

”ENGLANTI RIITTÄÄ JA SILLÄ  
PÄRJÄÄ”:

Parental role in the Preactional Stage  
of optional foreign language learning  
motivation in Finnish primary school learners

Master’s thesis  
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<p>Tiivistelmä – Abstract</p> <p>Suomen kielivaranon kaventuminen on viime vuosina herättänyt keskustelua peruskoulun valinnaisten kieliaineiden järjestämisestä. Suuressa osassa kunnista valinnaista A2-oppimäärää ei tarjota lainkaan ja niissäkin kunnissa, joissa A2-kieli on tarjolla, kielivalinnat ovat jääneet vähäisiksi ja peruskoulussa muita vieraita kieliä kuin englantia ja ruotsia opiskelevien määrä on ollut laskussa jo pitkään. Kielivalinnan vähenemiseen vaikuttavat opetuksen järjestämiseen liittyvien seikkojen lisäksi myös motivaatio ja asenteet vieraiden kielten oppimista kohtaan.</p> <p>Tässä pro gradu -tutkielmassa selvitettiin teoriaohjaavan sisällönanalyysin avulla A2-kielen valitsemiseen tai valitsematta jättämiseen johtaneita syitä alakoulun kolmasluokkalaisten huoltajien näkökulmasta. Huoltajien rooli kielivalinnoissa on aikaisemmissa kansainvälisissä ja kansallisissa tutkimuksissa osoittautunut merkittäväksi, ja etenkin huoltajien asenteilla ja heidän oppijoille antamallaan tuella on katsottu olevan vaikutusta siihen, miten vieraita kieliä valitaan koulussa, eli ns. <i>valintamotivaation</i> kehittymiseen. Valintaa tarkasteltiin vanhempien roolin lisäksi myös koulun ja opettajien toiminnan kannalta. Etenkin tuoreet muokausehdotukset Dörnyein motivaatioteoriaan (L2 Motivational Self System), joiden mukaan kielikohtainen ideaaliminä tulisi nähdä laajempänä monikielisenä ideaaliminänä, toimivat taustana tätä tutkielmaa varten laaditusta kyselylomakkeesta saadun aineiston analysoinnille. Sisällönanalyysia taustoittamaan käytettiin asennekysymyksiä, joiden tulkitsemiseen hyödynnettiin perustason tilastollisia menetelmiä.</p> <p>Tutkielman keskeisimpänä tuloksena voidaan pitää sitä, että A2-kielen valinneiden lasten huoltajat näyttivät monin tavoin tukevan lapsen sisäistä innostusta vieraita kieliä kohtaan, kun taas A2-kielen valitsematta jättäneiden huoltajat esittivät esimerkiksi omiin kielteisiin kieltenopiskelukokemuksiin perustuvia väitteitä puolustaakseen valitsematta jättämistä.</p>	
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. LEARNING FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN A GLOBALISING WORLD.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2.1 European Language Policies in the Globalising World .....</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1.1 Globalisation and language .....	6
2.1.2 Language education policies in Finland .....	7
2.1.3 Policies and practices promoting multiple FL learning in Finland.....	12
<b>2.2 Need for Foreign Languages in Various Settings.....</b>	<b>14</b>
2.2.1 Need for foreign languages in working lives.....	15
2.2.2 Need for foreign languages in studying .....	18
2.2.3 Foreign languages for leisure, not need.....	19
<b>2.3 Language policies and the role of English .....</b>	<b>21</b>
2.3.1 English – a threat to multilingualism? .....	22
2.3.2 Advertising language study as a toolbox? .....	24
<b>2.4 Declining interest in studying German in Finland .....</b>	<b>27</b>
2.4.1 The role of German in Europe and globally.....	27
2.4.2 Brief overview of the history of learning German in Finland.....	31
2.4.3 Drawing conclusions on policy making and promoting language study .....	34
<b>3. MOTIVATION AND ATTITUDES IN LANGUAGE LEARNING .....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>3.1 Theories on motivation and attitudes .....</b>	<b>36</b>
3.1.1 Socio-educational model .....	36
3.1.2 Self-determination theory.....	38
3.1.3 L2 Motivational Self System.....	38
<b>3.2 Ideal Multilingual Self.....</b>	<b>42</b>
3.2.1 Approaching the problem of L2-specific selves.....	43
3.2.2 Ideal Multilingual Self.....	43
3.2.3 Attitudes and the Ideal Multilingual Self .....	44
<b>3.3 Parents and the developing Ideal Multilingual Self .....</b>	<b>46</b>
3.3.1 Parents and the motivation to learn foreign languages.....	46
3.3.2 Parents and the motivation to learn languages other than English .....	47
3.3.3 Parental encouragement to study foreign languages in Finland.....	49
<b>3.4 Why study German? – motivational and attitudinal issues .....</b>	<b>51</b>
3.4.1 Setting the goals for learning German .....	51
3.4.2 Multilingual Self and the ‘holistic view’ of learning German.....	53
<b>4 DATA AND METHODS .....</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>4.1 Research questions.....</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>4.2 Data collection.....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>4.3 Respondents .....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>5 ANALYSIS &amp; RESULTS.....</b>	<b>66</b>

<b>5.1 Language choice</b> .....	<b>66</b>
5.1.1 Gender, parents' educational background, and parents' multilingualism.....	67
5.1.2 Reasons for choosing the optional FL .....	70
5.1.3 Reasons for not choosing the optional FL .....	82
<b>5.2 Why no German?</b> .....	<b>112</b>
5.2.1 Perceived importance of German as a school subject .....	113
5.2.2 Who chose German?.....	116
5.2.3 Promoting German as a FL.....	123
<b>6. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS</b> .....	<b>126</b>
6.1 Implications of the present study.....	126
6.2 Evaluation of the study and its results.....	129
6.3 Ideas for future research.....	131
<b>7. CONCLUDING REMARKS</b> .....	<b>132</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	<b>134</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b> .....	<b>141</b>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Foreign language skills are essential in today's globalised world. Language education policies around the globe aim at raising proficiency in foreign languages (FL), and national curricula guide FL education in schools. However, although a wide repertoire in multiple FLs is generally seen as the most beneficial way of enhancing international and intercultural communication and collaboration, there is one language that increasingly stands out as *the* FL one ought to possess. English, as the most widely spoken language based on the number of first (L1), second (L2), and FL users is most often the medium through which communication between two people not knowing each other's mother tongue takes place. In these situations, English is used as a so-called *lingua franca*. Although this has enabled spread of new ideas, concepts, and mutual understanding on an unprecedented scale, some argue that the urgency to learn English will eventually lead to monolingualism, -culturalism, and disastrous consequences for diversity. English can be seen as something imposing a threat to the future of other languages.

This MA thesis examines this phenomenon in a small, but rather interesting context of Finnish basic education, where the number of those learning FLs other than English has been declining for years. As a member of the European Union, Finland is committed to the objective which states that every European citizen ought to possess some level of proficiency in at least two languages that are not his/her L1. In the officially bilingual Finland, the national core curriculum for basic education states that everyone must learn one of the two national languages, Finnish or Swedish, at school. Although this policy is easily justifiable based on many cultural and economic reasons, combined with the urgency to learn English, it has led to an extent to narrowing down the linguistic reservoir in Finland. This is especially true in smaller municipalities and amongst the Finnish-speaking population.

The reasons for English and Swedish increasingly becoming the only FLs learnt at school lie in education policy planning, which has led to budget cuts in additional FL teaching in some Finnish schools and municipalities. FLs other than English and Swedish are not offered in half of the Finnish municipalities (OPH 2019). Furthermore, there are many other issues involved, such as general attitudes towards FL learning, which are not only behind the cost-cutting policies, but also individual uptake choices by learners. Although the role of English as an undoubtedly *useful* FL has led to beliefs that one should concentrate on English only, there are other possible reasons for additional FL not being viewed tempting. For example, the goals for

FL learning in basic education may have become somewhat blurred because of the emphasis on *error-free* language, memorising grammar rules, and learning vocabulary as individual words in lists, which still exists in many FL classrooms in Finland although they have been deemed rather ineffective in learning communicative skills. Moreover, such learning can be rather uninspiring and unmotivating for most learners.

Recently, new ideas on motivation to learn multiple FLs have emerged from various studies. According to these views (see e.g. Berchem 2003; Taylor and Marsden 2014; Coffey 2016; Ushioda 2017; Henry 2017), FL learning should not be considered as simply acquiring *instruments* or *tools* for communication, but focus on FL learning *holistically*, emphasising the acquisition of *cultural capital*, and supporting the innate interest and curiosity of children to learn FLs. Based on the earlier, well-known theory by Dörnyei (2005), the so-called *L2 Motivational Self System*, Henry (2017) introduced a new way of understanding multiple FL learning motivation. In Dörnyei's (2005) model, the central part of FL learning motivation was the so-called *Ideal L2 Self*. However, in the newer model by Henry (2017), this notion has been changed to *Ideal Multilingual Self*, which is not *L2-specific* in that it shifts the goal of FL learning to that of becoming a multilingual.

Based on the aforementioned realities, namely the declining interest to learn optional FLs in Finland, and the new ideas on FL motivation, this MA thesis approaches the issue of FL uptake by examining the *Choice motivation* (Dörnyei 2005) of Finnish nine-year-old primary school students based on their parents' accounts on the reasons that led to either choosing or not choosing the optional syllabus A2 language. The role of the parent in making FL choices has been investigated in the Finnish context by some earlier studies, most notably in MA theses by Nevalainen and Syvälahti (2000), and Larvus (2010). However, these examined the choice of the first FL (syllabus A1) and concentrated on institutional issues rather than learner motivation, which I believe to be key in choosing FLs other than English. Utilising a questionnaire filled in by 50 Finnish third grader parents in a large Finnish municipality, this small-scale study presents findings on the reasons that led to children choosing and not choosing the optional syllabus A2 language at school. The results can help FL teachers promote additional FL learning at school.

Given the complexity of the issues related to FL learning and the different factors behind FL motivation, first, the structure of this MA thesis must be presented. First, in chapter 2., I will

present the realities of FL education policies in Europe and Finland, which are strongly characterised by the demands of globalisation, and the special role of English. Then in chapter 3., some important theories in FL learning motivation are discussed, after which the role of the parents in the FL motivation of children is addressed. Chapter 4. presents the data and the methods of analysis used for this study, the results of which are covered in chapter 5. Finally, in chapters 6. and 7., I will make some concluding statements based on the findings of this study. At this point, it is important to note that this MA thesis takes special interest in German as a FL in Finland. Therefore, in addition to investigating the issue of optional FL learning in more general terms, there will also be closer examination into FL-specific factors. Next, FL education policies are discussed.

## **2. LEARNING FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN A GLOBALISING WORLD**

In this chapter, some main issues in language education policies are presented, first on a broader international level, such as the OECD and the EU, and then on the national level – in this case, mainly in the Finnish context. These goals and ideals for language education policies are then compared to the needs of different settings and stake holders in language learning, for instance higher education, businesses or individual's everyday life. Finally, it is necessary to examine closer the special role of English in today's globalised settings, and what implications it has on language education policies and language learning in general. After all, this special role of English is already visible in language education policies, some of which will be presented next.

### **2.1 European Language Policies in the Globalising World**

In this chapter, I will discuss language (education) policies in today's Europe. As an EU member country, Finland applies the EU language policies in its education system. Before I explain the Finnish language education system in more detail, I must first briefly discuss the issue of *globalisation* and what it means for language education. English plays a major role in the globalisation process, and is sometimes referred to as the only language one really ought to be able to communicate in. This has led to challenges in promoting learning and use of multiple languages, as although English can be used in a large variety of situations and contexts, it should not be seen as the only language worth using for communication in global contexts.

