

*”Tottakai määh tiiän mikä se on englanniks  
ku se on melkeen sama ruotsiks!”*

**BILINGUAL AND MULTILINGUAL CHILDREN LEARNING ENGLISH**

Children’s views

Master’s thesis  
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<p>Tiivistelmä</p> <p>Kaksi- ja monikielisyttä on tutkittu paljon esimerkiksi lasten kielen kehityksen ja kognitiivisen kehityksen näkökulmasta. Lasten käsityksiä omasta kaksikielisydestään tai sen vaikutuksista ei ole juurikaan tehty tutkimuksia. Tässä tutkimuksessa selvitettiin yhdentoista kaksi- ja monikielisen lapsen näkemyksiä kaksikielisydestä ja kielen opiskelusta. Kyseessä oli haastattelututkimus, jossa haastateltiin kuutta tyttöä ja viittä poikaa, jotka olivat neljäs-, viides- ja kuudesluokkalaista. Lapset kävivät ruotsinkielistä luokkaa suomenkielisessä koulussa ja he tulivat joko kaksi- tai monikielisisä kodeista tai heillä oli kielikylypytausta. Lapset olivat opiskelleet englantia yli vuoden verran tai parin kuukauden ajan tutkimushaastatteluita tehtäessä.</p> <p>Lapset määrittivät kaksikielisuuden ja kertoivat kokivatko itse olevansa kaksikielisiä. Kaksi- tai monikielisisä kodeista tulevat lapset olivat varmoja kaksi- tai monikielisydestään, sen sijaan kielikylypylapsista kolme oli hieman epävarmoja omasta kielellisestä identiteetistään. Tämä koski lapsia, joiden kodeissa ei lainkaan puhuttu ruotsia. Tämä saattoi johtua hyvin perinteisestä näkemksestä, jossa kaksikielisenä pidetään oppijaa, joka oppii varhaislapsuudessa kielet yhtäaikaaisesti kodissaan vanhemmiltaan. Lapsen kokivat, että omasta kaksikielisydestä ja kielenosaamisesta yleensäkin on hyötyä. He kertoivat, että osatessaan kieliä he voivat kommunikoida muiden ihmisten kanssa ja pystyvät auttamaan muita ihmisiä. Heidän mielestään kaksikielisyys auttoi myös oppimaan muita, erityisesti ruotsin kaltaisia kieliä. Lisäksi kielenosaaminen hyödytti tulevaisuuden opiskelu- ja työelämässä. He pitivät englannin opiskelusta ja halusivat opiskella tulevaisuudessa lisää kieliä. Lapset käyttivät ruotsia oppimisstrategiana englantia opiskellessaan. Kun lapset eivät ymmärtäneet jotain englannin kielen sanaa, he miettivät mitä sana voisi olla ruotsiksi ja hyvin usein oivalsivat sanan englanniksikin. Yksi lapsista vertaili myös englannin ja ruotsin kielen rakenteellisia asioita, artikkeleita ja prepositioita ja huomasi niissä yhtäläisyyksiä. Kahden kielen osaaminen tuntui vaikuttavan suotuisasti lasten näkemyksiin kielenoppimisesta. Myös kiinnostus eri kulttuureihin ja erilaisuuden hyväksyminen tuntui liittyvän vahvasti kaksikielisyteen. Kaksikielisten lasten kielitietoisuus nousi aineistossa vahvasti esille ja tämä voisikin olla seuraava kiinnostava tutkimuskohde. Tulevaisuudessa voisi tutkia kaksikielisten lasten rinnalla myös yksikielisiä lapsia ja vertailla eroavatko lasten käsitykset keskenään kielen opiskelusta.</p>	
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## **TABLES AND ABBREVIATIONS**

### **Tables**

Table 1 The background to the children's bilingualism or multilingualism

Table 2 The children's own concept on their bilingualism or multilingualism

### **Abbreviations**

L1 the first language

L2 the second language learned after the first

BFLA bilingual first language acquisition

MFLA monolingual first language acquisition

H: Heli, the author

A, B, C, E, J, L, M, O, P, S, T: initials for the children in this study

## 1. INTRODUCTION

As a bilingual (Finnish, Swedish) person myself I have always been interested in languages and have experienced learning languages as extremely interesting. When I had children I decided to pass on the gift of being bilingual. Now when my two children have started to study English at school it has been interesting to see if they have the same thoughts as me concerning language learning. I often hear them say “of course I know what that means in English, it is almost the same in Swedish”. This is one of the reasons why I wanted to find out whether other bilingual children feel the same way about learning English and whether also they use Swedish as a learning strategy. I have used this strategy through my life learning new languages, and now as a Swedish and English teacher, I often point out the similarities when teaching. For instance, when I teach the personal pronouns in Swedish I ask the students to write them down in English to see similarities in the languages ( *vi = we, oss = us*). The same works with many grammatical issues as definite and indefinite articles. It is easier for the students to compare two languages that remind each other rather than make the comparison to Finnish that is a very different language. In this study I have interviewed eleven children with the purpose of finding out how they see language learning and learning English in particular. I will try to find out what views bilingual and multilingual children have on learning new languages and how they define bilingualism.

In the next paragraph, chapter 2, I will deal with bilingualism and multilingualism. I will discuss the definitions, previous research, bilingual first language learning and third language learning. In chapter 3 learning languages in Finland will be considered and also the status of the English language in Finland. The present study is going to be introduced in chapter 4 and finally, in chapter 5, the findings of this study are going to be discussed.



## **2. BILINGUALISM AND MULTILINGUALISM**

In this chapter I will give an overview of definitions of bilingualism and previous research having to do with this subject. In addition, bilingual first language acquisition and third language acquisition are going to be taken into consideration as well as language immersion programmes.

### **2.1 Definitions of bilingualism**

The traditional view of bilingual people is that they have a native-like competence in two languages. The problem is that this view is very narrow as it focuses only on the dimension of competence. The modern definitions point out that bilingualism could be defined by different criteria, such as the age, method and context in which the individual has learned the languages, the level of competence in the languages, the way the languages are used and identification to the languages. Another definition of bilingualism is that a person is able to actively talk, understand, read and write and think in two languages and automatically switch from one to another even if one of the languages might be stronger. (Hassinen 2005: 16-21)

Bilingualism can be classified according to the age of the learner. Categories like simultaneous bilingualism, successive bilingualism and subordinate bilingualism may be used. When a child learns two languages starting from early childhood simultaneous bilingualism is used as a term. Successive bilingualism means that the languages have been acquired one after the other after the age of three. When a person learns a language later at the age of 7-12 the type of bilingualism is called subordinate bilingualism. (Hassinen 2005: 16-21) To continue, bilingualism can be discussed as a phenomenon of a society or as characteristic of an individual. Linguists often define bilingualism according to the linguistic competence, the way the individual masters the two languages. Sociologists are interested in what the languages are used for and define bilingualism in terms of the function the languages fulfil for the bilingual or the bilingual community. In sociolinguistics bilingualism is defined in terms of attitudes the speaker has towards the languages, how they identify themselves with both languages.

The same factors apply to the view the others take of the speaker and the languages the speaker speaks. (Skutnabb-Kangas 1981: 89)

Einar Haugen (1953: 7) says that bilingualism begins at the point where the speaker of one language can produce complete, meaningful utterances in the other language. Some researchers think that it is enough to understand a language to make an individual bilingual. (Skutnabb-Kangas 1981: 82) It is difficult to specify accurately the level of competence the definition requires in understanding, speaking, reading and writing. It is unclear whose linguistic ability the bilingual individual's competence is to be compared with. Another problem is that a complete command of the L1 is taken for granted or suggested that balanced bilingualism is the ideal. (Skutnabb-Kangas 1981: 85)

Researchers who define bilingualism by function, state that an individual who uses two languages alternately may be called a bilingual. The term bilingual can be interpreted in two ways, a minimalist and a maximalist interpretation. According to the previous interpretation a person can be called bilingual if he/she is able to accomplish a task with a restricted lexis and a small variety of grammatical rules e.g. an airline pilot using English at international control towers. In the latter case the speaker is able to conduct all his activities in two languages satisfactorily. (Baetens Beardsmore 1986) A complete monolingualism or hololingualism does not exist, and therefore it is not reasonable to assume that a complete bilingualism would either (Skutnabb-Kangas 1981: 37). If bilingualism is defined by the attitude of the speakers themselves, it refers to persons who identify themselves with both languages, communities and cultures. As Skutnabb-Kangas (1981: 88) says the speakers' own conception of how well they command the language and are able to use it should be included in the definition of attitude.

Hamers and Blanc (2000) use the term bilinguality to refer to the psychological state of an individual who has access to two different language systems whereas the term bilingualism is reserved for societal bilingualism. Hamers and Blanc (2000: 26) divide the types of bilinguality into different dimensions and types. The dimensions are a) the competence in both languages, b) the cognitive organization, c) the age of acquisition, d) the presence of the L2 in the community, e) the relative status of the two languages and f) the group membership and cultural identity. Competence is divided into two types: balanced bilinguality and dominant bilinguality where the previous refers to situations with equally strong languages and the latter to cases where one of the

languages is stronger. Balanced bilinguality does not mean a very high competence in the two languages. It means a state of equilibrium in the competence in the languages compared to monolingual competence. Dominance and balance is not equally distributed to all domains and functions of language which means that the individual may have a better competence in the other language in a certain field. This can also differ between individuals. (Hamers and Blanc 2000: 27)

Cognitive organization is divided to compound and coordinate bilinguality. This means that age and context of acquisition may lead to differences in cognitive functioning. In a compound system the two sets of signs are associated with the same set of meanings whereas in a coordinate system translation equivalents in the languages are used. This distinction has to do with the different cognitive organization of the two languages and not the difference in the degree of competence in the languages. A person who has learned both languages as a child in the same context is more likely to have a single cognitive representation for two language translation equivalents whereas a person who has learned an L2 in a different context than the L1 probably has a coordinate organization which means that he/she has separate representations for two translation equivalents. This fact is often ignored and only age and the context of acquisition define the type of bilinguality. (Hamers and Blanc 2000: 27)

The dimension of age of acquisition is divided into childhood bilinguality (both simultaneous and consecutive), adolescent bilinguality and adult bilinguality. In simultaneous childhood bilinguality the languages are acquired simultaneously and they both can be considered mother tongues of the speaker. In the consecutive type the mother tongue is acquired first and then L2 before the age of 11. In adolescent bilinguality the languages are acquired between 11 and 17 years and adult bilinguality after the age of 17. Another dimension is the presence of L2 in the community. If L2 is present in the community the type of bilinguality is endogenous bilinguality and the absence of L2 is called exogenous bilinguality. The status of the two languages in the community can cause cognitive advantage if the LA and LB, or L1 and L2 are socially valorized (additive bilinguality). The LA and LB denote the mothertongues that are learned simultaneously. Then again if the L2 is valued at the expense of L1 it can cause cognitive disadvantage (subtractive bilinguality). The dimension of group membership and cultural identity include four different types of bilinguality. The first type is bicultural bilinguality which refers to double membership and a bicultural identity. The

second is L1 monocultural bilinguality where the speakers have an LA1 membership and identity. The third type is L2 accultural bilinguality where the speaker has an LB2 membership and identity. The last one is deculturated bilinguality where the speaker does not have a clear membership or cultural identity. Hamers and Blanc (2000) divide bilingualism firstly, into territorial bilingualism where the two or more languages have official status in their own territory e.g. Canada and secondly, to multilingual situations as e.g. in many African countries where, beside the native languages there are one or more languages of wider communication e.g. Swahili. Thirdly, a bilingual community can be described as diglossic, which means that the two languages have a significant group of native speakers as French and Creole in Haiti. According to Hamers and Blanc (2000) bilingualism should be approached as a complex phenomenon which includes both bilinguality of individuals and the state of languages in contact at the collective level. Börestam & Huss (2001: 54) add that the individuals themselves may have very different views on bilingualism and demand a native-like competence in two languages to be able to call themselves bilinguals or then they may be satisfied with a lower level of competence. The perception the speakers have on themselves can change over the years. It is also possible that a person does not want to be identified with a culture for political reasons.

As shown above there is not only one truth in defining bilingualism. There are many different ways of seeing this phenomenon. Bilingual individuals come from different backgrounds and use their languages in different ways and situations. The competence in the languages is also an important factor in defining bilingualism as well as the age and context the person has learned the languages. Moreover, the attitude towards the languages and the identification are essential in defining a person bilingual. If the person thinks they are bilingual and identify themselves with the language and culture they are bilingual.

The informants in this study come from different backgrounds. Some of them come from bilingual homes whereas the others have gone through language immersion. According to these definitions above some researchers would call all these children bilingual and some researchers would not. The studied children use two languages, Finnish and Swedish, on daily basis and they have acquired the languages in their

families and through immersion programmes. The majority of the children themselves thought they were bilingual. (see ch 5.1)

## **2.2 Previous research on bilingualism**

Earlier studies made from the 20's to 70's associate bilingualism with negative consequences. In the 1960's and 70's the term semilingualism was used. Bilingualism was considered harmful for the children. The term came up with Sami and Finnish speaking children that did not succeed in their studies since they were forced to study in a language they did not master. (Börestam & Huss 2001: 48–49). According to Cenoz (2003) Peal and Lambert's study (1962) on the effect of bilingualism on cognitive development was an important landmark in research of this area. The study compared the achieved results in several cognitive tests by bilingual (French-English) and monolingual (French or English) primary school children. The results of the study indicated that bilingual children scored higher on several verbal and nonverbal tests of cognitive ability. According to Peal and Lambert (1962) the monolinguals have never been forced to form concepts or abstract ideas of things and may be more likely to think mainly in terms of concretes. Also a wider experience in two cultures has given the children advantages over the monolinguals. Intellectually the experience the children have with two language systems has made them more mentally flexible. Bilinguals are superior in concept formation and have a more diversified set of mental abilities developed compared to monolinguals. The researchers also argued that the attitudes the child's parents have an influence on the child's behavior and thinking to a great extent in bilingual families. The attitudes to different languages may not be so frequently discussed in monolingual families Peal and Lambert (1962: 18, 20).

Peal and Lambert's (1962) study had a great impact on research in bilingualism because previous studies had generally found that bilingualism was negatively associated with cognitive development. Also because Peal and Lambert (1962) had taken into consideration different variables such as sex, age, and socioeconomic level that had not been so well controlled in previous studies. This study was, however, criticized for some methodological aspects but as it resulted in a large number of new studies that were better controlled, it had a great impact on the research field of the effect of

bilingualism. In contrast to the studies made earlier, the research in recent decades have generally associated bilingualism with positive effects as cognitive advantages. (Cenoz 2003: 72-73)

The cognitive ability of the bilingual children has been measured in numerous studies which have resulted in contradictory outcomes. One attempt to explain the results led to the development of the threshold hypothesis by Cummins (1976a: 29) which includes the level of bilingualism achieved by the child. If the child is a balanced bilingual with high levels in both languages the cognitive effect of bilingualism is positive. If the child has a high level in only one language the bilingualism has neither positive nor negative effects. If both languages are at a very low level or if the child is forced to operate on the less well mastered language it may result in negative cognitive effects since the child might fail to understand the content transmitted in class and has difficulties in expressing themselves verbally which may result a decrease in intellectual curiosity. (Skutnabb-Kangas 1981: 222-223)

There are many studies that compare the development of monolingual and bilingual children. The studies in lexical development show that the bilingual children score lower in standardized tests of vocabulary than monolingual children do when each language is considered separately. (Genesee & Nicoladis, 1995) The total conceptual vocabulary of bilingual children is, however, the same as that of the monolinguals. There are a number of reasons for that: the bilinguals like the monolinguals have a limited long-term memory in early stages of development but must retain vocabulary from two languages in contrast to the monolinguals. Bilinguals are less exposed to one language, in contrast to the monolinguals, because they use more than one language and finally, the context for learning each of two languages is often less. It is likely that vocabulary knowledge in each language would expand if the context for using each language expanded. Pinter (2011)

Already Leopold (1949) noticed that his bilingual daughters could separate sound and meaning, name and object earlier than monolingual children. Since bilingual children hear an object given two different names in different languages they are forced to attach more importance to meaning than to the word used to express the meaning Leopold (1949: 188). Ianco-Worrall (1972: 1398) conducted a study which tested the sensitivity

to the semantic properties of words. Bilingual Afrikaans-English children were compared with monolingual Afrikaans and English speaking children. The outcome was that the bilingual children brought up in a one person, one-language home environment reached a certain stage in semantic development 2-3 years earlier than their monolingual peers in the test. They were also more aware of the arbitrary nature of words i.e. why things are named in the way they are. The greater awareness of languages is a consequence of bilingual children's attempts to keep their two languages apart. (Ben-Zeev 1977) It has been suggested that bilingual children can separate their two languages from the beginning and are able to use them in context-sensitive way. The mixing of languages is due to code switching which the children learn from their parents. Another possible explanation is that the children know the other language better. (Genesee & Nicoladis 1995: 20-21)

Bilinguals have a greater sensitivity to notice differences e.g. in facial expressions. (Cummins 1975: 34-35) This could be based on the fact that bilinguals have to learn to switch codes and to modify their behaviour according to very small nonverbal cues. The explanation for this greater sensitivity is the same that has been suggested for cognitive flexibility and divergent thinking. (Skutnabb-Kangas 1981: 232) Divergent thinking research show both that bilinguals succeed better in them and that they do less well than the monolinguals. (Skutnabb-Kangas 1981: 229)

One of the debated questions in bilingualism is the extent to which the different languages act as separate systems within the larger language system. Psycholinguistic and neuropsychological research suggests that the separate languages do not have their own distinct substrates in the brain and psycholinguistic research seems to indicate that languages cannot be switched off which means that the languages have an integrated system. At the same time, however, the multilinguals can choose to use only one language and not the other which proves that the languages can be separated. (Rothman, Amaro & de Bot 2013: 383)

According to the interdependence hypothesis (Cummins 1979) bilinguals are able to transfer skills from their first language for use in their second language and it could be expected that they can also be capable of transferring skills from the two languages they know to a third language. Most of the studies on the general effects of bilingualism report that the sociolinguistic context and the level of bilingual proficiency can explain

why learners with a minority language as their first language have advantages when their L1 is valued in society and they have acquired literacy skills in their L1. According to Cummins (1981) the bilingual competence is like two icebergs that have two separate tops but share a common ground under the water. The two tops represent the competencies in everyday language in the two languages while they share a common underlying proficiency which is the integrated base for thinking. This means that if the child learns the multiplication in one language they have it as a resource and need not to learn the same things in the other language. (Börestam & Huss 2001: 60)

Bialystok, Craik and Luk (2012: 241) write in their article about studies where it was proved that bilingual children seem to have better metalingual consciousness which results in solving linguistic problems that are based on understanding form and meaning. The bilingual children use their two languages automatically and are not in need to translate the word or meanings when they are using their two mother tongues. A bilingual person has two different systems for their two languages and they both get activated when one of them is used. That is called joint activation.

Different studies suggest that information from both languages of a bilingual is activated during language processing both in language comprehension and language production. It seems that the ability to switching from one language to the other depends on the L2 proficiency. Foucart & Frenck-Mestre (2013: 398-399) The bilingual's ability to switch quickly or automatically between the two languages is one of the criteria several researchers set for bilingualism. A bilingual person is also able to understand discussions which alternate between two languages or variants of one language. If the person consciously changes the languages it is a matter of code switching. (Skutnabb-Kangas 1981: 213)

Blom & Gumperz (1972) make a distinction between situational and metaphorical code switching. The previous refers to cases where the situation changes and thereby the language. The latter means situations where the speaker wants to change the style with the help of code switching. Søndergaard (1991: 89-91) found different patterns for code switching his material: switching due to lack of vocabulary, voluntary switching used to colour the language and spontaneous switching that is connected to strong emotions. If the speaker is tired he/she cannot find a word in the right code but chooses to use a



word from another code. Some issues or words may be related to a certain language and therefore causes code switching. The speaker may change whole sentences or single words. The speaker wants to find *le mot propre* “the right word”. Spontaneous switching happens when one is angry, surprised or shocked and does not have time to code the language. Code mixing, translations, loans and interferences are also concepts that are handled when code switching is discussed. Researchers have used these concepts when measuring the level of bilingualism. The more interference the speaker has in the speech the less bilingual he or she is. Code switching and translating can be good measurements of the degree of bilingualism if it is assumed that these are practiced by bilinguals. (Skutnabb-Kangas 1981: 231)

Monolingualism has traditionally been viewed as a norm in the research of languages even if multilingualism is more common. Multilingualism is nowadays seen as the ability of the individuals to situationally switch dialects, variants and languages even if they do not master them completely. Dufva & Pietikäinen (2009) introduce two concepts when discussing this issue. Multilingualism functions as a resource and therefore can be seen as situational involving certain conditions and consequences. Another concept is heteroglossia that belongs to the philosophy of the dialogic nature of the language. Heteroglossia describes the coexistence of distinct varieties within a single language. According to Bakhtin (1986) the language is varied to its nature and this involves different ways and forms of using the language.

In conclusion, bilingualism is a subject that has been studied from different point of views. According to the earliest studies bilingual children performed less well than the monolinguals both in cognitive development and in language learning. Later studies have shown that bilingualism has not affected the different test results either in a positive or negative way. In some studies positive advantages of the effect of bilingualism have been found. To sum up, most evidence suggests that bilingualism is not harmful for a person in any way.

### **2.3 Bilingual first language acquisition**

Bilingual First Language Acquisition (BFLA) is the development of language in young children who hear two languages spoken to them from birth. They have two first

languages. De Houwer (2009: 2). Some of the informants in the present study suit in this category. This is the case with the children that come from bilingual or multilingual homes. They have acquired the languages simultaneously and have more than one mother tongue. The informants and their backgrounds will be presented more closely in chapter 5.1.

Bilingual people themselves and other people constantly compare bilingual people to monolingual people and expect bilingual people to be two monolinguals in one, monolinguals with highly advanced language skills. Many people expect this also from the children. De Houwer (2009: 69) BFLA learners are not a homogenous group; they vary in amount and consistency of language exposure. It is possible though to evaluate if bilingual children are capable of acquiring two languages at the same time frame as monolinguals do but not whether all bilingual children do. The published studies show that the language development of the BFLA children happens at the same rate at the same age, and they can exhibit the same rate of language-specific grammatical development as monolingual children. Genesee (2006: 51) There are both similarities and differences in bilingual first language acquisition (BFLA) and monolingual acquisition but more research is needed. In a study of phonological development 17-month old monolingual children were able to attend to fine phonetic detail in minimal word pairs and the bilinguals managed to do that a bit later at 20 months of age. Both bilingual and monolingual children were able to segment words from continuous speech at 7.5 months. The bilinguals were able to do it in their both languages whereas the monolinguals only in the one they knew. (De Houwer 2009)

Volterra and Taeschner (1978: 312) had a hypothesis that the child develops into a bilingual in steps. First it has one lexical system which includes words from both languages. At the second stage, the child distinguishes two different lexicons but applies the same syntactic rules to both languages. At the third state the child keeps both the syntax and lexicon of the two languages separate. Volterra and Taeschner's hypothesis proposed that in the initial state of the developing bilingual child is essentially monolingual. The question is whether the two languages of bilingual children develop autonomously or interdependently.

