and prejudice was sparse. Professionals' negative attitudes are likely to be single incidents of misinformed individuals rather than a nation-wide attitude. Moreover, families were offered sufficient support for their bilingualism, if not even more than necessary. Parents, however, preferred to stay in control over the decisions regarding the choice of how to maintain their children's bilingualism.

5.3   Effects of bilingualism and biculturalism on the family members

One of the research questions the present study aimed to survey was *how bilingualism affects the family: the children, the parents, and their relationship with the extended family*. Although bilingualism was considered effortless by the interview parents, mutual support and understanding between the parents can still be considered crucial in family bilingualism. This is so because firstly, both parents have to agree on having two mother tongues in the family for bilingualism to take place in a positive environment, as the parents' reports of their acquaintances showed. Secondly, the minority parent especially may need support in sustaining the use of the minority language when surrounded by a host culture with a different language. In addition, against what has been suggested in literature before (e.g. Multicultural Association Familia Club 2010: 6–7) and against the original hypothesis of the present study, the interview parents did not see their different cultural and language backgrounds to have caused any issues in their mutual relationship. It can be argued that the parents had thus provided enough

mutual support and understanding for one another, as there was no purpose for conflicts over bilingualism. Rather, as with their children, they did not see bilingualism or biculturalism as a defining feature in their relationships, but above all, the parents were their own personalities. However, facing a crisis because of bilingualism and biculturalism in a relationship is still possible – in these cases, understanding the other's background and accepting it as a part of the person, as well as having mutual goals about family life would help alleviate the crisis.

The role of the extended family, especially those of the minority parents, proved significant for the interview families in both countries. Trips to the minority home country or having family visit the majority home country strengthened ties between the nuclear and extended family. Furthermore, as Goulbourne et al. (2010: 86) have found, the interview parents also thought visits to the minority home countries significantly contributed to strengthening the children's cultural identities to involve the minority home country and culture in them as well – UK2Fa, for instance, said that the trips helped to give their children background for why they are bilingual. Many of the children in the families were reported to have identified themselves with the minority home country, to have missed it and the family abroad and to have showed pride about their roots to their schoolmates. The sense of belonging thus came through the family members and their history for both parents and children in the interview families. Moreover, the trips were considered important for the children from the point of view of acquainting them with the culture as well as strengthening the minority language. Therefore, through the trips, but also through contact via phone and the Internet, the extended family could contribute to the children's identity development, assisting them in including both language and culture positively in it. The extended families also were reported to provide support for all the interview parents for embarking upon raising the children bilingually and biculturally. One minority mother was pleased that her husband's family had not been threatened by the interview family's bilingualism and felt that they had always been supportive of it. Therefore, the extended family's attitudes play a role as well in how comfortable the parents feel about bringing up their children bilingually. Thus, there were no cases of unsupportive extended families, something which Baker (2000: 11–13) would see as possibly harming the child's positive identity construction. However, it was still possible for the extended family to put pressure on the nuclear family as well. In one interview family's case, it was

expressed that the extended family created pressure for the minority parent to succeed in raising the children as bilingual and acquiring the minority language. As a result, it is possible that the extended family's involvement is not hoped for in cases like this as it causes more anxiety than supports.

As for the effects of bilingualism and biculturalism on the child, with the parents' current understanding of their children's identities, it is evident that the parents could not identify their children to have a special, bilingual identity. This outlook questions the holistic view of bilingual identity, which Baker (2006: 9) reports of, according to which a bilingual person has "a unique linguistic profile" instead of simply being the sum of these two monolinguals. On the other hand, the parents did not report to see their children as having two separate monolinguals in them either, which Baker (2006: 9) offers as the other, opposite option of the holistic view. Instead, the interview parents had created a new way of seeing their children's bilingualism: as stemming from the children's personality and adding to it, rather than defining it. It is an important finding of the present study that the parents in both countries found their children to be their own personalities above all, with their individualities such as their own tempers, characters and personalities. Bilingualism was thus *only an attribute* to a child's personality instead of a defining character that moulds the child's identity.

Similarly to the bilingual identities of the children of the interview families, their bicultural identities were not particularly clear or strong, and there was a lack of a sense of belonging to the minority home countries. Again, it must also be taken into consideration that the children were all young at the time of the interviews and thus full understanding of their roots cannot be expected from them. Therefore, it is likely that the bond with their two home cultures will develop in time, as do their identities. At the present, parents thought that most of the children acknowledged their two origins and some even identified themselves as members of both nations, but it was to a lesser extent than with their permanent home in the majority home country. Thus, the minority home country was not believed to be seen as "home" to the children by the interview parents. Goulbourne et al. (2010: 99) as well as Papayiannis (2011: 72) have claimed that bicultural children will not feel at home with either of the countries and cultures, however, such rootlessness of the children was not mentioned by the interview parents. Moreover, although Baker (2006: 4) claims that it is possible to be bilingual but

monocultural – that is, to have the communicational access to two languages (Hamers and Blanc 2000: 6) but to have a command of and competence to only one culture – this did not seem to be the case with the interview children either. The children still enjoyed trips to the minority home countries, missed the extended families living there and some had even showed to take pride in the minority home country.