### 2.1.1 Globalisation and language

The intriguing issue of globalisation (in lay terms the development leading to greater movement of people, ideas, and goods around the globe), which is one of the most central phenomena of today's world, is that achieving agreement on the definition of the term *globalisation* has proven so difficult. Chomsky (2006) argues that globalisation can be understood in two different ways: in its technical sense meaning international integration on an economic level or otherwise, or in the doctrinal sense where international corporations exploit the technical meaning in a way that undermines the popular democratic power. In regard to English playing a major role in globalisation, Pennycook (2006) explains that while others view globalisation mainly as Americanisation – or corporatisation similar to Chomsky's doctrinal meaning – he himself suggests a more complex definition where globalisation is much more than homogenisation of the world: it can also be seen as

“a set of interrelated processes that have transgressive or transformational orientations: transgression and resistance, translation and rearticulation, transformation and reconstitution, translocalization and appropriation, transculturation and hybridization.” (Pennycook 2006: 30)

Similarly, Hüppauf (2004: 14–15) argues that globalisation does not lead to one global, homogenised culture. On the contrary, it creates a greater sense of self and local identity. This, he explains, can be seen in the resistance towards globalisation, as individuals share fears of losing their cultural identity. In light of this, one could indeed argue that the current European movements demanding greater national independence from the EU are also examples of the member states' greater sense of uniqueness and that these movements are not only anti-EU, but also anti-globalisation. There are fears of one's own culture and lifestyle losing their global value, and a central part of culture is, of course, language. This issue is of course recognised by politicians all across Europe, who use them for promoting their own views and ideologies. Therefore, language policy and planning are important issues, which are increasingly debated in the EU for a variety of reasons, such as migration, the Brexit, and the protection of the rights of linguistic minorities.

One could conclude that regardless of its definition, globalisation is a phenomenon that leads to requirements of skills that enable communication with and understanding of cultures and languages different to one's own. Whether or not the role and character of the EU changes in the future, the importance of communication remains on the global, international and local

level. Therefore, I shall now bring up the issue of re-evaluating language education policies. The cause for this need is indeed primarily globalisation. Somewhat recently, an extensive publication by the OECD (2012) compiled evidence from multiple researchers on the impact of globalisation on language learning, and it seems clear that the need for competence(s) in languages is growing, as being able to communicate in only one language in addition to one's mother tongue does not give any 'competitive edge' in today's, or indeed in tomorrow's world (OECD 2012: 25). Proficiency in multiple languages is essential for managing and thriving from globalisation on the societal and the individual level (OECD 2012: 28).

These issues have earlier been addressed in the Barcelona Objective of the European Council (2002: 19) which lays down the plan for language education in the EU countries and promotes teaching of at least two foreign languages (FL) in schools. Of course, these measures have primarily the aim to create cohesion between the EU member states, obviously deriving from the fundamental reasons for the Union in the first place, and thus the languages most widely learned and taught in Europe are indeed European languages. In addition to that, however, such objectives should be seen as an effort in sustaining Europe's competitive edge globally, as language learning increases the number of speakers of the languages in question. Although on surface, this call for at least two FLs seems a neutral way of promoting multilingualism and multicultural communication, some have criticised it for being overly focused around the few larger European languages, namely English, French, German, Italian and Spanish (Rindler Schjerve and Vetter 2012: 170). This raises language ideological questions, for example which languages are eligible as a FL and chosen to be included in national curricula and school syllabuses.

### **2.1.2 Language education policies in Finland**

In Finland, the objective of the European Council of teaching at least two FLs has been fulfilled by the decision to make it *compulsory* to study at least two FLs (labelled syllabus A1 and B1) during basic education (POPS 2014: 219). One of these two languages must be one of the two national languages, Finnish or Swedish. Although such arrangement exists in other EU countries as well, it has also been criticised by some commentators, as national languages are in some sense not 'foreign', and this seems to be in conflict with the European Council's ideal (Wright 2004: 130). Usually, the language chosen – or offered by schools – as the A1 is English. The A1 language starts in third grade, when the students are around 9 years old. However, in

some municipalities it has been possible to begin study earlier, and in 2020, the first FL (A1) will start in first grade for every Finnish child in basic education. Although it is hoped that children choose some other FL than English as their A1 starting in first grade, English as the A1 is so common that the arrangement of English as the A1 (and obviously Swedish or Finnish as the B1) is also used as reference in stating the objectives for FL learning and teaching in the Finnish core curriculum for basic education (POPS 2014: 125). Below, Table 1 compiles the labels used for FLs starting in different grades and shows the most common language for each level and the percentage of primary school students studying that language.

Table 1. Foreign language syllabuses in the Finnish core curriculum for primary education (POPS 2014) based on 2017 statistics. (Source: Opetushallitus 2019 – Mitä kieliä perusopetuksessa opiskellaan?)

Syllabus*	Compulsory or optional?	Starting grade (as of pre-2020)	Most commonly studied language	Percentage of the most common language in the whole student generation (as of 2017)
<b>A1</b>	compulsory	1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> or 3 <sup>rd</sup>	English	> 90%
<b>A2</b>	optional	4 <sup>th</sup> or 5 <sup>th</sup>	English**/Swedish	ca. 8% / 6%
<b>B1</b>	compulsory	6 <sup>th</sup>	Swedish/Finnish	ca. 99% / N.A.
<b>B2</b>	optional	8 <sup>th</sup>	German	ca. 8%

\* not to be confused with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR 2001)

\*\* English particularly in Swedish-speaking areas

Looking at Table 1, one can see how English and Swedish form the basis of the Finnish FL education. English is studied by over 90% of children in basic education (grades 1–9). The number of those studying other FLs falls under 10%. In Swedish-speaking schools, Finnish is the most commonly studied the compulsory syllabus A1 language, and English is usually taken as the *optional* A2 language (emphasised in Table 1, above). Other FLs taught as A2 are mainly large European national languages, such as Swedish, German, French, Russian, Spanish or Italian, with the exception of Sámi languages and Latin (Kumpulainen 2014: 45). As explained above, the most common A2 language is English (8% of the fifth graders in 2017). This is especially true for Swedish-speaking areas, where Finnish is the most common A1 (OPH 2019: 3). The second most common A2s are Swedish (6%), and German (6%), followed by French (3%), and Spanish (3%) as can be seen in the statistics by the Finnish National Agency for Education (OPH 2019: 3). In 2017, almost 30% of students in Swedish-speaking schools studied also a third FL (syllabus B2, optional), half of them choosing German and every fourth choosing French (OPH 2019: 6). In Finland, girls choose to study more FL than boys, and almost two thirds of those studying the optional B2 language are girls (OPH 2019: 5). Those

living in more affluent areas seem to have better access to A2 study, and therefore socio-economic factors might affect the equality of children to study multiple FLs (OPH 2019: 3).

It is important to note that the syllabus labels (A1, A2, B1, B2) do not refer in any way to the levels of the Common European Framework of Reference (2001). The Finnish core curriculum for basic education (POPS 2014)<sup>1</sup> uses the CEFR (2001) as the basis for language assessment, although the scale is somewhat modified for pedagogical purposes (for instance, CEFR level A1 is divided into three: A1.1, A1.2, and A1.3)<sup>2</sup>. The goal is that at the end of basic education (grade 9, when the students are 15 years old), the so-called “good” proficiency in the syllabus A1 English is B1.1 on the Finnish scale (B1 in the CEFR). On the Finnish scale, the level of “good” proficiency in the compulsory syllabus B1 Swedish in ninth grade is A1.3 (just under the CEFR level A2). For the optional syllabus A2, the proficiency level is A2.2 for “good” proficiency at the end of basic education, which is somewhat under CEFR level B1. In the Finnish core curriculum (POPS 2014), the level of “good” proficiency in the optional syllabus B2 language is A1.3 for comprehension and A1.2 for production (CEFR level A1 to A2). From this point on, I will use the terms A1, A2, B1, and B2 in reference to the syllabuses in the Finnish core curriculum (POPS 2014). When referring to the CEFR (2001) levels, I will specifically state so.

The debate around the syllabus B1 Swedish has been rather heated in the Finnish educational context. The fact that the status of Swedish as a national language derives strongly from historical reasons has often led to objection by those viewing this status as a mere ideological and political relic with no real significance to Finland at present. Some also argue that it is questionable to study a national language (Finnish or Swedish) as a ‘foreign’ language. As discussed above, one could even interpret this as not fulfilling the objective set by the European Council. Moreover, those objecting compulsory study of Swedish point out to *instrumental* reasons, i.e. that learning Swedish does not provide similar advantages than learning some other FL. However, Swedish is also used outside Finland, and it should be seen as an important resource for understanding and communicating in the Nordic community, as it can be used to some extent as a *lingua franca* (a language used in communication between non-native

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<sup>1</sup> For the goals of FL teaching, see: Opetushallitus (2014). Kehittyvä kielitaito eri kielissä ja oppimäärissä. [online] [https://www.edu.fi/download/172823\\_kehittyva\\_kielitaito\\_eri\\_kielissa.pdf](https://www.edu.fi/download/172823_kehittyva_kielitaito_eri_kielissa.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> For descriptors in Finnish, see: Opetushallitus (2014). Kehittyvän kielitaidon asteikko – toinen kotimainen ja vieraat kielet. [online] [https://www.edu.fi/download/172824\\_kehittyvan\\_kielitaidon\\_asteikko.pdf](https://www.edu.fi/download/172824_kehittyvan_kielitaidon_asteikko.pdf)

speakers) in the Scandinavian countries. This is a substantial argument for studying Swedish as a FL and defining it as one.

Swedish should also be seen primarily as a FL in those areas in Finland, where there are only few Swedish-speakers, in which case there are few opportunities to use the language in everyday bi- or multilingual communication, which can be the case in areas with a larger Swedish-speaking population. Furthermore, it should be acknowledged that the term *foreign language* itself can be used rather vaguely, and it begs the question whether the definition should be based on national borders or the individual's milieu in a much smaller scale, as in *foreign* meaning *unfamiliar to oneself*. One could argue that the latter is more suitable as an emphasis in school education. Anyway, as will be discussed below, some point out that *lingua franca* situations (mainly in English, but surely in other languages, too) require skills that should be addressed in language education somewhat differently than in the traditional way of teaching FLs.

It is also important to acknowledge the goals set for language learning at school in the Finnish core curriculum (POPS 2014: 218): first and foremost, language is seen as the basic requirement for any learning and thinking. In addition to the obvious benefits FL learning offers for a small language community such as Finnish-speakers – without any skills in other languages the L1-Finnish-speaker's communicational sphere would be rather restricted in today's globalised world – language education is also essential for the development of one's multilingual and multicultural identity. Finland is a multilingual country and thus learning multiple languages at some point during basic education is important. This, to my mind, also includes the two national languages. Considering both the increasingly multilingual culture into which children should be able to prepare themselves and the underlying view of multilingualism as a *basic skill* – or in other words as a *key competence* (see European Commission 2005) – one can argue that gaining even the most basic skills in any language should be seen as a meaningful goal for the education system. For the B1 Swedish the goal is to learn “*elementary*” skills (A1.3 in the Finnish core curriculum, POPS 2014) during basic education. Objecting the (compulsory) study of Swedish can therefore be seen as not valuing to achieving basic proficiency in a FL which is without question important for multiple cultural, economic, and diplomatic reasons. The debate is highly political, and I will not be taking much of a stance neither for nor against the compulsory B1 study. However, in my opinion, the discussion concerning the goals of the syllabus B1 must continue in the future.

Some consideration may also be needed in regard to English. At the moment, English is the most common A1 language in Finnish primary education, as 90.5% of third graders are studying it (Kumpulainen 2014: 44). The reason for English being such a popular choice for A1 might indeed be that it is seen as an important FL to learn, but in some cases offering languages other than English as A1 is in some municipalities seen as financially impossible, in which case there is no other option than choosing English. In fact, in only about half of the Finnish municipalities the optional A2 language is offered (OPH 2019: 3). The role of English as the “world language” means that there seems to be some level of urgency involved in teaching it to children in many countries, Finland included. Municipalities place English above other FLs, which in some cases may have resulted in cutting down the budget and not offering other FLs than English and Swedish (or Finnish in Swedish-speaking schools). I will return to this issue later.

The special role of English is present in the Finnish core curriculum, where it is the language used as reference for planning FL teaching, and a division is made between English and other FL (POPS 2014: 219). To some extent, the discussion has already shifted to treating English not simply as a ‘foreign language’, but as a *lingua franca* somewhat different from other languages. This scenario was already discussed by Jenkins (2007: 238), who at the time concluded that although teaching English strictly as a *lingua franca* may not be possible, as more knowledge was (and still is) needed, there needs to be “a change in mindset” on how English is taught and thought of in terms of its role in international communication (Jenkins 2007: 238). The growing role of English in the Finnish society has been acknowledged (see e.g. Leppänen et al. 2009), and thus this “change in mindset” has been underway in the Finnish core curriculum. Thus, the perceived “importance” of English has led to the division between English and the other languages being more and more visible in today’s Europe (Dörnyei et al. 2006: 51).