Interdependent development would mean that one language influences on the development on the other leading to patterns that differ from what would be expected in

monolingual children. The linguistic competence of bilingual children, like those of bilingual adults, should be examined and evaluated on their own merit (Grosjean 1997). On the other hand scientific comparisons between bilingual and monolingual children can reveal the differences in BFLA and monolingual acquisition. Even if the development of the bilingual children is different from the monolingual there is a strong agreement on the fact that it is not harmful for an individual to acquire two languages simultaneously. (Genesee & Nicoladis, 2005).

According to Genesee & Nicoladis (2005: 1–7) there is evidence on that BFLA children learn to separate their two languages in early infancy and that the development of the languages responds that of the monolinguals. It has been suggested that children have two different phonetic systems.

There is no evidence on that the language of bilingual children would develop more slowly than the monolinguals. Some MFLA children develop faster than some BFLA children, some BFLA children develop faster than some MFLA children and some MFLA children develop faster than other MFLA children and some BFLA children develop faster than some BFLA children. De Houwer (2009: 6) Delayed language acquisition has been studied comparing the vocabulary of mono-and bilinguals. The studies show that 20% of both mono-and bilingual children have a delayed development which means that they have less than twenty words at the age of two. Even the first words appear at the same age of both mono- and bilinguals. (Genesee & Nicoladis 2005: 6–7.)

Bilingual children begin to produce their first words the same time as monolinguals that is around the age of one year. The rate of vocabulary development is the same as for monolinguals when compared to their combined bilingual lexicon. Bilingual children produce translation equivalents from the time they start to speak (Pearson, Fernandez and Oller 1993). By the age of 1.5 years the amount of translation equivalents in bilingual children's vocabulary increases sharply, showing that they have two distinct lexical systems. (Nicoladis and Secco 2000) The rate of translation equivalents under the age of two is from 10%-35% which means that the majority of the words known by bilingual children have no match in their other language (Pearson, Fernandez & Oller

1995) If the child has lexical gaps in the weaker language he or she can use different patterns of code-mixing.

It is possible to reach a high standard of competence in a language even if you start learning it after the age of 25 but the pronunciation follows the pattern of your mother tongue. Lenneberg (1967) argued that there is a critical period in language learning that is 12-13 years. It was thought that at that age the brain would go through a change which prevented the individual of learning or adapting to new situations the brain losing some of its plasticity. Lenneberg (1967: 176) says that a person can even start to learn new languages at the age of forty but an automatic acquisition from exposure to a language is no longer possible. The foreign languages have to be taught and learned through a conscious effort. However, there are studies that prove that the brain changes when it gains more knowledge. A second language can even replace the first language. (Lenneberg 1967)

Ventureyra (2003) studied Koreans that had moved to France and forgotten all about their mother tongue. The Koreans were people adopted to France at the age of 3-9 years. In the tests they did not recognize Korean sounds and could not produce them either. The Korean adoptees did not have any contacts with their home language and culture when arriving in France and that is why they were no more exposed to Korean phonemes. Some of the studied people had visited Korea for short periods but that did not have significant effects. Ventureyra (2003) compares these results with other studies where reexposure and formal instruction helped the subjects who have started to go to classes in order to relearn their childhood language. Ventureyra (2003: 88-89) suggests that with extensive reexposure it may be possible to reactivate the phonetic knowledge of the L1 that has not been used for a long time. She also points out that early experience with language, even up until age nine, does not guarantee the availability of the language's phonology later in life. The brain is very plastic and develops constantly but some areas like phonetic processing are not developing in a same way at later age. Ventureyra (2003) asks how these results match with other data often suggesting that people who learn a second language after age 6 years do not reach full proficiency. Ventureyra (2003) suggests that one explanation could be that the effects of age of acquisition before the age of 10 are due to an increased stabilization of the neural network and not the decrease of neural plasticity in the brain. When exposure to L1

ceases, then the network could somehow 'reset' and L2 would be acquired fully. This could be tested by comparing the performances in L2 of adopted subjects with that of immigrants who arrived in the foreign country at the same age but have continued using their L1. If the immigrants performed less well than the adoptees, then this would support the hypothesis of stabilization by L1.

There are studies, however, that show the bilinguals may be using more of their brain capacity for their two languages than the monolingual. Lateralisation is not a simple irreversible process that is completed by a certain point of time. (Albert and Obler 1978) The bilingual may be more bilateral than the monolingual which means that the person uses both halves in the brain. It was earlier thought that the most language functions were located in the left hemisphere of the brain and this gradual localization i.e. lateralization became complete at the age of puberty. (Skutnabb-Kangas 1981: 106) Even children that are L2 speakers have difficulties in reaching to a native kind of level. A native speaker uses idiomatic language and has an automatic syntax. (Ekberg 2004: 269) According to Ekberg children that have come into contact with Swedish at the age of four or five have partly different patterns in their language than language learners that have started learning Swedish later. These language learners make more mistakes than the native speakers do. That means that it is difficult even for the children to reach a native kind of level in a language. On the other hand the bilingual children can be seen more creative in their language structures. The monolinguals use conventional and stereotype structures, in other words, idiomatic language. (Ekberg 2004: 274)

It is easier for older learners to learn languages in formal settings but younger learners tend to catch up in the long run. This is due to differences in cognitive development. The older learners are faster and more efficient when it comes to formal language learning and explicit teaching processes. The younger learners take greater advantage of implicit learning. Munoz (2006: 32)

One of the most significant consequences of being bilingual is the possibility that bilingualism influences the manner or efficiency with which children become literate. Bialystok (2006) addresses two questions in her paper: is the process of acquiring literacy skills different for bilingual children than for the monolingual children? Is there a systematic effect on literacy acquisition that comes from having two linguistic

systems at the time children are beginning to learn to read. The second question is the relation between progress in the acquisition literacy in each of the two languages. The first factor identified in the model is oral language proficiency. Vocabulary competence both precedes and predicts reading level. The second factor is the development of print concepts relevant to literacy e.g. what the notations mean and how the notations encode meaning. The third factor is awareness of the metalinguistic concepts required for reading. The meanings of language develop through conscious processes that require explicit knowledge of language and the structure of the writing system. The results showed two main conclusions. The first was that bilingual children whose two languages were based on alphabetic writing systems were making better progress than monolinguals or non-alphabetic bilinguals on a phonological segmentation test. The second is that progress in early decoding skills favored the bilinguals. The extent of the advantage depended on the relation between the two writing systems in the languages. Children who were learning to read in two alphabetic systems the progress in early reading was more advanced than that for the children in the other groups. The Chinese-English bilinguals did as well as the English monolinguals even if they had to face the challenge to learn to read in two different writing systems. Bialystok (2006: 107-114)

Bilingual first language acquisition means that a child has learned two mother tongues as a first language. Bilingual people are compared to monolingual people and are expected to be two monolinguals in one with highly advanced language skills. BFLA learners are not a homogenous group; they vary in amount and consistency of language exposure. There are both similarities and differences in bilingual first language acquisition (BFLA) and monolingual acquisition e.g. language learning happens at the same age and the same rate as with the monolinguals. There have not been conducted that much research comparing monolingual and bilingual children in language learning. The database is quite limited with case studies or small groups of children and therefore more research is needed before possible generalizations can be made.

## 2.4 Bilingual third language acquisition

The common idea that bilinguals learn a third language more easily than monolinguals was suggested by researchers already in the sixties and seventies e.g. (Albert & Obler 1978).

Researchers have different opinions about whether bilingualism is an advantage when a third language is acquired. Both positive and negative views are found in different studies. There are also studies that show that children learn new languages in the same way in spite of the mono- or bilingual background (Keshavarz & Bahrainy 2002: 1).

Third language acquisition shares many characteristics with second language acquisition but it also presents differences because third language learners have more language experience than second language learners. Bilinguals have access to two linguistic systems when acquiring a third language. (Cenoz 2003: 71) Third language acquisition presents more temporal diversity than second language acquisition. When two languages are involved, we only have two temporal possibilities, the acquisition of the two languages is either simultaneous (early bilingualism) or consecutive (first language acquisition + second language acquisition). When three languages are acquired, we have four possibilities. The three languages can be acquired consecutively, first L1, then L2 and then L3. Two languages could be acquired simultaneously before the L3 is acquired or after the first language or the three languages could be acquired simultaneously in early trilingualism. (Cenoz 2003: 72)

Cenoz (2003) presents several studies on the effect of bilingualism on third language acquisition. The studies have different aims and that is why he divides them into different categories. Some of the research focuses on the effect of bilingualism on general proficiency in the third language and others focus on very specific aspects of proficiency or language processing. The researchers also concern a different variety of languages and different degree of proficiency in the languages.

The following studies focus on the effect of bilingualism on general language proficiency (oral/written) in the third language. In all cases at least one of the languages involved is a “minority language” in the community, which can have different degrees

of institutional support and can be either the first or second language of the learner. Cenoz & Valencia (1994) conducted a study which included 320 bilingual (Basque-Spanish) and monolingual (Spanish) secondary school students who were acquiring English as a third language. Bilingualism was found to influence on different areas in English language proficiency such as listening, writing, speaking, reading, grammar and vocabulary. The effect of other factors such as socioeconomic status, exposure to English, general intelligence and motivation had been taken into consideration. However, the effect of factors such as general intelligence and motivation was more important than the influence of bilingualism.

Some studies have analyzed the differences between monolinguals and multilinguals in some specific aspects of syntax. For example, Zobl (1993) used a test to measure several structures such as adjacency of verb and object and indirect and direct object passive. The participants were 18 monolingual and 15 multilingual learners of English and the scores of the grammaticality judgment test did not present differences. Zobl indicated that multilinguals formulate a wider grammar meaning, that they accept as correct more incorrect sentences than monolinguals. The difference between monolinguals and bilinguals could explain why bilinguals have advantages when learning additional languages. Monolinguals tend to formulate grammars that are just powerful enough to fit the input data with a more restricted grammar but include fewer errors. Multilinguals formulate larger grammars which include incorrect sentences but allow them to progress faster.

There are more studies that support the notion that multilingualism can be an advantage when a person is learning new languages. For example double immersion programs in which trilingual school children were compared to children in bilingual immersion schools in Canada. The results indicate that the simultaneous acquisition of two languages presents positive outcomes and they have been related to the cognitive and linguistic advantages associated with bilingualism (see e.g., Genesee, 1998)

Brohy (2001: 47) studied mono- and bilinguals in Switzerland and came to the conclusion that the bilinguals learned French better than the monolinguals. According to Brochy (2001) the researchers have wondered whether bilinguals would have an initial bonus when learning an additional language, and if this bonus is due to linguistic,



motivational, attitudinal, or strategic factors, or any combination of these. The hypothesis that the bilingual pupils would have more positive attitudes toward French than the control group proved to be wrong but the difference was only marginally significant. The bilingual pupils reported that they would prefer to learn English instead of French. However, the competencies in French in reading, listening, speaking and writing taken together were higher in both bilingual samples, but writing was lower in the bilingual group from 1998 than in the control group of monolinguals. Speaking was better in both bilingual samples than in the control group. According to Brochy this can be due to the fact that the specific advantages of Rumansch–German school bilingualism have stronger and more direct effects on receptive skills. Pronunciation is better in the bilingual samples, which could account for the wider range of phonemes being heard and used from an early age in the family, school and social bilingualism. The bilingual pupils also gave more information than what was required in the task assignments. This could be the result of a more relaxed attitude toward using a foreign language.

Klein (1995) also did a research on the bilingual third language acquisition. The outcomes of the study are quite clear: the bilinguals had an advantage when it came to the lexical aspects of learning the new language. The bilinguals were not better in setting the parameters but they did it faster Klein (1995: 450). This means that the bilinguals understood the syntax of the language and the way the language works quicker. Klein (1995: 420) suggests that if the bilinguals have an advantage over the monolinguals a) the advantage may appear only under specific conditions e.g. the manner the L2 was learned b) the advantage may involve particular areas of acquisition e.g. vocabulary but not syntax and c) this advantage may affect the rate of development but not its course. Klein (1995: 423) adds that if the L2 parameter is complex (the syntax of the language) and mismatching choices between the L1 and L2 parameters are made it can be a cognitive burden at least in some areas of acquisition. Some studies suggest that those who are bilingual, who have already L1 and L2 parameters set, appear to acquire an L3 easier than monolinguals do. Other studies show no difference between the two groups which means that language learners do not use analytic strategies in language acquisition. Some researchers suggest that the learner starts with the simplest parameters and sets or resets them on the basis of knowledge from L2. In other words, they are not using problem solving in language learning. Klein (1995: 424)

J. Thomas (1988) compared the acquisition of French by English monolinguals and English-Spanish bilinguals. There were clear differences between the two groups as the bilinguals were outperforming the monolinguals. She explained that because Spanish and French are closely related languages, acquisition of the new language is in that way easier for the bilingual learners. Bilinguals have also a greater sensitivity to languages which helps them in learning languages formally in contrast to monolinguals that are learning their first foreign language.

Some European studies conducted with immigrant children found no significant differences between monolinguals and bilinguals in the acquisition of a third language. For example, Jaspaert and Lemmens (1990) analyzed the acquisition of Dutch as a third language by Italian immigrant children. Proficiency in Dutch was evaluated by using different tests as grammar, writing, vocabulary, dictation, reading and a cloze test. The level of proficiency in Dutch of Italian-French bilinguals was compared to that of French-speaking monolinguals, however, no significant differences were observed. The results can be considered positive taking into account that Dutch was a third language for the immigrant children. Keshavarz och Bahrainy (2002) compared Turkish-Persian and Persian acquisition of English. They came to the conclusion that the monolingual speakers did better than the bilinguals. One reason could be that the bilingual speakers had learnt Persian after they had learnt Turkish i.e. they had not acquired the languages simultaneously. Another important point is that the bilinguals were not literate in their first language L1, Turkish. Yet another reason for the outcome can be that Persian and English belong to the Indo-European group of languages whereas Turkish has no resemblance with them belonging to the Altaic family. The typology of the languages should therefore be taken into consideration as a variable in research having impact on L3 acquisition.

Cenoz (2003) and Rothman, Amaro & de Bot (2013: 382) cite different studies on multilingual lexical processing e.g. Mägiste 1979. Mägiste (1979) conducted her study in Stockholm studying German monolinguals, German-Swedish bilinguals and trilinguals with competence in German, Swedish and one additional language which varied between individuals. The control group consisted of Swedish monolinguals. The pupils were tested in different tasks like reading numbers, naming numbers, naming objects and different decoding tasks in Swedish and the time of reaction was measured.

The findings were that the trilinguals were the slowest group whereas the Swedish monolinguals had the shortest reaction time in all tasks. According to Mägiste (1979: 86) it is clear that a bilingual can never reach the same level of competence in two languages as a monolingual in one language. It is also possible that people that have one dominant language deal with concepts that are more readily available whereas the words a multilingual person possesses have more than one verbal referent.

Gürler (2013) tested Turkish-Swedish bilinguals in her study and tried to find out how well they could separate morphological and syntactic patterns in a corpus, in this case verbs in Swahili. Another test she used tested the ability of coding which means identifying different sounds in nonce words in English and Swedish and coding them into written language. The results were that the bilinguals did a little better in the coding task. Gürler sees a connection with bilinguality and the ability of recognizing sounds. The informants stated that they found pronouncing different languages their strength which helped them in the coding task. However, the monolingual control group was better in the morphological test. According to Gürler this can be a result of the fact that bilinguals have learned the languages naturally through listening and talking and have not analyzed the language in the same way as a monolingual would do when learning grammar. She also states that bilinguals seem to understand different languages rather easily and probably in a different manner than monolinguals. The study showed also that the informants had a positive attitude towards foreign languages and language learning. According to Gürler the fact that a person is bilingual and already knows two languages and cultures make them even more interested in different cultures and languages.

It can be said that bilingualism has no negative effect on third language acquisition and in many cases can enhance the acquisition of a third language. The results vary according to the context and the different aspects of language proficiency taken into consideration. General aspects of L3 proficiency show more favorable to bilinguals than those studies in which very specific aspects of language proficiency are analyzed. Third language acquisition is a complex process that can be affected by many factors and therefore it is not possible to provide a simple explanation to account for the results of the studies.

### 3. LEARNING LANGUAGES IN FINLAND

In this chapter I will give an overview of learning languages in Finland. I am going to deal with traditional **teaching languages at school**, informal language learning and immersion. As background information I will first handle the language situation in Finland and the status of the English language in Finland.

The two official languages spoken in Finland are Finnish and Swedish. There are about 5.5% people speaking Swedish in Finland ([www.stat.fi](http://www.stat.fi) 2007). Swedish-speakers live mostly in the coastal regions of Ostrobothnia, Uusimaa and Turku region, and on the Åland Islands. These areas are mainly bilingual while Åland is monolingual Swedish. The Swedish minorities live also in other areas, that is in monolingual Finnish cities. These are called language islands. Four cities Tampere, Kotka, Pori and Oulu are considered traditionally language islands but there are Swedish schools also in 12 other Finnish cities (see Appendices 1 and 2). The bilingual cities have normally separate schools for both Finnish and Swedish speaking pupils and the language islands either have a Swedish school or Swedish classrooms in Finnish schools.

English is spoken as a mother tongue by 340 million of people and as a second language by 510 million of people in the world. It is difficult to give exact figures since it is not easy to define bilingualism and multilingualism. The status of English has been very strong already for a long period in Finland. In 1990's the significance of English as an internationally used language in communication increased. English is the most popular language and it is the foreign language that Finnish people know the best. It is also the most studied language; 99.5% from the students that ended their high school in 2006 have studied English. Furthermore, it has become more popular to use English in teaching at schools, vocational schools and universities. English is used in various contexts in the Finnish society and it is sometimes called the third language in Finland even if it is not an official language. English is often chosen for a means of communication, because it is the common language among the participants at meetings or the official language in companies. (Leppänen & Nikula 2008) English seems to be changing from a foreign language to the second language of Finland (Nikula &

Leppänen 2008: 426). Many school children, especially those in Swedish schools, feel that they are trilingual rather than bilingual (Sjöholm 2004: 220).

Also children have contact with the English language in their everyday lives at school and outside the school which can be called **informal learning**. Children have various possibilities for informal learning of English: watching TV, visiting different websites on Internet, playing computer games and listening to music are an important part of children's lives nowadays. As films and English programmes are not dubbed on Finnish television channels, and as subtitles are provided in Finnish or Swedish on TV, it has a strong influence on learning of English. (Sjöholm 2004) The contacts children have with the English language outside the school affect undoubtedly their ability to learn English. It may also affect both their attitudes towards the English language and their learning of English at school. According to Sjöholm (2004) there seems to be evidence of that the incidental learning taking place outside the classroom is beneficial to the development of conversational proficiency and to the development of receptive skills.

Finnish children start learning their first foreign language usually on the third grade, at the age of nine years. Nine out of ten children choose to study English. This is partly due to the fact that it is the only language offered in many municipalities. ([www.oph.fi](http://www.oph.fi)) The children have the possibility to choose another language in grade four, at the age of ten years, and yet another one at the age of fourteen, in the eighth grade in comprehensive school. In Finnish schools they start with their Swedish studies in the sixth grade, at the age of thirteen. In Swedish classrooms the first language they study is Finnish. Finnish is a language they already know and it is called "Finnish as the other mother tongue" while Swedish is the first one. They start with English in their fourth grade. Earlier it was the fifth grade, at the age of eleven. Later the pupils get to choose languages in the same manner as Finnish speaking pupils. It is not so popular nowadays to study additional languages at schools in Finland. In 1994 almost 40 % of the pupils in Finnish schools chose to study an additional language in grade eight while the percentage was only about 14 % in 2009. The corresponding percentage of pupils at Swedish schools in Finland was about 24 % the same year. This percentage has also decreased. ([www.oph.fi](http://www.oph.fi)) It has been argued that the usefulness of English tends to be overestimated and that it results in a diminished motivation to learn other foreign languages (Björklund & Suni 2000: 203).

In Swedish classrooms the pupils have to know Swedish well enough to be able to follow the teaching that is mainly in Swedish. Children from monolingual homes have often an immersion background. The children in the present study come either from bilingual homes or then they have an **immersion** background. They live in a monolingual Finnish town in Central Finland and go to a Finnish school but have their education in the Swedish classroom. The informants told that they all knew some English before they started to learn it officially. They had learnt some English through informal learning or from their parents or siblings.

The “immersion programme” originates from Canada. It was launched in the French-speaking province of Quebec where a group of Anglophone parents in the 1960’s wanted to provide better French education for their children than was available at local schools. Their children were placed in classrooms where they heard French all day and began their education entirely in French. This resulted in that the children learnt to read and write in French before they learnt that in English. English was introduced in the third grade. This type of immersion is called early total immersion. (Pinter 2011: 80) The different programmes can be summarized in the following way (Johnson and Swain 1997):

- It is always the L2 that is used as the medium of instruction
- The immersion curriculum parallels the local L1 curriculum
- Overt support exists for the L1
- Attitudes in the community are positive to both L1 and L2
- The aim of the programme is to achieve additive bilingualism, with high levels of proficiency in both L2 and L1.
- In immersion programmes L2 is largely confined to the classroom
- Children enter with similar (limited) levels of proficiency and from the very beginning instructional procedures, materials and curriculum can be tailored to the needs of the target group
- Teachers are bilingual, able to communicate with students in L1, if necessary
- The classroom culture is that of the local L1 community rather than the target language culture
- Immersion programmes may be full or partial

The immersion approach is based on two assumptions: that at the age of immersion an L2 is learned in a similar way to an L1 and that the language is best learned in a stimulating context which exposes the child to natural language. (Hamers and Blanc 2000: 332) A language that has been acquired before affects the future language acquisition. The studies on immersion in Finland show that the children that have gone through a Swedish language immersion program experience learning new languages easier. The Finnish speaking children learn not only the immersion language effectively but also other languages that they have in their program. (Laurén 2008). The studies show that the students that had had immersion in Swedish did very well in the matriculation examination. They were better in Swedish and their mother tongue Finnish than other students approximately. This is the result of early, meaningful connections to different languages, not the amount of time spent with the mother tongue. The immersion pupils did very well also in English and German examinations. The results were even better in mathematics and in humanities and sciences. These results are very similar to the Canadian ones. (Bergroth & Lauren 2005) Possible reasons according to Laurén (2008: 84) could be that the pupils get a lot of possibilities to interact in their language which has its effects on the mother tongue as well. This can also be due to the fact that an immersion pupil grows to be interested in languages and is more conscious of languages in general. The groups are smaller and the teacher has more time to share with the pupils.

