

**“I feel that I am a world citizen and don’t really belong
anywhere”:**

Investigating Linguistic Identities of Three Finnish Missionary Kids

Bachelor’s thesis

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Nykyajan globalisoituneessa ja digitalisoituneessa maailmassa monikielisissä ympäristöissä elävien ihmisten lukumäärä kasvaa jatkuvasti. Lähetyslapsen ovat erinomainen esimerkki tällaisista ihmisistä, joiden elämässä monikielisyydellä on merkittävä rooli, sillä heidän arkipäivässään on läsnä useampi kieli kuin heidän äidinkieltensä. Tällä on luonnollisesti suuri vaikutus myös heidän kielellisiin identiteetteihinsä, sillä nykypäivän kielentutkimuksen näkökulmasta kielen ja identiteetin nähdään olevan lähes erottamattomia toisistaan.</p> <p>Aikaisemmin suomalaisia lähetyslapsia on tutkittu lähinnä kotimaahan paluun jälkeisen suomalaisen yhteiskuntaan ja koulujärjestelmään jälleensopeutumisen näkökulmasta, mutta lähetyslapsen kielellisiä identiteettejä ei ollut tähän asti tutkittu lainkaan. Tämän tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli täten täyttää tämä aukko selvittämällä, minkälaisia kielellisiä identiteettejä suomalaisille lähetyslapsille on muodostunut. Aineistonkeruumenetelmänä käytettiin semistrukturoituja haastatteluja, joita pidettiin kolmelle osallistujalle. Haastateltavat olivat kaikki viettäneet suurimman osan elämästään ulkomailla lähetyslapsina ja he olivat palanneet Suomeen lähetyskentältä teini-ikäisinä. Kerätty aineisto analysoitiin laadullisia menetelmiä hyödyntäen.</p> <p>Tutkimukseni osoitti, että vaikka suomi oli kaikkien osallistujien äidinkieli, he kokivat jonkintasoisia epävarmuuden tunteita suomen kielen taitojaan kohtaan. Tästä huolimatta kaikki kuitenkin kokivat, että suomen kieli kuuluu heille. Tulokset osoittivat myös, että englannin kielellä ja monikielisyydellä on erityisen merkittävä rooli osallistujien kielellisissä identiteeteissä, mikä oli havaittavissa esimerkiksi tavoista, joilla osallistujat käyttivät osaamistaan kieliään ja vaihtoivat eri kielten välillä. Lisäksi paluu Suomeen oli kaikille osallistujille merkittävää aikaa heidän kielellisten identiteettiensä muodostumisessa.</p>	
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1. INTRODUCTION

As a phenomenon, multilingualism is neither new nor rare. From earliest times of humankind, speakers of different languages have been in contact with each other, for example, in pursuit of territory, better hunting grounds or trade. Today, with a conservative estimate of 7,000 existing languages (Ethnologue: Languages of the World 2017) divided between only 195 countries, it is clear that multilingualism is the norm and monolingualism the exception in world. Furthermore, due to globalization and digitalization, the theme of multilingualism continues to maintain its relevance, as there is an increasing number of people living in multilingual environments (Peters et al. 2012: 7). This is why it is not rare that an individual might grow up learning more than one mother tongue with his/her parents speaking different languages, and using a third language in the affairs of his/her everyday life, and learning yet a fourth one at school.

An excellent example of these kinds of people are Missionary Kids (often abbreviated as MKs), who form a diverse group with special first-hand experience in multilingualism. Missionary Kids have spent a considerable amount of their developmental years in a different culture than their parents' home culture (or in some cases home cultures), which is why their linguistic repertoires are marked by the coexistence of multiple languages. However, having multiple languages in one's repertoire is not merely an issue of multilingualism, but it also has a significant influence on one's identity, which is a key issue in the field of sociolinguistics because of the close relationship between language and identity (cf. Joseph 2004, Edwards 2009). As a large portion of their lives have been spent in a different context than their countries of origin, my hypothesis is that the linguistic identities of MKs are bound to differ in a distinct way from those of their non-MK peers.

The issue of linguistic identities of MKs has been a neglected area in the field thus far. Therefore, the purpose of this present study is to fill this evident gap by investigating what kinds of linguistic identities Finnish Missionary Kids have constructed, and more specifically, what kind of attitudes the participants have towards the different languages, which functions the different languages in their repertoires play in their lives, and how returning back to their country of origin has affected their linguistic identities.

2 KEY CONCEPTS

In this section, I will give and critically discuss some basic definitions for the central concepts in this field of study, and explain how they will be used in the present study. Firstly, I will begin the section by providing brief definitions for *Missionary work*, *the Missionary* and *Missionary Kids*, which will help in understanding the background of the participants. Secondly, I will continue to discuss multilingualism, code switching and identity, and lastly, I will conclude the section with an introduction of the terms *third space* and *negotiation of difference*.

2.1. Missionary work, the Missionary and Missionary Kid

2.1.1 Missionary work and the Missionary

Missionary Work (often also referred to as 'missions') can be defined as "the worldwide enterprise of making disciples of the nations that falls outside the normal outreach responsibilities of the local church" (Church Missions Policy Handbook 1995). *Missionaries* are, therefore, people, usually sent by churches or agencies, who engage in this work (Wright 2006: 23).

Missionaries have been doing this work ever since the beginning the early Church and it continues to be carried out around the world today. The main motivation behind the enterprise is spreading the Christian gospel, and following the Great Commission given by Jesus Christ:

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:16-20 New International Version (NIV))

In Finland, according to the statistics sheet provided by the Finnish Missions Council (2015), in the year 2014, there were 680 missionaries sent by Finnish missions organizations working in a variety of forms, the largest agencies being Fida International, The Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM), The Evangelical Free Church of Finland and Youth with a Mission Finland.