Learning and teaching English as a *basic skill* is a theme to which I will be making multiple references later in this paper. One of the people behind the view on English as a basic skill is Graddol (2006), although many others use the term, as well. However, as Grin (2015) argues, English should not be considered a *basic skill* similar to reading and writing. He argues that in general, FL skills (in English or any other FL) cannot not be viewed as a basic skill, but skills in a majority language can (Grin 2015: 129–130). This obviously depends on multiple issues, and in many ways, one could argue that English indeed has become a *basic skill* – in other words a *requirement* – in many contexts of the Finnish society. However, I argue that in general,

English should be viewed primarily as something additional, and not as a basic requirement (similarly as any other FL). Treating English as a basic skill and placing it onto the same level as other core skills (e.g. reading and writing) could in some cases lead to some level of social exclusion of those who for one reason or another are not “fluent enough” in English. Therefore, learning one’s L1 always should proceed learning of FLs. On the other hand, recent discussion on immigrant language proficiency has led to fears that the lack of skills in Finnish (the majority language) is used for discrimination. However, this issue is out of the scope of the present paper.

### **2.1.3 Policies and practices promoting multiple FL learning in Finland**

The number of those choosing to study optional FLs at primary school has been on decline for some years. In the past, there have been various measures aimed at tackling this problem, perhaps one of the most notable ones being Finnish National Agency for Education’s (OPH) *KIELITIVOLI* (Tuokko et al. 2011), a project with the target at improving the opportunities for children to study additional languages in basic education. The project proved effective in promoting language studies, as the number of students choosing additional languages (A2 language) increased in municipalities which received the additional funding and support. As part of a larger national project for enhancing learning at school, a two-year initiative aimed specifically at FL study was launched. During the first part of the initiative in 2017, 95 municipalities and other education providers were granted subsidies for a variety of projects aimed at developing language study. For the second part in 2018, municipalities and other education providers were offered financial support for starting FL teaching for younger learners (see e.g. OKM [no date] or OPH [no date]).<sup>3</sup>

Although such initiatives have proven to some extent promising, they have provided only temporary relief (see e.g. Helenius 2011), and more and more municipalities have been dropping optional A2 language from their curricula (OKM 2010: 121; OPH 2019). Additionally, as English is the most commonly chosen language as the optional A2, (especially in Swedish-speaking schools where Finnish is most often taught as the A1), one could argue that the efforts to broaden the Finnish language reservoir have failed. Furthermore, if Swedish is chosen as the A2, it also takes the slot as the B1 language (the compulsory Finnish or Swedish), which in practice results in Swedish taking up two FL slots (see e.g. Turku 2016<sup>4</sup>).

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<sup>3</sup> Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö (no date). [online] <http://minedu.fi/kielikokeilut> ; Opetushallitus (no date). [online] <http://www.oph.fi/kehittamishankkeet/kieltenkarkihanke>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.turku.fi/sites/default/files/atoms/files//a2-kielivalintaesite\\_2016\\_uusi\\_ops.pdf](https://www.turku.fi/sites/default/files/atoms/files//a2-kielivalintaesite_2016_uusi_ops.pdf)

Of course, in eighth grade, some schools offer yet another optional FL, labelled B2, but this means that the child has missed years' worth of language learning. One would assume that creating a more flexible system that allows the study of Swedish as the A2, as well as some other language as B1 would diversify language learning in Finland. However, in practice such arrangement would be rather complicated, as the syllabus B1 is only aimed at learning the two national languages, Finnish or Swedish, and the fact that students are often relocated from one school to another at the start of the seventh grade could result in even more complication.

The number of languages offered is also an important factor. Offering fewer FLs is particularly prominent in smaller municipalities, where English is often offered as the only option for the compulsory A1 language. This, in turn, has led to inequality between students in different areas in Finland, as some do not have the possibility to study FLs other than English at primary school, be it as their A1 or A2 (OKM 2010: 120). In larger cities, the higher number of schools alone means more opportunities for students, or their parents, as in cases where the A2 language of their choosing is not offered in the school they are attending, they can be offered transportation to another school where that particular language is offered, or it can be possible to switch to the other school as a full-time solution (see e.g. Seinäjoki 2018)<sup>5</sup>. In addition, the minimum number of students required for courses to be offered in a given language varies from one municipality to another. The official documents by three larger municipalities reveal that in Turku (2016) the requirement is 14 students, in Jyväskylä (2018) 12, and in Seinäjoki (2018) 8 students. These requirements might only be based on the municipalities' own perceptions on the value and costs of FL study. Kangasvieri et al. (2011: 22) state that more important than the size of the municipality is the decision-makers' willingness and knowledge of language learning. If such requirements are followed strictly, what results are situations where missing one student thwarts the opportunity to learn a new language for many other students. One could argue that such bureaucracy is not beneficial for broadening the language repertoire in Finnish schools. Later in **2.2.1**, some further issues related to the economics of FL study will be addressed, as these often provide the reasoning for decision-makers in municipalities to cut FL courses.

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[http://www.seinajoki.fi/material/attachments/seinajokifi/paivahoitojakoulutus/siv.keskuksenhallinto/hallinto/9A\\_K8ubmzN/Kielivalinta\\_vanhempainkirje\\_2018.pdf](http://www.seinajoki.fi/material/attachments/seinajokifi/paivahoitojakoulutus/siv.keskuksenhallinto/hallinto/9A_K8ubmzN/Kielivalinta_vanhempainkirje_2018.pdf)

I must now address a current notable measure for promoting FL study. In a recent report ordered by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture (Pyykkö 2017), the situation of Finnish FL education was examined. The report stated various measures for developing FL education in Finland in order to enhance multilingualism and eventually stop the current trend of language competence becoming increasingly one-dimensional. One of the interesting suggestions stated in the report for language education at the primary school level is that not only should the compulsory A1 language start earlier, in first grade, but it is also suggested that this first FL should preferably be some other language than English. It was suggested that English should start as the optional A2 language on the third grade, which too is earlier than currently (Pyykkö 2017: 34). Based primarily on this document, the Ministry of Education and Culture (OKM 2018) concluded that from 2020 onwards, the overall number of teaching hours in basic education will be raised and the A1 language is set to begin already in first grade. This is a significant investment into FL learning. However, whether or not the objective to increase FL learning in languages other than English can be full-filled with this measure will largely depend on individual schools and municipalities, and of course the willingness of children and their families to choose these FLs.

Promoting the study of FLs other than English is increasingly important, as these are the languages that make the difference in many situations, where using English may well be helpful, but not necessarily more fruitful. This, however, is easier said than done because of the reasons described above, but also because many people may be satisfied with the fact that they can cope with English, and do not see the additional, often rather abstract benefits of other languages. This phenomenon is present particularly in countries where English is spoken as a native language, but something similar can also be found in the discussion about FL learning in the Finnish context. This theme, namely different situations and needs for FL use, is discussed in the next section.

## **2.2 Need for Foreign Languages in Various Settings**

Even in today's globalised world and the advancing technological solutions, the ways in which people solve problems related to communication, for instance when they do not understand each other's languages, remain more or less the same. As Wright (2004: 101) points out, such problems are solved by either "developing an interlanguage which both sides employ" or "by one group, or a section of one group, learning the other's language". She proceeds that choosing

one of these solutions is an outcome of “the reasons for the communication and power relationships” between the two groups (Wright 2004: 101). These issues affect language policies around the world, and it is clear that in the globalised era, negotiation about which languages to use for communication has become even more important.

The main reason for the ever-increasing significance of negotiating language use, is the fact that more people have participate in situations where using languages other than one’s mother tongue is needed. Wright (2004: 102) reminds that there was a time when language learning was almost exclusively an undertaking of a limited group of people, for instance those belonging to the so-called elite or working in international trade. Nowadays, the need for being able to use FLs is acknowledged, and more people see the benefits of learning languages as the settings of multilingual communication have become increasingly accessible. As the globalisation process continues, these multilingual settings are present also in most Finnish people’s everyday lives, be it work, study or free time. Next, some of these settings are explored.

### **2.2.1 Need for foreign languages in working lives**

At the moment, it is widely discussed in many European and developed countries around the world, Finland included, how the jobs and careers of today are undergoing change, as work is shifting onto the service sector, away from the industries. This development means that the role of language(s) is also changing. As Williams (2015: 107) explains, the shift from the industrial economy into the knowledge economy means that language becomes the essential part of the labour process itself. In the industrial economy, the produce was not connected to language, and language could even be seen as the “friction” in the industrial process, whereas in the knowledge economy, language becomes both the product and the means of production. This of course results in unprecedented demands for the education system, as the needs for knowledge in language(s) are not as straightforward as they used to be (e.g. German only needed when working in German-speaking areas). Moreover, Grin (2015: 128–129) explains that the linguistic skills required by today’s occupations can vary greatly, as some jobs require very high-level FL skills (often in English but also in other languages), while others require more basic skills. One could argue that the latter should be seen as the main focus of the Finnish *basic* education.

Leppänen et al. (2009) provide the most comprehensive insight into multilingualism in people's everyday lives in Finland. In this large-scale survey conducted on 1,945 Finnish citizens from four age groups (15–24, 25–44, 45–64, and 65–79) (Leppänen et al. 2009: 25), the focus was on the role of English in Finland, but the participants were also asked in which situations they use or encounter other FLs. Most commonly, the context of FL use was travel or work, and English was by far the most common FL in all situations. A comparison is provided in the context of working life, where behind English, Swedish was the second most used language, followed by German. However, German and other FLs were used only little in comparison to English and Swedish (Leppänen et al. 2009: 41). Whether this is due to little need for or lack of proficiency in these FLs is not clear. On one hand, one could argue that FL education follows the needs of working life, as the comparison presented above also mirrors the languages used in educational context, including FL learning (Leppänen et al. 2009: 41), but on the other hand, the fact that people are not learning FL other than English and Swedish can lead to missed opportunities in working life, which do not show in the statistics of *use*. It is important to make the distinction between the terms *use* and *need*, and even more importantly, *potential*.

Carrying on in the context of work, if one examines FL use more closely, rather interesting issues have recently emerged. In a 2014 report by the Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK) on future need of FLs in working life from the employers' point of view, there is a consensus that the importance of proficiency in FLs is growing (EK 2014: 12). The companies consulted for the report found that growth in the number of proficient users of Russian was most urgently needed in the future (expected growth is 70%), followed by Chinese (58%), Estonian (40%), Italian (38%), English (35%), German (29%) and Spanish (28%). Significant growth was expected in all other major languages as well. These numbers only account for companies where the aforementioned languages are already in regular use. Most urgently FL proficiency is needed in small and medium-sized enterprises (SME), where the lack of FL skills leads to missed business opportunities (ELAN 2006).

If one analyses the list of FL demand by EK (2014: 12), it is visible that although English is widely becoming a necessity, rather than an advantage in working life (see Graddol 2006: 107), significant growth is still needed in English. However, it is alerting that Russian, which is only being studied by little over one per cent of primary school students as a FL, is the language with the most growth needed. Of course, one must remember that there is a large number of students with Russian as their L1 or L2 used at home, and in this sense, there are already many proficient

users of Russian in Finland, but as it seems, this is not enough for fulfilling the needs of the Finnish businesses. However, even more notably, Chinese, a language hardly any one is learning at the Finnish primary level, is on the second place of future most-wanted languages list. Furthermore, Russian and Chinese both are languages with completely different writing systems to that of Finnish or Swedish (or other European languages) and would thus require major effort from learners for becoming proficient, which in the reality of today's schools already struggling with limited time and resources would preferably mean beginning learning as early as possible.

Major growth in these two important languages, especially in the case of Chinese, seems a somewhat difficult task under the current circumstances. The main reason for this is of course the lack of additional FL teaching offered in Finnish municipalities. On the other hand, were Chinese offered more widely, it could prove rather difficult to find enough qualified teachers of Chinese, although it has recently become possible to receive a qualification for teaching Chinese at the University of Helsinki (2015) <sup>6</sup>. At the moment, Chinese is being studied at the upper secondary school level, universities and in adult education, but also in some primary schools. Chinese FL groups have been mostly enabled by projects such as *POP kiinaa*, conducted in the city of Tampere <sup>7</sup>. Extensive speculation on whether Chinese will spread to more schools in the Finnish basic education is out of the scope of the present study, but it would not be surprising if offering Chinese became a tempting option for those schools that have the resources for teaching a wider range of FLs, as it undoubtedly is a language for which there is a growing need and interest in businesses.