According to Skuttnabb-Kangas (1981: 160-161) pupils who had participated in immersion programs in Canada had positive attitudes towards it and they would do it again and recommend it to their siblings. The children had a positive attitude both to their own linguistic group and also towards French Canadians and towards other nationalities. The children in early immersion programs did as well as or even better in their mother tongue English as the control group. The results in French were varied to some extent. The immersion children did better in certain subjects than the monolingual French but mostly the children did equally well or less well. The competence in French however, was better than that of the children who were learning French as foreign language. The children taking part in these programs were middle-class but similar positive effects have been seen in immersion with working- class children.

In the immersion programmes the children learn a second language integrated into the curriculum rather than a separate subject. They get a high input level in comparison to

ordinary language teaching where the input level is low that means that the children get a limited access to the target language. (Pinter 2011: 86)

Some of the children in the present study have an immersion background which means that they have gone to kindergartens with Swedish language education while their home language is Finnish. After the kindergarten they have started at school with a Swedish classroom. This means that they get all their education in Swedish except for lessons in music and handicraft which they have together with the Finnish speaking pupils.



#### **4. THE PRESENT STUDY**

The present study aims to map the views of Finnish-Swedish children on bilingualism, language learning and the role of earlier language proficiency in learning a new language. In this study case the acquisition of a third language (English) starts chronologically after the acquisition of the other two languages (Finnish and Swedish) (see ch. 2.4. Cenoz 2003)

The eleven children live in a monolingual Finnish area in Central Finland and all of them go to a Swedish school or better they attend a Finnish school that has two Swedish classrooms with about 28 pupils altogether. They get all their education in Swedish except for handicraft and music where the classes are combined with Finnish speaking pupils. They use Swedish in school in the classes but mainly Finnish with their friends during the breaks and after school. Some of the children have bilingual homes and some of the children have an immersion background. I will present the informants more closely in chapter 5.1.

##### **4.1. The research questions**

The research questions are:

1. How do the children define bilingualism? Do they see themselves as bilinguals?
2. How do the children describe language learning and the benefits of multilingual language proficiency?
3. How do the children describe the role of the Swedish language in learning English? What do they see helpful?

##### **4.2 Data and methods**

I wanted to find out how the children saw bilingualism and whether they saw it as an advantage in learning additional languages, English in this case. For that I interviewed eleven 9-12- year-olds. Interviewing the informants has been a very typical way of

gathering material when studying languages in use e.g. in dialect surveys and in sociolinguistics. It is a way to have the interviewee's voice heard. You can either study the language people use or the viewpoints, experiences and beliefs they express e.g. what the interviewee's views towards different languages are. (Dufva 2011) This last approach is used in the present study.

There are several ways in building an interview situation. The researcher can use a structured interview, a half structured interview, a theme interview or an open interview. Theme interview was used in this. A theme interview consists of certain topics that are discussed. The questions are not as precise as in a structured interview but all the informants are asked about the same themes that the researcher has decided on in advance. The order of the themes or the width of discussion may vary between informants. (Eskola & Suoranta 1998: 87) The interview in this study may also be called semi-structured because all the informants were asked more or less the same questions.

Before the researchers start interviewing they have chosen the topic of the study, read background material and thought of central themes, that they want the interviewee to talk about. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000). Before the interviews were made I investigated what previous studies have been written related to the issue in question. Then I designed the research questions (see Appendix 4) and planned how many people I was going to interview. Before the interviews were made, I asked the parents for permission to interview the children and the material to be used in the study. In children's interview in particular, it is important to have unambiguous and understandable questions. I tried to avoid questions that you can answer only yes or no to. Before the real questions I made some warm-up questions to get the interviewee relaxed. After the interviews were made the data was transcribed (see Appendix 5). According to Alasuutari (2005) it is important to note that when interviewing children the researcher has to understand that even the parents are involved since they have given the permission for the interview to the researcher and therefore they might have certain expectations of the interview. The relation between an adult and a child is special since they are not equals. The adults are in control and rule even in the interview situation which can also be an advantage in the interview. The researcher has in principle the right to ask any kinds of questions and expects truthful answers. The interviewer has to be careful though not to give the interviewee the feeling that he or she has to come with the right answers if the meaning

is to get knowledge of the experiences the child has. When the child is telling about something it is important to support the child with minimal responses like *yes* or *mmm*. The responses should not be too long allowing the child to continue with the story. If the child feels that it is hard to answer the question the interviewer should try to reformulate the question so that it would be easier for the child to start. The interview situation is always interactive since both the situation and the researcher affect the child. The researcher should carefully follow the child and adapt the questions to fit in the conversation.

The children were asked about what languages they use on daily basis and in what situations and with whom they used the languages. They were asked if they thought one language was stronger than the other or if they thought they knew them equally well. Other questions were how they felt about starting learning a new language, English, at school. If they thought English was easy to learn and if they thought it useful being competent in two languages Finnish and Swedish, before they started learning a new language. They were also asked about their future plans having to do with language learning and if they wanted to learn more languages in the future. The children also defined bilingualism and answered a question about themselves being bilingual. The interview questions are given in Appendix 4.

### 4.2.1 Interviewing the children

I interviewed eleven 9-12-year-old children, five boys and six girls for this study (see Appendix 3). The children go to a Swedish classroom at a Finnish school and they are on grades four, five and six. All of them had visited our home before and they had met me several times during the past years, as they are friends of my children. That is why they knew me and therefore it was easy to interview them. The interviews were made at my home in a peaceful space and I tried to create a relaxed atmosphere. On the other hand some of the interviews were made during a birthday party or in a situation where other children were playing in the room next to the room the interviews were made. The interview situations were successful apart from the fact that there were some extra noise on the tape but it did not cover the actual speech even though it might have affected the interview situation. The two first interviews were recorded on the mobile-phone which means the interviews made with Eemil and Teresa. In Eemil's interview there were some technical disturbances which mean that some parts were not heard so clearly. Both Eemil and Teresa were interviewed three times because the two first situations were pilot interviews and gave structure to the interview questions. Eemil and Teresa's third time was much later than the other interviews since I noticed that they had not been asked all the same questions as the other children were. I used a small recorder for the interviews. I asked pre questions before I started with the real ones like "what are your hobbies and with whom do you play at school and what do you do at school when you are having a break between the lessons". The children were invited to my home and got to play with my children before they were interviewed. In that way I expected them to be more relaxed when I started interviewing them.

Each interview took about 15-20 minutes of which I transcribed the sections with the real data having to do with this study. I avoided asking too direct questions that might have led to expected answers. Instead of directly asking e.g. "do you think Swedish has helped you when you are learning English?" I tried to approach the theme asking "what do you do if you don't recognize a word in English". After this leading question if the child has said that they think of Swedish I continued asking more precise questions related to that issue. In some cases the child did not say anything about Swedish then I asked them directly.

Some of the informants come from bilingual or multilingual homes and some of them have an immersion background. Some of the children have studied English for a couple of months or over a year before these interviews were made. The informants are going to be presented more closely in chapter 5.1.

IMMERSION	TWO LANGUAGES AT HOME	THREE LANGUAGES AT HOME + SWEDISH AT SCHOOL
Eemil 5 <sup>th</sup> grade	Camilla 6 <sup>th</sup> grade	Anton 6 <sup>th</sup> grade
Onni 5 <sup>th</sup> grade	Mikael 4 <sup>th</sup> grade	Benjamin 4 <sup>th</sup> grade
Piia 4 <sup>th</sup> grade	Julia 4 <sup>th</sup> grade	
Satu 5 <sup>th</sup> grade	Linnea 4 <sup>th</sup> grade	
Teresa 4 <sup>th</sup> grade		

**Table 1. The background to the childrens' bilingualism or multilingualism**

#### 4.2.2 Analysing the material

As material I have 3.5 hours of taped interviews. Before analyzing the material it was transcribed. According to Nikander (2010) transcribed interaction is not an exact copy of the original situation leaving out some verbal and non-verbal nuances. A transcription is a product of the researcher and consists of his or her observations of the interaction and choices of what is relevant to the reader for understanding. However, the transcription brings the interaction close to the reader and makes reinterpretations possible for the reader. The transcription was rough because in the present study the most important thing was not how things were said but what was said (see Alanen 2006: 222 in Kalaja, Alanen & Dufva 2011: 145). For the purpose of the thesis, the examples were also translated. I have short or longer sections of the dialogues as examples and then the translation following the original. I tried to follow the language as precisely as I could trying to use natural English rules. I left out some stutterings in the translations since it would be easier to follow the idea in that way. In some cases I added some words into the translations to get it clearer. They are marked separately [added word]. The original speech is very precisely transcribed.

I use a qualitative content analysis in this study. A qualitative research analysis consists of two phases: to reduce and simplify the observations and to solve the problem. The data is only studied from a certain point of view relating to a certain theory and methodology that is relevant to the study in question. Solving the problem means that the results are interpreted and compared to previous studies. (Alasuutari 2001: 39-44)

The interviews were analysed using *qualitative content analysis*. According to Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009) this method gives a condensed and general description of the phenomenon and it is suitable also for nonstructured material (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 103-104). Content analysis has three different approaches: data-based, theory-guided and theory-bound content analysis. Theory-guided content analysis will be used in the present study. Theory-guided content analysis presents connections to earlier theories without the aim of testing their validity. Previous research is instead used to support the findings of the study in question. Items for the analysis are chosen independently from theory, like in data-based content analysis. In theory-guided content analysis, however, previous research can be used to assist the analysis process to find new ways of thinking and interpreting the data (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 95–97). In contrast, theory-bound content analysis aims to confirm previous research and leans on previous research for example when determining the items to be analysed from the data.

## **5. THE FINDINGS**

Several interesting observations were made by children while being interviewed. The children are defining a bilingual person and giving their opinion on their own bilingualism. In addition, they are discussing bilingualism as a benefit for them. I will also report on how the children use Swedish as a strategy in learning English. Moreover, I will report on what they say about learning English and how they feel about learning languages in general.

### **5.1 The informants and their views on bilingualism**

First, I will present the children's views on bilingualism by presenting themselves and telling about their language background at the same time. Eleven children, five boys and six girls, were interviewed for this study. The children are 9-12 years old. I chose the children that have started learning English in the Swedish classroom. Two of the children, Anton and Camilla, had started one year before the others since they are on the sixth grade and started learning English on the fifth grade. Eemil, Onni and Satu were on the fifth grade and had learned English for two-three months before the interviews were made. Benjamin, Mikael, Julia, Linnea, Piia and Teresa were on the fourth grade and had also started to learn English two-three months before the interviews were made. The reason why some pupils had started with English in the fourth and some in the fifth grade is that there was a change in the curriculum in year 2014. All the children chose to learn English even if it would have been possible to also choose some other languages. The pupils in the Finnish-speaking classes had started English already on their third grade.

Four of these children came from homes where they communicate in two languages and five had an immersion background. Two children, they are siblings, used more than two languages at home since they communicate in two different sign languages with their parents and used Finnish when talking to each other and then they used Swedish at school.

The children had acquired Swedish in different ways. It is not so easy to place the informants in ready-made categories since all the situations are different. Therefore it is difficult to define bi- or multilingualism. Some of the children have learned both Finnish and Swedish at home in early childhood and may be called simultaneous bilinguals. This is the case with Camilla, Julia, Henrik and Linnea. Anton and Benjamin have learned two sign languages simultaneously at home and both Finnish and Swedish as babies from their relatives and in kindergarten in Sweden. The boys could probably also fit in the same category with the children mentioned above. Successive bilingualism means that the languages have been acquired one after the other after the age of two or three. Satu, Piia, Onni, Eemil and Teresa have learned Finnish at home and Swedish in kindergarten through immersion. Eemil and Teresa have learned some Swedish before going to kindergarten but better fit in this category than the previous one. Piia has started with Swedish at the age of two but is also placed here. (See chapter 2.1) The informants are going to be presented more closely here. They are also going to define a bilingual person and give their opinion on their own bilingualism.

#### CAMILLA

Camilla comes from a bilingual family. She speaks Swedish with her mother and Finnish with her father. She uses both Finnish and Swedish with her younger brother. According to her the choice of language when talking with her brother depends on how they feel. There are no certain rules for choosing either Finnish or Swedish. Camilla has relatives to whom she speaks Swedish regularly. Those are the relatives on her mother's side. Camilla has gone to a Swedish kindergarten and Swedish school. She is now on the sixth grade, the last level in primary school. The next example is from the interview made with Camilla. She is asked to define a bilingual person.

(1)

C: Noo ei sitä mun mielestä mitenkään huomaa erikseen että onko suomalainen vai ruotsalainen vai puhuuko kumpaaki.

H: Nii, mutta jos sun pitäs määritellä että tuo ihminen ei oo kaksikielinen ja tuo ihminen on kaksikielinen, niin mitä eroo niillä on, minkälainen ihminen on kaksikielinen sun mielestä?

C: Noo ei niinku ulkopuolisesti näy mitään eroo mut sitten niinku jos niinku jos on tosi vahva ruotsi nii se suomi saattaa olla niinku vähä heikompi

H: Mmm



C: mut sitten taas jos on yhtä hyvä kummassakin ei sillonkaa kyllä huomaa mitää eroo.

*C: Well you can't notice a difference whether you are Finnish or Swedish or if you talk them both.*

*H: Yes but if you had to define that that person is bilingual and that person is not a bilingual, so what makes the difference, what kind of a person is a bilingual what do you think?*

*C: Well you can't notice it from outside but then like if like they have a strong Swedish so then the Finnish can be a bit weaker*

*H: Mmm*

*C: but then if you are equally good in both languages then you won't notice a difference either.*

According to Camilla it is hard to see from outside if a person is bilingual or not. She thinks that it is possible that one of the languages is weaker than the other or then the languages can be equally strong. This is the case with herself. She thinks she knows both the languages equally well. She takes Finnish and Swedish as examples probably since she herself is a bilingual with these languages. Camilla also told in the interview that she mixes the codes when she is talking e.g. with her mother. This is possible since the mother knows both Finnish and Swedish. Camilla refers to situations where she does not immediately find the right word and therefore code switches. Søndergaard (1991: 89-91) found a similar pattern for code switching his material: switching due to lack of vocabulary. If the speaker is tired he/she cannot find a word in the right code but chooses to use a word from another code. In this case Camilla knows both the languages well but does not temporarily find the right word and uses the other code. This is possible in her situation since the family knows both languages. Mixing Finnish and Swedish is very typical for bilinguals in Finland.

## JULIA

Julia comes from a bilingual home. She talks Swedish with her mother and Finnish with her father. She uses both Swedish and Finnish with her little sister. Julia has gone to both a Swedish and Finnish speaking kindergarten. She started going to a Finnish speaking school but continued in a Swedish classroom when she started her second year. Now she is in grade four and has started with her English two or three months before the interview were made. This is what Julia says about bilingualism.

J: Sellanen joka puhuu kahta kieltä

H: Niijust joo, ootko sä ite kaksikielinen ihminen?

J: No joo, periaatteessa

H: Joo, kyllä niijustiin, eli ihminen joka puhuu kahta kieltä...täytyyks niitä kieliä osata sillai, yhtä hyvin vai voiko jompikumpi olla vahvempi tai heikompi?

J: Noo see mää luulen, mä lu- mulle tulee sellanen niinku tunne et öö jos on kaksikielinen

H: Mmm

J: ni se ei vo- se ei voi nyt olla sillen et jos mä vaikka osaan portugalia, vähän englantia, vähän, sit suomee ja ruotsia

H: Niin?

J: ni sillon emmää oo neljäkielinen sillä englantia ja portugalia mä osaan vaan vähä

*J: A person that talks two languages.*

*H: That's right yes, are you a bilingual person?*

*J: Well yes in principle*

*H: Yes that's right so a person that talk two language...do they have to know the languages like equally well or can either of the language be stronger or weaker?*

*J: Well that I think I get the feeling that like if you are a bilingual*

*H: Mmm*

*J: so it can't be like that that if I know Portuguese, a bit of English, a bit and then Finnish and Swedish*

*H: Yes?*

*J: so I can't be a quadrilingual because I only know English and Portuguese a bit.*

Julia thinks that a person needs to have enough competence in the languages to be called bilingual. She uses herself as an example when she defines a bilingual person and discusses the level of language competence needed. She knows Swedish and Finnish well and can therefore be called bilingual. Julia also knows some words in Portuguese since she has been to Portugal several times and she also knows a bit of English. She says that she cannot be called a quadrilingual because she only knows little Portuguese and English. Also the researchers studying bilingualism have different opinions on the level of competence of the languages a bilingual should have to be able to be called bilingual (see ch. 2.1)

## LINNEA

Linnea talks Finnish with her mother and her two younger siblings and both Finnish and Swedish with her father. She has lived in many countries. She was born in England where she lived for four years and started to go to the kindergarten there. Then the family moved back to Finland for a short while and then to Norway where they lived for two or three years. Linnea went to kindergarten there too and also started preschool. She continued in a Swedish pre-school in Finland when they returned back home. She went to a Swedish classroom for two years and then the family moved to Australia for a year and then returned back to Finland. She continued again in the Swedish classroom with her classmates. Now she is on grade four. Linnea has learned both English and Norwegian living abroad. Linnea defines a bilingual or a multilingual person in the following way.

(3)

L: No se osaa niinku monta erilaista kieltä

H: Osaako se yhtä hyvin kaikkia kieliä vai? Voiko joku kieli olla parempi ku joku muu?

L: Joku voi olla parempi tai joku huonompi

H: Niijjust. No osaatko sanoa itsestäs ootko sä kaksikielinen tai monikielinen ihminen?

L: No...mä olen kaksikielinen, suomi ja ruotsi sitä puhutaan eniten, sitte tulee vasta englanti.

*L: Well they know many different languages*

*H: Do they know all the languages equally well or is some language better than the others?*

*L: Some [language] may be better and some weaker*

*H: That's right. Well can you say about yourself are you bilingual or multilingual?*

*L: Well...I am bilingual, Finnish and Swedish I mostly speak those then comes English.*

Linnea has the same opinion as Julia. A person cannot be called multilingual if they only know some of the language. She says that she is bilingual because she uses Finnish and Swedish the most and “then comes English”. This probably means that she does not use English that much compared to the two other languages. Linnea has lived many years in English speaking countries, five years altogether in England and Australia but she does not identify herself as a multilingual person. She states later in the interview

that she thought that starting learning English at school feels nice and easy but feels that she does not know the language enough to be called multilingual. On the other hand she might not be thinking of the competence in the languages but the use of them. In the example she says that *Well...I am bilingual, Finnish and Swedish I mostly speak those then comes English*. Linnea uses Finnish and Swedish at home and English only at school in the English lessons. This seems to be a question of identification more than competence. She does not use English that often anymore. As she was living in England and Australia she was using English every day at school and with her friends. Then again her home languages were still Finnish and Swedish.

#### MIKAEL

Mikael comes from a bilingual family. His mother is Swedish speaking and his father is Finnish speaking. His mother speaks Swedish to all the sons in the family but Finnish to her husband. The oldest son responds the mother in Swedish but the younger sons prefer to talk Finnish to their mother even if she talks Swedish to them. The brothers talk Finnish to each other. All the boys use Swedish when they talk with their Swedish speaking grandparents. Mikael has gone to a Swedish kindergarten and goes to the Swedish classroom in school. This is what he says about a bilingual person.

(4)

M: Mmm no sillä ainakin, se puhuu kahta kieltä ((naurahdus))

....

H: Nii, no ootkos sä ite kaksikielinen?

M: Mmm, öö mä oon kolmekielinen

H: Kolmekielinen?

M: tai oikeestaan mä en osaa enkkua niin hyvin ettää, mää osaan kolmee kieltä mutta, kai kolmekielinen sitte.

*M: Mmm well they have at least, they speak two languages ((laughter))*

....

*H: Yes, well are you bilingual*

*M: Mmm, öö I am trilingual*

*H: Trilingual?*

*M: or actually I don't know English so well that, I know three languages but, I guess I am trilingual.*

Mikael says that a bilingual person speaks two languages. When he is asked if he is bilingual he answers that he is trilingual. He seems a bit uncertain when he is asked for an explanation and says that he does not know English that well. Then he repeats that is thinks he is trilingual. This motivation differs from the ones Julia and Linnea had. Mikael thinks that knowing some of the language could be enough to call a person multilingual. There seems to be some uncertainty in his answer though. He is not sure if the competence he has in English is sufficient in order to make him trilingual. The researchers have different views on this matter. Some of them think that a person has to be fluent in both languages and some of them think that understanding the language is enough (see ch. 2.1).

#### ANTON AND BENJAMIN

Anton and Benjamin are brothers and they talk Finnish with each other and with their friends. They use two different sign languages with their deaf parents. The boys themselves are hearing. They go to a Swedish classroom where only Swedish is used. That means that they use four different languages nearly every day and can therefore be called multilingual. In this study I will concentrate only on the spoken languages they use and leave out the other aspect of sign languages. I only mention the sign languages here in the background information. The boys' first languages were two different sign languages. Anton and Benjamin started learning Swedish in the kindergarten at the age of one in Sweden. Later they went to a Finnish speaking kindergarten in Sweden. They also learnt Finnish from relatives visiting them in Sweden as they were babies. After they moved to Finland they learned some more Finnish and Swedish in the Swedish kindergarten in Finland from the age of three (Benjamin) and five (Anton). Now the boys go to the Swedish classroom at school. They are fluent in four different languages. The next example shows what Anton thinks of a bilingual person. He himself thinks that he is bilingual.

(5)

H: Minkälainen ihmisen pitää olla että sitä voi sanoo kaksikieliseksi?

A: No et se osaa kahtakieltä, varmaan.

H: Nii niijjustiin, osaa kahta kieltä. Pitääks sen osata niitä sitte ihan yhtä hyvin?  
/Vai?/

A: /Ei/ ei sen tarvii nyt nii, kauheen hyvin. Ehkä pääasia et se osaa ihan perusasiat ja tällast

H: Nii. No ootko sä kaksikielinen ihminen?

A: No kyllä

*H: What should the person be like to be considered a bilingual?*

*A: Well they have to know two languages, I think.*

*H: That's right, they know two languages. Do they have to know them in the sama way? / Or?/*

*A:/No/ no they don't have to so awfully well. Maybe the main things are that they know the main things and such.*

*H: Yes. Well are you a bilingual person?*

*A: Well yes.*

Anton is asked how he would define a bilingual person. He says that the person has to know two languages. When he is asked about the level of competence in the languages he says that the basic knowledge is enough. The person does not have to know the languages equally well. In the study of bilingualism the competencies in the two languages are one of the central issues discussed. The researchers have different opinions on the level of competence in the languages. The most traditional view is a balanced bilingual who has a more or less similar competence in the languages but this is in fact very seldom the case (see ch.2.1). Anton says that he is a bilingual person but as the conversation goes on he talks about the four languages he uses nearly on daily basis. He is then asked if he would consider himself multilingual he says he would.

Benjamin was not directly asked about being bilingual or multilingual but it seemed apparent in the interview that he is a multilingual person with a multilingual identity like his brother. Benjamin has a bit different definition of a bilingual person.