2.1.2 Missionary Kids - Third Culture Kids?

Missionary Kids (=MKs) are defined as children whose parents work as missionaries and they are thus born or grow up abroad “on the mission field” (Pollock & Van Reken 2009). Often in research, MKs are also categorized as a subset of the broader group of Third Culture Kids (or TCKs), a term originally coined by researchers John and Ruth Hill Uusem in the 1960’s (see for example Uusem & Uusem 1967). Pollock and Van Reken later popularized the term and Pollocks’s definition is now a widely known one in the field:

[A Third Culture Kids is] an individual who, having spent a significant part of the developmental years in a culture other than the parents’ culture, develops a sense of relationship to all of the cultures while not having full ownership in any. Elements from each culture are incorporated into the life experience, but the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar experience. (Pollock, 1988)

Very similarly to Pollocks’s view, according to Lijadi (2013), TCK’s hold membership in three different types of cultures simultaneously: (1) their country (or countries) of origin (also referred to as their ‘passport country’), (2) all countries where they have lived, and (3) the global trans-cultural and interstitial culture in which they have become competent. According to this categorization by Lijadi, what differentiates MKs from other TCKs is the fact that the career choice of their parents is not generally professional as much as ideological.

However, this kind of conceptualization can be also criticized in light of current views on culture, because it suggests that culture is intrinsically of essentialist nature. Namely, the notion of culture as static, fixed, objective, consensual and uniformly shared by all members of a group is, as Wikan (1999: 62) argues, an obsolete model, or “a figment of the mind that anthropologists have done their share to spread”. Cultural essentialism therefore sees people as cultural subjects: bearers of *a* culture located in a bounded world (Grillo 2003: 158). Furthermore, Verschueren (2001: 40) goes as far to suggest that although culture is a universal human phenomenon, cultures do not actually exist in any real sense of “existence”. What have been labeled as Third Culture Kids could then be rather seen as, using the term coined by Anderson (1983: 6), members of an *Imagined Community*, who will never know most of their fellow members, and yet the image of their community lives in their minds, which makes the community “imagined”.

2.2 (Re)defining Multilingualism

Research on multilingualism can be considered multidisciplinary, as it draws on various fields such as psycholinguistics and linguistics, applied linguistics, especially second language acquisition, neurolinguistics, sociolinguistics and education (Stavans & Hoffman 2015: 142). To define multilingualism is not a simple task. Many linguists have defined multilingualism as the use or coexistence of three or more languages, but the problematic aspect of this is defining what a language actually is (Kemp 2009). Namely, it is not always clear whether a language is indeed a language or a dialect. Moreover, a language that is *linguistically* recognized as a distinct language might not be *politically* recognized as such.

Furthermore, there have been disagreements among scholars about the distinction between bilingualism and multilingualism. Some find it necessary to label someone speaking two languages a bilingual, but the two terms are increasingly used interchangeably when speaking about someone who is not a monolingual (Aronin and Singleton 2012: 4). Despite the disagreements about the conceptualization in the field, many scholars of today see multilingualism as a phenomenon which is an "ever-changing pattern of language combinations in individual language repertoires" as Djité (2009:3) puts it. What has traditionally been seen as something relatively static, has thus been redefined as dynamic.

For the purposes of the present paper, I have chosen to adopt the term multilingualism when referring to the use and coexistence of two or more linguistically recognized languages.

2.2.1 Code Switching and Code Mixing

Some scholars use the terms "code-mixing" and "code-switching" interchangeably. However, many linguists make a somewhat clear distinction between the two terms. MacSwan defines code switching as the alternate use of two (or more) languages within the same utterance (2006). Code mixing however, sees the phenomenon from a more grammatical (and/or intrasentential) point of view. Bokamba (1989) defines code mixing as

the embedding of various linguistic units such as affixes (bound morphemes), words (unbound morphemes), phrases and clauses from a co-operative activity where the participants, in order to infer what is intended, must reconcile what they hear with what they understand.

In this present study, the term *code switching* will be henceforth adopted when referring to both code switching and code mixing.

The importance of code switching has been long recognized in sociolinguistics. Two main foci have generally been, according to Tay (1989), (1) the linguistic constraints that determine the *form* of code switching and mixing and (2) the sociolinguistic functions which determine *when, with whom, and why* code switching occurs. The present study will adopt the second approach focusing on the sociolinguistic aspect of code switching as explained by the participants rather than on the grammatical form. Moreover, code switching relates especially to the focus of the present study, because it can be seen as *an act of identity* (Ellwood 2006: 2): an act through which one can both attempt to align with a particular identity but also may attempt to reject, resist or try to modify an imposed identity.

2.3 Identity in light of post-structuralism

Identity is a key issue in the field of sociolinguistics, as the relationship between language and identity is multifaceted and tightly knit. Joseph (2004, as cited in Edwards 2009: 20) goes as far as to suggest that identity and language are so closely together that they cannot even be separated from each other. It is fair to say, therefore, that an issue of language is simultaneously an issue of identity.

In today's research, identity is generally placed in a post-structuralist framework. Quite in contrast to the traditional view of identity as a fixed or unitary phenomenon, the post-structuralist perspective sees identity as a constantly evolving phenomenon, *a process*, and not as something "fixed for life" (Block 2007: 864). Attributes, such as fluid, multiple, diverse, dynamic, varied, subject to change, shifting, and contradictory have been used to describe the nature of identity in light of current perspectives (Kouhpaenejad & Gholaminejad 2014). Furthermore, it has been argued that individuals can not only simultaneously possess one identity, but *multiple identities*, as for example gender identity and social identity (Edwards 2009: 18-19, see also Tajfel and Turner's social identity theory, 1979). The present study will follow this post-structuralist understanding of identity as a process that is shaped by sociocultural factors. Furthermore, *linguistic identity* will be understood both as "the sense of belonging to a community as mediated through the symbolic resource of language," and "the varying ways in which we come to understand the relationship between our language and ourselves" (Park 2012).