Above, the focus has been on the *need* for FLs from the perspective of economy. If there are not enough workforce with proficiency in FLs most urgently needed by businesses, the negative outcomes can be severe. A survey commissioned by the European Commission involving nearly 2000 SMEs found that the *potential* losses caused by lack of FL skills in the European Union add up to between ca. 16.4 and 25.3 million euros (ELAN 2006: 17). Thus, the value of missed contracts in the EU caused by lack of language proficiency is estimated at 100 billion euros annually (ELAN 2006: 18). It is remarkable from the Finnish perspective that 1 of 5 Nordic businesses that participated in the study (in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden)

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.helsinki.fi/fi/uutiset/opetus-ja-opiskelu-yliopistossa/ensimmais-kiinan-ja-japanin-opettajia-koulutetaan>

<sup>7</sup> <https://popkiinaa.wordpress.com/popkiinaa/>

reported lost contracts due to lacking FL skills (ELAN 2006: 17). Although lack of proficiency in English was most often reported as a cause for lost export contracts, the role of other languages was also significant.

The ELAN survey (2006) namely found that the use of languages other than English in export is surprisingly high: English was used in 51% of the reported instances, but German (13%), French (9%), Russian (8%), Spanish (4%) and other languages (15%) were also commonly used. This finding is explained by the tendency to use the language of the target country, In addition, large European languages are often used as *lingua franca* when there is no proficiency in the (smaller) language of the targeted market (ELAN 2006: 18–19). Although these findings are already somewhat outdated, they show how disinterest in study of languages than English can have severe financial consequences for the economy. Moreover, the potential losses caused by lacking *cultural knowledge* might be even more substantial.

### **2.2.2 Need for foreign languages in studying**

The above-mentioned need for multilingual skills in the working life also affect the language use in the studying context, particularly in higher education, as schools and institutions need to prepare their students for the multilingual and -cultural tasks in their future jobs. As Leppänen et al. (2009: 43–44) point out, the use of and need for English is more common among highly educated people in Finland, and thus it is essential to continue teaching English – and other FLs – after basic and secondary education. Pyykkö (2017: 59) points out to suggestions of making studying multiple FLs alongside national languages (Finnish and Swedish) a part of university degrees. There is of course real need for FLs (at least English) for students at Finnish universities, as large portion of books, articles, and other study material are in some other language than their L1, most commonly in English. At Finnish universities, the number of English-medium master's programs has increased dramatically (Fortanet-Gomez and Räisänen 2008: 26), which means that more and more Finnish students enrolling in these programs instead of Finnish-medium ones need proficiency in English.

On the other hand, as master's programs in English have become more common in other European countries as well, new possibilities have emerged for those who are not proficient in the national language to enrol at a foreign university. Indeed, there is a growing trend that some young Finns travel abroad to study (OPH 2017). However, although most of the programs

enrolled in by Finnish students are in English, this should not be seen as diminishing the importance of skills in other European languages, as those applying for an English-mediated program might later on in their studies also take additional courses, where the language of instruction is the national language of the university. In addition, Finnish students might want to work during or after their studies at a foreign university. In such cases, previously acquired proficiency and language learning skills in a FL would be of great advantage, and thus encourages learning of various languages at school.

### **2.2.3 Foreign languages for leisure, not need**

Although *work* and *study* are areas where the use of FLs, predominantly English, is increasingly high, most notable change caused by globalisation is that Finnish people encounter more FLs during their free time. Indeed, Leppänen et al. (2009: 93) report that for 51.5% of the respondents in their survey free time was the most common context for using English. One of the most important contexts where the respondents *listened to* English was watching movies and television and listening to music. These are media through which over 80% of the Finnish respondents hear English on a weekly basis (Leppänen et al. 2009: 94). Another medium, the role of which is increasingly important, is the internet, on which (in 2009) 56.4% of the Finnish respondents reported *reading* English on a monthly basis. For younger respondents, the role of the internet was greater than for older respondents (Leppänen et al. 2009: 96). However, these numbers are rather outdated, and one could expect that there have been notable changes in the use of the internet, for instance.

In 2006, Graddol (2006: 44) noted that the internet was becoming increasingly multilingual, and from years 2000–2005, the share of English on the internet had decreased from 51.3% to 32%. The portion of other languages, especially smaller ones, had increased the most during the same period. Graddol (2006: 44–45) suggests that the dominant role of English on the internet has been exaggerated. Yet, the most recent statistics languages of the web show that two languages, English and Chinese dominate the internet (FUNREDES/MAAYA 2017). From the European point of view, the portions of major European languages on the internet have, however, not increased. Mostly, the shifts in the proportion of languages on the internet have been caused by the fore-mentioned smaller languages. One could argue that websites in those languages are mainly used by the equally small native-speaking communities. This, and the growth of Chinese, has its roots in urbanisation and better access to the internet in developing

countries. All in all, from a language learner's point of view, the possibilities of finding target language texts on the internet have arguably increased.

When talking about FL use on one's spare time, the important role of international travel should not be forgotten. However, Leppänen et al. (2009: 34) found rather large differences between different groups of the Finnish population travelling abroad, and 25–44-year-olds were the group travelling the most. In the context of travel, English, but also Swedish were the most commonly used languages (Leppänen et al. 2009: 47). Obviously, travelling abroad opens up more possibilities for using FLs, although as Coffey (2016: 7) points out in his study, which examined native speakers of English, the willingness to use the local language when travelling depends on individual, personal factors, and motivation. English speakers in general might not feel the need to speak some other language than their L1, because many foreigners speak it well, too. For those who speak English proficiently as a FL using other FLs might involve similar motivational issues.

The increasingly common encounters with FLs in one's pastime also have implications for FL learning at school. The role of using FLs outside school has been found to have positive effects on language learning. For example, a large-scale study conducted in Finland by Härmälä et al. (2014) on 3,476 ninth graders (aged 15) at the end of their basic education found a relationship between the learner's language skills and watching movies and listening to music in English. In addition, reading English texts online seemed to have a positive effect on learning. However, communicating with tourists correlated with language skills only moderately (Härmälä et al. 2014: 162). This, however, might be somewhat dependent on the participants' age group (15), as one could argue that the type of communication between most 15-year-olds and foreign tourists might be rather basic.

When it comes to using FLs other than English outside the classroom, there might not be as many spontaneous encounters with the language. However, as mentioned, multiple languages can be found online, where music, films, texts and other multimodal sources can offer great pleasure for any language learner, even at the most basic levels of proficiency. For instance, in music, Spanish has gained ground through the popularity of the Latin music genre, producing massive pop-hits such as *Despacito* by the Puerto Rican singer Luis Fonsi and his fellow-countryman, rapper Daddy Yankee, with just under 1 billion streams on Spotify (Wikipedia

29.1.2019)<sup>8</sup>, ca. 6 billion views on YouTube <sup>9</sup> (as of March 7, 2019). If one counts the remix with the Canadian pop-singer Justin Bieber, with almost 1.2 billion streams on Spotify (Wikipedia, *ibid.*) and over 600 million views on YouTube <sup>10</sup> (as of March 7, 2019), it is clear that Spanish-speaking music has established itself globally in an unprecedented fashion.

Languages other than English or Spanish do not reach such levels of global popular interest yet, but there are some major trends such as Korean *K-pop*, which is gaining ground here in Finland, as well (HS Nyt 28.9.2018). *K-pop* has led to an interest towards the Korean language and culture and some young people invest hours of their free time in learning Korean: FL learning has become their hobby. Other languages and cultures have their own examples of popular music artists: there are German groups such as *Rammstein*, *Die Ärzte*, or *Die Toten Hosen*, and there are internationally renowned French-speaking artists such as the Belgian *Stromae* – and countless others. The same could be said about books, films, and video games with their multilingual versions. There are also YouTubers attracting global audiences, famous Instagrammers, and streamers. All these offer easily-accessible, fun and entertaining, thought-provoking, strongly emotive sources of inspiration. They should also be seen as incentives to learn the languages through which the content is mediated, and together they show that FLs are not only about the needs of working life or studying but also about enjoyment, fun, and relaxation in the free time.

### **2.3 Language policies and the role of English**

For a long time, the role of English has been under discussion in language policies around the world. In English-speaking countries, the benefits of studying languages other than English might seem even more remote than elsewhere, and educational actors have struggled to make FL learning more popular and stop the downward trend of multiple language learning. According to Crystal (2012: 15) “[there] is no shortage of mother-tongue English speakers who believe in an evolutionary view of language” or who see the global status of their L1 as a “happy accident”. There are also those who think that learning languages is a waste of time and that the vision of a monolingual world would not have any negative side in it (Crystal 2012: 15). However, as Crystal (2012: 17–18) points out, these issues are attitudinal and indeed there have

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<sup>8</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_most-streamed\\_songs\\_on\\_Spotify](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_most-streamed_songs_on_Spotify)

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kJQP7kiw5Fk>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=72UO0v5ESUo>

been studies indicating ways for maintaining and increasing learners' motivation (Busse and Williams 2010), which might be useful for those planning curricula or teaching FLs. In addition, some positive results have been reported, for instance by Taylor and Marsden (2014), on interventions affecting attitudes and motivation to language learning.

One would assume that in non-native English-speaking parts of Europe, the benefits of studying additional FLs might be more tangible for learners than in native English-speaking countries, but a similar downward trend in FL learning exists in these countries, as well. This has led to discussion on the role of English in Europe, as in the extensive compilation by Ahrens et al. (2003), collected from the 2002 conference *Europäische Sprachenpolitik – European Language Policy*. The role of English, and whether it is a serious *threat* to other European languages, has been commented by many. Some of these commentaries and the main issues in the European language education debate are reviewed below.

### **2.3.1 English – a threat to multilingualism?**

Phillipson (2003) sees English – or more precisely promoting *monolingualism* by using English as a *lingua franca* – as a threat to European unity, and most notably to creativity and expressiveness (Phillipson 2003: 176). He argues that the reasons for English dominance in Europe are both structural and ideological. As structural factors, he lists the aggressive promotion of their own language by the US and Britain, which has resulted in English being the dominant language on almost every field of society, such as “commerce, finance, politics, military affairs, science, education and the media” (Phillipson 2003: 64). This, he argues, in combination with little skill or effort involved in planning language education policies in most European countries has led to uncontrollable spread of English-only language policies in education, which in the long run affect multilingualism in general. Ideological factors, such as little awareness of language policies in some European countries, differing views on the fundamental role of languages in the society, and the creation of hierarchies between languages, where English is seen as the key to success, contribute to the spread of English-only attitude (Phillipson 2003: 65). Phillipson's views are shared by some scholars, and for example Meyer (2004) sees English not as a *lingua franca* – a term he argues is used very vaguely – but rather an *imperialistic* language, such as Latin during the Roman era.

Phillipson (2003: 176–177) suggests there is an urgent need for investing in languages other than English for avoiding the creation of a new common *lingua franca*, which he calls “Euro-English”, as monolingualism would restrict creativity and expressiveness in Europe. He also calls for awareness-raising, and dispelling ignorance and prejudices for instance by using real experts of language policies in political decision-making, and by ensuring language policies are considered in all fields of society (Phillipson 2003: 180). He concludes that the commercially-driven globalisation – lead by the US and therefore giving the competitive edge to English – will continue to influence European societies, and for this reason it would be increasingly important to view language policies from the perspective of *human rights*, on which the policies are originally based (Phillipson 2003: 192).

Views on English as a threat to other languages, such as Phillipson’s (2003) above, have been questioned. For example, House (2003) argues that such views, also labelled as *linguistic imperialism*, do not take into account different functions languages have in individuals’ lives. She divides the functions into two: “languages for communication” and “languages for identification” (House 2003: 556). She argues that the term *English as a lingua franca* (ELF) needs a clearer definition, as ELF is “neither a restricted language for special purposes, nor a pidgin, nor an interlanguage, but one of a repertoire of different communicative instruments an individual has at his/her disposal, a useful and versatile tool, a ‘language for communication’” (House 2003: 559).