(6)

B: No...ei siinä kauheesti eroo oo mutta...sillee...sillee, jos öö välillä aika sama kieli ni voi siinä sekaantua parissa sanassa, mutta, ihan samanlaista mun mielestä

*B: Well...there are not so many differences but...like if the language is quite similar so you can mix up a couple of words, but otherwise it is the same.*

Benjamin says that the bilingual person is not that different from a monolingual one. He says that if the languages are quite similar there might be situations where the bilingual person confuses the words. Benjamin is a multilingual person like his brother Anton. It is possible that he talks of his own experiences with four different languages. If this is

the case it does not clearly come out what languages he is talking about. Does he have experience of mixing the two different sign languages or Swedish and English? It is also possible that he considers the issue on a general level and does not have own experiences in this matter. The researchers have different opinions on the disadvantages of bilingualism. Especially earlier studies made found disadvantages like semi-lingualism and mixing the languages. Recent studies, however, come up with positive results (see ch. 2).

## ONNI

Onni comes from a Finnish speaking family and he talks Finnish to his parents and siblings. He has learned Swedish through a Swedish education program, in other words immersion in kindergarten. He started the Swedish speaking kindergarten when he was five years old. After that he went to a Swedish classroom in school. He uses Swedish only in school. Onni says that a bilingual person speaks two languages fluently.

(7)

O: Noo joka osaa niinkun suomea ja ruotsia ja nii ja puhuu molempia, ihan sujuvasti

H: Joo kyllä, pitääks sen osata niitä molempia kieliä yhtä hyvin täsmälleen vai?

O: Ei ehkä ihan yhtä hyvin tarvii voi olla että osaa vaikka toista kieltä paljon paremmin ku toista.

H: Ootko sää ite kaksikielinen ihminen?

O: No joo mun mielestä varmaan.

*O: Well that knows like Finnish and Swedish and yes and speaks them both quite fluently.*

*H: Yes right, do they have to know them equally well or?*

*O: Maybe not equally well it is possible that you know the other language much better than the other.*

*H: Are you a bilingual person?*

*O: Well yes I guess so.*

Onni states first that both languages have to be spoken fluently. Then he is asked if he thinks that the languages have to be known equally well. According to him the other language could be stronger. This is the situation with himself. He knows both languages well but Finnish is his stronger language, his mother tongue. He has learned Swedish through immersion when he started going to an immersion kindergarten when he was

five. He would be classified as successive bilingual since he has started with the other language after the age of two. (see ch. 2.1) That means that he has learned Swedish for two years before starting school. Onni says thinks he is a bilingual person even if there is a hesitation in his answer. It is hard to say to what grade he is unsure of his identity. He uses quite often the word *varmaan* (I guess so, I think, probably) and in some cases this does not seem like a hesitation. The result is going to be interpreted as he is a bit unsure, in contrast to the children that are very certain of their bilingual identity.

## SATU

Satu has started Swedish immersion in kindergarten at the age of four and has continued in a Swedish classroom at school. She talks only Finnish with her parents at home since they are Finnish speaking. Her older sister is also Finnish speaking and lives on her own. The big sister has not gone through an immersion program but has learnt Swedish at school. Satu uses Swedish only in school when attending classes. Satu gives a definition of a bilingual person.

(8)

S: Mmm no enimmäkseen sellane joka osaa kahta kieltä niinku puhua nii sellane ja. Siinä voi tulla myös mieleen mulla nii ruotsinsuomalainen ihminen joka osaa suomee ja ruotsii tietenki nii

H: Mmm. Nii nii justiin, kyllä kyllä. Eli osaa kahta kieltä ja tota ootsä ite kaksikielinen?

S: Noo osittain ehkä, mutta ei siis mistää suvusta, että mun äiti tai isä ei oo mikään ruotsalainen vaan se on päiväkodista tullu se ruotsi.

*S: Mmm well mostly a person who knows two languages and speaks them. I also think of a person that is a Swedish Finn that knows Finnish and Swedish ofcourse.*

*H: Mmm. That's right yes. So they know two languages and well are you yourself a bilingual person?*

*S: Well maybe partly, but it is not in the family, my mother and father are not Swedish I have learnt Swedish at kindergarten.*

Satu says that a bilingual person is someone who is able to speak two languages. She comes to think of a Swedish-Finn that knows two languages. She feels a bit uncertain of her own situation. She says that she is partly bilingual because her parents are not Swedish and she does not have Swedish speaking relatives. She says that she has learned Swedish in the kindergarten. This seems to be a matter of identification. Satu



thinks that a true bilingual has grown in a bilingual home where two languages are spoken. That is why she says that she is only partly bilingual since she has learned Swedish in kindergarten and not from her parents. This definition is similar to the traditional view on bilingualism, childhood bilingualism, where the languages have to be acquired simultaneously from early childhood and at home (see ch. 2.1).

## PIIA

Piia has started a Swedish immersion program at the age of two. She goes to a Swedish classroom and uses Swedish mainly in school. Piia's home language is Finnish i.e. she speaks Finnish with her parents and brother. Piia also uses Swedish when she is in contact with her friends that live in Southern Finland. They use only Swedish when they call to each other nearly every day. Piia says that a bilingual person is doing well at school and work and when they apply for working life practice. She says that it is good that you can yourself learn something from a bilingual person. This is how she continues her definition.

(9)

H: Nii että, vielä vähä tarkemmin et m- mite sä ajattelit et minkälainen ihminen kaksikielinen, millätavalla se kieliä, puhuu?

P: Noo yleensä se on nii että, toinen kieli on semmone että tavallaan äidinkieli on yleensä semmonen missä se puhuu just lyhenteillä ja niinku silleen niinku me puhutaan suomee että me ei puhuta puhekielellä mutta sitten taas jos, meneeki niinku, esimerkiks me ku me opetellaan englantia niinku sanoilla ni, siis me mennään Englantiin nii kyllähä ne puhuu vähä niinku iha eri aksentilla ja,

*H: That's right what would you say about the languages a bilingual person has, how do they talk the languages?*

*P: Well it is usually like this that the other language is like kind of the mother tongue in which you use abbreviations and sort of like when we speak Finnish that we don't use the spoken language but then again if you go to like for example when we learn English like with words so, when we go to England so they do talk with another accent and,*

As Piia is asked how a bilingual person uses the languages she says that the other language is like the mother tongue where you can use abbreviations. Then she says that when we speak Finnish we do not use spoken language. It is possible that she mixed up the terms spoken and written language and meant that we can use spoken language when we are talking Finnish. She says that compared to us speaking English the English use a different accent when they are talking.

(10)

H: No mites ootkosä itse kaksikielinen ihminen?

P: Nooh emmä tiiä ((naurahdus)) kyl sitä ruotsia osaan mut on mulla suomi on vä- ihan vähä vahvempi kuitenkin että

H: *Well are you a bilingual person?*

P: *Well I don't know ((laughter)) I know Swedish but Finnish is a bit stronger anyway so*

Piia is asked if she considers herself bilingual and she says that she does not know since Finnish is her stronger language even if she also knows Swedish. Earlier in the interview she stated that she has an equal competence in the languages but here she changes her opinion. She seems, however, quite certain with her competence in Swedish. Later in the interview she tells that she has been helping her mother and brother with Swedish. On the other hand, she seems to think that the languages have to be equally strong. The researchers have different views on the definitions of bilingualism. Bilingualism can be defined according to the age and the order the languages are learned. Also the aspect of competence is one way to define bilingualism. (See chapter 2.1) Piia has started learning Swedish at the age of two in a Swedish kindergarten and could be called a simultaneous bilingual since the acquisition of the language started that early. She also uses Swedish with her Swedish speaking friend which means that she is also exposed to Swedish outside school. It is possible that she does not so clearly identify herself as bilingual because she has Finnish speaking parents and she does not use Swedish at home.

#### EEMIL AND TERESA

Eemil and Teresa's father is Finnish speaking and their mother is a bilingual but she talks Finnish with her children. Eemil communicated also in Swedish with his Swedish grandmother until he was 19 months old but then his grandmother passed away. He learnt to say a few words in Swedish and seemed to understand what his grandmother talked to him. Teresa did not have the same possibility since her grandmother died before she was born. Eemil and Teresa speak Finnish to each other and to both their parents. Eemil and Teresa's mother read books in Swedish to both of the children when they were born and is still doing that. So the children were and still are exposed to Swedish even at home to some degree. Eemil started a Finnish daycare at the age on nine months and stayed there until his sister was born when he was one year and nine

months. The children started a Swedish kindergarten at the age of three years (Eemil) and 15 months (Teresa). In Eemil and Teresa's case one could say that they went through an immersion like phase, but they knew a bit of Swedish before they attended the kindergarten. After the kindergarten they went to a Swedish classroom in school. Eemil and Teresa will be considered immersion children in this study since they are not exposed to Swedish every day at home. This is how Eemil defines a bilingual person.

(11)

E: Se on sellane, et se puhuu niinku öö et se osaa puhua niinku kahta kieltä ihan silleen sujuvasti ja käyttää niinku arkipäivinä kumpaaki. Toista ei ehkä ihan yhtä paljon mutta, ei vaan niinku joskus harvon puhu, mut niinku että, vähän myös arkipäivinä käyttää sitä kieltä sitä toista.

H: Mmm, joo. Osaakse molempia kieliä yhtä hyvin vai?

E: Noo toista kieltä ehkä vähä huonommin tai emmä tiä se saattaa vaihella.

*E: They are like, they talk like they can speak like two languages quite fluently and use both the languages on daily basis. Maybe not so much of the other language but they don't very seldom speak it but like also use the language in everyday life.*

*H: Mmm, yes. Do they know the languages equally well or?*

*E: Well the other language might be a bit weaker or I don't know it may vary.*

Eemil says that the person uses both the languages in everyday life. He probably thinks of himself when giving this definition. Eemil uses both Finnish and Swedish every day. According to him the other language might not be used equally much but, however, on daily basis. The use of the languages is also one aspect that has been taken into consideration in research when discussing bilingualism. When he is asked if the languages have to be equally good he says that it is not necessary and that it can vary between different people. Eemil is then asked if he knows any bilingual people.

(12)

H: Joo tunnetko sä ketään kaksikielistä ihmistä?

E: Noo ((naurahdus)) mä ite oon kaksikielinen ainaki ja, kaikki mejän luokalta yks viiva kuus är...ni ja äiti on myös, ja pikkusisko

*H: Yes do you know any bilingual people?*

*E: Well ((laughter)) I am at least and, everyone in our class are from [grades] one to six R...yes and my mother is too and my little sister*

Eemil seems quite sure about his own bilingual identity as he says that at least he himself is bilingual. Then he lists other bilingual people like his classmates, his mother and his little sister Teresa. Eemil is classified here as a child with immersion background but in contrast to the other immersion children he more certain of his bilingual identity. This can be due to the fact that he is also exposed to Swedish at home and his mother is bilingual. He identifies himself with his mother more that he does with his monolingual father. Bilingualism is, as mentioned, a matter of identification, the way a person feels about themselves. It is also the way other people see them. If the other people consider a person bilingual it is strong evidence on that they are bilingual. (see ch. 2.1) Eemil says that all his classmates are bilingual. The classmates, obviously, have different backgrounds but they share many characteristics like knowing Swedish very well in contrast to other pupils at the Finnish school.

In the following example Teresa has a few additions to the previous definitions of bilingual people.

(13)

T: Öö se tarkoittaa sitä esimerkiks sitä, että jos on suomenruotsalainen niin että osaa kahta kieltä

H: Mmm

T: ja...niin...on aika pienestä asti osannu ja silleen

H: Joo. No ootko sä ite kaksikielinen?

T: Oon

*T: Öö it means for example that if you are a Finnish Swede so you know two languages*

H: Mmm

*T: and...yes...has known them since they were little and such*

H: Yes. Well are you bilingual?

*T: Yes I am.*

Teresa says that a bilingual person knows two languages and has known them since they were small. This is a fact that has not been stated yet. The age of acquisition of the languages is a variable that is also discussed in the definition of bilingualism (see ch.2.1) Teresa considers herself bilingual and she has started learning Swedish at a very young age. She started going to a Swedish kindergarten at the age of 15 months and were exposed to Swedish before that listening to her mother reading in Swedish.

In the next table the concept of the children's own bilingualism is shown. They answered the question "Are you bilingual or multilingual?"

<b>CERTAIN OF THEIR BI- OR MULTILINGUALISM</b>	<b>UNCERTAIN OF THEIR BILINGUALISM</b>
Anton	Onni
Benjamin	Piia
Camilla	Satu
Eemil	
Julia	
Linnea	
Mikael	
Teresa	

**Table 2. The children's concept of their own bilingualism or multilingualism**

The majority, 8/11 children, considered themselves bilingual or multilingual. Three children with immersion background were slightly unsure about their bilingual identity. One of the children, Piia, said that she does not know whether she is bilingual or not because her Finnish is stronger. Two other children, Satu and Onni, were also a bit uncertain. Satu said that she is partly bilingual since she has learned Swedish in the daycare but she does not have Swedish speaking relatives. Onni said that he himself thinks he is bilingual. It is difficult to say how unsure Onni is about his identity as he says *Well yes I guess so*. Otherwise he is a very confident language user as later comes out in the interview. Onni does not clarify his answer and it seems that he knows he is bilingual but leaves the question open for the interviewer to comment on. Piia seems to think that a bilingual has to be equally strong in the languages they use. According to definitions of different researchers she would be classified a simultaneous bilingual because she started learning Swedish at the age of two. She also uses Swedish on daily basis at school and when she is calling her Swedish speaking friend. It is also the most natural thing that one of the languages is stronger than the other. According to Börestam & Huss (2001: 54) the individuals themselves may have very different views on

bilingualism and demand a native-like competence in two languages to be able to call themselves bilinguals or then they may be satisfied with a lower level of competence. Satu says that she is partly bilingual because she has learned the language at school and she does not have Swedish relatives. According to researchers a person can become bilingual through immersion without any background for that language (see ch. 3). Bilingualism is also a matter of identity. If a person identifies themselves bilingual and the other members in the community think the person is bilingual they can be considered bilingual. It seems that the children with immersion background do not have a clear bilingual identity since they mainly speak Swedish at school and not at home.

However, the fact that the informants being interviewed for this study are children, it is probably more common that they are somewhat unsure in these kinds of interview situations. The informants sometimes might want to give “the correct answer” and do not necessarily give their own true opinion. Some of the children gave contradictory answers when they defined bilingualism and issues related to that. Therefore it is not easy to categorize the answers on their bilingual identity. The children that seemed uncertain were, however, put in the category “Uncertain of their bilingualism” (see table 2). It is hard to say whether the uncertainty was also caused by the interview situation or if they found it difficult to give definitions overall. The latter case would be very natural since researchers themselves have different views on matters concerning bilingualism.

The children coming from bilingual or multilingual homes were certain about their bilingualism or multilingualism in contrast to the children that had an immersion background. Eemil and Teresa fall between these two categories since they are to some extent exposed to Swedish at home even if they have an immersion background. Eemil learned some Swedish with his grandmother before starting with immersion and both the children have listened to their bilingual mother reading books in Swedish. They have also visited relatives in Sweden several times and heard some more Swedish. Eemil and Teresa have a bilingual identity like Camilla, Julia, Linnea, Mikael, Anton and Benjamin. It is probable that they identify themselves with their bilingual mother instead of their monolingual father. Nearly all the interviewed children and their families belong to a Swedish society that has different activities in the leisure time. The bilingual and monolingual families belonging to this society spend some time together every once in a while e.g. such as skiing or paddling together and baking ginger bread houses at Christmas. This strengthens the bilingual identity the children have and their

competence in Swedish when they meet other bilingual people and hear Swedish even outside school.

## 5.2 The benefits of language learning

All the interviewed children experienced that bilingualism was beneficial for them for several different reasons. The opinions of the children will be presented in this chapter with some examples.

### 5.2.1 The ability to talk to different people

Most of the children, that is seven out of eleven children, stated that they have great use of knowing different languages since they would be able to talk to different people abroad. It is possible that the rest of the children also had the same experience but it did not clearly come out in their answers. Some of the children were asked about the benefit of being bilingual and some children answered the question of what use they would have if they knew many languages. In some cases the children talk about the benefits they have had so far and in some cases they think of the advantages in future. Julia, Camilla, Satu and Eemil talk about the benefits of being bilingual.

Julia tells that she has had the possibility to use her Swedish in an amusement park where she had been talking to Swedish speaking people.

(14)

H: Niijjust kyllä, no tota mitäs hyötyä sulle on ollu siitä nyt tähän mennessä kun sä oot kaksikielinen ihminen? Et sä osaat suomee ja ruotsia tosi hyvin?

J: Nooh...jossain kuten vaikka, noo jossain huvipuistossa kun oon ollu ruotsinkielisiä, niin mä oon pystyny puhumaan niitten kaa.

*H: That's right yes, well what use have you had so far of that you are a bilingual person? That you know Finnish and Swedish really well?*

*J: Well...somewhere like, well in some amusement park there has been Swedish talking people, so I have been able to talk with them.*

Julia speaks Swedish in her daily life at school and at home but in other environments as she is living in Central Finland she hasn't had so many possibilities to talk Swedish outside home and school. She has been able to use Swedish in an amusement park

where she met Swedish speaking people. In Finland all people are not so willing to talk Swedish with the Swedish speaking population due to the lack of competence or uncertainty of the competence and in some cases the attitude towards Swedish. However, this bilingual child was happy about this opportunity to speak her other mother tongue, Swedish.

Camilla states that it is useful to know the two languages of Finland since as she travels it is easy to communicate with different people when you know the same language. Piia had the same thoughts as Camilla. If you travel to a Swedish speaking environment in Finland it would be useful to also know Swedish.

(15)

H: Nii toine ymmärtää, kyllä. Entäs sitte tulevaisuudessa mitä hyötyä sulla on kaksikielisyydestä?

C: Mmm no ainaki silloin kun Suomessa on ruotsi ja suomi on semmoset niinku ...öö tavallisimmat kielet

H:/Joo/

C: /nii/ sitte jos sää matkustelet Suomessa nii sitte erilaisissa kaupungeissa missä myös puhutaan ruotsia niin siellä on helppo niinku puhuu toisten kaa ku osaa samaa kieltä.

*H: Yes the other person will understand, yes. What about in the future how would you benefit from being bilingual?*

*C: Mmm well at least as Swedish and Finnish are like...the most common languages in Finland*

*H:/Yes/*

*C: /so/ when you travel in Finland in different cities where they also speak Swedish so it's easy to talk with the others when you know the same language.*

Camilla says that it is easy to talk to people if you can use the same language as them. She refers to Swedish places in Finland where Swedish is spoken. Camilla has Swedish speaking relatives living in Finland so she has her own experience about using Swedish in Finland outside her home and school. Camilla says in the next example that if you are travelling and need help it is possible that everyone doesn't know English. Then it is useful if you know the other language and are able to communicate.

Satu thinks it is good that she is able to speak Swedish in Sweden and does not have to use English. Finnish people can be quite shy in speaking Swedish in Sweden and quite



often prefer using English even if they have studied Swedish at school and know some Swedish.

(16)

S: Noo me käydään yleensä ää aika monenaki kesänä ollaan käyty Ruotsissa, nii siellä on sille hyötyä että voi ihan puhua sitä kieltä mitä osaa hyvin ja nii ei tarvitse puhua niinku englantia tai nii.

*S: Well we travel normally we have quite often been to Sweden in summertime so it is useful to be able to talk the language that you know well and so you don't have to talk English or so.*

Satu prefers talking Swedish in Sweden instead of using English. She says it is nice to be able to talk a language that she knows well and does not have to speak English. Satu is bilingual and obviously wants to use Swedish in Sweden instead of English. She feels a bit uncertain about speaking English which is quite natural since she has only studied it for two months at school.

Eemil also gives a personal example. He says that it is useful to know Swedish because then you can talk Swedish with the people and understand what they say.

(17)

E: Nii että öö siitä ku osaa ruotsia ni on siitä hyötyä jos menee Ruotsiin, nii siellä voi sitte ööh siellä osaa sitte puhua ja ymmärtää mitä ne muut puhuu ja sitte myös sitte pikkuserkkujen kaa voi, puhua siellä

H: Mmm

E: koska ji- jos mä en osais ruotsia ni...

H: Nii sä et /pystyis/ puhumaan niitten kanssa

E: /Nii/

*E: Well that öö if you know Swedish so it is useful if you travel to Sweden, so you can talk there and understand what the others talk and then I can talk with my second cousins there*

H: Mmm

*E: because if I didn't know Swedish then...*

*H: You wouldn't /be able/ to speak with them.*

*E: /Yes/*

Eemil gives another example that is more detailed. He says that he is able to talk with his second cousins that are of the same age as he and his sister. He has met the second

cousins several times and has been able to communicate with them without problems even if he himself uses Finnish Swedish and the cousins use a Swedish Swedish variant. The variants differ slightly in the vocabulary and in the pronunciation.

The examples above had to do with the benefits of being bilingual. The next examples have to do with knowing languages in general. In the next example Anton states that he can talk to many different people in different countries if he knows many languages.

(18)

H: No mitäs hyötyä sulle on ollu nyt siitä et sä osaat montaa kieltä?

A: Mää voin puhua monelle eri kieltä. Jos mää oon jossai Englannissa mä voin puhua sitä kieltä ja, jos menen Ruotsiin voin puhua ruotsia ja Suomessa voi puhua suomee ja, tällee.

*H: Well what use have you had now when you can speak many languages?*

*A: I can talk many languages to many people. If I am in England I can talk the language and, if I go to Sweden I can talk Swedish and in Finland I can talk Finnish and, such.*

Anton gives some examples of languages he can speak in different countries. He says that he can speak English in England, Swedish in Sweden and Finnish in Finland if he knows the languages. Anton has already experienced speaking different languages in different countries. It came out in the interview that he had spoken English in Croatia. He seems to be a quite confident English speaker already.

Onni and Camilla have similar examples. Onni says that he would have use of knowing different languages when he travels abroad. The people there would understand him when he talked their language.

(19)

O: No jos menee jonneki ulkomaille ni sitte, ku sä puhut niiden kieltä ni sitte sä ne ymmärtää sua ja, mmm

*O: Well if you travel abroad so then, when you talk their language so then you they understand you and, mmm*

Camilla says that it is easier to understand each other if you have a common language. Everyone does not necessarily know English. It is important to choose the right language “so you would not start talking Finnish to a Spanish person”.