2.3.1 Third space and negotiation of difference

As discussed above, identities are not static nor fixed, but rather processes, which can be experienced as changeable, unsteady and wavering phenomena. Hawley (2004) states that the re-entry into the parent's home culture is a critical issue for all members of missionary families (see also Ketting 1997, Stringham 1993), and for many Missionary Kids, returning to their passport country means leaving the culture where they feel most at home and entering into a new environment. As Block (2007: 864) states: "In particular, when individuals move across geographical and psychological borders, immersing themselves in new sociocultural environments, they find that their sense of identity is destabilised and that they enter a period of struggle to reach a balance." When a MK returns to his/her country of origin, following Block's view, he/she moves across geographical as well as psychological borders and thus forms and enters into a *third space* (a term coined by Bhabha, 2004), which is when one might feel disoriented, and find him- or herself in an ambivalent state of struggling to find a balance. This is when what Papastergiadis (2000, cited in Block 2007: 864) calls *the negotiation of difference* takes place. During this time, the past and the present "encounter and transform each other" (ibid.), and the individual must strive to find a new balance between the two and thus craft a new identity in response to the new sociocultural environment. In the case of Finnish MKs, the first days, weeks, months or even years after entering into Finland and its culture, language environment and school system after a significant period abroad is when the negotiation of difference occurs.

3. Previous research

Even though multilingual identities have been widely studied in linguistics, in many societies research on language use and identity has been and still is grounded on the assumption of individual and societal monolingualism (Djité 2009). In recent years, however, a shift has taken place towards the acknowledgement of what Aronin and Singleton (2010: 1) refer to as a "new linguistic dispensation of highly complex and highly diverse multilingualism", and there is a call for new research foci in the study and empirical research of multilingualism (Djité 2009).

There is a host of a research articles on Third Culture Kids, a significant portion of which focus on Missionary Kids. The majority of Missionary Kids studies falls into one or more of the following three categories: (1) educational concerns, (2) re-entry issues, and (3) the adjustment of adult MKs (Hawley 2004). In these studies, researchers have found, for example, that strong, healthy family relationships seem to be the key to successful adjustment, both on the mission field and during times of transition (see for example Wrobbel & Pluddeman 1990 and Huff 2001). Furthermore, it has been found that the time of re-entry is a critical period in the life of a missionary family (see Ketting 1997, Stringham 1993).

Although Missionary Kids have been the focus of a considerable amount of research in the United States, the topic has yet to gain wide attention in Finnish scholarship. Previous studies on Finnish Missionary Kids have mainly focused on the re-adaptation process to the Finnish society and education system (see for example Takala 2003, Korhonen 2007, Niskanen 2004). These studies have found, for example, that returning (or in some cases moving) to Finland is a time of great significance to the MKs. Some MKs felt like an immigrant in disguise: like someone who may look like other Finnish people, but still feels like a foreigner on the inside. The Finnish language and Finnish cultural values were seen as strengthening agents for their identity as Finns. Social networks, such as family, school, friends and church were found to be crucial in the adjustment process.

Linguistic identities have been a neglected area of research thus far. To my best knowledge, no study has been specifically devoted to the investigation of the linguistic aspect of identity in the lives of Finnish MKs. This is why the aim of the present study is to fill this gap by researching the linguistic identities of three Finnish Missionary Kids who have returned to their passport country, after a number of years spent abroad, and who are now in the process of transitioning back to their country of origin.

4. THE PRESENT STUDY

In the following chapter, I will introduce the main aim of the present study, as well as the research questions. Then I will move on to the data and methods section, in which I will

introduce the participants of the study and the methods of data collection and analysis. Finally, I will conclude the chapter with a discussion on ethical issues that arose in this study.

4.1 Research aim and questions

The main aim of the present research is to investigate what kinds of linguistic identities the Finnish MK's have constructed.

In my analysis, I seek to answer the following four questions:

1. What are the languages in the participants' repertoires and what kinds of attitudes do they have towards the languages?
2. What kinds of functions do the different languages in their repertoire serve in their lives?
3. What is the role of multilingualism in the participants' linguistic identities?
4. Did returning to Finland cause the formation of a third space in the MKs' lives?

4.2. Data and methods

In pursuing the research aim stated above, I chose to conduct qualitative research, upon which I will elaborate in this section.

4.2.1 Participants

The present study includes three Finnish Missionary Kid participants (Table 1), all of whom have spent a significant portion of their lives living abroad in a different culture than their parents' home culture. The participants were found through the researcher's personal connections and selected based on their availability. They will henceforth be referred to by pseudonyms to ensure their anonymity.

Elise and Lily are sisters, who spent ten years of their lives living in the country their parents served as missionaries. Elise was aged 5 upon entering her new home country, and Lily was three years old. At the time the interviews took place, it had been nine months since their return to Finland. Joel, on the other hand, had already lived three years in Finland post-return. He was 3 months old when moving to his first new home country, where he lived for seven

years. Then a period of two years of living in Finland took place, after which his family moved to a second country for missionary work, which lasted for roughly four years.