Making this distinction between languages for communication and identification is indeed interesting. House (2003) concentrates on the micro level and argues that language hierarchies are based on the situation and function of language use. Of course, the differing views of Phillipson (2003) and House (2003) might to some extent be due to their focus on slightly different phenomena: on one hand, the spread of English at the institutional, societal and therefore at the individual level, and on the other hand, the spread of English in usage by individuals who function at different levels of society and in different contexts. Nevertheless, this comes to show the complexity of the “English as a threat to other languages” discussion. Phillipson’s (2003) view might be somewhat limited, as it mostly takes into account the macro level, as mentioned, and for this reason leaves out the complexity of individual’s choice of language use – be it conscious or unconscious.

### 2.3.2 Advertising language study as a toolbox?

Where, however, Phillipson's (2003) arguments are most salient, is in raising awareness of policy makers and involving linguistics experts in political decision-making. As already mentioned, Jenkins' (2007: 238) advice for changing our way of thinking about English, which would undoubtedly involve some reconsideration about other FLs as well, can be seen in both Phillipson's (2003) and House's (2003) arguments. Thus far, the way languages have been viewed can be divided into two. As Berchem (2003: 27) explains, languages are often observed from the "*idealistic*" and the "*utilitarian*" viewpoint. The idealistic viewpoint sees language learning as a matter of an individual, where a person's own interest in learning or using a language is pivotal. The utilitarian viewpoint, on the other hand, means learning and using those languages that bring the "greatest material advantage" (Berchem 2003:27), or those languages that have most speakers. Thus, the utilitarian view advocates learning of just a few, or only one language that one can use almost everywhere around the world (such as English). Interestingly, the latter view seems to be present in the Finnish discussion about FL learning today, for example in the media and general opinions, but also in political discourse. Acknowledging the bias towards *instrumentalist* views has indeed led to some new ways of examining attitudes and motivation behind language learning.

It has already become clear that English plays a different role in the everyday life in Finland compared to other FLs. As a result, some students considering whether or not to study optional FLs might find themselves in limbo: the way they perceive the world and the role of FLs in it might in fact be different to what they are being informed by their school and teachers advertising the different benefits of language study. There might be some discrepancy between political, general, and school discourses surrounding FL learning. The problem of the declining interest in languages might lie in the way FL study is being advertised, presenting arguments mostly based on the *instrumental* benefits of language study, in contexts similar to those that have been introduced above: work, study, or leisure. Concrete examples of the instrumental value attached to language learning (e.g. economic benefits) might be easier to handle by policy makers and other stakeholders. However, this further emphasises the need for voices of language experts in the policy-making process, as discussed above.

There are some interesting studies examining the views on benefits of FL study. Taking a discursive approach, Coffey (2016) found that a more useful way of describing the benefits of language study is not necessarily by seeing them as an instrumental goal, but as *cultural capital*.

The 14-year-old British students (N=26) interviewed in the study did not always see the benefits of studying FLs, as their mother tongue English was enough for them to cope with even if they went abroad. However, it was found that whether students view language learning beneficial or not might be related to their general attitude towards languages and language learning. Thus, those who think favourably of FLs are also more likely to use them when they are abroad (Coffey 2016: 7). Summarising the results from the interviews, Coffey (2016: 8) states that “positive motives ... formed a virtuous circle of mutually reinforcing motives from different domains that were embedded in the multi-dimensional experience of the student”, which shows how relying solely on *instrumental* reasons in promoting language learning is not enough: the emphasis should be on developing one’s *cultural capital* through learning.

Similar findings were made in an earlier, much larger study (N=604) on the same age group (13 to 14 years of age) by Taylor and Marsden (2014). They examined the reasons for British students’ FL uptake and how students’ choices can be influenced by intervention through which their knowledge about language learning was increased. Taylor and Marsden (2014: 914) found that one decisive factor the FL uptake has to do with students’ general perceptions of FL learning itself: whether it is fun, hard work, and so on. In line with Coffey’s (2016) findings, they discovered that students’ earlier perceptions correlated with their reactions to the intervention, as those with positive general perception reacted more positively and those with negative perceptions more negatively toward the intervention. Here again, the attitudinal cycle described above affected students’ decision making.

Thus, perhaps unsurprisingly, Taylor and Marsden (2014: 914) had to conclude that intervention aimed at students’ attitudes and perceptions was enough to only “buffer downward trends in FL attitudes”, but not really improve the attitudes significantly. For this reason, they recommended earlier intervention, for instance through language camps or language showers, which in fact are measures that have been taken here in the Finnish context, as well. In addition, at some Finnish schools, it has been decided to begin FL study earlier at primary level, for instance in first grade. As already explained, in 2020, this will be reality at every Finnish primary school. All in all, these measures could, in the best-case scenario, affect positively on general attitudes towards FLs. One must, however, remember that Taylor and Marsden’s (2014) study did not take into account the students’ final decisions of uptake, nor possible differences between languages, as some FLs might be perceived more positively than others for instance because of some features of pronunciation, or perceived complexity of the grammar, or some

cultural and social aspects attached to the FL and its speakers.

With these studies in mind, the focus should now be turned to the Finnish context of FL learning. As discussed, multiple FLs are needed in various settings in today's everyday life, but in Finland, English is still generally seen as *the* FL to learn. Here, the ultimate question then remains, does one need FLs other than English, and which ones in particular? Taking an *instrumental* viewpoint, one could argue that all the situations presented earlier (work, study, leisure) can be solved at least somewhat satisfactorily using English only, and thus for an individual it might become unclear why he or she should learn or use other FL. In addition, if those languages listed by EK (2014: 12) as the most important ones in the working life are not included in most school curricula, as in the case of Chinese, choosing additional FLs becomes even more confusing for students and their parents. Even more worrying is the fact that some municipalities do not offer any A2 language in their schools, because of practical and economic reasons, but also because of attitudes of the politicians and decision-makers towards FLs (Kangasvieri et al. 2011: 21). As English is seen as essential by its *instrumental* value, it is usually the only option for A1 language in municipalities with no A2 language.

If we took a turn towards a more *holistic* view on FLs and re-set the goal of language learning at school towards that of accumulating one's cultural capital, it could result in a clearer path for children towards choosing additional languages. Here, as discussed above, the roles of English and Swedish should also be considered carefully: would it be reasonable to teach and promote English mostly for its *instrumental* value, i.e. its usefulness, or should it still be part of students' multilingual, multicultural repertoire? Should Swedish, the official second language in Finland be taught for *cultural* reasons only, or would it have *instrumental* value as well? Or should other FLs, German, French, Russian, and so on be made compulsory, in order to gain economic advantages, or strengthen the ties between Finland and the world? Such questions are also asked by Piri (2003), who goes as far as to ask should English be taught at school in the first place? (Piri 2003: 170).

Perhaps Piri's (2003) reasoning aims at provoking thought and creating discussion by overdramatizing the issue, but on the other hand, these are genuine questions to consider if one is willing to make the study of additional FLs more popular, or at least if one wishes to stop the declining trend. In light of the studies reviewed above, it would probably be most worthwhile simply giving children opportunities to try out as many FLs as possible, so that their awareness

about their possibilities could be raised. In this sense, the current initiative of starting FL study earlier in first grade in addition to continuing to organise language camps and showers could be key. The only main obstacle to arrange extra-curricular FL activities might be organising the funding and resources.

## **2.4 Declining interest in studying German in Finland**

Thus far, it has become clear that the interest in studying multiple FLs, more precisely studying FL other than English, is declining in Finnish primary schools. Below, the focus turns to investigating one of the victims of the current trend. Studying German has declined radically in Finnish schools, even more radically than the study of other languages. Yet, German is spoken as a first language by 90 million people, making it the tenth largest language in the world. In total, the number of German speakers is obviously larger, as it is also spoken as a L2 and learned as a FL by millions (Ethnologue 2009, cited in Ammon 2015: 181). In Europe, 16% of the EU population speak German as their L1, making it the most widely spoken L1 in the EU (Eurobarometer 2012: 5). Of course, this only shows the numerical importance of German, and one should be reminded the importance of German-speaking countries, most notably Germany, in the European decision-making, economy and culture. In Finland, German has traditionally been one of the most popular FLs studied at school, and relations to German-speaking countries have been important throughout the history of Finland and today. The current trend is alarming but finding reasons behind it or stopping the decline has proven difficult. Next, the *local* and the *global* roles of German will be discussed. After that, issues related to learning German in Finland will be examined more closely.

### **2.4.1 The role of German in Europe and globally**

Understanding the role which German language and culture plays in the world today requires some comparison between German and other languages. As already discussed in length, English has taken over in many relevant fields: economy, science, education, and culture. In the past, all of these areas have been strongly influenced by German, at least in the Western societies. Yet, many historical events have played a part in the decline of German in these fields. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, German was a major language of academic publications, but after WWI the growing international opposition to German academics led to boycotts against anything German and eventually English took the first position as the language of academic publications

(Ammon 2004). Both WWI and WWII accelerated the global decline of German. In WWI Germany lost its colonies and Germany and Austria lost linguistic influence in Central-Eastern and Eastern Europe (Ammon 2004: 165). After WWII, Germany became occupied and divided. Additionally, the Nazi era led to expelling of university professors and researchers from Germany in the 1930s. Most of the expelled fled to English-speaking countries and continued their work in English (Ammon 2004: 164). Eventually, the result was that the German cultural, scientific, and economic power vanished.

Since then, Germany and the German language have shed much of the dismal past of the wars, but Ammon (2004: 170) is rather pessimistic about the future of German as an international language. He argues that “German may be studied as a FL only so long as there are recognizable advantages to the knowledge and use of the language. He does not believe that arguments such as “every language entails a specific view on the world” are enough to convince people into studying FLs (Ammon 2004: 170). However, this should be seen as a wake-up call for all speakers of German (or of any other languages) to continue using and developing their languages in all contexts, both in international and national, and thereby demanding those languages to be used. As Ammon (2015) more recently states, it is the responsibility of the German language community (both native and non-native speakers) to take care of their language, which is comparable to the similar, although more linguistic imperialistically inclined argument by Meyer (2004: 73) that it is not the case of English taking a victory over other European languages, but that the speakers of these languages have surrendered.

However, there are still reasons to believe that there indeed is a future for German as an international language, and therefore there are reasons (as Ammon would put it) for studying it. For instance, German still ranks high in different international measures of *importance* and *influence* of languages. As mentioned, German is the largest language in Europe by the number of L1 speakers (Eurobarometer 2012: 5) and Germany is also the leading economic force in Europe. Globally, German is still being learnt by millions and it has thus expanded around the world and has much potential influence outside Europe, as well (Ammon 2015: 181). In fact, German ranks 7<sup>th</sup> in the global Power Language Index (Chan 2016), which measures numerical data on the global *influence* of languages in terms of geography, economy, communication, knowledge and media, and diplomacy. Unsurprisingly, English takes the first position, followed by Mandarin Chinese. Table 2, below, shows ten most influential languages according to the WEF’s Power Language Index (PLI) as of 2016, and the prediction for 2050.

Table 2. Ranking of most influential languages in 2016 and 2050 according to the Power Language Index (PLI), German highlighted (WEF 2016)

Place	As of 2016 (score*)	Prediction 2050 (score*)
1.	English (0.889)	English (0.877)
2.	Mandarin (0.411)	Mandarin (0.515)
3.	French (0.337)	Spanish (0.345)
4.	Spanish (0.329)	French (0.325)
5.	Arabic (0.273)	Arabic (0.295)
6.	Russian (0.244)	Russian (0.242)
7.	German (0.191)	German (0.155)
8.	Japanese (0.133)	Portuguese (0.149)
9.	Portuguese (0.119)	Hindi (0.138)
10.	Hindi (0.117)	Japanese (0.110)

\* weighted average of the indicators, 1 reflects dominance in every measured facet (Chan 2016)

As can be seen in Table 2, there are no big changes to be expected in the global ranking order of different languages in the next 30 years, apart from the rise of Spanish and the fall of Japanese. In addition, the index score (i.e. the influence) of Mandarin Chinese is expected to rise considerably. According to Chan (2016) the ranking lists languages by their *usefulness* in different contexts, and thus one could say that German will remain “useful” in the near future. One should be aware, however, that as Pyykkö (2017: 20) – and indeed Chan himself – points out, the PLI relies heavily on information about nation states rather than the languages themselves in measuring “influence”. This is problematic, because languages carry much more meaning and importance in them than mere statistical information of use and prominence, for instance their perceived beauty, or importance for individuals and their identities, which play an equally important role in planning individual learning paths, i.e. which languages one chooses to study.