(20)

C: No jos matkustelee paljon ja tarvii johonki apua nii sit on helppo niinku jos joku ei osaa englantia nii että voi sitte niinku vähä sillen niinku... pystyy silleen ymmärtää toisia paremmin niinettä, esim että joku ei osaa englantia ja sä et osaa mitää muuta kieltä

H: /Nii/

C /ni sitte/ ettei yhtäkkiä ala puhua mitää suomee espanjalaiselle. ((naurahdus))

*C: Well if you travel a lot and need help with something so it is easy like if someone doesn't talk English so you can like kind of... understand the others better like if someone doesn't know English and you don't know any other language.*

H: /Yes/

*C: /so/ you would not all of a sudden start talking Finnish to a Spanish person. ((laughter))*

The children gave examples on how knowing languages would be beneficial when they travel abroad. They did not talk about how they would use foreign languages in Finland in different situations like at school or when talking to foreigners. The languages seemed to be connected with the countries themselves which clearly shows in Anton's example (...) *If I am in England I can talk the language and, if I go to Sweden I can talk Swedish and in Finland I can talk Finnish and, such.* This is something that also Aro (2009) found in her material with monolingual children. The children seem to connect the languages with the countries where the languages are spoken and do not come to think of other possibilities to use the languages. Camilla and Julia give also examples on using Swedish in Finland. This theme is more closely related to their lives since they themselves use the second official language, Swedish, in their daily lives.

### **5.2.2 The ability to help different people**

Two of the children thought that they would be able to help other people if they knew many languages. Piia is telling about her own experiences and Linnea is referring to possible situations in life. Piia says that she has worked as an interpreter while she was in Sweden with her grandparents. She has also helped her mother and brother when they needed help in Swedish. In the beginning of the dialogue I repeat the languages Piia told she wanted to study in the future.

(21)

H: Ranska ja italia ja espanja. No tota onkos sulle ollu hyötyä siitä et sä osaat ruotsia ja suomee molempia tosi hyvin?

P: Joo, mä oon toiminu tulkkina mummolle ja ukille

H: Aha

P: Koska ne ei osaa ruotsii justuinsa yhtään ni ku me oltiin Ruotsissa niiden kaa ni,

H: Nii

P: siellä

H: Niijjustiin joo, entäs tuleeko muita tilanteita mieleen, missä vois olla hyötyä?

P: No just se kun mä oon auttanu äitiä töissä ja isoveljeä.

*H: French and Italian and Spanish. Well have you had benefit from the fact that you know both Swedish and Finnish really well?*

*P: Yes, I have worked as an interpreter for my Grandmother and Grandfather.*

*H: Okay*

*P: Because they don't know Swedish at all when we were in Sweden with them so,*

*H: Yes*

*P: there.*

*H: That's right yes, well can you think of other situations, where you could have use of Swedish?*

*P: Well it was when I helped my mother and brother with their work.*

According to Piia the grandparents do not know so much Swedish so she has been helping them on their trip to Sweden. Piia has also helped her mother in her work with translating some words into Swedish from Finnish and vice versa. She has also helped her brother with his homework in Swedish and he has helped her with English. Piia seems to be very confident with her languages as she is already helping her mother and brother and also interpreted Swedish to her grandparents on their trip to Sweden. Piia also told that she had learned English when her mother has translated words Piia has said in Swedish into English and stated that it is easy to learn the language in that way.

Linnea answers the same question. She thinks knowing many languages would be useful if you have to help people abroad. She thinks of the possibility to guide other people if they got lost.

(22)

L: No onhan siitä [hyötyä] jos menee johonki maahan ni onhan se, Italiaan ni sittenhän se on paljon ihmisiä jotka ei varmaan tiedä minne menee ni voihan niitä opastaa ja pitäähää sitä kieltäki osata.

*L: Well it is [useful] if you go to a country so it is, to Italy then there could be a lot of people that didn't know where they were going so you can guide them and you have to know the language as well.*

Linnea thinks that there could be a lot of people in different countries that might need help for example in Italy. She could guide them if they didn't know where to go. Linnea thinks you have to know the language too to be able to help the people.

In this chapter two of the interviewed children told that knowing languages would be useful for them because they would be able to help other people. Piia talked about the benefit of being bilingual and Linnea about the benefit of knowing languages in general.

### 5.2.3 Easier to learn other languages

The children experienced that they had advantage of knowing languages when they started to learn English. The children were asked if they thought knowing Swedish has helped them when they learn English or other languages. Three of the children stated that they have advantage of Swedish when they are learning other languages. All the children used Swedish as a learning strategy (see 5.3.3) but only these three informants explicitly gave the answer that it is easier to learn English if you know Swedish. One reason could also be that they were not asked the question so clearly. The same themes were discussed but everyone did not get this particular question. Onni tells that he is able to go to a Swedish school and that he knows Swedish better than the pupils that are not in the Swedish school when he is asked about what benefit he has had of being bilingual. Then he is asked about if he thinks knowing Swedish helps him in learning other languages.

(23)

H: Joo tota hyödyttääkö tää ruotsinkielen osaaminen sun mielestä nyt kun sä opiskelet muita kieliä?

O: No joo, just niinku että neon se on aika samanlainen ku esim just saksa ja englanti ja sellaiset et...

*H: Yes well do you think it is useful to know Swedish now when you study other languages?*

*O: Well yes, it's like it is quite the same with for example German and English and [languages] like that...*

Onni says that knowing Swedish helps him in learning other languages. Onni compares Swedish with German and English and says they are similar. First he told that he knew a few words of German but did not think the languages were similar, but after he heard words like willkommen (welcome), danke (thank you) he said that the German words were like the similar words in Swedish and English. Onni points out the similarities with Swedish and English when he reports of using Swedish as a learning strategy. This is also the case with the other children. (see ch 5.3.3)

Julia has experienced that it was easier to understand English as she knew Swedish. She had heard English speaking people talk at the airport.

(24)

J: tai siellä lentokentällä ni siellä on ollu englanninkielisiä niin mä voin vähä niinku tietää mitäh, ne sanoo kun, mä, osaan ruotsia.

*J: or at the airport there has been English speaking [people] so I can like know what, they say when, I, know Swedish.*

Julia thinks that knowing Swedish helps her understand what people say when they speak English. The conversation continues with Julia saying that it is easy to learn languages in the future if you know a few languages. She also thinks it is easier to learn English when she knows Finnish and Swedish.

(25)

H: Mmm niijustiin kyllä, se onki ihan hieno juttu, no entäs tulevaisuudessa mitä hyötyä näät et sulle on siitä et sä osaat paljon kieliä tulevaisuudessa?

J: Noo kieliä on helppo sit oppia jos tietää muutaman kielen.

H: Joo, nii, eli tuntuuko susta et sun on nyt helppo oppia uusia kieliä niinku englantia kun sä jo osaat kahta kieltä?

J: Mmm ((muiden lasten taustahälyä))

*H: Mmm that's right yes, that's great, well what about in the future how do you think you can benefit from knowing a lot of languages in the future?*

*J: Well it is easier to learn if you already know some languages.*

*H: Yes, so do you feel that it is easier for you to learn new languages like English now when you already know two languages?*

*J: Mmm (( background noise from other children))*

Teresa also agrees with this. She cites her teacher saying that the Swedish speaking pupils start with English later because it is easier for them because of their knowledge in Swedish.

(26)

H: Aha joo. No luuletko sä että sulle on ollu hyötyä siitä, että sä jo osaat ruotsia ku sä opiskelet nyt englantia?

T: Joo esimerkiksi ope sano että täällä ruotsinkielisessä luokassa alotetaan englanti sen takia myöhemmin kun se on paljo helpompi oppia sit se sano että kuitenkin sitte yläasteella on kaikki ihan yhtä hyviä ja just nää ruotsinkieliset ehkä vähän parempia.

*H: Okay yes. Well do you think that you have benefited from that that you know Swedish now when you study English?*

*T: Yes for example our teacher said that we start English later here because it is much easier for us to learn and in junior high we are all equally good and these Swedish speaking maybe a bit better.*

It seems to be general knowledge for the bilingual children that knowing Swedish helps in learning English. When the Swedish speaking pupils enter junior high they will have reached the other pupils in English even if they have started one or two years later with English or even better they will be more competent in English than the other students according to the teacher that Teresa cites. Teresa continues listing words that are similar in Swedish and English.

(27)

H: Niin, ootsä oppinu muita sanoja jotka on melkein samanlaisia...tuleeks sulle mieleen?

T: Hmm no esimerkiks **blue** ja blå on melkein samanlaisia ja sitten orange ja **orange**

H: Nii

T: nii se on aika helppoo silleen

*H: Yes, have you learnt other words that are nearly the same...can you think of?*

*T: Hmm well for example **blue** and blå are nearly the same and then orange and **orange**.*

*H: Yes*

*T: So it is quite easy like that.*

Teresa gives examples of words that are quite similar in Swedish and English and says that it is easy to learn the language when the languages are that similar. Also Piia finds it easy to learn English through Swedish. The same thought came clearly out in the interviews made with the children. The fact that it is easier for bilinguals to learn new languages comes clearly out in several studies (see e.g. Albert and Obler 1978, Cenoz 2003, Klein 1995). The children in the present study felt they benefited from knowing Swedish when learning English, a similar language that belongs to the same language group, the Germanic languages. Similar findings have been made in other studies as well. Keshavarz och Bahrainy (2002) and Thomas (1988) found out in their studies that the individuals had a benefit from knowing a language related to the new language being learned. Therefore it is important to take the typology of the language into consideration as a variable in the study on bilingualism (see ch. 2.4).



In the following example Piia tells about her mother translating words from Swedish to English probably to help Piia learn the new language.

(28)

H: Missäs sä olit oppinu sitte englantia aiemmin

P: Noo iha kotona ja sit ku äiti tekee työtä nii sit siinäki, jos se kysyy esimerkiksi et voisinks mää sanoo jonkun ruotsinkielisen sanan ja sitte se aina vaan kertoo mulle että se on englanniks tämmönen ja niin, se kan-kääntää englannista ruotsiinki

H: Ymhy joo, elikä se pyysi sinua sanomaan, ruotsinkielisen sanan ja sit sano ite sen englanniks?

P: Nii

H: Niijust, no tuntuko susta et sun oli helppo oppia tällee ruotsia englannin... kautta

P: Joo

*H: Where did you learn English before*

*P: Well at home and when mom is working so therefrom, if she asks [me] for instance to say a word in Swedish and then she tells me the word in English and yes, she translates it from English to Swedish*

*H: Ymhy yes, so she asked you to say a word in Swedish and then she said it herself in English?*

*P: Yes*

*H: That's right, well do you think it is easy to learn Swedish in this way through English*

*P: Yes*

In the example above Piia tells about her mother who is working at home and at the same time she asks her daughter to say words in Swedish and then translates them into English. This is probably because she wants to teach English to her daughter. The interviewer asks [...] *well do you think it is easy to learn Swedish in this way through English* when she in fact meant to ask about learning English with the help of Swedish. This is, however, quite clear to Piia and it does not cause any misunderstandings. The conversation goes on about the benefits of knowing Swedish when learning English. In another part in the interview Piia tells that she has been helping her mother and brother with Swedish when they are working and doing their homework and they assist her with her English (see ch. 5.2.2) The interest to learning languages comes often from the homes and the families play a big part in motivating their children to learn languages. This is something many researchers have pointed out (see Peal and Lambert 1962, Pystynen 2013)

#### 5.2.4 In future working life and studies

The majority on the children thought that they would benefit in future working life and studies when knowing many languages. Anton, Benjamin, Mikael, Eemil, Satu and Piia stated this opinion when asked about what benefit they have from knowing many languages or as they are bilingual. Anton says he would probably get an easier work place. It is also possible that he meant that he would more easily get a work place.

(29)

H: Nii kyllä, se on tosi hyvä. No entäs tulevaisuudessa mitä hyötyä sulle on siitä et sä osaat montaa kieltä?

A: Varmaan saan ehkä jotain helpomman työpaikan ehkä, jossain paikoissa.

H: *Yes, that is really fine. Well in the future how would you benefit from knowing many languages?*

A: *I would probably get an easier job maybe, in some places.*

It is difficult to say what Anton means as he states that *I would probably get an easier job maybe, in some places*. He possibly means that he would benefit from knowing many languages at certain workplaces where competence in many languages are valued. Another explanation could be that he refers to different places in Finland where bilingualism would be appreciated.

Both Benjamin and Mikael thought bilingualism and knowing many languages would help them land a working place in the future.

(30)

B: Töissä, jos mä meen ni, aika helposti pääsee johonki jos osaa montaa kieltä.

B: *At work, if I go so, it is quite easy to get somewhere if you know many languages.*

Benjamin says that it is easy to get a job if you know many languages. He seems to be quite certain of this fact. These types of statements are probably truths and so called general knowledge the children have heard the parents or teachers talk about and now they are also the children's opinions. In the next example Mikael goes into details thinking of how he would benefit from knowing many languages.

(31)

M: On jos vaikka on niiku tietokoneella niinku töi- on töissä ja käyttää tietokonetta sitte ja se niinku, kirjottaa eri kielillä.

*M: Yes if you use the computer like for wor- you work and use the computer and like write in different languages.*

Mikael says he would be able to write in different languages if needed at work. He has already been thinking about how he could use the languages he knows at work and he has also thought about the tasks he has to do when he is in working life.

Satu and Piia give many reasons for why it would be useful for them to know many different languages in future. Piia mentions applying for the future working place and working there.

(32)

P: Työssä ja työpaikan haussa justiinsa ja sit jos käy eri maissa ni siellä on helppoo tai jos joskus muuttas jonnekin paikkakunnalle jossa puhutaan sitä kieltä.

*P: At work and applying for a job that's right and if you go to different countries so it is easy there or if you sometimes move to another place where they talk that language.*

Piia thinks she would benefit in future working life if she knew many languages. She also mentions travelling to different countries and also moving to a city in Finland with a certain language. Most cities in Finland have Finnish as their majority language but there are also Swedish cities or bilingual cities. Piia pointed to this possibility. She could move to a city with Swedish as the main language and would be able to use her Swedish.

Satu states that she would benefit from being bilingual both in working life and when she applies for a place of study. She also tells that her mother has told her that it would be easier to get a study place in the veterinarian school if she knew two languages.

(33)

S: Noo siitä on tulevaisuudessa silleen hyötyä et siin saa ehkä niinku paremmin töitä haettu ku osaa kahta kieltä niin pystyy palvelemaan esimerkiks asiakkaita ku mun tulevaisuuden haave on ollu pitkäni aikaa se et musta tulis eläinlääkäri nii mun äiti sanoo aina et tota sitte että nii eläinlääkäriks hakemisessa nii sinne opiskelemaan nii siinä auttaa aika paljon se jos osaa kahta kieltä.

H: Mmm

S: Nii pystyy palvelemaan ihan niinku ruotsinkielisiä asiakkaita ihan omalla kielellä.

*S: Well in the future I would benefit in that way that I would probably get a job easier when I know two languages so I can serve people because my future dream has been for a long time that I became a veterinarian so my mother always says that when you apply for studying to a veterinarian it is useful if you know two languages.*

H: Mmm

*S: Then you can serve the Swedish speaking people in their own language.*

Satu clearly knows the advantages she has as she is competent in Swedish. It is highly valued and it is easier to land a study place and also a working place if you are fluent in Swedish in Finland which has two official languages. Satu says that she would be able to serve Swedish speaking people in their own mother tongue. Satu has lived in Southern Finland before moving to Central Finland and she has most certainly come into contact with Swedish speaking Finns there as it is widely a bilingual area in contrast to Central Finland.

Eemil shares the same thoughts. He says that if you know Swedish you have advantages at work.

(34)

E: No jotkut työt on niinku vaikka että siinä ruotsinkieli niinku jos osaa ni on hyvä vaikka jos on joku, vaikka nyt vaikka jos on jossain joku vaikka joku myyntih- päällikkö vai mikä lie, joku sellane sitte niinku eri maiden välillä pitää niinku eri kieltä osata ja

H: /Mmm/

E: /joskus/ sanoo jotain.

*E: Well some work like that you have Swedish if you know it then it's good if you are a sales manager or whatever somebody that [takes care of business] between different countries and has to know different languages and*

H: /Mmm/

*E: /sometimes/ say something.*

Eemil first talks about why knowing Swedish would be useful if you work for instance as a sales manager. Then he goes on saying that if you have to use different languages at work when dealing with businesses between countries it is good to know the

language. It is possible that he means knowing languages in general and not only Swedish.

It came clearly out that the children know what benefits they have when knowing many languages. Also being bilingual is an appreciated issue. It is most evident that these themes have been discussed in the homes and the parents have given reasons and motivations for why knowing languages is good and what advantages the children would have in the future. Also the positive attitude is apparently something they have learned from home. The fact that these children already are competent in two languages gives them an open mind and wakes the interest to study even more languages. This is something that Gürler (2013) also pointed out in her study (see 2.4).

### **5.3 Thoughts about language learning**

The children seem to have a very positive feeling about language learning. As they are already bilinguals they know two languages and seem to be open to and willing to learn more languages. They have also a wide knowledge of different languages. In the interview the children were asked to name different languages and they came up with long lists of languages they knew. They could also describe many characteristics in the languages and if the languages were related to each other. Even quite detailed information came up in the interviews. Here is one example Teresa gave when she discussed languages that were related to English and Swedish.

(35)

T: yheksänkyt kuus prosenttia on samoja sanoja norjassa ku ruot-[sissa]

*T: ninety-six percent of the words are same in Norwegian and Swedish*

The children think it is easy for them to learn English and they are interested in learning new languages in future. The children were asked about how they felt about studying English and what languages they wanted to learn in future.

### 5.3.1 Learning English

The interviewed children, aged 9-12 years, have started learning English at level four or five and they are on levels four, five and six at school. That means that some of the interviewees have studied English for over a year and some of them have only started. The interviews were made in September and October which means that the children have learnt English at school for one year and two or three months or only for two or three months. Camilla and Anton have started learning English earlier and the rest of the children have started later. All the children knew some English before they started to learn it in school. They have learned it from their parents and other relatives, from TV and computer games.

All the children thought it was fun to start learning English at school. Since all the children knew a little English in advance it was easy to start. Two of the children said it was hard in the beginning but that it is easier now when they have learnt more.

Onni thinks starting with English feels easy and nice. He says that he has learnt it from computer games or TV and already had a good knowledge in it.

(36)

O: No aika helpolta koska mä osasin jo englantii ennestään vaikka kukaan ei oo opettanu mulle, koska mä oon oppinu sitä ehkä jostain tietokonepeleistä tai teeveestä ja osasin sen aika hyvin jo.

*O: Well quite easy because I knew it already even if nobody has thought me because I have maybe learnt it from some computer games or TV and have good knowledge in it.*

Onni feels quite sure about himself concerning competence in English. He has already used English abroad (see 5.3.2) Satu thinks too that it feels nice to start with English but she is a bit unsure because she is comparing herself with Onni. She says it is easier at home since she is more relaxed at home.

(37)

S: Mmm kivalta, mutta sit siinä on myös se että se sujuu ehkä vähän paremmin kotona se englanti

H: Ymhy?

S: ku sillon rentoutuu enemmän ku tunnilla saattaa vähä jännittää mua ainaki. Vähä jännittää aina se englannin tunti.

H: Nii, mikäs siinä jännittää?

S: Noo mää en oo ihan niinku ihan niin hirveen hyvä englannissa esimerkiks niinku Onni sehä osas jo ennen ku se tuli sinne englannin tunneille nii

H: Mmm

S: aika paljonki jo enkkua

H: Mmm

S: nii en oo yhtä vahva siinä vielä.

*S: mmm it feels nice but then there is the fact that my English is more fluent at home.*

*H: Ymhy?*

*S: Then I am more relaxed than in the class you can be a bit excited at least I am. I am excited for the English class.*

*H: Okay why is that?*

*S: I was not quite so good in English like for instance Onni he knew English before we started learning English so,*

*H:Mmm*

*S: quite a lot of English*

*H:Mmm*

*S: I am not so good at it yet*

Satu compares herself with Onni and tells that he knows English a lot more than she does. When she is at home she does not compare herself with anyone and feels more confident and relaxed and says that it is easier at home. It is very common nowadays that children know some English before they start studying the language at school (see ch.3) Satu felt that she did not know enough English maybe felt that she should have known more before starting with the language. Benjamin says that it feels quite normal to start with English since he already knew some English.

(38)

H: No miltäs on nyt tuntunu alottaa sitte englannin opiskelu sä osaat jo tosi monta kieltä ja nytte tuli vielä tää englanti nii miltäs se on tuntunu?

B: No iha normaalilta sillee mä oon osannu jo englantii, aika pienenä ku teeveestä ja sillee, mut vaan niinku pari sanaa.

*H: Well how do you feel about starting learning English you know already really many languages and now you are starting with English so what does it feel like?*

*B: Well quite normal like I already know English, since I was little when from TV and such, but only like a couple of words.*

Benjamin tells that he has learned English when he was quite small and that he has learned from TV. He says that he did not know that much but it seems to have helped him to start or continue learning English. TV is one of the most important media wherefrom children learn English. In Finland the films and programmes are not dubbed but provided with subtitles in Finnish or Swedish this is why children learn quite much English while watching TV. This is something also Sjöholm (2004) pointed out (see ch. 3). In the following example Linnea tells about learning English. Linnea was born in England and she has lived there for three-four years. She went to kindergarten and learned English. Then the family moved to Finland and after that they lived in Norway for two years and returned to Finland again. Before Linnea started learning English at school the family lived in Australia for a year and she went to school there so she already had quite a good knowledge of English already.

(39)

H: No miltäs on nyt tuntunu alottaa englannin opiskelu koulussa?

L: No, kivaahan se on.

H: Onks se tota hirveen helppoo sulle ku sä jo osasit?

L: On.

H: *Well how do you now feel like starting with English at school?*

L: *Well it's fun.*

H: *Do you think it was easy for you when you knew it already?*

L: *Yes.*

Linnea says that learning English is fun. She is asked if it feels easy since she already knew quite a lot of English since she has lived both in England and in Australia, she answers yes. Later Linnea says that it is easy for her to listen to English and to understand it but writing is a bit demanding. Linnea has obviously heard English more than read since she has lived in English speaking countries and has had friends that speak English. She went also to a kindergarten in England and to school in Australia. Linnea had to write English at school where she went for a year. One year is quite a short time to learn to write a new language so that still feels a bit hard. Piia says in the next example that it is nice to start with English and to have a new challenge.



(40)

H: Miltäs on tuntunu englannin kielen opiskelun aloittaminen?

P: Noo kivaa ja sit ku saa vähä uutta haastetta.

*H: How do you feel like starting with English?*

*P: Well it's fun and then you get a new challenge.*

It comes clearly out in Piia's example that she wants to study new languages and is not afraid of a new challenge. Since she already knows two languages and has learned them in a natural and easy way, she happily starts yet with another language, English. Also Teresa and Julia consider starting learning English is fun as Piia also says above. Mikael says that it was hard in the beginning but now it is quite easy.

(41)

H: No miltäs on tuntunu, aloittaa englannin opiskelu?

M: Ekaks se oli vähä vaikeeta mut nyt se on aika helppoo kyllä.

H: Joo, tuota osasit sä yhtään englantia enneku sä menit kouluun?

M: Noo, itse asiassa osasin ihan vähän, todella vähän.