Moreover, some of the children even experienced mixed feelings about being bilingual, as they had had feelings of both pride and embarrassment caused by it in the past, which suggests that bilingualism was still seen somewhat out of the ordinary in their environment. Based on the interview parents' comments, the children in the families had not always wanted to express their bilingual and bicultural roots. Some children had refused to speak one of the mother tongues in some occasions, for instance at school, for wanting to fit in the majority group, as also Baker (2006: 7) has found. This can be seen as normal in a bilingual child's development according to Roos (2009: 138). Parental support and guidance was important during these periods to encourage the child to continue using the minority language, and as the parents in both countries voiced their opinion, it was always considered a parental decision whether or not the child should cease using the minority language. In other words, parents could not allow their children to stop using the minority language for good based on a period of confusion in their early years.

5.4   Critical discussion of the present study

The present study unfortunately could not avoid certain potential research biases and weaknesses. Within the scope of the present study, first of all, not all of the interviewees' answers could be included in the analysis, but it had to be limited to the most prevalent themes and to the most important findings. At the same time, the weakness of the study is its limited data on the phenomenon of family bilingualism and biculturalism and, therefore, the study did not aim for generalization.

Secondly, it must be considered as an option that the parents may not have wanted to talk about topics that they found too personal and thus have only revealed a part of their lives that they felt comfortable with, leaving their answers incomplete. Especially when discussing any issues, such as any perceived difficulties bilingualism caused in the family and in the mutual relations, some parents may have felt uncomfortable with

discussing their private life in the interviews. Moreover, it is possible that the parents may have wanted to present a certain kind of an image of their families and their values in their answers, and they could have provided "polished" answers in order to present a more positive image of their families. The latter possibility would go into some extent to explain why the families had no experiences of the negative aspects of bilingualism that previous research has discovered. Thus, it is a potential research bias of the method of the present study that the truthfulness of and the depth into which the parents went in their answers cannot be guaranteed and the answers have to be looked at critically.

Thirdly, there was great perceived controversy among the parents' comments about whether or not bilingualism took place consciously or unconsciously in their families. The parents presented several points in which it seemed obvious that they had had to discuss their children's bilingualism and they had had to make decisions how to deal with it best. Then again, it was assumed when analysing the data that the parents may not see maintaining bilingualism and biculturalism as an effort, despite being aware of their presence in their everyday family life. Therefore, the problem of somewhat confusing results of whether bilingualism is conscious or unconscious in the families' lives may have lain in the weak phrasing of the question: parents may have understood the question of conscious effort differently than what was intended by the interviewer.

Finally, it should also be emphasised that all the children concerned in the present study were still very young at the time of the interviews and thus their identities were and are still in progress, as identities are not static and change throughout life, as for example Goulbourne et al. (2010: 119) and Bailey (2007: 344) have noted. Therefore, it is not surprising that the parents failed to clearly describe the children's identities at the present, and the results were inconclusive at this stage. As Roos (2009: 138) explains, small children are unaware of their identity altogether which later develops through various periods of single-culture identities, denial and confusion, all of which some of the interview children had experienced. Therefore, had the children in the families been older, being able to report a consistent type of bicultural identity would still have been difficult, if not impossible, because identity is experienced uniquely, and changes within individuals throughout life. This natural development will have made assessing their children's identities difficult for the parents, and not being able to forecast this difficulty

when disposing the research questions must be considered as a shortcoming for the present study.

6   CONCLUSION

It has been the aim of the present study to study and compare bilingual and bicultural families in Finland and the United Kingdom through the methods of thematic interviews and comparative content analysis. It was in the interest of the present study to broaden the understanding of bilingual family life through the parents' eyes from various aspects. Firstly, the present study aimed to study how bilingual parents deemed bilingualism and biculturalism on an ideological and practical level. Secondly, parents explained their perceptions of bilingualism's effects on the family members, on an individual level as well as on an inter-relational level, with a special focus on the child's bilingual and bicultural identity. Thirdly, the present study introduced the parents' perceptions of how modern societies in the two countries receive the families for their bilingualism as well as the societies' concrete involvement in the families' lives.

Although the present study did not aim for generalisation, it has attempted to provide an in-depth view of the experiences of some representatives of the phenomenon of family bilingualism. The results of the present study have confirmed that there are various ways of experiencing bilingualism and biculturalism in practice and how they are executed in practice. However, the present study has also pointed out that there are some country-specific findings as well, especially when it comes to the amount of effort needed to maintain a child's bilingual growth, in which the global status of the minority language plays a part. Moreover, it has offered a fresh way of seeing the bilingual identity of young children, namely as seeing bilingualism as an attribute to it and not as defining it as has commonly been suggested in previous research.