Furthermore, different languages play different roles in different contexts, and there are differences in needs for FLs across the globe, from one country or region to another. One could expect, for example, that in Finland the need for or the influence of European languages is greater than, say, in some Asian countries, considering the factors in the PLI: geography,

economy, communication, knowledge and media, and diplomacy. For instance, Grin (2015: 126) points out that in Switzerland, English provides individuals somewhat differing economic advantage depending on the majority language of the region, whereas the advantage of proficiency in one of the national languages is rather stable across the languages.

This, however, reveals an additional problem into the discussion about calculating the influence of specific languages. Ricento (2015: 27) argues that language policy scholars are not familiar with the logics of political economy, and often fail to address the way today's economic policies affect the status and utility of languages on the *global* level on one hand, and languages on the *local* level on the other. He uses the evidence from development projects in low-income countries and argues that using non-global languages (i.e. the ones locals speak as their L1) has a vast positive impact on the local economic and social development and are thus more effective than global English for achieving the goals of the development projects.

Although Ricento's (2015) aims his criticism towards English-medium attempts to develop low-income countries, these remarks might be relevant for the purposes of this paper as well. It could be the case that the way many people, be it politicians, principles, teachers, or parents, think of language(s) is in one way or another too narrow. To put it simply, when the decision is made which languages should be offered in schools or which languages a child should begin to study, the scope used for making this decision is flawed. What is thought of as *global* need is in fact more *local* or *non-global*: learning a European language is not necessarily something providing additional *global* value, although European languages are used globally as well. However, skills in European languages provide added value on a European level, never mind the value of the cultural capital for an individual.

If languages such as German, French, Russian, or Swedish are (deliberately or mistakenly) put into the same category as the so-called *global* English these languages seemingly become *less useful*, *less important*, or *less valuable*. In reality, English is not different to any other language, as it is indeed *local* (see Pennycook 2006 for discussion about *global Englishes*) – it is used globally by individuals acting on a local level. Believing otherwise leads to language policies that hold English as the only language leading to “success” in the global and exceedingly competitive narrative (see for instance Piller & Cho 2015 for a discussion on Korean language policies). Language learning should be seen from a broader perspective of introducing opportunities for multicultural communication in both local and global contexts. Speakers of

FLs act here and now, locally, and what is called the global linguistic marketplace is merely the global connections between different agents on a local level.

To conclude, the following remark by Phillipson (2004) highlights the gap between the *local* and the *global* realities. It is the well-known paradox in European language policies in relation to German:

“*Germany* [is] a demographically and economically dominant force in Europe, BUT *German* [is] progressively marginalized in scholarship, commerce, youth culture, and in the global linguistic marketplace” (Phillipson 2004: 55)

Whether or not one agrees with Phillipson on the causes of this *marginalisation* – traces of which can indeed be found in some educational policies of Finnish municipalities (see 2.1.2) – one should take this remark as a challenge to which policies can positively affect by creating educational systems which enhance the *localness* of European languages which also have *global* influence. In chapter 3, the discussion turns to motivational issues of language study, but at this point it should be stated that based on the what is presented above, it is clear that learning multiple languages is something that has both *local* and *global* influence (compare to Pennycook 2006). The way we understand the *local* importance of different languages also affects the motivation to learn them. Next, the situation of learning German in Finland is discussed.

#### **2.4.2 Brief overview of the history of learning German in Finland**

The decline of learning German in Finland has been a rather long process, and its roots can be traced back to the end of WWII, when English began to gain in popularity in Finnish schools. Especially in larger Finnish cities English was first being offered as an optional subject, and by the beginning of the 1960s, it replaced German as the most popular FL in many cities (Leppänen et al. 2011: 18). The popularity of English continued its rise through the 1960s, and eventually English overtook German, while Swedish was still the most commonly studied language (Leppänen et al. 2011, citing Takala and Havola 1984). One turning point was perhaps the establishment of the comprehensive school system in Finland in the 1970s, which consolidated the role of English as the number one FL in Finland. The new school system made studying Finnish and Swedish – the two national languages – obligatory, with the addition of at least one FL. In most cases, this third language was English (Leppänen et al. 2011: 19, citing Takala and Havola 1984). This arrangement still widely exists today, as discussed earlier in 2.1.2.

In the 1980s to the 1990s, the popularity of English further increased due to globalisation, which in the case of Finland can be linked to events such as joining the EU in 1995. The development continued in an accelerating pace through the 2000s, which experienced vast leaps for instance in the information and communication technology. However, one must remember the remark by Graddol (2006: 45) that the role of English, for example in the case of the internet, has been somewhat exaggerated (see also 2.2.3). However, it is clear that English has been and still is the most prominent language of globalisation.

From 2000 to 2016, the decline of German in Finnish schools has been steeper than ever. Compared to any other FL studied as the optional A2 language (FL starting from the fifth grade at the latest, when the students are 11 years old) in Finnish schools, the study of German has declined the most dramatically. According to the statistics of the Finnish National Agency for Education (OPH) in 2000, almost 20,000 children chose to study German as their A2 language, whereas in 2016, the number was only 11,000 (Vipunen 2016). The declining interest in German can also be seen at a later stage at the upper secondary school, where in 2017 only around 700 students studied German as a syllabus A language (language starting in grades 1–6 of primary education) (Statistics Finland 2017). Figure 1 shows the declining trend in different A2 languages, where the decline of German has been the most dramatic one.

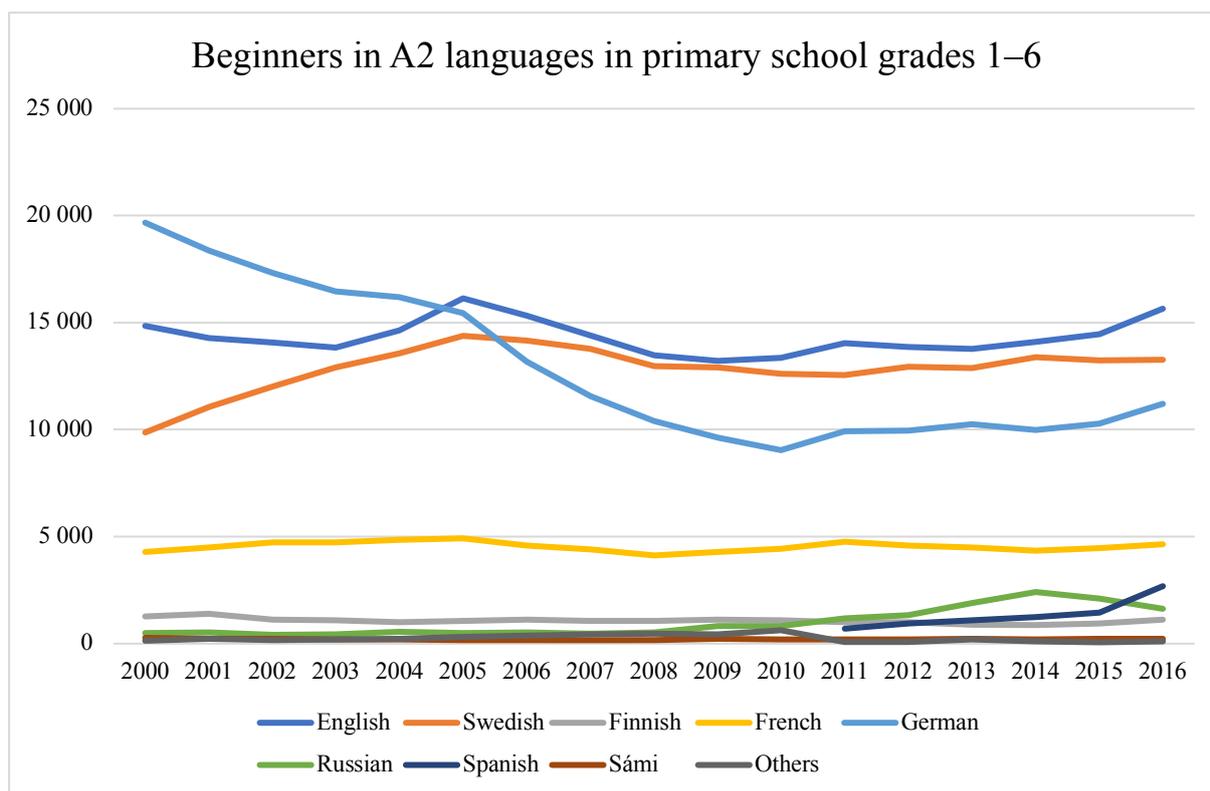


Figure 1. Beginners in syllabus A2 languages in primary school grades 1–6. German in light blue. (Vipunen 2016)

Apart from the diminishing number of beginners depicted in Figure 1, above, equally alarming is the number of students quitting the study of German when entering or during upper secondary school (after grade nine of primary school). Throughout the primary school, until ninth grade, students are obliged to study the languages they have chosen, and they in most cases cannot easily quit or switch them, for instance change the optional A2 language from German to French based on motivational issues. It is a commonplace practice that quitting the A2 is only possible in cases where the overall school achievement drops radically. After ninth grade, students who continue to upper secondary school are allowed to drop the optional A2 language – in vocational schools, FL study is arranged differently, and it will not be discussed here. However, there have been cuts made to FL study in the vocational education, the outcomes of which, according to Pyykkö (2017: 125), need closer inspection in the future.

As it seems, the majority of students choose to quit studying German as their A2 language. Those who finished upper secondary school in 2017 most likely chose their A2 language in 2010, and that year the number of students who chose German was at record low: only 9000 in the whole country. This means that of the 9000 students over 8000 did not continue studying German at the upper secondary school as a syllabus A language. Of course, there are those

students who choose to continue studying German at a later stage, as a so-called B2 language (language starting in grades 7–9 of primary education), but still there seems to be no great interest in studying German in Finnish upper secondary schools.

Although the current paper focusses on the initial stage of choosing to study optional FLs in primary education, there seems to be an additional problem that occurs during the individual's educational path. Even if a student chooses an A2 language at primary school, he or she will most likely quit studying it when entering or during upper secondary school. This indicates that something happens to the language learning motivation during the years of FL study. Not continuing to study is especially problematic with FLs that might not be encountered outside school very often, such as German, as the basic competence achieved during primary school will most likely diminish over time due to little use of or contact with that language. Of course, someone who quits language study “prematurely” can continue studying the language later on in his or her life, but one could argue that finding available time and motivation can prove more difficult than when studying the language at school. Later in 3.4, some motivational issues related specifically to studying German are discussed in more detail.

#### **2.4.3 Drawing conclusions on policy making and promoting language study**

As discussed above, much of language policy making and promoting study of FLs has largely taken a utilitarian viewpoint on the benefits of language study (Berchem 2003). However, as Coffey (2016), as well as Taylor and Marsden (2014) report, such angle does not resonate best with children. Coffey (2016: 16) argues that such approach risks becoming “an instrumentalist trap of utilitarianism”, which mostly originates, at least in the British context, from FLs (such as German) competing with the so-called STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and maths), which are promoted widely for being economically beneficial for the society. Interestingly, similar decline in students' interest can also be seen in STEM subjects (Goold 2013), which shows that mainly promoting *instrumental* values might not prove very fruitful, be it in humanities or in sciences, although the latter ones might in the general discussion – also in Finland – be viewed as more “useful” for the economy, for instance.

Some have recently realised this problem in promoting language study, and theorists investigating motivation to language learning have shifted their focus onto a more holistic view of learning motivation (Ushioda et al. 2017). These issues should increasingly be taken into

consideration by policy makers and teachers, as they might prove vital in turning the downward trend in FL study here in Finland. Were language policy planning and teaching approached more holistically, rather than getting stuck in discussion about which subjects in our curricula are “useful” and which ones are not, the development of school curricula and setting new goals for FL teaching and learning could begin. Sustaining a utilitarian discussion led by politicians, schools and teachers themselves, or the media will eventually affect attitudes in the general public, most notably the parents, who are involved in the process of deciding whether their child will start studying additional FLs.