*H: How do you feel like starting with English?*

*M: At the beginning it was difficult but now it is easy.*

*H: Did you know any English before you went to school?*

*M: Well, I knew some, not so much really.*

Mikael says that learning English now feels easier than in the beginning. He also knew some English before he started learning English at school. According to his own words he knew only little English. Mikael has studied English for two or three months when the interview were made which means that he has quite quickly changed his view and become used to the new language. Also Camilla says that she has developed in English and that she knows now much more than in the beginning.

(42)

H: No miltäs tuntu aloittaa englannin opiskelu ss- sillon vuos sitten syksyllä alotit?

C: Noo kummää alotin mä en osannut paljoo yhtään englantii, kyl mä oon kehittyny siinä aika paljon ettää, nyt mä niinkun ymmärrän paljo enemmän kun sillon alussa.

*H: How does it feel like starting with English you started an year ago in the autumn?*

*C: Well when I started I didn't know so much English, so I have developed quite much in it so now I understand much more than in the beginning.*

Camilla has learned English for over a year so it is natural for her to compare how much she has developed in English. She says that she did not know so much in the beginning but that she now understands a lot more English. Also Anton has studied English for over a year and he says that it feels easy and nice. Anton says that it is not at all difficult to learn English. He does not compare his competence with that he had before. He says that it is nice to learn a new language. He still thinks English is a new language for him. Both Camilla and Anton have studied English for over a year before the interviews were made and they have a wider perspective and more experience in learning a new language at school than the other children. They both have very positive views on learning English. As they are bilingual or multilingual persons learning a new language feels easy. This is something also Eemil says in the next example.

(43)

H: No miltäs on tuntunu alottaa englannin opiskelu?

E: Noo, ihan kivalta, se on helpompaa jos osaa ruotsia niin sillon on helpompi osa- oppia englantia

H: Aha, millä tavalla se on helpompaa?

E: koska jotkut sanat on, aika monetki sanat on niinku muistuttaa toisiaan.

*H: How do you feel about starting learning English?*

*E: Well, it feels nice, it is easier if you know Swedish it is easier then to learn English.*

*H: Okay, in what way is it easier?*

*E: Because some words are, quite many words are like they remind each other.*

According to Eemil it is nice to study English and it is easier to learn the language if you know Swedish. When he is asked for a reason he says that the languages are similar and later gives examples of words that are similar. Anton is asked when he uses English. He mentioned earlier that he has learned some English from computer games and now he is asked if he uses English while he is playing the games. He says that the instructions are in English but otherwise there is probably no need to use English.

(44)

H: entäs ku pelaat jotain tietokonepelejä tarviiks siinä käyttää enkkua?

A: No eei mut, tai no ehkä jos siinä lukee yleensä lukee englanniks ne kaikki jutut

H: Mmm

A: kyllä varmaan siinä täytyy ymmärtää mut, ei muuten tarvii kauheesti ehkä?

H: Joo onko Minecraftissä esimerkiks kaikki englanniks? /niiku ohjeet/

A: /mmm/ joo on se voi vaihtaa kieltäki

H: Ai jaa aha sen voi

A: mut, ite en vaiha, koska voisin oppia uusia sanoja siitä jos (---)

*H: What about when you play computer games do you need English?*

*A: Well no but or well maybe if everything is in English*

*H: Mmm*

*A: yes you have to understand it but otherwise you don't need to [use English]*

*H: Yes is everything in English in Minecraft? /like the instructions/*

*A: /mmm/ yes and you can change the language too*

*H: Okay so you can do that*

*A: but I won't because I might learn new words if (---)*

Anton says that it is possible to change the language of the instructions in the game but he will not do that because he might learn some new words while playing the games. He has himself realized that he can learn English by playing computer games and following the instructions in English. The children seemed very aware of ways they had acquired English informally. They told about learning English through watching TV, playing games and learning English from their relatives.

The children were also asked about how they felt about learning English if something felt particularly difficult or easy. Five children answered that they found that writing was the hardest part in learning English. Julia says here that writing English feels a bit difficult.

(45)

H: Kyllä, no osaatko sanoo että onko joku osa-alue englannissa helpompaa ja joku vaikeempaa et esimerkiks kirjottaminen tai kuuntelunymmärtäminen tai tekstinymmärtäminen, onks ne kaikki yhtä helppoja vai onko joku helpompi ja joku vaikeempi?

J: Noo emmä vielä tiää...se on... ehkä, kirjottaminen on vähän hankalaa

H: Joo minkäs takia se tuntuu hankalalle osaatko sanoo?

J: Noo kyllä mä osaan niinku niinku tekstistä jotenki ääntää ne sanat

H: Joo

J: mut en osaa äänteestä kunnolla kirjottaa niitä

H: Ymhy joo /niijjustiin/

J: /mut/ nyt sun ei kannata saada sellasta tunnetta et mä mu- en muka osais kirjottaa kyl mä osaan kirjottaa mut se on vähän vaikeempaa.

*H: Yes, well can you say is some things easier in English like is it easier to write or listen or understand texts are they all easy in the same way or is something easier and something more difficult?*

*J: Well I don't know yet...it is...maybe, writing is a bit hard.*

*H: Yes why do you think it is hard?*

*J: Well I can somehow pronounce the words in the text.*

*H: Yes.*

*J: But I don't know how to write the pronounced words.*

*H: Aha yes /okay/*

*J:/but/ now you must no get the feeling that I am not able to write because I can write in English it only a bit more difficult.*

Julia says that she can easily pronounce the words in the text but she is not so good at writing the words she hears. She emphasizes that she is not having any severe problems in writing English it only feels a bit more difficult than other parts in learning the language. Mikael, Linnea, Benjamin and Onni also mentioned writing as the most difficult part in English. Mikael says that listening is the easiest part and writing the most difficult one.

(46)

M: No kuuntelu, on helpointa ja, ehkä kirjottaminen on vaikeinta.

H: Joo, tuntuuks se kirjottaminen vaikeelle vai meneekö se iha- ihan ok?

M: Iha ok ((naurahdus))

*M: Well listening, is the easiest and maybe writing is the most difficult thing.*

*H: Yes, do you think writing feel difficult or is it quite okay?*

*M: Quite ok ((laughter))*

When Mikael is asked if writing feels difficult or if he manages quite ok he answers “quite ok”. This is the same as Julia said. Both children chose writing when they had to choose an area which they found the most difficult one. They both chose writing but

then they stated that it did not feel particularly difficult. Linnea and Satu give more detailed information about what difficulties they have in writing English. Linnea says she has problems in choosing the right letters.

(47)

L: mutta siinä kirjottamisessa se on vähä vaikeeta kyllä, siinä tulee niitä erilaisia esim niinku ii ja ee ja ne kuulostaa ihan samoille

*L: but in the writing it really is a bit difficult there are those difficult for example like [i ] and [e] and they sound the same*

Linnea says that writing English is a bit difficult since the vowels [i] and [e] sound the same. Linnea feels that it is nice to start studying English and it feels easy except for the writing. Then she says that the writing feels a bit difficult but reading and listening is easier.

(48)

L: No se kirjottaminen englanniks on vähä vaikeeta mutta, lukeminen ja kuunteleminen on, helpompaa.

*L: Well the writing is a bit difficult but reading and listening is easier.*

Linnea has not had that much training in writing English when she lived in England and Australia but she has learned to listen and understand English over the years she lived there. Satu also says that writing feels a bit hard because it is difficult to know what letters you should choose.

(49)

S: Helppointa ehkä se kuunteleminen ja osittain se myös ymmärtäminen, mutta se kirjottaminen menee aika vähän sitte pieleen ku se on vähä hankalaa kun ei tiiä mitä kirjaimia siihen sanaan tulee. Siinä en oo kovin hyvä vielä. Ja puhumisessa kyllä ja ääntämisessä on vielä pikkuse ku se on vähä sellasta, mutta puhuminen sujuu ihan hyvin

*S: The easiest thing is maybe the listening and partly also the understanding but the writing goes a bit wrong when it is quite hard and when you don't know what letters you have there. I'm not so good at that yet. And in talking I am and the pronunciation it is a bit [hard]when it is like that but the talking goes well.*

Satu says that listening and understanding English are the easiest parts but the writing goes a bit wrong since it is hard to know what letters you should choose. The answers

Linnea and Satu gave are not surprising since Finnish is both written and pronounced in the same way. Swedish has also some differences in writing and pronouncing but not to the same extent as English. Satu adds that pronunciation feels a bit hard but speaking English goes well. Teresa also states that writing is the hardest part in learning English.

(50)

T: No englannissa kirjottamine on aika hankalaa, mut onha se ruotsissaki ku o lausutaan uuna ja sit on ruotsalainen å ja, u on y ja sitte vielä y on yy mä en osaa sanoo sitä kun se on silleen.

H: Mmm tarkotitko että se on ss-samalla tavalla että ei oo niinku

T: Joo ei se välttämättä kirjojeta samalla tavalla ku sanotaan, englannissa.

*T: Well in English it is quite hard to write but it is in Swedish too when [o] is pronounced like [u] and then you have the Swedish [å] and [u] is [y] and [yy] I can't say it when it is like that.*

*H: Did you mean that it is in the same way that it is not like*

*T: Yes you don't necessarily write it in the same way as you pronounce it in English.*

Teresa says that writing is hard both in Swedish and English since you do not write the words in the same way as you pronounce them. She also says that she has problems in pronouncing [y]. The children have learned a Finnish Swedish way of pronouncing and the [y] Teresa refers to here is the Swedish Swedish [y] that is a bit different. She says that she cannot pronounce that in the right way. Teresa's mother uses the Swedish Swedish style of speaking as well as the relatives in Sweden do. One of the teachers also pronounces in a similar way. Teresa was interviewed a few months later for a couple of questions that were not asked in the first interviews and now she says that writing was the easiest part but pronouncing was more difficult.

(51)

T: Ee noo...esimerkiks sanojen kirjottamine on aika helppoo ja sitte eh semmosen esim jos sanoo niinku **three three** ni se siinä on hankala sanoo siinä se mikä se on se ääni se ths- jotenki tollee

H: Three

T: Nii

H: Joo eli siis lausuminenko tuntuu hankalalle?

T: Noo ainaki siinä sanassa mutta ei muissa

*T: Ee well...for example writing the words is easy and then the fro example if you say like three three so it is hard to say that what is it the sound ths- like that*

*H: Three*

*T: Yes*

*H: Yes so the pronunciation feels difficult?*

*T: Well at least in that word but not in other [words]*

The reason for Teresa changing her opinion can be due to the fact that she has learnt more English. Writing feels easier after a few months practice and now she has faced new challenges in pronouncing words. She says that one sound in particular feels difficult, the [th] sound in the word *three* but pronunciation is not a difficulty for her in other words.

Benjamin says that everything feels quite easy and there are not so big differences in the areas in learning English.

(52)

*B: Mun mielestä kaikki iha, yhtä, [helppoa] mutta niinku öö mä en oo kauheesti kirjottamisessa osaa englannissa koska ku mä kuuntelen yleensä ja silleen ja puhun vaan englanniks nii mä en tiä kuinka ne kirjoitetaan.*

*B: I think everything is quite the same [easy] but I like I'm not so good at writing because I listen mostly and such and just talk in English so I don't know how they are written.*

Benjamin says that he has more listened and talked in English so he has not so much experience in writing English. This is quite natural since the children have only learned English for a couple of months at school and they knew some English beforehand which they might have heard. It is possible that they have received more listening comprehension than English in the written form. This shows clearly also in Onni's example.

(53)

*O: Silleen että kirjottaa oikeen se on ehkä mun mielestä vaikeinta että esim joskus teen ehkä mä saatan tehdä aika monta kirjoitusvirhettä englannissa tai no en ehkä niin monta mutta, pari ja sitten kuuntelu on mun mielestä aika helppoa ja niin.*

*H: Niin kyllä mitenkäs a- ä- [miltä] lausuminen [ja] puhuminen tuntuuko?*

*O: Noo se on mun mielestä aika helppoo varmaan lausua ja puhua.*

*O: It's like you write in the correct way and I think that is the hardest part that I might sometimes make quite many spelling mistakes in English or not that many but a couple and then I think the listening is quite easy and such.*

*H: Yes what about pronunciation [and] talking [how] does it feel?*

*O: Well I think it is quite easy to pronounce and talk.*

Onni tells that writing feels like the most difficult part and he says that he might make a few mistakes in writing. Listening and talking are easy according to him. This is quite the opposite to what Piia says. She thinks that it is easier to write than to pronounce.

(54)

*P: Mää en oikeestaan tiiä, must tuntuu et mulla menee kirjottaminen paremmin ku lausuminen, ainaki.*

*H: Joo, onks sulla sama, sama muissa kielissä suomessa ja ruotsissaki et kirjottaminen on helppoo? /Helpompaa./*

*P: /Joo/ koska mä pystyn lukemaan sitä niinku mielessäni jos mun pitää alkaa lukee jollekin toiselle niin mulle tulee niin tuntuu et mä lausun sanat väärin.*

*H: Nii englannissako vai?*

*P: Nii.*

*P: I don't really know, I think that I manage better in writing than in pronouncing, at least.*

*H: Yes, is it the same in other languages too in Finnish and Swedish that writing is easy? /Easier./*

*P: /Yes/ because I can read it like in my mind if I have to read it to someone else I feel like I'm pronouncing the words in a wrong way.*

*H: Do you mean in English?*

*P: Yes.*

Piia says that it is easier to write than pronounce because she feels that if she has to read the text to someone she might pronounce the word in a wrong way. She thinks it is easier to read it in her mind. The conversation goes on and Piia continues with talking about listening comprehension. She does not talk about practices she has had in school but situations she has had abroad.

(55)

*H: Joo niijjust joo se on vähä haastavaa kun siinä kirjetetaan eri tavalla ku lausutaan. No entäs sitten kuuntelu kuuntelunymmärtäminen tuntuuko helpolle vai /hankalalle?/*

*P: /Noh/...joo useimmiten sit välillä kun ollaan oltu hotelleissa mä osaan jonku verran englantia ni sit se oli jotenki tosi vaikee ymmärtää*



H: Joo.

P: ku puhuu eri tavalla

*H: Yes that's right it is a bit challenging when you write in a different way than pronounce. Well what about listening listening comprehension does it feel easy or /difficult?/*

*P: /Well/...yes mostly when we have been to hotels I can speak a bit English but it was somehow really hard to understand*

H: Yes.

*P: when [they] talk in a different way.*

Piia tells about situations where she has been abroad to hotels with her family and she has had difficulties in understanding what was said. She has noticed that English can be used in different ways and that people can speak it in a different way. This could be hard for anyone not to mention a child that has studied English for two months or even less. The situation Piia talks about happened before she had studied English at school. Camilla shares the same feeling i.e. listening is more difficult than writing. She feels that it is sometimes hard to clearly hear what is said on the CD.

(56)

C: No no mmm se on ku me kuunnellaan yleensä sellaselta levyltä niin se välillä ei aina kuule ihan selvästi mitä ne sanoo siinä

H: Mmm

C: mut sitten ku lukee tekstiä ni se on niinku paljo helpompi ymmärtää ku ite niinku näkee ja pystyy lukee uuestaan et mitä on tapahtunu.

H: Nii just et mitä siinä sanottiin, kyllä. Mites sitte ite ku kirjat englantia ni onko se helppo? tuntuuko vai onk- tuntuuko hankalalta kirjottaa?

C: Noo on se aika helppoo jos tietää mis-mistä aikoo kirjottaa, mut jos ei yhtään tiä nii sitten on aika vaikee yhtäkkiä alkaa keksiä jotain.

H: Mmm. Mites sitte oikeinkirjotuksessa ku englantia ei kirjoteta ihan niinku lausutaan ni, onks siinä ollu jotain hankaluuksia vai /tuntuuks?/

C: /Noo/ ei oo ollu mitään erityisesti mitään joka ois vaikeeta.

*C: Well well mmm it is when we listen to a CD so I don't always hear so clearly what they say*

H: Mmm

*C: but then when I'm reading the text is is much easier to understand when you see yourself and can read again about what had happened.*

*H: Yes that's right what was said there, yes. What about when you write English so is it easy? Or does it feel difficult to write?*

*C: Well it is quite easy to write if you know what you are going to write about, but if you don't know so it's hard to make something up.*

*H: Mmm. What about spelling since English is not written quite like it is pronounced so have you had any difficulties there or /do you feel?/*

*C: Well no I have not experienced anything particularly difficult.*

Camilla thinks the most difficult part in learning English is listening comprehension. Camilla thinks it is easier to check later in the text what was said than only listen to the story. She thinks writing and spelling are quite easy and she has not had any difficulties in that area. Anton says that he has not had any particular difficulties in any of the areas in English. Eemil shares the same opinion. He was not able to mention any areas in learning English that would have been more difficult.

(57)

*A: Mmm ei oikeestaan on se kyllä aika helppoa, mun mielestä.*

*H: Että ei oo mitään semmosta osa-aluetta mikä tuntus hankalalle*

*A: Mmm ei*

*A: Mmm not really it is quite easy, I think.*

*H: So you don't have any particular areas that would feel hard?*

*A: Mmm no*

Both Anton and Camilla have studied English for over a year and think they manage quite well already. However, Camilla says that listening comprehension is the hardest part. Eemil shares the same opinion with Anton and says there are no particularly difficult areas in learning English. Eemil has learned a lot of English in advance being very interested in the language. The children had a positive attitude towards learning English. They did not experience any severe problems in learning English. The children were asked to mention the most difficult area in learning English and the most children chose one area. Writing English was mentioned most often. Seven children said that writing English is the most difficult area. This outcome is not surprising since Finnish is written as it is pronounced and is much easier to Finnish children to learn. The children have also learned to write in Swedish which can also be a bit demanding but has obviously helped in getting the children to realize that writing and pronouncing words can be different. Two of the children mentioned listening comprehension as a more demanding area in learning English. Two of the children said that there were no particularly difficult areas. All the children are doing quite well in learning English and these areas were only mentioned when they had to choose one area in particular.

Knowing Swedish, another Germanic language, helps these children in learning English. They use Swedish as help when they try to figure out words in English (see chapter 5.3.3).

### 5.3.2 Languages in general

Here the children were asked about what languages they wanted to study in the future. All the children gave examples of at least one language and many of them had a list of languages they wanted to study. Julia is asked in the next example if she wanted to study more languages in the future.

(58)

H: No onko sulle tullu mieleen et sä haluaisit opiskella muita kieliä sitten joskus myöhemmin lisää?

J: Joo

H: Mitäs kieliä sä oot miettiny?

J: Ainaki kaikkia mitä mä just mainitsin ehkä, ranskaa ja kiinaa.

H: *Well have you thought about studying languages sometimes later?*

J: *Yes*

H: *What languages have you thought about?*

J: *At least the languages I mentioned before maybe, French and Chinese.*

Julia mentions that she would like to study French and Chinese in addition to the languages she mentioned before. Those languages were Estonian, Russian and Japanese. She does not give any motivations for the mentioned languages. However, this example shows clearly that Julia is very keen on learning new languages of different types. She told that she also knew a little Portuguese since the family had been there many times. The fact that Julia is bilingual and knows a bit of English and Portuguese shows that she is open to different languages and cultures. Camilla has been planning to start studying Spanish.

(59)

H: O-ootsä ajatellu et sä voisit opiskella jotain muita kieliä tulevaisuudessa, tuleeko mieleen sellasta jota oisit miettiny et toihan kuulostaa kivalta kieleltä mä voisin sitä lukee /joskus/

C: /Noo/ ehkä espanja tai joku tällanen

H: Mmm. Tiiätsä minkälainen kieli espanja on?

C: Noo en mä o mitenkää hirveesti oo sitä kuullu joskus mä oon mun kaverilta ku sillä on tota espanja öö öö yhtenä aineena

H: Joo

C: Nii mä oon sen kaa kattonut niitä aina

H: Niin just

C: ja se kuulostaa ihan kivalta

*H: Ha-have you thought about studying some other languages in the future, can you think of a [language] that you have thought about like that sounds like a nice language I could study it /some day/*

*C: /Well/ maybe Spanish or something like that.*

*H: Mmm. Do you know what kind of language Spanish is?*

*C: Well I haven't heard so much of it sometimes I have heard from my friend when she has well Spanish like a ee ee a subject.*

*H: Yes*

*C: So I have looked at that [Spanish schoolwork] with her all the time*

*H: Okay*

*C: and it sounds quite nice*

Camilla states that she would like to learn Spanish like her friend. Camilla's friend has started with Spanish and Camilla has been looking at the homework her friend has. She says that she does not know the language so well but seems interested in it and thinks it sounds nice. Camilla has travelled several times to Spain and has heard the language quite a bit. She is obviously very interested in learning this language. Piia lists four languages she wants to study in future. Piia mentions four languages she wants to study: French, German, Russian and Estonian.

(60)

P: No mulla on kolme kieltä jota mä haluisin oppia

H: Okei

P: rans- tai no oikeestaan neljä, ranska, saksa, venäjä ja viro.

H: /okei/

P: /ka-/

H: Joo minkä takia sä haluaisit just näitä oppia?

P: Mä haluaisin vähä enemmän ymmärtää viroks niitä niinku sanoja ja venäjä mua kiinnostaa sillä ku mua kiinnostaa apteekkiala, nii siellä, Suomeen tulee tosi paljon venäläisturisteja

H: Mmm

P: mä haluisin sillä osata sitäki, sit mä pääsisin apteekkiin. ((naurahdus))

H: Nii

P: Sit ranska, mua kiehtoo se ranska niinku jollain tavalla ja, saksaki samalla tavalla ku ranska ((naurahdus))

H: Ootko sä käyny jossain ranskan ja saksankielisissä maissa?

P: E mä oon vaan kuullu nii- sitä puhetta teeveessä jos mo- mä haluun ymmärtää sitä

H: Joo niijjust, mites italia? Minkälainen kieli on italia?

P: Noo aika kaunis kieli. Sit just kaikki italialaiset laulutkin ni, haluis ymmärtää mitä niis tarko- tarkotetaan

*P: I have three languages I would like to learn*

*H: Okay*

*P: Fre-or actually four French German Russian and Estonian.*

*H: /Okay/*

*P: /ka/*

*H: Yes why would you like to learn these?*

*P: I would like to understand more words in Estonian and I am interested in Russian because I am interested in pharmacy so there so many tourists from Russia coming here.*

*H: Mmm*

*P: I would like to know that [Russian] also so I could work in a pharmacy. ((laughing))*

*H: Yes*

*P: And French I'm fascinated by French somehow and German fascinates me in the same way as French ((laughing))*

*H: Have you visited French or German speaking countries?*

*P: No I have only heard it from TV if I want to understand it.*

*H: Yes that's right. How about Italian? What kind of language is Italian?*

*P: Well quite a beautiful language. Then all the Italian songs, I would like to know what they me-mean.*

Piia has different motivations for learning these different languages she mentions. She would like to study Russian because she could work in a pharmacy like her parents and serve all the Russian tourists coming there. She would also like to learn some more Estonian words because it is close to Finnish. In another part of the interview Piia compares Estonian with Finnish and seems interested in the similarities and differences of the two languages. Later Piia mentions some words that are “false friends” in Estonian and Finnish and interest her in that way. The two other languages she wants to

study, German and French, both fascinate her. When she is asked about Italian that she mentioned earlier she says that it is a beautiful language and she would like to understand the Italian songs she has heard.