Table 1. The participants

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Time lived abroad	Time spent back in Finland
Elise	15	Female	10 years	9 months
Lily	13	Female	10 years	9 months
Joel	15	Male	12 years	3 years

4.2.2 Data collection

The data was collected in January 2017 in the form of semi-structured one-on-one interviews. Since the main purpose of this study is to delve deeply into the construction of linguistic identities, I find interviewing to be the best choice of data collection, because having the participants themselves describe in detail their own experiences, feelings and views on the issue best provided the needed data. Because of the semi-structured nature of the interviews, much room was left for probing and follow-up questions, such as “Can you be more specific?” and “Can you tell me more about that?”. I put together a list of 29 interview questions ranging from very specific to nonspecific questions using Peijonen’s (2016) example as a general guide on interviewing about linguistic identities. The questions dealt with five main themes: (1) General information, (2) Attitudes and Function, (3) Identity in general, (4) Multilingualism and (5) Third Space. In the first category, the participants were asked to share some general information about their linguistic repertoires and language usage in their families. The second category dealt with their attitudes towards the different languages and the functions the languages serve in their lives. In the third category, the participants were asked to characterize themselves as speakers of the languages and also weigh in on whether the languages belong to him/her, which was meant to shed light on their self-perceived linguistic identities. The fourth category focused on the issue of multilingualism and the final category questions were about the third space. The final data consists of three interviews, all of which were recorded in Jyväskylä with the permission of

the research subjects and their custodians. Altogether, the interviews provided one hour and 46 minutes' worth of material for analysis.

4.2.3 Method of analysis

The interviews were recorded and all material was subsequently transcribed. Then I proceeded to analyze the collected data by using the methods of data based content analysis (see Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009). For the purposes of the present study, content analysis was a more suitable choice of analysis methodology than, for instance, discourse analysis, because from the point of view of the research aim, *what* was said was more important than *how* it was said. The analysis was carried out, following Tuomi & Sarajärvi's (ibid.) method consisting of three stages: (1) reducing, (2) clustering and (3) abstracting the data. First, I collected the most relevant and interesting findings from the gathered data and systematically arranged the findings into a compact form. Thereby the data was first reduced to only the most relevant parts of the interviews, in which I then proceeded to look for patterns and consider the relationships between the themes, and wrote the final analysis based on this. All Elise and Lily's extracts in the analysis section are transcriptions, whereas those from Joel are translations from the Finnish transcription, and the original extracts can be found in the Appendix 3.

4.2.4 Ethical issues

There were some ethical issues that had to be taken into account during this present study. Firstly, the participants were asked to express their consent by signing a form of before the interview, in which the purpose and the confidential nature of the study were explained. Secondly, since one of the participants was under the age of 15, a form of consent was also given to her parents, in which it was stated that should they wish not to have their child take part in the study, they could ask the researcher not to use her interview. Finally, for the purposes of ensuring that the individuals cannot be recognized, all participants were given pseudonyms, which are used all throughout this paper.

5. ANALYSIS

In the following chapter, I will present my findings and seek to answer my four research questions. I have divided this section into three parts. In the first part, I will answer the first and the second research questions by looking at the general linguistic profiles of the MKs: which languages they know, how they perceive their competence in the languages, and what kinds of attitudes they display towards the languages. In the second part, the focus will lie on the role multilingualism plays in the lives of the participants, looking especially into code switching and the different kinds of functions their languages serve in their lives. The final part will answer the final research question regarding the returning processes of the MKs, and more specifically, how the phenomenon of *third space* played out in their lives.

5.1. Linguistic identities of the three Finnish MKs

All the MKs listed multiple languages in their repertoires. Elise and Lily had four: Finnish, English, Spanish and French, and Joel had five: Finnish, English, Swedish, Turkish and Nepali. However, he notes that whereas he used to know some Nepali, he cannot really speak it anymore. All three participants had experiences in both learning languages formally at school and acquiring them informally. According to Elise and Lily, they acquired Spanish when they moved to their new home country, Peru. They both describe the learning process as quite effortless; in words of Lily, they “just learned it”, much as one “just learns” a mother tongue. First, their family lived in a smaller city and the girls attended a nursery where only Spanish was spoken, but when their family moved to the capital city, they also started learning English at an international school. There, they had language support classes, which helped them to learn English quickly, although Lily states that she already knew some basics of the language, such as names of colors and animals. They both also studied French formally at school.

Much like the sisters, Joel learned English when he started an international school in Nepal, the country where his parents worked as missionaries. The Nepali language he both studied formally at school and also acquired informally, or, as he puts it “naturally”, by hearing it spoken by the people around him. Very similarly, when his family moved to Turkey later on, he acquired Turkish in a formal setting at school and also in informal settings in his everyday life. After his return to Finland, he had also been studying Swedish at school.

Even though Finnish is the mother tongue of the participants, all the MKs expressed some feelings of inferiority regarding their Finnish language skills compared to those of their non-MK peers. It is to be noted, however, that both Elise and Lily expressed these feelings significantly more than Joel, which is most likely due to the fact that Joel had spent more than triple the amount of time back in Finland than the sisters had, and had therefore had more time to learn Finnish. All three participants felt that especially their vocabularies were not as rich as their peers'. Joel also added reading and grammar as one of the problematic areas of the Finnish language to him:

(1) I would say that my vocabulary is weaker than many other people's, because I haven't attended school that much in Finland and my reading has also been weaker, but my pronunciation, it is just like a native speaker's so there is no problem with the speaking, but with the vocabulary, and also what is this, this - - grammar. (Joel)

Here, Joel explains that even though his pronunciation is as good as a native speaker's his vocabulary and grammar skills are weaker. What is more, he even said the word *grammar* in English here because he did not remember how to say it in Finnish, which conveniently exemplified his point of having a limited vocabulary. Even though they thought that their vocabularies were limited, Elise and Joel still perceived themselves as fluent in Finnish. Lily, on the other hand, did not. She explains that while she can have a conversation with someone in Finnish, most of the time she says things "the wrong way". She continues with the following explanation:

(2) Sometimes - - people speak really quickly in Finnish and it confuses me, and then I read really slowly in Finnish, or if you compare me to someone who has like read and spoke and everything in Finnish their whole lives. (Lily)

Here, Lily explains that compared to people who have grown up using mostly Finnish, she sometimes finds it more difficult to understand fast-paced speech, and she feels that she is not as competent as a reader, which is why she would not characterize herself as fluent. The idea of fluency had therefore different meanings for the MKs: for Joel and Elise, being fluent meant getting your point across in everyday situations, but for Lily, it meant using the language in a correct way.