At this point, it is also important to note that, as discussed earlier, there are many municipalities in Finland where the optional syllabus A2 language is not offered at all. Reasons for this are, as stated by Kangasvieri et al. (2011) often related to economic reasons, and the willingness for municipalities to invest in FL teaching. One interesting insight into the situation of offering German as the A2 is provided by Helenius (2011), who in her MA thesis interviewed 15 experts (teachers, politicians, council members, and other key people) in the FL education field. Her view of the situation is that there exists a vicious cycle as proposed by one teacher of German, where the curricula reforms which decreased the number of A2 teaching hours has led to arrangements where lessons are set to start at unpopular times of the day, after which students have become less motivated to choose the A2 and teacher less motivated to teach, which then has led to fewer students in total. After that, German study materials have not been developed by publishing houses, which has led to more work for those (supposedly unmotivated) teachers who are still left because of fewer students and fewer courses, and so the cycle continues (Helenius 2011: 54).

However, in my opinion such view presented by Helenius (2011) is too pessimistic, and there are enough points where the cycle can be stopped, if it even exists in reality. First and foremost, one could argue that motivating children and feeding their innate interest towards learning inevitably leads to a positive cycle: motivated students leads to motivated teachers who not only motivate students but are also more motivated to create their own teaching materials (although the publishers’ interest probably rises as well), after which the politicians and other decision-makers are more willing to invest in FL learning. Were they not willing to do so, they would have to justify the reasons for not offering FL courses, and as I have pointed out, these arguments cannot be based on economic issues (see e.g. ELAN 2006; EK 2014; Grin 2015). To conclude, I do not believe that the situation of the syllabus A2 is as grim as depicted by Helenius

(2011), and even if it was, one would be able to turn the vicious cycle into a positive one by offering students opportunities to become more motivated. Therefore, I will next turn to the issue of language learning motivation.

### **3. MOTIVATION AND ATTITUDES IN LANGUAGE LEARNING**

In this chapter, the focus shifts from policies in FL learning to the role of motivational and attitudinal factors, and therefore the emphasis will be on individual's willingness to learn FLs, rather than on institutional or societal issues discussed above. However, where appropriate, connections need to be made between the individual's experience and the current situation in the policy making, as it is connected to the attitudinal environment. First, there will be a brief discussion on some of the most notable theories on motivation in FL learning, and after that some recent developments will be discussed in more depth. These theories will then be examined focussing on one of the more important factors affecting the development of child's language learning motivation and attitudes toward languages, namely the parent.

#### **3.1 Theories on motivation and attitudes**

Motivation to learn languages has been examined by many, and multiple theories, usually somewhat overlapping each other, have emerged over decades of research. An exhaustive discussion of these theories in a paper of this scale is not to be expected, but it is important to cover at least some of them briefly. The theories will be presented mostly in a chronological order, following the development of the most acknowledged ones. As mentioned, understanding these developments at least on a larger scale is crucial in order to proceed to the most recent theories, and finally towards the main target of this paper.

##### **3.1.1 Socio-educational model**

Integrative and instrumental orientation are terms which have already been touched upon above, and they can be seen as providing a corner stone for the understanding of reasons why some are more willing to learn FLs than others. Their importance for second language learning originates from Gardner's (1985) idea to divide reasons for language learning into two:

*integrative* and *instrumental* motivation, the former relating to issues such as willingness to belong to a specific group, for instance those speaking some specific FL, and the latter relating to the benefits one receives from, for example, learning English so that one can increase the chances of being employed. In his Socio-educational model, Gardner (1985: 50) defines the components of motivation as follows: “Motivation involves four aspects, a goal, effortful behaviour, a desire to attain the goal and favourable attitudes toward the activity in question.” The attitudes, he explains, can be towards specific or general factors, such as language learning or the language itself (Gardner 1985: 40). In chapter 3.3, the development of such attitudes, particularly the role of parents in it, will be discussed.

Later, the socio-educational model was adjusted, in order to clear some ambiguity from the term “Integrative Motivation”, which was emphasised in the model (Gardner 2001: 1). Gardner’s vision of the Integrative Motivation includes three main components: Integrativeness, Attitudes Toward the Learning Situation and Motivation, which is then related, alongside Language Aptitude and so-called Other Factors, to one’s Achievement in language learning (Gardner 2001: 5–7). In this model, instrumental factors play an indirect role in integrative motivation, by contributing to the Motivation. Gardner (2001: 13) also highlights, that Integrative Motivation (the driving force in language learning) should be separated from Integrative Orientation, which means the integrative reasons behind language learning. Similarly, Instrumental Orientation means the instrumental reasons learners give for their language study. Although these might be significant in the overall language learning process, for instance affecting student’s motivation or the actual uptake of additional languages, Gardner (2001: 16) notes that for the Language Achievement itself, the role of orientations has proven difficult to elicit, one reason being that the integrative and instrumental orientations can coexist (Noels 2001: 44).

Peirce (1995: 17) criticises the socio-educational model and suggests that the term “motivation” should be replaced with the notion of “investment”. She argues that the socio-educational model is too static and does not take into account the full complexity of learning a second language, as learning is also related to issues such as power relations and identity. She argues that by seeing language learning as an investment, learners are more aware that they will “acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital” (Peirce 1995: 17). Symbolic resources, she explains, are things such as language, education and friendship, whereas material resources stand for capital goods, real

estate or money. Peirce (1995: 17–18) argues, however, that learning languages for the resources acquired from it is not the same as Instrumental orientation in Gardner's (1985) model, largely due to taking into account the ever-changing world around the learner, and the learner's changing desires.

### **3.1.2 Self-determination theory**

In order to create a more complete model of language learning motivation, Noels (2001) used the notions of integrative and instrumental orientation from the socio-educational model and supplemented them with the self-determination theory by Deci and Ryan (1985, cited in Noels 2001: 45). This model entailed the factors of *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* orientation, where intrinsic refers to “reasons for L2 learning that are derived from one's inherent pleasure and interest in activity” (Noels 2001: 45), and extrinsic to “reasons that are instrumental to some consequence apart from inherent interest in the activity” (Noels 2001: 46).

Noels (2001: 61) argues that the advantage of her model over the socio-educational model is that it examines closer the factors related to learner's orientations, as they might differ to some extent in different learning contexts. In addition, her model enables a more systematic investigation into the learner's motivation and could provide information for classroom use (Noels 2001: 62). However, as Busse and Williams (2010: 68–69) point out, research that examines the connections between the *integrative* and *instrumental* orientations and the *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* factors, has concentrated mainly on L2, not FL learning. It is reasonable to argue that in FL learning there are other significant factors affecting one's motivation, as the goals of these two might be somewhat different. Bringing the theories closer to the purposes of the present paper, the next model of language learning motivation will be presented below.

### **3.1.3 L2 Motivational Self System**

Although the theories presented above have been utilised in various studies, and their results have proven useful in understanding L2 learning processes, Dörnyei (2005) argued that a new model on language learning motivation was needed, as Gardner's (1985) model was insufficient for investigating motivation in contexts other than bilingual communities, from where the model originated (Dörnyei 2005: 94). Especially the notion of integrativeness, according to Dörnyei (2005: 94–95), needed a reinterpretation. As a result, Dörnyei (2005: 103) argued that integrativeness, the driving force of language study, should be replaced with the term “Ideal L2

Self”, which would be a more suitable model in various settings of language learning, and would also function in investigating the motivation in the globalised world, where some languages, for example English, have become less attached to specific nationalities (Dörnyei 2005: 104).

The L2 Motivational Self System includes three dimensions: Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self and L2 Learning Experience (Dörnyei 2005: 105–106). The Ideal L2 Self comprises of factors related to one’s self image, for instance if one would like to be able to speak some language, one would be motivated to learn that language in order to become closer to the desired self-image. Dörnyei (2005: 105) argues that the Ideal L2 Self is language specific, that means one has an idea of the desirable self in each language one is learning. The Ought-to L2 Self, on the other hand, is a combination of external factors affecting one’s learning motivation, for instance one believes it to be obligatory, or a responsibility to learn a specific language. Finally, the L2 Learning Experience relates to factors in specific language learning situations, for instance the learning environment. As Dörnyei (2005: 105–106) himself notes, these factors share some of the main ideas with Noels’ (2001) notions of extrinsic and intrinsic orientation.

Furthermore, Dörnyei (2005) argues that motivation is dynamic, and there are different temporal stages in which motivation can be observed. Dörnyei (2005: 84) describes these three stages as follows:

“1. *Preactional Stage*: First, motivation needs to be *generated*—the motivational dimension related to this initial phase can be referred to as *choice motivation*, because the generated motivation leads to the selection of the goal or task that the individual will pursue.

2. *Actional Stage*: Second, the generated motivation needs to be actively *maintained* and *protected* while the particular action lasts. This motivational dimension has been referred to as *executive motivation*, and it is particularly relevant to sustained activities such as studying an L2, and especially to learning in classroom settings, where students are exposed to a great number of distracting influences, such as off-task thoughts, irrelevant distractions from others, anxiety about the tasks, or physical conditions that make it difficult to complete the task.

3. *Postactional Stage*: There is a third phase following the completion of the action—termed *motivational retrospection*—which concerns the learners’ *retrospective evaluation* of how things went. The way students process their past experiences in this retrospective phase will determine the kind of activities they will be motivated to pursue in the future.” (Dörnyei 2005: 84)

In the present paper, the focus will be on the first of these three stages, the *Preactional Stage*, as that is the stage during which the *FL uptake* (i.e. choosing to study the optional A2 language) takes place. Below, Figure 2, taken from Dörnyei (2005: 85), shows the *motivational functions* and the *main motivational influences* during the three different stages. In my discussion regarding Figure 2, I will focus on the *Choice motivation*, i.e. during the *Preactional Stage*.

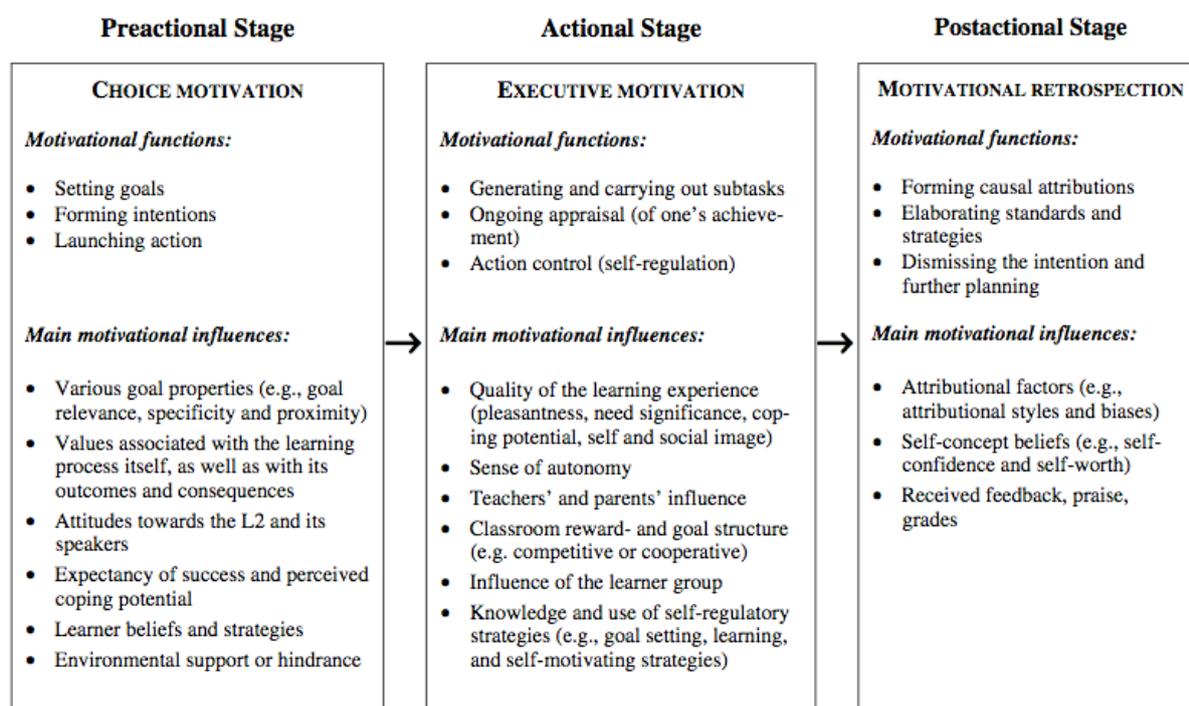


Figure 2. “A Process Model of L2 Motivation” (Dörnyei 2005: 85).