Mikael says that he would like to learn Spanish because his family often travels there on holidays. Both Mikael and Benjamin mention languages they need when travelling. Mikael says that his family always travels to Spain therefore he could benefit from knowing Spanish. Benjamin says that he could probably study some Scandinavian language like Norwegian to be able to use it when he is travelling. Teresa and Linnea also mention languages they would like to study but don't give that clear motivations to their choices. Linnea mentions German, French or Italian as languages she would like to study. Teresa wants to study more English and Swedish and probably German because so many people talk about German.

(61)

T: No ehkä englantia lisää

H: Mmm englantia lisää entäs sitte?

T: ja ruotsia lisää, mut niiden lisäksi ehkä nii...emmä tiiä, aika monet puhuu saksasta niin emmä tiiä ehkä sitä

*T: Well maybe some more English*

*H: mmm some more English and then?*

*T: and more Swedish but in addition maybe...I don't know, quite many people talk about German so maybe that I don't know maybe that*

Teresa probably thinks that German could be a good choice since so many people talk about German. She does not define so clearly who has been talking about German but she considers studying that language. Satu has already planned what languages she wants to study in junior high.

(62)

H: No tykkäätkö sä opiskella kieliä?

S: Joo mää tiiänki sitte mitä mä valitsen sitte yläasteella. Mullon mää tykkään tosi paljon ranskasta, koska se on niin kiva kieli. Se ärrä on siinä nii kiva

H:Mmm, ahaa, no niin.

S: ja sitten espanjaa varmaan myös

H: Joo

S: seki on kiva kieli.

H: *Well do you like studying languages?*

S: *Yes I know what language I'm going to choose in high school. I have I like French really much, because it is a nice language. The R is so nice.*

H: *Mmm, okay, yes.*

S: *and also Spanish*

H: *Yes*

S: *it's also a nice language.*

Satu wants to study French because the [r] sounds nice to her. She also thinks that Spanish is a nice language. When Onni was asked about the languages he wants to study in future he says that he does not know but tells that his mother has recommended Mandarin Chinese for him.

(63)

O: Noo emmä nyt oikein tiää mut ((naurahdus)) mun äiti sanoo ehkä ihan vitsiks et mun pitäisi oppia mandariinikiinaa.

O: *Well I don't really know but ((laugh)) but my mother says I should learn Mandarin Chinese it's maybe a joke.*

Onni is motivated to learn new languages even if it does not show in the previous example when he was asked about it. This example shows anyway that studying languages in the future has been discussed at home and it feels natural to the bilingual children. The interest to learn a new language clearly shows in Onni's urge to learn German before a trip to Germany.

(64)

H: No mistäs sä oot sitte saksaa oppinu ku sä sanoit et sä osaat saksaa?

O: Varmaan siitä kun me oltiin lähössä Berliiniin isän kanssa tapaamaan mun siskoa joka asuu siellä

H: Joo

O: niin sitte mää sen takii vähä yritin oppia tota saksaa et mä voisin puhua saksaa siellä Berliinissä, mut sitte mä en kyllä puhunu kauheesti saksaa siellä mä enemmänki käytin englantia siellä, ku mä aattelin et muut ymmärtäis englantia ehkä, myös

H: Niijustiinsa mites sä pärjäsit englannilla siellä?

O: No aika hyvin, ku mä sanoin jotain englanniks tai kysyin nii kyllä ne sitten vastas, englanniksi.

*H: Well how have you learnt German when you told me you know German?*

*O: Maybe when my father and I went to see my sister that lives in there*

*H: Yes*

*O: so that's why I tried to learn German so I could talk German in Berlin but then I did not talk so much German there it was mostly English because I thought they would probably understand English too.*

*H: That's right. How did you do with English?*

*O: Well pretty well when I said something in English or asked them so then they answered me in English too.*

In the example Onni tells about when he travelled to Germany and wanted to speak German with the Germans. Onni tells that he learned a few words and phrases in German before he went to see his sister in Berlin. However, he had spoken English instead. It was probably easier since he knew English better and thought that the people would understand him when he spoke English. He had managed quite well with his English. Onni seems to be a confident ten-year-old who wants to learn new languages and use them in real life situations.

Both Anton and Eemil give the same reason for their choice of language. They both want to study Spanish or French since they are widely used.

(65)

*A: No ainaki varmaan espanja ois semmone, kieli ehkä*

*H: Mmm*

*A: tai joku ranska, ehkä, ku espanjaaki käytetään aika paljon, ni... se ois varmaan ihan kiva opetella*

*A: Well at least Spanish would be that kind of language, maybe,*

*H: Mmm*

*A: or some French maybe when Spanish is also widely used, so it would be nice to learn that*

Anton mentions first Spanish and then French. He gives his reason for the choice; Spanish is so widely used. Eemil gives the same reason. He says that Spanish and French are spoken in many countries so he would like to study at least those two languages.



The children seemed to be interested in different languages and were motivated to learn new languages. They had many reasons for why study languages. Some of the children said that they would like to study a language that is widely used. In that way they would also be able to use the language more often. Also travelling to other countries was a motivation for two children. Some of the children did not give that specific motivations of their choice of language but wanted to study a language that fascinated them or interested them or sounded nice. One child also wanted to know what the song lyrics in Italian meant and wanted to learn Italian because of that. One child also mentioned the benefit in working life. Piia's parents had an experience of Russian customers at the pharmacy and she wanted to work in the same field in the future and therefore wants to learn Russian. These bilingual children are clearly motivated to learn new languages. They come from bilingual homes or homes that have wanted them to become bilingual in putting them to kindergartens and schools with immersion programs. The positive attitude and interest towards different languages is something the children can have adopted from their homes. This is something that already Peal and Lambert (1962) pointed out (see chapter 2.2). These issues are obviously more often discussed in bilingual families than monolingual families. Intellectually the experience the children have with two language systems has made them more mentally flexible. Moreover, knowing two languages and cultures gives the children advantage in learning new languages and confidence in doing so.

### **5.3.3 Swedish as a strategy in learning English**

In what follows I will discuss how the children saw the position of the Swedish language in learning English. I will give some examples of strategies the children use when learning English. First the children were asked about what they did in the English lessons and what kind of homework they get. The children were asked in the interview what they would do if they came across with a word in English they did not understand in the text. Eight children stated first that they would ask the teacher if they did not understand some word in English. The rest of the children would either check the dictionary first, ask their friend or try to figure out the word out with the help of the context. Other ways the children would use were ask their classmates or parents for help and then they would try to check the meaning of the word in the dictionary. This was

the case with seven children. Three children would use the context as help and one child said he would give up if he didn't have the possibility to ask the teacher or classmates. When asked had he used Swedish as help he said he had done that. All the children had more or less used Swedish as a device when trying to figure out what a word means. Benjamin, Camilla and Julia start talking about the similarities of English and Swedish spontaneously when they try to figure out a meaning of a word they do not know in English.

(66)

B: Noo öö välillä mä mietin myös ku englantia ja ruotsi on aika samanlainen niin mä mietin, miltä se ruotsiks, et voisko se sillee, ja jos se on niinku joku koe nii mä meen tietysti eteenpäin ja teen muut tehtävät ja viimeseks palaan takas siihen, kattomaan sitä

H: Joo niijjust, tuleeko sulle mieleen joku semmonen sana mitä sä oisit miettiny ruotsin kautta ja sitte hoksannu et hei täähä onki englanniks tää.

B: no, **door** on dörr aika samanlainen.

*B: Well öö sometimes I think also when English and Swedish are quite the same so I think, how is it in Swedish, that could it be like, and if it is like an exam I of course move on and do the other excercises and finally move back to have a look at that.*

*H: Yes okay, can you think of a word that you have thought of in Swedish and then understood that hey it has to be this in English.*

*B: Well, **door** is dörr [it's] quite the same.*

Benjamin above states that he thinks of a word in Swedish since the languages are quite similar. He gives an example of the words **door** and dörr which is exactly the same examples Camilla gives in the next extract.

(67)

C: Noo aika monet englanninkieliset sanat niinku, ööm niinku, muistuttaa aika paljon ruotsia ja että, että jos on joku...niin sitte se saattaa olla aika lähellä ruotsin kieltä

H: Joo, tuleeks sulle mieleen joku sellane sana mitä sä oisit niinku ruotsin kautta ajatellu että mitähän tää on ruotsiksi (---)(( epäselvää))

C: No esimerkis ovi niiku dörr

H: Nii

C: Ni se on englanniks, **door**, se on aika niinku sama

*C: Well quite many English words like, ööm like, remind a lot of Swedish and that, that if you have some...so it can be quite near Swedish*

*H: Yes, can you think of a word that you have thought through Swedish and thought that what could this be in Swedish (---)((unclear))*

*C: Well for instance door like dörr.*

*H: Yes*

*C: So it is door in English, it is like quite the same*

Camilla says that quite many words in Swedish remind of English and if you have a word you do not understand in English it can be quite near Swedish. She has earlier figured out the word **door** which is dörr in Swedish. Julia also thinks of Swedish when she finds a word in the text she doesn't understand. If that doesn't help she says she goes on and asks a friend. She gives one example of the word **dumb** that she understood with the help of the Swedish equivalent the word dum.

(68)

*J: Noo sit mää aattelen et mikä se sana vois olla ruotsiks, mut sit jos mä en löydä mitään niin sit mä kysyn kaverilta*

*H: Niijjustiin kyllä. Tuleeko sulle mieleen semmosia sanoja joita sä oisit miettiny ruotsiks ja sitte keksiny mitä se on englanniks?*

*J: Öh, kuten vaikka dum*

*H: Niih ((naurahdus))*

*J: No eik se ollu jotain **dumb** /tai/ damb tai*

*H: /Joo/ nii aivan hyvi- hyvin lähellä ruotsia*

*J: mut*

*H: Nii?*

*J: ton sanan mä löysin yhestä pelistä.*

*H: Aha...ja sä sillon mietit tän?*

*J: Joo se oli sen pelin nimi*

*J: Well then I think what it could be in Swedish but if I don't find anything then I ask a friend.*

*H: That's right yes. Can you think of a word that you would have thought about in Swedish and then found out what it is in English.*

*J: Eh like dum*

*H: yes ((laughter))*

*J: isn't it like **dumb** /or/ damb or*

*H: /Yes/ it is re-really close to Swedish*

*J: but*

*H: Yes?*

*J: I found that word in a game.*

*H: Okay...and then you thought about it?*

*J: Yes it was the name of that game.*

Julia used the strategy of thinking of a Swedish word when she was playing a computer game. The name of the game was *Dumb* and she figured out the meaning with the help of the Swedish word dum that means the same. Teresa and Eemil also state that Swedish and English remind of each other. It is anyway clear that they both use the strategy quite often. When they are asked if they can mention any examples of words that they might have thought about in situations where they did not find a meaning to a word they did not remember any examples. Teresa, however, makes a list of similar words easily and says twice that it is easy to remember such words.

(69)

T: Noku englanti ja ruotsi on aika samanlaiset kielet nii siitä vois päätellä jotain

H: Nii just. No tota tuleeko sulle joku sellane sana mieleen minkä sä olisit tässä, viime aikoina tai joskus samalla tavalla päätelly?

T: No ei mutta esimerkiks katt ja **cat** on melkein samanlaisia sanoja niin

H: Mmm

T: Ne on helppo muistaa, silleen

H: Niin, ootsä oppinu muita sanoja jotka on melkein samanlaisia...tuleeks sulle mieleen?

T: Hmm no esimerkiks **blue** ja blå on melkein samanlaisia ja sitten orange ja **orange**

H: Nii

T: Nii se on aika helppoo silleen

*T: Well English and Swedish are similar languages so you can conclude something*

*H: Right. Well can you think of a word you have recently or sometimes figured out in that way?*

*T: No but for example katt and **cat** are almost similar kind of words so*

*H: Mmm*

*T: It is easy to remember them, in that way*

*H: Yes, have you learnt other words that are nearly the same...can you think of?*

*T: Hmm well for example **blue** and blå are nearly the same and then orange and **orange**.*

*H: Yes*

*T: So it's quite easy that way.*

Teresa has found many words that are similar in Swedish and English and here she gives some examples of them. Her brother gives examples of partly the same words, name of colours, in (71). In the next extract Eemil says that he has to figure out a word he doesn't recognize and see if the word reminds of a word in Swedish.

(70)

E: Noh, sit pitää varmaan päätellä (---)

H: /Joo/

E: /Niinku/ ruotsin kielestä. Muistuttaakse jotain sanaa et mitä sanaa se muistuttaa.

E: *Well, then I have to figure it out (---)*

H: /Yes/

E: /Like/ through Swedish. *If it reminds some word that what word it reminds.*

In another part in the interview Eemil also listed quite many words that reminded each other in Swedish and English. Here he compares the names of colours and words **rain** with regn.

(71)

E: Koska jotkut sanat on, aika monetki sanat on niinku muistuttaa toisiaan

H: Osaatsä antaa esimerkkiä sellasesta sanasta?

E: Esimerkiks **rain** on regn ja öö... ja niin ja öö orange on **orange** ja mm ja nii ja värit on esimerkiks röd on **red** ja **blue** on blå ja silleen.

E: *Because some words are, quite many words remain each other*

H: *Can you give an example of a word like that?*

E: *For example **rain** is regn and öö...and yes and öö **orange** is orange and mmm and yes the colours for example röd is **red** and **blue** is blå and like that.*

When the interview goes on Eemil says that both languages use prepositions and that there probably are other similarities in these two languages. He also finds similarities between English and Danish were words **worm** and *orm* mean “worm” whereas orm means “snake” in Swedish. In another part in the interview Eemil discusses learning English before school. His mother had written words in English for him and he tried to figure out the meaning of them. He says that he knew some of the words but some of them had to be figured out.

(72)

E: noo öö jotkut esimerkiks, no jotkut mä tiesin iha sillee, mut jotkut mä vähä niinku päättelin esimerkiks mä muistan mitä mä mietin aika pitkään oli se niinkun suu niinkun **mouth** nii **mouth** jotekin mite [se] sanotaan mun nii että öö, nii, sitä mä mietin kanssa sillee.

H: Niin-nii tota mietit niinku etit sä sitä mitä se on ruotsiks, vai?

E: Öö nii tai no nii et siitä ois sitte helppo kääntää sen suomeks ruotsista.

H: Aivan

E: Niin, ei se muistuta mitää suome kieli suo-suu ja sitte niin. Se muistuttaa enemmän niinku mun.

*E: Well some for example, well some of them [words] I knew already, but some I like figured out I remember a word I thought for a long time it was like **mouth** yes **mouth** how do you say [it] mun so that, yes I was thinking of that.*

*H: Yes so you were thinking of it and searching for it in Swedish, or?*

*E: Yes well or yes so it would be easy to translate it into Finnish from Swedish.*

*H: Right*

*E: Yes, it does not remind of any Finnish suu (mouth in Finnish) and that. It reminds more of like mun (mouth in Swedish).*

Eemil tried to find the meaning for words in English his mother had written on a paper. He used Swedish as a help to figure out the meaning of the words he did not know yet. One word was **mouth**. He said that it reminded of Swedish but not Finnish. He said that it was easy then to translate it to Finnish from Swedish. In this case this translating could also be due to the fact that Eemil was talking to his mother in Finnish and translated the words to her in Finnish. On the other hand Eemil's stronger language is Finnish so the translating could also help him remember the words if he translated them into Finnish.

Both Linnea and Piia state that they try to conclude a meaning of a word by changing the word into Swedish and after that they translate it into Finnish. Finnish is the language both the girls know the best so the way of understanding the meaning of a word probably comes best if they think of the word in Finnish. But then again the children translating the words from Swedish to Finnish probably refer to situations with a Finnish context.

(73)

H: Yritätsä tuota koskaa mieltä et mitä se vois olla muilla kielillä se /sana/?

P:/ Joo/ koska yleensä mä mietin et mitä se vois olla ruotsinkielellä,

H: Joo

P: koska ne on kuitenkin aika lähellä toisiaan, sit mä hoksaan sen jotenki ruotsiks nii sitte, mä käännän sen siitä suomeen.

H: Nii, niijustiin kyllä. Tuleeks sulle mieleen jotaki semmosia sanoja mitä sä olisit tehny tällä tavalla et sä oisit niinku ruotsin kautta sen ajatellu?

P: Mmm...no ehkä...**room** ku mä en vielä tienny mitä se tarkoittaa nii sit mä kääns- aattelin että se on rum.

*H: Have you ever thought what it could be in other languages that /word/?*

*P: /Yes/ because I normally think what it could be in Swedish,*

*H: Yes*

*P: because they are quite near each other, then I come to think of it in Swedish and then, I translate it into Finnish.*

*H: Yes, that's right yes. Can you think of some words that you have thought of in this way like thought of it trough Swedish?*

*P: Mmm...well maybe...**room** when I didn't know yet what it means so I translated that it is rum.*

When Piia is asked if she ever thinks of other languages when she is trying to figure out what a word means she says that she usually thinks of a word in Swedish because Swedish and English are quite near each other. As she finds the meaning in Swedish she translates it into Finnish. As an example she gives the words **room** and rum. Linnea says that if she doesn't know some word in English she translates it first into Swedish and if it is easier in Swedish she translates it into Finnish.

(74)

H: Joo kyllä vertaatko sä sitä koskaan muihin kieliin, niitä sanoja?

L: No yleensä jos mä en tiiä sitä suomeks ni mä laitan sen eka ruotsiksi sit jos se tulee niinku ruotsiks helpommalla nii mä käännän se suomeks.

*H: Yes do you ever compare it to other languages, those words?*

*L: Well normally if I don't know it in Finnish I put it in Swedish first if it comes more easily in Swedish so then I translate it into Finnish.*

Linnea probably means with *if it comes more easily in Swedish* that it is easier to compare Swedish and English than Finnish and English. The same strategy, translating the word from English to Swedish and then again into Finnish, could be used by the other children too that have Finnish as their stronger language, but it did not show in the answers. Another fact is that these situations appear in a Finnish context and that could be the reason for why the words are translated from Swedish to Finnish.

Linnea, Satu and Onni tell that they change the word they don't understand from English into Swedish and listen to it what it sounds like.

(75)

S: Yleensä mä kysyn opelta, että mikä se on ja joskus mä sitten yritän iteki päätellä siitä sanasta mikä se vois olla.

H: Niin ii. Millä tavalla sä sit rupeet sitä päättelemään?

S: Mää jotenki miltä se kuulostaa nii ää sillee ja kirjojetaan ja yritän päätellä mut yleensä mä kysyn kyllä sitte opelta neuvoja et mitä se tarkoittaa ni

H: Joo, entäs jos opelta ei voikaan kysyä etkä voi tarkistaa mistään sanastosta nii. Onko sulla jotain apukeinoja millä sä mietit sitä sanaa, että?

S: Noo yleensä se mää kuuntelen miltä se niinku kuulostaa ja yritän päätellä ruotsinkielisestä sanasta et mitä se niinku tarkoittaa mut joskus jos ei saa sitä vastausta nii sitte sanakirjasta yleensä löytyy se vastaus.

*S: Normally I would ask the teacher what it is and I sometimes try to figure it out myself what the word could be.*

*H: Yes. In what way do you start figuring it out?*

*S: I somehow [listen] what it sounds like and that [how it is] written and try to figure it out but normally I ask the teacher for help that what it means yes.*

*H: Yes how about if you are not able to ask the teacher or check the meaning in a wordlist do you have any ways how you would think of the word?*

*S: Well normally I listen to it what it sounds like and try to figure it out through a Swedish word what it could mean but normally I find it in the dictionary.*

Satu mentions twice the listening to the sounds: *I somehow [listen] what it sounds like and that [how it is] written and try to figure it out but normally I ask the teacher for help that what it means yes* and *Well normally I listen to it what it sounds like and try to figure it out through a Swedish word what it could mean but normally I find it in the dictionary*. Satu also mentions that she looks at the word how it is written and then tries to work it out. The easiest way seems anyhow to be to ask the teacher or to check the meaning in the dictionary. Satu tells that she has recently found the meaning for word **weather** and found the meaning with the help of the Swedish word väder.

(76)

H: Kyllä. Tuleeks sulle mieleen joku semmonen sana, jota sä olisit just miettiny et mitähän tää on ja hoksannu sit ruotsin kautta, että hei sehä on varmaan

S: No esimerkiksi tää oo mm **weather** nii sen voi päätellä helposti, että se on väder

H: No nii



S: nii silleen myös silleen niinku ku meillä oli se kappale justiinsa siitä niin siitä sitte päättellä niin, onnistuin.

*H: Can you think of a word that you have thought about in that way like what could this be and found the meaning through Swedish like hey this must be.*

*S: Well for example this **weather** so you can easily figure it out that it is yäder.*

*H: Okay*

*S: So that way also that way like when we had the text the other day so I figured it out and made it.*

Also Linnea mentions the sound of the word she doesn't know. She tries to figure out the meaning listening to the word and comparing it to Swedish.

(77)

L: Ehkä sen sanan avulla niinkun miltä se kuulostaa tai niin yritän päätellä sitä mitä se vois tarkoittaa.

*L: Maybe with the help of the word like what it sounds like or then I try to figure it out what it could mean.*

Words may be written quite differently in English and Swedish but the pronunciations can be closer to each other. That is probably why the children use the strategy of listening to the word. Onni says in the following example that if the word sounds like a word in Swedish it might also have the same meaning.

(78)

O: Mmm no... englannin kieli on aika samanlainen ku ruotsin kieli niin ehkä jos mä tie-s- joku se kuulostaa joltain ruotsin sanalta ihan nii sitte se saattaa ehkä tarkoittaa sitä ja sitten siitä voin päätellä että sitten tarkoittaa sitä

H: Mmm niijjust, tuleeko sulle mieleen joku semmonen sana mitä sä olisit sillätavalla just miettiny?

O: No esim vaikka **day** niinkun päivä niin sehän on dag niin se on aika sama, paitsi että yyn tilalle gee.

*O: Mmm well...English is quite like Swedish so maybe if I know some it can sound like a word in Swedish and then it can probably mean it and then I can figure it out that [it]means that*

*H: Mmm well right, can you think of a word that you have thought about in that way?*

*O: Well for instance **day** like day it is dag so it is quite the same except for that [y] is replaced with [g].*

As an example Onni gives the word **day** and dag and explains in detail how the words are similar and how they differ from each other. *Well for instance **day** like day it is dag so it is quite the same except for that [y] is replaced with [g].*

As Mikael was asked what he would do if he came across a word in English that he did not recognize he said he would ask the teacher or a friend and then give up and move further on. Then he said that he would check the meaning in Google translator. After that he was asked if he had used Swedish in these type of situations and he said that he normally does that.