Despite the fact that they do not think of themselves as equally capable in Finnish as their peers, the MKs still thought that Finnish belongs to them. Joel explained that:

(3) I feel that I am a Finn even though I might not feel that my home is here in Finland. But the Finnish language is a part of being Finnish and I guess it belongs to me. (Joel)

Here we can see that Joel identifies himself as a Finnish person and he therefore has a sense of ownership of the Finnish language, despite the fact that he has spent most of his life living abroad. Similarly, although with more hesitation, Elise and Lily stated that they feel that Finnish belongs to them at least to some extent. Elise admitted that sometimes she does feel like it does not belong to her, because she has lived most of her life in Peru, which is why she feels that Spanish belongs to her more, even though it is not her mother tongue.

The attitudes the participants displayed towards Finnish were mostly positive. However, at times some negative undertones were detectable when Joel spoke about Finnish:

(4) I like hearing especially English more [than Finnish], maybe it's just a nicer language than Finnish somehow. (Joel)

Here we can see Joel's attitude towards English to be more favorable than towards his mother tongue. On the other hand, he does later mention that he learned to appreciate Finnish and sometimes got a sense of pride when he spoke the language in the presence of his non-Finnish speaking friends. The conclusion cannot therefore be drawn here that to him, living abroad only affected his attitude towards Finnish in a negative way. Negative attitudes towards any of the languages were not clearly detectable in the sisters' comments. However, Elise often connected Finnish with shyness, which some may deem as a negative trait, but she herself does not specify whether that is something negative or positive in her opinion.

All the participants perceived themselves to be very competent English speakers. This was clear from the very beginning of the interview, as the first question was to choose the language in which they wished to conduct the interview. They were given the choice between English and Finnish, and both Elise and Lily chose to do the interview in English with no hesitation. Elise and Lily motivate their choice in similar ways: Elise states that it does not really matter to her but she feels that her vocabulary is much better in English so she can better express herself using that language. Quite similarly, Lily finds English to be more easy and comfortable to speak than Finnish. Joel, on the other hand, chose to do the interview in Finnish, because he has used Finnish at school for some years now and he feels that he knows the language a bit better because of that. Later in the interview, however, Joel

expresses similar feelings to the sisters' that he can best express himself in English in some situations.

In general, English played a very significant role in the linguistic identities of the MKs. Notably, I found that the participants' English-speaker identities leaned more towards English as a native language (ENL) than English as a foreign language (EFL) identities even though none of their native languages was English, which can most clearly be seen in the functions of their languages, which will be discussed more in depth in the next section of this paper. Furthermore, they all pointed out the special global role of English. Lily observed that:

(5) Most people, like everywhere, they speak English or like a little bit English, and it's like an international language, so if you go anywhere in the world, you can speak to someone in English and they will probably understand you. And you can't go somewhere and start speaking in Finnish. (Lily)

Here we can see how Lily perceives English as an international language that opens the way for communication across cultures, which would be impossible using Finnish. Joel feels in a way connected to the English language, because of this very reason:

(6) I feel that I am a world citizen, and I don't really belong anywhere, and English is this kind of a global language. (Joel)

As we can see here, Joel relates English very closely to its worldwide reach: it is a lingua franca and thus does not solely belong to any particular nation but to the whole world. Correspondingly, he feels that his citizenship is in the whole world and not just in one or two nations, and he thus characterizes himself as a "world citizen." Joel, as well as the sisters all think that English will be the most important language in their future, which is a clear indication that it is also a significant part of their linguistic identities today.

The languages spoken in the countries their parents worked as missionaries, i.e. Spanish, Turkish, and Nepali, also were important building blocks of the linguistic identities of the MKs. Elise expresses, for instance, that:

(7) When I think of my identity - - and all the things that have happened in my life, and like everywhere that I've lived, and all the people I've met, and the fact that most of my life I've lived in Peru that even though Finnish is like my first language, I feel like it's not the most important language maybe. Or like even though Spanish and Finnish are almost as like the same importance to me, I feel like Spanish belongs more to me. (Elise)

Here we can see how closely Elise relates to Spanish by stating that it belongs more to her than her native language. She goes on to explain that speaking Spanish made her feel like one of the Peruvian people and the language therefore gave her a sense of belonging there. Lily adds that she feels sad because she does not get to use Spanish as much anymore in her everyday interactions. Even though Joel does not use Turkish nor Nepali in his everyday life, he still regards them as important because of the memories he made at the time he still used the languages actively.

In addition to their mother tongue and the languages they used in their everyday lives, all interviewees had also studied another language at school, which they did not use regularly; Elise and Lily studied French at school in Peru, and Joel had been studying Swedish in Finland for a couple of years. When asked how close they feel to all the languages in their repertoire, these were the ones they placed farthest away from them. Lily and Elise both regard French as “not that important”, and Joel expresses very similar feelings towards Swedish:

(8) I have never used Swedish anywhere else but in school, so I can't say that I think it is very important, but it can very well be that in future, it will be the kind [of a language] that can open new doors that I couldn't even imagine. (Joel)

Here, even though Joel does not find Swedish important to him at the moment, he does not dismiss it as a useless language to him, but he also sees the possibilities that knowing Swedish could offer him. However, none of the MKs feel that these languages belong to them like the other foreign languages they know, such as English or Spanish.