Longitudinal research in this area would provide more information on how bilingual identities develop and what changes take place in the attitudes of bilingual parents and children. As the children get older, they could be interviewed comparatively to their parents' preceding thoughts. Moreover, it would be interesting to study how the divorce of parents of bilingual families affects the children's bilingual identities. Especially in cases where the parents live in different countries, this is bound to have an effect on a child's identity and the relationship with and the skills in the minority language. As it

was discovered that bilingualism may be arduous to maintain to a certain standard even in a nuclear family environment, it would thus be interesting to see how bilingualism is managed in situations where the bilingual nuclear family has been separated.

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8   APPENDICES

Appendix 1.

AGREEMENT OF THE RIGHTS OF USE OF THE RESEARCH DATA

Research project: Master's thesis / Riikka Pystynen

In this agreement, the person participating in the research and the representative of the research project agree on the rights of the gathered research data. By signing the contract, the participant agrees to take part in the study and to give their rights, which are specified below, of using the data gathered to the research project.

The participant has read, understood and accepted the following terms:

- Participating in the research is voluntary.
- The anonymity of the participant is protected in reporting the data and the results, both in written and spoken form.
- When using video material and/or pictures (including screen shots and drawings based on them) the face and voice of the participant will be left recognisable, unless the participant forbids it.
- The results of the study may be published and reported in academic publications and conferences.
- Parts of the research data (including video clips, pictures and screen shots or drawings based on them) may be used e.g. in electronic publications or presentations etc.
- The research data may be used in teaching or in making of dissertations and theses related to the research project.
- The participant may drop out and he/she has the right to cancel the rights regarding the use of the gathered data at any point.

In their turn, the research group pledges to:

- Handle the research data and the results confidentially.
- To store the research data in such a manner that outsiders have no access to it.
- Guarantee the anonymity of the participant in reporting the data and the results, both in written and spoken form.
- Modify the voice and/or blur the face of the participant when showing video and /or picture material in public, if the participant demands it.
- Make sure that any other users of the research data (including writers of dissertations) pledge to bind to the terms of uses and the professional secrecy.
- Give up the rights of use, if the participant wants to discontinue participating in the research, or if he/she cancels the rights regarding the use of the gathered data afterwards.

☐

I demand my voice not to be recognisable on the video and/or picture material (including screen shots and drawings based on them), if the material is publicly shown (e.g. in teaching, academic publications, books, electronic publications, conferences etc.) I have the right to demand this at any point with a separate informal application addressed to the contact person of the research project.

Date and location   _____

Signature of the participant_____

Print name   _____

Contact details   _____

                             _____

                             _____

                             _____

                             _____

☐

I demand my voice not to be recognisable on the video and/or picture material (including screen shots and drawings based on them), if the material is publicly shown (e.g. in teaching, academic publications, books, electronic publications, conferences etc.) I have the right to demand this at any point with a separate informal application addressed to the contact person of the research project.

Date and location   _____

Signature of the participant_____

Print name   _____

Contact details   _____

                             _____

                             _____

                             _____

                             _____

Date and location   _____

On behalf of the research project   _____
                                               Riikka Pystynen

Contact details   Riikka Pystynen
                                               [email address]
                                               [phone number]

Two identical copies were made of this agreement.

Appendix 2.

Interview questions

Bilingualism and biculturalism in practice

- Describe the kind of Finnish and English that you use at your home – who speaks what, when, how much and with whom?

- How do you keep in touch with the family that lives abroad? How often do you visit them? What language does your child speak with the family?

- How do Finnish and English show themselves in your everyday life?

- What are the roles of Finnish and English in the family? Are those roles strong? Is one of the languages stronger or more used in the family?

- How do you make sure your child is learning both languages?

- Is your child taking any classes in [the minority language], or is the family a sufficient source of English for your child?

- How do you make sure your child is introduced to both cultures equally?

Bilingual identity

- How does your child acknowledge having two different languages to work with? How does he/she feel about it?

- How does your child acknowledge having different ways of doing things in your cultures? How does it make him/her feel?

- Does your child see himself/herself differently from other children who only speak Finnish/English? If so, how?

- Have you ever had to explain to them that some kids only have one language and your family has got two? What did you say? How did your child feel about it?

- How does having two home countries make your child feel?

- How do your children adapt to live between two countries and two cultures?

- What if you stopped using English or Finnish altogether, do you think your child would still maintain his two cultures and his identity as it is now?

Values and attitudes

- How would your lives be different, if you lived in [the minority home country] instead? What would your child think about it?

- What does having two languages mean to you? And to your child? What about having two cultures?

- How would it feel if your child didn't speak both of your mother tongues?

- What do you think it would be like if your child grew up monolingual even though you used both your languages with him/her?

- What are the pros and cons about your child being bilingual, in your opinion?

- How do you feel society sees your family's bilingualism? What about your own extended families? How do they show it?

- Have you got any friends with bilingual children? Have they got similar experiences?

- How does having to bring up your child bilingually affect the relationship between you two? How do you feel about it?