(79)

H: Ootko sä koskaan miettiny niinku ruotsin kautta että mitähän tää on ruotsiks tai

M: Noo mä yleensä otan sen ruotsiks joo

H: Mmm

M: mut jos se on aika vaikee nii mä otan, yritän niinku suomeks.

*H: Have you ever thought of like through Swedish that what could this be in Swedish or*

*M: Well I normally take it in Swedish yes*

*H: Mmm*

*M: but if it is hard I take it, I like try in Finnish.*

Mikael states that he normally thinks of Swedish in these kind of situations but if it feels hard he takes the word in Finnish. He probably uses the same strategy as Linnea, Piia and Onni who said that they translate a word first into Swedish and then into Finnish. Mikael was then asked if he compares words in Swedish and English and he answers that he probably sometimes does that.

(80)

H: Mmm, niijjustiin. Tuleeko sulle mieleen jotai sellasia tilanteita että sä oisit miettiny ruotsiks jotain sanaa tai e- nähny sanan englanniks ja aatellu että, onkohan tuo sama ruotsissa? Muistatsä semmosta sanaa mitä sä olisit sillä tavalla miettiny?

M: Ai että niinku englanniks että onko se sama sana ku se?

H: Nii, että oot vertaillu että onko ne samantyyppisiä

M: Noo oon ehkä joskus, noh joo

*H: Mmm, okay. Can you think of situations where you have been thinking of a word in Swedish or seen a word in English and thought that is that the same in Swedish? can you remember thinking of a word in that way?*

*M: Do you mean that it would be the same word in English?*

*H: Yes, that you have compared the words if they are similar*

*M: Well I guess I have sometimes, yeah*

It is also possible that Mikael did not completely understand the question the interviewer tried to make. The question seems a bit unclear and it might have been difficult to answer it. However, Mikael stated before in example (79) that he normally compares the languages which means that he uses the same strategy as the other children. Anton was asked if he uses Swedish as a help when he does not understand something in English. In the following example Anton tells that he sometimes has compared words in Swedish and English since he has noticed that there are words that are nearly the same.

(81)

A: No kyllä mä oon joskus ehkä, miettiny, ku on jotain sanoja jotka on melkein samoja ni, vois päätellä siitä jo että, se vois olla joku

H: Mmm, kyllä tuleeks sulle mieleen mitää semmosta sanaa minkä sä olisit keksiny sillä tavalla?

A: Mmm...no ei juuri nyt tai ööö...no joo tulee yks sana mieleen öö öö aurinko elikkä niinku englanniks se ois **sun**

H: Mmm

A: mut ruotsiks se on niinku sol se on niinku melkein sama

H: Mmm

A: siitä voi päätellä melkein

*A: Well yes I have sometimes maybe, thought of that, when there are words that are nearly the same and, you could think that, it could be some*

*H: Mmm, yes can you think of a word that you have come up with in that way?*

*A: Mmm...well not right now or ööö...well yes I remember one word öö öö aurinko [sun] that means **sun** in English*

*H: Mmm*

*A: but in Swedish it is like sol it is almost the same*

*H: Mmm*

*A: You can almost figure it out*

Anton gives an example of a word that he has figured out through Swedish. He has found the meaning to word **sun** through thinking of the word in Swedish. He thinks **sun** and sol are quite similar. All the children seemed to use the help of Swedish when

learning English. This is a very natural thing to do since these two languages are similar both being Germanic languages. All of the examples shown here deal with the similarities of words in Swedish and English. Klein's (1995) study on bilingual third language acquisition showed that the bilinguals had an advantage over monolinguals when they learned a new language. In some cases the advantage involved particular areas of acquisition e.g. vocabulary but not syntax. In the present study the informants seem to concentrate on comparing the lexical aspects when learning the new language. Only one informant mentioned similarities in some of the grammatical aspects. Eemil compares articles and prepositions in the next example.

(82)

H: Joo kyllä, onks englantia helppo kirjottaa?

E: Ee, nooh aika helppo.

H: Mites ruotsia?

E: On sitäki aika helppo paitsi *en* ja *ett* on aika vaikee aina välillä muistaa, että kumpi on kumpi, siinä sanassa niinku

H: Mmh. Mites tota onkos englannissa mitää semmosta samaa niinku mikä pitäs muistaa?

E: No siinä on niinku *a* ja *an*...nii

H: Nii.

E: ja *the*, mut onks se samanlainne sellane?

[...]

H: Joo, ootsä huomannu mitää muita samanlaisia juttuja kun näissä sanoissa niin onks ollu jotai muita asioita?

A: Mmm no se että ei oo niinku vaikka mm öö että vaikka että jos menee johonkin nii se ei oo esimerkiks kotiin vaan till niinku öö **to the home** niinku jotenki sillee jos on ruotsissaki eiksoo niinku till hemmet?

H: *Yes, is it easy to write English?*

E: *Ee, well quite easy.*

H: *How about Swedish?*

E: *It is also quite easy except for en and ett ((indefinite articles)) they are quite hard to remember that which one like belongs to the word*

H: *Mmh. Do you think there are similar words to remember in English?*

E: *Well there are like **a** and **an**...yes*

H: *Yes*

E: *and **the** but is it a same kind of [word]?*

(...)

*H: Yes have you noticed any other similarities like in these words so have there been other things?*

*E: Mmm well it is like mm like when someone goes somewhere like it is not kotiin (home in Finnish) but till ((preposition in Swedish)) like **to the home** like in Swedish isn't it like till hemmet*

Eemil says that it is hard to remember the indefinite articles en and ett in Swedish. He means here that it is hard to know which words have article en and which have ett. He is asked about if there are similar words in English and he mentions the indefinite articles **a** and **an** and then he adds **the** asking if it is a similar kind of article. It seems that he is conscious of the similarities even at a grammatical level. Later in the interview Eemil is asked about if he thinks these two languages share other issues apart from similar words. Eemil compares the prepositions. In this example he incorrectly uses prepositions since they are not needed in either of the cases or languages. However, the prepositions till and **to** are more or less used in similar situations in these languages. Even if the example was incorrect he managed to compare the languages and had noticed that Swedish and English, in contrast to Finnish, have many structural similarities like and articles and prepositions.

Other studies show the same results. It is an advantage if the studied language is similar to the one the person knows. Keshavarz and Bahrainy (2002) compared Turkish-Persian bilinguals' and Persian monolinguals' acquisition of English. In this study they came to the conclusion that the monolingual speakers did better than the bilinguals. Possible reasons for this outcome could be that the bilinguals were not literate in their stronger language Turkish and they had learned Persian after they had learned Turkish. Persian and English both belong to the Indo-European language family whereas Turkish belongs to the Altaic family. This shows that knowing Persian well helped the informants to learn English. The bilinguals on the other hand were not so fluent in Persian and did not have the advantage. Turkish were their stronger language but being a different type of language the competence in Turkish did not help.

The informants in the present study are fluent both in Finnish and Swedish and can therefore use Swedish when learning English. Several studies show that it is easier to learn a new language that is related to a language the person already knows. Thomas (1988) compared English-Spanish bilinguals and English monolinguals learning French.

The study showed that the bilinguals did better than the monolinguals due to the fact that Spanish and French are closely related (see ch. 2.4). There are many studies that argue that bilingualism itself is an advantage when a person learns new language. According to Laurén (2008) the Finnish speaking children that have gone through an immersion program learn not only the immersion language, Swedish, effectively but also other languages that they have in their program. In addition Cummins (1991) states that bilinguals are able to transfer skills from their first language for use in their second language and it is possible that they are also be capable of transferring skills from the two languages they know to a third language. This is called the interdependence hypothesis.

## 6. DISCUSSION

I studied eleven Finnish- Swedish bilingual children, six girls and five boys, in this study. The children were interviewed and asked questions on learning English and studying other languages; also the matter of bilingualism was discussed. The children considered knowing Swedish helpful when learning another Germanic language, English. Some of the children came from bilingual homes and some of them had an immersion background. They also gave definitions of bilingualism that were similar to the definitions different researchers have given. Eight out of eleven children considered themselves bilingual. Three children with immersion background were not so sure about their bilingual identity.

The children stated that knowing languages would help them when they travel abroad and when they learn new languages. Furthermore they thought that they are able to help different people and that they would have benefit in future working life and studies when they are bilingual and/or know different languages. They also used Swedish as a learning strategy when learning English. When the children did not know a certain word in English they tried to find a similar sounding word in Swedish. In many cases this helped them to understand the word in English. The children concentrated on vocabulary and did not compare the languages in other matters except for one informant. He compared the articles and prepositions in Swedish and English. These grammatical issues are not used in Finnish so they were presumably easy to recognize as something different. The present study suggests that bilingual children have benefit from being bilingual when studying new languages.

The bilingual and multilingual children have more language competence in average compared to monolingual children. Anyhow, it was somewhat surprising that some of the studied children demanded so much from themselves. They had only started learning English at school and they already used the language abroad or thought they should understand everything when they are spoken to at hotels abroad. English is a very natural part in their lives. It has already been that for a long time since the children knew some English before they started with it at school. This is very natural since English has become a very important language in Finland. It has been called the third language of Finland (see ch. 3) The children had learned English from their parents and

other relatives and from TV and computer games. One informant had been living in England and Australia where she had acquired the language.

Aro (2009) studied 7-12-year-old English learners on their beliefs about language learning. These monolingual children had partly the same thoughts concerning the use of English as the children in the present study. The aspects of talking English with strangers, talking English abroad and helping people are similar to the categories in the present study. The willingness to study English seemed also similar in some answers in both studies. Some of the children wanted to study English because it is so widely used, as a lingua franca or because they might need it in future working life. The bilingual children seem, however, to be even more motivated in learning new languages and give more motivations for their eagerness. The children in the present study seem very confident with their language skills and are open to new experiences with even more languages. It is highly presumable that this results in the fact that the children are bilingual and already know two languages and two different cultures. Also the positive attitudes they have towards other languages, and the consciousness of the fact that there are different languages in the world, are possibly due to the fact that they are bilingual.

The families play a big role in the upbringing of the bilingual children. Peal and Lambert (1962: 18) discussed that the attitudes the child's parents hold influences the child's behavior and thinking to a great extent in bilingual families. The attitudes to different languages may not be so frequently discussed in monolingual families. This is something that also Pystynen (2013) points out in her study. The conscious efforts of providing a bilingual and bicultural environment for the children have clearly affected also the children's views and their perceptions on themselves.

Pystynen (2013) aimed to study how bilingual parents valued bilingualism and biculturalism on an ideological and practical level. The Finnish and British parents explained their perceptions of bilingualism's effects on the family members, with a special focus on the child's bilingual and bicultural identity. The parents considered bilingualism to have several positive effects. Bilingualism and biculturalism were both seen to raise awareness and increase tolerance in the children towards different kinds of people, languages and cultures. The children were able to accept others' beliefs since



they were themselves aware of their own biculturalism and different customs in two cultures. (Pystynen 2013: 42)

The families of the children in the present study have also consciously chosen to give the children a bilingual or multilingual upbringing by using two languages at home and/or provided the children with bilingual education in the kindergarten and at school. These efforts have made these bilingual children interested in learning new languages and accept different cultures.

## 7. CONCLUSION

This study concentrated on the views a group of bilingual children had on learning English and languages in general. Also the matter of bilingualism was discussed. The children considered knowing languages useful and the competence in Swedish helpful when learning English. The children came either from bilingual or multilingual homes or had an immersion background. This study did not aim to make generalizations on bilingual children but rather give an overview on the concepts and views bilingual children have on being bilingual and on learning a new language. This study suggests that an individual can have advantages of being bilingual when for instance they learn new languages and when they already know a language that is related to the new language in question.

Not all the aspects involved in bilingualism or the answers the children gave were taken into consideration in this study. Aspects like language awareness would be an interesting matter to study in the future. Another possibility would be to compare bilingual and monolingual children and see if they have similar views on the issues discussed here. Moreover, it would be interesting to follow the children in their learning process and study how their views and opinions on learning English might develop.

There are still remaining questions in the study of bilingualism. It is a wide research field that is varied to its nature. It is hard to give definitions on bilingualism or place bilingual individuals in ready-made categories since all cases are different involving a number of languages and many other variables that influence the studied results. I hope this study, despite of its restrictions, gives ideas and new views on the study of bilingualism.

**SYMBOLS IN TRANSCRIPTION****English**Swedish

Other languages in Georgia style

/interruption/

... longer pause

. shorter pause

(---) unclear

(( comments))

[added words in transcription]

(translations where needed)

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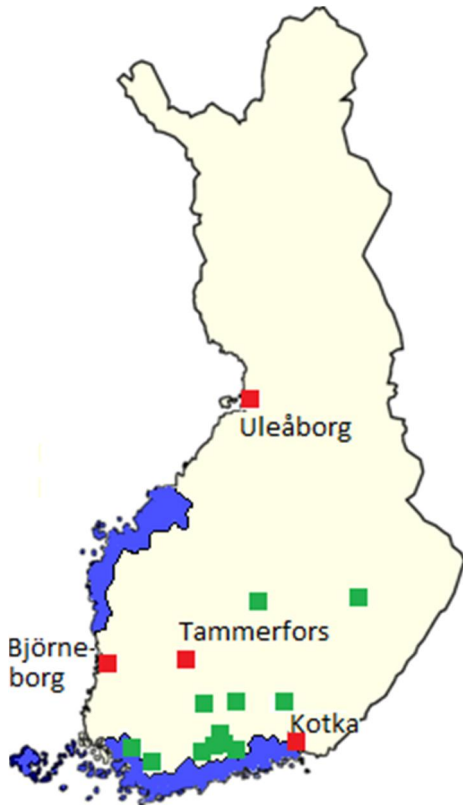
Websites: [www.oph.fi](http://www.oph.fi)

[www.stat.fi](http://www.stat.fi)

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1

#### The areas with a Swedish minority



Blue = the majority of the Swedish speaking people

Red = traditional language islands

Green = new language islands

The name of the cities in Finnish:

Uleåborg = Oulu

Tammerfors = Tampere

Björneborg = Pori

Kotka = Kotka

[http://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Svenska\\_spr%C3%A5k%C3%B6ar\\_i\\_Finland](http://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Svenska_spr%C3%A5k%C3%B6ar_i_Finland)



**APPENDIX 2****Cities with a Swedish minority and Swedish classrooms in schools.****The traditional language islands**

<b>City</b>	<b>Swedish speaking</b>	<b>Total population (2012)</b>	<b>The percentage of Swedish</b>
Tampere	1156	217421	0,53%
Kotka	535	54873	0,97%
Pori	446	83285	0,54%
Oulu	412	190847	0,22%

**New language islands**

<b>City</b>	<b>Swedish speaking</b>	<b>Total population (2012)</b>	<b>The percentage of Swedish</b>
Kaarina	1261	31363	4,02%
Tuusula	604	37936	1,59%
Salo	592	54858	1,08%
Vihti	510	28674	1,78%
Nurmijärvi	491	40719	1,21%
Kerava	385	34491	1,12%
Hyvinkää	370	45592	0,81%
Lahti	341	103016	0,33%
Kouvola	316	87296	0,36%
Jyväskylä	299	133482	0,22%
Hämeenlinna	215	67497	0,32%
Varkaus*	48	22340	0,21%

- The Swedish school in Varkaus is probably going to be put down

[http://www.magma.fi/images/stories/reports/ms1303\\_sprakoar.pdf](http://www.magma.fi/images/stories/reports/ms1303_sprakoar.pdf)

**APPENDIX 3****The recordings**

<b>Child</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Minutes</b>
Eemil	27th September, 2014	7:21
Eemil	28th September, 2014	14:11
Eemil	6th January	3:41
Teresa	28th September, 2014	17:00 + 3:00
Teresa	6th January	2:23
Camilla	1st October, 2014	18:47
Piia	4th October, 2014	18:21
Mikael	8th October, 2014	18:13
Satu	8th October, 2014	16:56
Anton	14th October, 2014	19:11
Benjamin	14th October, 2014	20:36
Onni	17th October, 2014	22:54
Linnea	19th October, 2014	15:17
Julia	19th October, 2014	14:08

## APPENDIX 4

### The interview questions

1. Mitä kieliä osaat?
2. Mitä kieltä käytät eniten?
3. Missä olet oppinut suomea? Entä ruotsia?
4. Mitä kieliä puhut kotona, vanhempien kanssa, sisarusten kanssa, koulussa oppitunneilla, välitunneilla?
5. Miten hyvin osaat suomea, ruotsia? Onko jompikumpi vahvempi vai yhtä hyvät? Mikä äidinkieli?
6. Miten hyvin osasit ruotsia ja suomea ennen kuin menit kouluun?
7. Millainen ihminen on kaksikielinen? Oletko itse kaksi kielinen?
8. Pidätkö kielenopiskelusta? Miltä on tuntunut aloittaa englannin opiskelu?
9. Osasitko yhtään englantia ennen kuin aloitit koulussa? Mistä olet oppinut?
10. Mitä te teette englannin oppitunneilla? Millaisia läksyjä saatte?
11. Osaatko erityisen hyvin jotain englanniksi esim. lukea tai kirjoittaa tai kuunnella tai tuntuuko joku vaikealta?
12. Jos et tiedä jotakin englannin sanaa, mitä teet, jos et voi kysyä keltään, tai katsoa sanakirjasta tai tietokoneelta?
13. Tiedätkö mitä muita kieliä on olemassa? Millaisia kieliä ne ovat? Haluatko opiskella muitakin kieliä tulevaisuudessa?
14. Onko sinulle ollut hyötyä kaksikielisyydestä? Onko hyötyä tulevaisuudessa?

### Translation

1. What languages do you know?
2. What languages do you use the most?
3. Where have you learned Finnish? Swedish?
4. What languages do you use at home, with you parents, with your siblings, at school in the lessons, during breaks?
5. How well do you know Finnish, Swedish? Is one of the languages stronger or equally strong? What is your mother tongue?
6. How well did you know Finnish and Swedish before you went to school?
7. What kind of person is bilingual? Are you bilingual?
8. Do you like studying languages? How do you feel about starting with English?
9. Did you know any English before school? Where have you learned English?
10. What do you do in the English lessons? What kind of home work do you get?
11. How about different areas in learning English, like reading, listening, writing. Do you find something really easy or difficult?
12. If you don't know a word in English, what do you do, if you don't have the possibility to ask anyone or check a dictionary?
13. Do you know what other languages there are in the world? What are they like? Do you want to learn other languages in the future?
14. Have you had benefit from being bilingual? How about in the future?

## APPENDIX 5

**Example of transkription: Julia 19th October, 2014**

[...] H: Ja tuota miltäs on nyt tuntunu alottaa englannin opiskelu koulussa?

J:Kivalta

H: Osasitsä englantia ennenku te alotitte koulussa?

J: Öö...osasin, vähä

H: Mistäs sä olit oppinu englantia?

J: Isältä äidiltä ja...yh noh, ja tietenki kaikkihan osaa sanan hello

H: Nii, osaatko sanoo mi- mistä muualta sä olit o- mistä sä oot kuullu tän helloun ja näitä sanoja?

J:Noo mä oon vähä kuullu kun, muut, puhuu englantia,

H: Joo kyllä

J: jaa englanti on muutenkin melkein yhtä, tai no silleen, melkein samanlaista ku ruotsi

H: Ymhy niijust, et sitä on iha helppo, oppia, kyllä. Jotkut lapset sanoo et ne on oppinu tuota telkkarista ja tietokonepeleistäki näitä sanoja

J: Joo tietokonepeleistä mäkin oon (---) oppinu

H: Joo niijust, kyllä. Mitäs te teette englannin oppitunneilla?

J: Nooh...vaikee sanoo, me ollaan vasta alotettu nii me ei olla päästy kauheen pitkälle oppikirjan kanssa

H: Joo teette luetteko te siellä kuunteletteko te pelaatteko jotain pelejä?

J: Noo mee luetaan... jaa sit, no e- me ollaan kuunneltu ihan vähä vaan, yks, sellane, osa

H: Nii, niijustii, kyllä, ja tuota minkäslaisia läksyjä te saatte sitten englannista?

J: Nooh...ei me kauheesti ainakaan tässä alussa saada (---) niinku öö saadaan kotona vaikka et pitää täyttää joku lappu, sellanen, me saadaan y- yleensä ainaki ku se alko nii sellane öö lappu, johon pitää niinku kirjottaa niinku vastaukset joihinki kysymyksiin

H: Joo

J: jotka löytyy tekstistä

H: Niijustiin kyllä, tekstiin liittyviä kysymyksiä

J: Mmm

H: Kyllä, no osaatko sanoo että onko joku osa-alue englannissa helpompaa ja joku vaikeempaa et esimerkiks kirjottaminen tai kuuntelunymmärtäminen tai tekstinymmärtäminen, onks ne kaikki yhtä helppoja vai onko joku helpompi ja joku vaikeempi?

J: Noo emmä vielä tiä...se on... ehkä, kirjottaminen on vähän hankalaa

H: Joo minkäs takia se tuntuu hankalalle osaatko sanoo

J: Noo kyllä mä osaan niinku niinku tekstistä jotenki ääntää ne sanat

H: Joo

J: mut en osaa äänneestä kunnolla kirjottaa niitä

H: ymhy joo /niijustiin/

J: /mut/ nyt sun ei kannata saada sellasta tunnetta et mä mu- en muka osais kirjottaa kyl mä osaan kirjottaa mut se on vähän vaikeempaa

H: Niinpä kyllä, se on ehkä pikkusen haasteellista mutta sä selviät siitä oikein hyvin

J: Joo

H: Kyllä no niin, se on hieno juttu. No tota, mitä sä teet jos, tuota noin tulee joku englannin sana vastaan josta sä et tiä et mitäs tää tarkoittaa nii mitäs sä teet?

J: Kysyn opettajalta,

H: Mmm joo, entäs jos opettaja ei oo siinä, heti keneltä sä voisit kysyä niin mitä sä sitten teet ((muiden lasten taustahälyä))

J: noo sit mä aattelen et mikä se sana vois olla ruotsiks, mut sit jos mä en löydä mitään niin sit mä kysyn kaverilta

H: Niijustiin kyllä. Tuleeko sulle mieleen semmosia sanoja joita sä oisit miettiny ruotsiks ja sitte keksiny mitä se on englanniks?

J: Öh, kuten vaikka dum?

H: Niih ((naurahdus))

J: No eik se ollu jotain dumb /tai/ damb tai

H: /Joo/ nii aivan hyvi- hyvin lähellä ruotsia

J: mut

H: Nii

J: ton sanan mä löysin yhestä pelistä

H: Aha?...ja sä silloin mietit tän?

J: Joo se oli sen pelin nimi

H: Niinpä joo niin hieno juttu, ja sä mainitsit äsken että sä osaat portugaliakin mm- missäs sä oot tuota portugalia oppinu?

J: Portugalissa

H: Ootsä käyny siellä monta kertaa?

J: Oon