5.2. “My life would be boring if I only knew like one language” - Multilingualism and the MKs

All the MKs identified themselves as multilingual. When asked what it means to them they gave the following answers:

(9) I think it means that I can explain my feelings and say what I want to say in at least three different languages. (Elise)

(10) Like knowing - - more than two languages. Well, that you can use many different languages in your normal life. (Joel)

(11) That they [multilingual people] speak more than two languages or like fluently speak more than two languages. (Lily)

Here we can see that the participants thought that in order to be multilingual, one has to know at least three languages. Interestingly, even though Lily stated earlier that she does not regard herself as a fluent speaker of Finnish, she does identify as a multilingual who, by her own definition, fluently speaks more than two languages. This incoherence in Lily's statements is most likely due to the fact that she had not previously given this issue much thought and had not at that point yet formed a coherent view of the matter.

In all the families, the MKs said that Finnish is the main language of communication. However, whereas in Joel's family, Finnish has always been the only language used, in Elise and Lily's family they spoke Spanish in addition to Finnish. According to Lily, if there were guests around they would speak either Spanish or English. Lily also described a kind of a Finnish-English-Spanish hybrid spoken in their family:

(12) - - we speak Finnish with our family but then sometimes we just automatically use words in Spanish and English. And we don't really think about it when we say it but it's funny because everyone understands it if we're with our family. (Lily)

Here, Lily explains that code switching happens very naturally in their family, and it is nothing out of the ordinary because everyone understands it. Elise says that she usually does not even realize that she has switched to another language. Lily goes on to state that while she feels that it is normal when it occurs in the context of her family, people outside of that context sometimes get confused when she code switches. As stated in the background section of this paper, code switching is also an act of identity, and since all the MKs stated that code switching is a normal occurrence in their lives, multilingualism can be seen as an important building block of their identities. Joel even code switched during the interview:

(13) I think that it's [using multiple languages] completely normal. When I meet people to whom learning even English is difficult and who only speak Finnish, then you feel very privileged. (Joel)

Here, we can see how naturally code switching happens in Joel's speech, as he uses the English word for *privileged*. The MKs also described switching between their different languages altogether to be generally very easy. However, Lily observed the following:

(14) If I switch from English to Finnish it's a little bit hard but if I switch from Finnish to English it's like a relief, because I guess it's easier for me to express myself in English than in Finnish. (Lily)

Here Lily describes switching from Finnish to English as a relief, and to her, switching from English to Finnish can be difficult. One would easily think that switching to one's mother tongue would be a relief, but in Lily's case the situation is the opposite, which gives the impression that English is her first language (hence learning towards an ENL identity) and Finnish her second language.

Since thinking is an act that presumably happens mostly automatically, the language in which one does it, gives us an important insight into the linguistic identities of the thinker. Even though the mother tongue of the MKs is Finnish, all of them stated that much of their thinking happens in English. According to Joel, the reason for this might be that when he thinks, he often tends to think about his future, and since he thinks that English will be the language he will be using the most, English is the language of his thoughts. Lily also said that her main language of thinking is English, but Elise says the following:

(15) If I'm in Finland, I mostly think in Finnish, but if I'm at school here, I think I think in Finnish and in English, because most of my classes are in English. And when we were in Peru, I used to think mostly in Spanish, but then also sometimes when it's about like a certain thing, like for example if I thought about saunas, I thought about it in Finnish - - and when we were in the US, I thought mostly in English. So I think it's like about the environment I'm in.
(Elise)

Here we can see that in Elise's case, the language in which she thinks depends on the environment she is in and sometimes on the topic she is thinking about. Furthermore, both Lily and Joel bring up praying, which is an act that is very often thought to be conducted in one's native language, or 'the language of the heart'. Lily stated that she usually prays in English, which is an indication that English is a language, if not closest, at least very close to her heart. Joel explains that he might start praying in Finnish and then switch to English or vice versa, and some phrases even in Turkish might come up in his prayers.

In this section we have found that knowing and using multiple languages play a big part in the identities of the MKs. Moreover, from the interviews it was also clearly detectable that the MKs genuinely enjoy learning and using languages, as can be seen in this statement by Lily:

(16) I think my life would be boring if I only knew like one language. (Lily)

Here, Lily connects multilingualism to an exciting life, which is a connection also made by Elise. Namely, she also sees that knowing many languages has contributed a lot to her life,

more specifically, by opening up different points of view to her, “without even trying”. The important role of languages was not hidden in Joel’s statements either:

(17) I got this enthusiasm towards languages, because I want to learn new languages and new cultures, live with them, and you wouldn’t get that opportunity if you didn’t have the language skills. (Joel)

It is clear here how Joel sees languages as something that can open doors to communication with people and learning about their culture, which is why he hopes to continue learning new languages, such as Arabic or Chinese. He goes on to discuss how different it is to encounter and talk to people using their own languages than English, which is something he has learned first hand in his life as a Missionary Kid.

5.3. A “dramatic change” in the lives of the MKs

The MKs all reported that coming back to Finland was a confusing time in their lives. They moved across both geographical and psychological borders, and had to readjust to a whole new school system and to a different culture than they were used to. Elise felt like she was going through “a cultural crisis”, and she continued to state:

(18) It [coming back to Finland] was weird. Because I had to get used to the fact that no one here speaks Spanish and everyone around here understands it when I speak Finnish, ’cause in Peru we used to - - talk with only with our family, and we could be like in a bus and we would like scream things to each other and no one would understand, but here we just had to get used to not being able to say things without other people not understanding it too. (Elise)

Here, Elise describes how differently languages were used in her home country than back in Peru, and it took some getting used to; in Peru, she could use Finnish as a ‘secret language’, but that would not of course work in Finland.

The phenomenon of *third space*, entering which one might feel disoriented, and find him- or herself in an ambivalent state of struggling to find a balance, was evident in the MKs’ lives. Joel said that especially the first time he entered the Finnish school system, he felt that it was a time of a “dramatic change” in his life, which indicates that this was the time *the negotiation of difference* took place. Elise explained that for about six months after returning, she tried to block all the feelings that were involved with the transition process in order to make it easier for herself, and Lily recalled feeling very confused. Even though the return processes are always unique to the individual, all the MKs state that family and friends were a key

element in making the readjustment easier for them, which is a finding that aligns nicely with previous research conducted on MKs (cf. Takala 2004).

One final theme which came up in the interviews when discussing their current life in Finland, was the sense of being different. As most of their Finnish classmates had never lived abroad, the MKs felt that they inevitably differed from their peers in a certain sense. Elise feels that she had acquired traits from Peruvians, such as risk-taking and confidence, that are not traditionally very Finnish. Joel is found it odd that some of his friends do not find learning languages important and never plan to leave their home city, because to him, both of these have been such a natural part of his life. During her interview, Lily refers to other Finnish people who have lived their entire lives in Finland as “normal”, indicating that she identifies herself as abnormal. As the final question of the interview came, and Lily was asked if there were any final remarks she wanted to make, she uttered the following thought:

(19) I guess as a missionary kid I always feel different from the others. Like in Peru, I was like 'the Finnish girl' and here I'm 'the Finnish girl who lived in Peru'. (Lily)

Here, Lily talks about two different identities that have been imposed upon her: “the Finnish girl” and “the Finnish girl who lived in Peru”, both of which contain the same underlying sense of being different from the others. She is unsure whether she feels good or bad about that, but she affirms that she regards being different as a part of who she is.

6. CONCLUSION

In the present paper, my main aim has been to shed light on the previously un-researched issue of linguistic identities of Finnish Missionary Kids. I took on a qualitative approach by conducting semi-structured interviews with three participants and analyzed the interview transcriptions using data based content analysis. Firstly, I found out that even though Finnish is the mother tongue of the participants, all the MKs expressed feelings of inferiority regarding their Finnish language skills compared to those of their non-MK peers. They felt that especially in terms of their vocabulary and grammar, their skills were not as developed as their peers'. Despite the fact that they do not think of themselves as fully capable in using Finnish, the MKs still thought that Finnish belongs to them. Secondly, my research showed

that English played a crucial role in the construction of the linguistic identities of the participants. I found their identities to lean more towards ENL identities than EFL identities, which could most clearly be seen in the functions the English language played in their lives: expressing themselves the best, general thinking, and even praying. Thirdly, based on this study, multilingualism can be regarded as very prominent in the linguistic identities of the three Finnish MKs. Code switching occurs very frequently and naturally in their speech, and the coexistence and usage of multiple languages in their daily lives was considered as very positive by the participants. Finally, all three of the participants went through the formation of a third space upon their return to Finland, and found the time of the negotiation of difference to be a confusing time of dramatic change. As a result of reshaping their identities, the sense of being different to their peers, just as they were abroad, still remained a part of them.

According to Pollock & Van Reken (2009:5), the Third Culture Kid (thus also the Missionary Kid) experience can be seen as a sort of microcosm of what is becoming the norm all around the world. Culturally and linguistically homogenous communities are growing increasingly few in this era of international mobilization and digital communication. Much like MKs, children of refugees and other immigrants, for example, encounter cultures and education systems that are different to what they are used to in their countries of origin, and have to adjust to growing up abroad. This is why the findings of this study are not only interesting to the people involved in Missions, but also to a much wider audience of the multilingual community.

Since the scope of the Bachelor's thesis is so limited, the present study could only include a very small number of participants, and there is, therefore, much left to research in this area. Further research could be done, for example, on the specific topic of the role of English in the linguistic identities of Finnish MKs or on the change of linguistic identity the MKs go through when returning to Finland. Although the results of this study do not suffice to make any wide generalizations about all Finnish Missionary Kids, they provide an enlightening contribution into the significance of multilingualism in an individual's life, and this information is very useful, for instance, in developing language pedagogy. Researching identities is not only intriguing but also of great importance, and as multilingualism is such a

visible component in the globalizing world of today, linguistic identities should receive even more focus than thus far.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview questions in English

1. GENERAL

- Would you like to be interviewed in Finnish or in English? Why?

- What are the languages in your linguistic repertoire?
- How have you acquired each of the languages?
- How have these languages been used among your family?

2. ATTITUDES AND FUNCTION

- In general, which language do you prefer to use? Why?
- Are these languages equally important to you or do they have different functions?
- What is English to you?
- What is Finnish to you?
- What is ___ to you?
- Is English important to you? Why?
- Do you notice using words from another language when conversing in Finnish or vice versa? In what kinds of situations? How does it feel when this occurs?
- Do you find yourself thinking in another languages than your mother tongue? If yes, in what kinds of situations (and about what kinds of things)?

3. IDENTITY IN GENERAL

- How would you characterize yourself as a Finnish speaker? Please be as descriptive as possible.
- How would you characterize yourself as an English speaker? As said above.
- How would you characterize yourself as a speaker of ___ (any other languages in their repertoire)?
- Do you feel like Finnish “belongs” to you? Why?
- Do you feel like English “belongs” to you? Why?
- Do you feel like _____ “belongs” to you? Why?

4. MULTILINGUALISM

- How fluent do you think you are in your different languages? Why?
- Do you regard yourself as monolingual, bilingual or multilingual? Why?
- What is bi- or multilingualism to you? Why?
- How do you feel about using multiple languages daily? Why?
- How does it feel switching between the different languages?

5. THIRD SPACE

- How do you think you have changed as a Finnish speaker during your time living abroad?
- Did you notice any change in yourself as a Finnish speaker when you first entered your new home country?
- Did your relationship with the Finnish language change upon entering your new home country?
- Did you face any difficulties regarding you and your relationship with the Finnish language?
- If yes, how did you try to survive these difficulties? What did this process feel like?
- Did you notice any change in yourself as a Finnish speaker when you returned to Finland?
- Any further comments on language/identity/being a MK?

Appendix 2: Interview questions in Finnish

1. YLEISET

- Haluatko, että sinua haastatellaan suomeksi vai englanniksi? Miksi?
- Mitä kieliä osaat?
- Voitko kertoa, miten olet oppinut kunkin näistä kielistä? (esim. äidikieli, koulussa, muuten vaan kuuntelemalla, puhumalla)

2. ASENTEET JA KIELTEN KÄYTTÖ

- Yleisesti ottaen, mitä kieltä käytät mieluiten? Miksi?
- Ovatko kaikki osaamasi kielet yhtä tärkeitä sinulle, vai pidätkö jotain selkeästi tärkeämpänä kuin muita?
- Mitä englannin kieli merkitsee sinulle?
- Mitä suomen kieli merkitsee sinulle?
- Mitä ___ kieli merkitsee sinulle?
- Huomaatko käyttäväsi sanoja tai ilmaisuja toisista kielistä kun puhut suomea? Minkälaisissa tilanteissa tätä tapahtuu?
- Miltä sinusta tuntuu, kun näin tapahtuu?
- Onko sinusta joskus vaikeaa muistaa suomen kielen sanoja?
- Huomaatko ajattelevasi eri kielellä kuin suomeksi? Jos kyllä, niin millaisissa tilanteissa tämä tapahtuu?

3. IDENTITEETTI

- Voitko kertoa mahdollisimman tarkasti, että miten kuvailisit itseäsi suomen kielen puhujana?

- Voitko kertoa mahdollisimman tarkasti, että miten kuvailisit itseäsi englannin kielen puhujana?
- Voitko kertoa mahdollisimman tarkasti, että miten kuvailisit itseäsi ____ (jonkun muun osaamasi kielen) puhujana?
- Kuuluuko suomen kieli mielestäsi sinulle?
- Kuuluuko englannin kieli mielestäsi sinulle?
- Kuuluko __ kieli sinulle?

4. MONIKIELISYYS

- Kuinka sujuvasti osaat omasta mielestäsi puhua eri osaamasi kieliä
- Pidätkö itseäsi yksikielisinä, kaksikielisenä vai monikielisenä?
- Mitä kaksikielisyys ja monikielisyys tarkoittaa sinun mielestäsi?
- Miltä sinusta tuntuu useiden kielten läsnäolo arjessasi? Miksi?
- Miltä sinusta tuntuu, kun vaihdat eri kielten välillä?

5. THIRD SPACE

- Silloin kun asuit ulkomailla, tuntuuko sinusta, että muutuit suomen kielen puhujana? Jos kyllä, niin miten?
- Muuttuiko suhteesi tai asenteesi suomen kieleen, kun muutit ulkomaille?
- Kohtasitko jonkinlaisia vaikeuksia suhteessasi kieleen kun muutit ulkomaille?
- (Jos kohtasit) Miten selvisit näistä haasteista? Miltä se prosessi tuntui?
- Millaista oli palata Suomeen suhteessa kieliin?
- Haluatko vielä kertoa/komentoida jotain kieliisi ja lähetyslapseuteen liittyen?

Appendix 3: The Finnish interview extracts

- (1) Sanoisin että mulla on sanasto - - heikompi kun monella, et koska en oo käyny koulua niin paljon Suomessa ja se on jääny ehkä, lukeminenki on jääny vähän heikommalle puolelle, mutta mun lausuminen on ihan se on ihan äidinkielenä, ku on puhunu, ettei oo mitään ongelmia puhumisen kanssa, mut just se sanasto sitte kanssa tämä - - mikäs tää nyt on tämä tämä grammar.
- (2) Mä tunnen itseni suomalaiseks kuitenkin vaikka ei välttämättä tunne että koti ois täällä Suomessa mutta on se suomen kieli se on osa suomalaisuutta ja kuuluu varmaan mulle.

- (3) Mä tykkään enemmän kuunnella varsinkin englantia, ehkä puhua, se on jotenki vaa hienompi kieli tietyllä tavalla ku suomi.
- (4) Mä tunnen itteni maailmankansalaiseksi, etten oikeen kuulu minnekään ja englantia on tämmönen maailmankieli.
- (5) En oo ikinä käyttäny ruotsia missään muualla ku koulussa, että en voi sanoo, että kovin tärkeänä pidän sitä, mutta voihan se olla, että tulevaisuudessa olla sellanen, joka voi avata uusia polkuja mitä en oo voinu kuvitellakaan.
- (6) Että osaa - - enempää kuin kaks kieltä. No siis just se et pystyy käyttään monia eri kieliä normaalissa elämässä.
- (7) Mulla tuli se innostus kieliä kohtaan - - että mulla on se halu oppia kieliä ja uusia kulttuureita, asua sitten niiden parissa ja sellaista mahdollisuutta ei ois jos ei ois kielitaitoo.