The *Preactional Stage* has three *Motivational functions*, namely setting goals, forming intension, and launching action. The *Main motivational influences* affecting these functions are related to the goal (e.g. its relevance to the learner), different values, attitudes towards the FL, expectations, beliefs and strategies, and support or hindrance from the learner’s environment. As the present paper will focus on younger learners (9-year-olds) choosing or not choosing the optional A2 language, it should be noted that the above-mentioned issues can be rather unclear for the learners themselves (for instance, a 9-year-old should not be expected to set very far-reaching goals). Therefore, my focus will be on the *Environmental support or hindrance*, as it can be argued that young learners are especially sensitive towards feedback from their environment. Attitudes, beliefs, support, and other factors sourcing from the children’s parents, friends, relatives, or other significant people arguably affect greatly the *Choice motivation* of children.

In a large-scale FL motivation survey conducted on over 13,000 13 to 14-year-old Hungarian students in years 1993, 1999, and 2004, Dörnyei et al. (2006) found that the L2 Motivational Self System would indeed be a more suitable way of eliciting language learning motivation, as it turned out that English had become detached from the traditional definition of a FL. The significance of integrative factors, such as willingness to belong to a language group, had decreased in the case of English, whereas the instrumental factor had become more important. Generally, English was perceived as a basic skill, which everyone should possess (Dörnyei et al. 2006: 48), which is mainly the result of its global status. Interestingly, other FLs had faced a decrease in both integrative and instrumental value during the period from 1993 to 2004. This was most notable in German, which had earlier functioned as the second lingua franca in Hungary alongside English and had therefore had a higher instrumental value (Dörnyei et al. 2006: 50).

As Dörnyei (2009: 27) explains, the findings in the earlier Dörnyei et al. (2006) study showed that integrativeness was the central factor in explaining language learning motivation (the choice of language and the effort). Integrativeness was taken from the terminology of the socio-educational model by Gardner (1985, 2001), but when it turned out that integrativeness was most affected by two very different factors, *instrumentality* and *attitudes toward L2 speakers*, integrativeness was renamed as Ideal L2 Self. This made it possible to explain how instrumentality and attitudes toward L2 speakers were so strongly connected to the integrativeness/Ideal L2 Self factor: first, the learner's idealised vision of him/herself as a proficient user of a language motivated him/her instrumentally to learn that language. Second, the attitudes toward the L2 community is also near the learner's self-image, as the learner's positive attitudes make his or her Ideal L2 Self more attractive. (Dörnyei 2009: 27–28)

As already mentioned, the selves in the L2 Motivational Self System are L2 specific (Dörnyei 2005: 105). However, some scholars have recently begun to ask whether it would be more fruitful to extend the model to being not L2-specific but accounting the whole linguistic repertoire one possesses (Ushioda 2017). In the globalised world where English is more and more widely spoken, the goals of acquiring a FL other than English might seem too remote for some, and it is therefore very hard for them to imagine their Ideal L2 Self in these languages (Ushioda 2017: 479–480). As a result, the discussion has now turned to examining the learner's ideal multilingual selves. Next, this new point of view will be examined.

### **3.2 Ideal Multilingual Self**

Earlier, Graddol (2006: 107) argued that as English becomes more and more widely spoken around the world, people would be increasingly encouraged to study other languages as well, as English would not provide a competitive edge anymore. The reasoning went that when most people were proficient in English, they would turn to other languages in order to stand out from the masses, for instance in professional life. Graddol (2006: 106) placed the study of English on a S-shaped curve used for representing innovation diffusion. Looking at his forecast at present, it shows that we should already have passed the peak of the suggested curve, and the number of new adopters, people beginning to study English, should now be declining. However, it seems clear that in Europe, English is still gaining ground as a popular language. In the European Commission's Eurobarometer (2012: 22), English and Spanish are the only languages where there has been increase in the number of people able to hold a conversation in a L2/FL since the last barometer conducted in 2005. Other major European languages, German and French have lost some proficient L2/FL users during the same period.

Of course, one needs to remember that Graddol (2006) examined English on a global level: the largest growth and investments in learning English are taking place outside Europe, especially in the rapidly developing markets of Asia (Graddol 2006: 33; see also Piller and Cho 2015). Therefore, much depends on whether the developing Asia continues to study English, or whether at some point Europe begins to more commonly study Asian languages. It would seem reasonable to assume that it takes time for the European market to react to the shifts of the global language hierarchies and see the benefits of languages other than English. Of course, such shifts are gradual and in flux. It is also worth considering, which languages will become popular among learners, as they might be some of the big non-European languages, for example Chinese. However, it can also be seen in the Eurobarometer (2012: 6) that only 44% of Europeans are proficient enough for following news in a FL. English, although the most widely understood FL, amounts for only 25% of the European population. As Piri (2003: 170) argues, the practical usefulness of English is often exaggerated. Here, one could argue, there is still a very wide market for learning English and other FLs in Europe, but as seen in the study by Dörnyei et al. (2006), the motivational and attitudinal theories used so far may struggle to capture the reality of FL learning in Europe.

### **3.2.1 Approaching the problem of L2-specific selves**

Ushioda (2017) recognises the discrepancy between Graddol's (2006) predictions and the present state of language learning in Europe. She states that there is little to suggest that people are more willing to learn additional FLs, as English becomes more widely spoken globally (Ushioda 2017: 470). She argues, in line with the Dörnyei et al.'s (2006) findings, that the "motivation for learning English becomes increasingly associated with factors such as necessity, utility, advantage, social capital, power, advancement, mobility, migration and cosmopolitanism". These, she notes, are largely *instrumental* values, which in turn mirrors the present ideologies and discourses in the political field (Ushioda 2017: 471).

As already discussed, in the case of Coffey's (2016) and Taylor and Marsden's (2014) findings, instrumental reasoning does not resonate very well with children. Ushioda (2017: 479) adds that, in the case of promoting languages other than English, the instrumentalist approach is problematic if the recipient firmly believes that English is enough. Contradicting the argument by Wright (2004: 102) that learning FLs has become normal outside the "cosmopolitan elite", Ushioda (2017) points out to existence of beliefs of FL learning as an elitist undertaking. She argues that associating language learning instrumentally with economic and social advantage does not resonate with those who see the language learning as an elitist undertaking, and for this reason, Ushioda (2017: 479) calls for motivating language study by promoting "more general grassroots interest in language learning."

Ushioda (2017: 479–480) suggests that there is now a need for revision of the terminology in language learning motivation research. Instead of concentrating on specific languages and the benefits each individual language offers, as in the L2 Motivational Self System and the Ideal L2 Self so far, the focus should be shifted to a more holistic point of view. She therefore argues for replacing the traditional notion of Ideal L2 Self with Ideal Multilingual Self, as it could help engaging those individual learners who do not see enough reasons for studying FLs other than English. In addition, this would support the idea of lifelong learning, and help learners recognise their own development as multilingual users of language (Ushioda 2017: 480).

### **3.2.2 Ideal Multilingual Self**

Henry (2017) shares Ushioda's (2017) view of developing a theoretical framework of language learning motivation around the concept of Ideal Multilingual Self. He encourages examining

multilingualism as a whole and taking into account the learner's Multilingual Self System. His argument is that if learners develop a L2-specific self, or what he calls a "contentedly bilingual self", the learner could end up with an impression it is enough to learn one FL – in most cases English – and that learning additional languages is a waste of time and effort. The fear is that the individual is missing out on opportunities that knowledge of English only cannot deliver (Henry 2017: 554). However, if the learner develops an Ideal Multilingual Self, then learning FLs becomes a "project of personal development the goal of which is to be/become multilingual" (Henry 2017: 554). In other words, the goal of language learning is different if one focusses on each individual FL or if one takes the objective of developing the communicational repertoire as a whole. Interestingly, one is able to see some ideological similarities between this view and the earlier one by Dalby (2001), namely the so-called 'Linguasphere', which takes into account all languages "spoken, written or read" (Dalby 2001: 22–23) as being part of a single global linguistic system. According to the concept of Linguasphere, there is no need to view languages as countable entities "as though they were apples or nation states" (Dalby 2001: 23).

Further support for the Ideal Multilingual Self is provided by Dörnyei and Al-Hoorie (2017: 458) who point out that if a learner concentrates mainly on learning English, and is highly motivated in doing so, this could lead to English occupying too much space from one's "limited capacity of the working self-concept", which in turn would make becoming motivated to learning other FLs problematic. Although it would otherwise be possible for an individual to learn multiple FLs and become plurilingual, for language learning has proven to be a cumulative process where all languages support each other (see for instance Flynn et al. 2004), this would not fit into the learner's self-system. As a result, some learners could perceive additional FLs as a burden, or even harmful for learning other FLs. Additionally, as Dörnyei and Al-Hoorie (2017: 461) note, in learning FLs other than English, some conflicts are bound to occur in one's Ought-to Self, which could then lead to conflicts between language-specific self-images. If one sees learning of multiple FLs as belonging to what Henry (2017: 557) calls "a larger identity project", such conflicts could possibly be turned into constructive development.

### **3.2.3 Attitudes and the Ideal Multilingual Self**

Returning to the L2 motivation theories presented above, and taking a second look at Gardner's (1985, 2001) socio-educational model, one notices that attitudes play an important role in the

development of language learning motivation. In fact, the test battery used in conducting research in Gardner's (1985, 2001) model is called the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB). The variable Attitudes Toward the Learning Situation in the socio-educational model, discussed above, includes both in-school and out-of-school activities, however, strictly related to the language learning situation (Gardner 2001: 5), and not language-related attitudes in other contexts than school work. Here, one must remember that Gardner's emphasis was on motivation affecting language learning performance.

However, Gardner (2001: 5) includes attitudes in the variable Integrativeness, where they relate to attitudes toward the community that speaks the language in question. Moreover, Integrativeness is a "complex of attitudes involving more than just the other language community" (Gardner 2001: 5). Attitudes can be toward specific or general issues, such as the language or language learning itself (Gardner 1985: 40). In addition, Gardner (1985: 43) points out that the attitudes around the learner, for example those of their family, affect language learning motivation. The attitudes of the learner are influenced by the attitudes in his or her upbringing. Gardner (1985: 167) remarks that although language learning at school mostly leans on imagined communication situations, these situations are still related to the learner's social attitudes and motivation, as "our self-identity is intermingled with language".

In the later model of L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei 2005), as discussed above, attitudes toward the L2 speakers are strongly connected to one's Ideal L2 Self. However, as the role of English as a national language increasingly lessens, one could ask what the role of such attitudes is in the future, if the motivation to learn English becomes more instrumentally oriented, as Dörnyei et al. (2006) argues. At least in the case of English, the notion of Attitudes Toward the L2 Speakers becomes rather problematic, as the group of English speakers could either imply to those who speak it as a mother-tongue, or to those who speak it as a second language or as a lingua franca. Graddol (2006: 110) also recognises this problem of defining who is an English speaker.

If one is then willing to use the new terminology, such as Ideal Multilingual Self (Henry 2017, Ushioda 2017), there should be some consideration how to incorporate the notion of Attitudes Toward the L2 Speakers, as it is embedded in the notion of Ideal Self. If one simply replaces the L2, which indicates to a specific language, with Multilingual, the result would be rather confusing 'Attitudes Toward the Multilingual Speakers'. Here, one should probably reconsider

the terminology, for instance by broadening the scope to a more general Attitudes Toward Multilingual Community, which is perhaps what Henry (2017: 553) implies, although not explicitly using it as a term. On the other hand, it could also be the case that the Ideal Multilingual Self is not negatively affected by the notion of a L2-specific community, which exists regardless of the learner's motivational self-image. Anyway, it is clear that attitudes play an important role in the Ideal Multilingual Self as well, although the relationship between the learner and the his or her ideal self might become somewhat more complex than in the original Ideal L2 Self.

### **3.3 Parents and the developing Ideal Multilingual Self**

If the terminology around the Ideal Multilingual Self is still somewhat confusing, as the concept is rather new, it is probably best to take one small step backwards and examine the milieu from which the Ideal Multilingual Self, including earlier notions such as Integrativeness or the above-discussed Attitudes Toward the L2 speakers, arise. One way of doing this is to examine some of the most important people influencing an individual's attitudes and ways of viewing the world, namely one's parents. Parents do not only affect the development of their child's attitudes towards languages, which can either be direct or indirect influence, but also the actual decision whether or not a child begins learning a new FL, and what language in specific (Kangasvieri et al. 2011). Next, the possible role of parents is discussed in the light of earlier studies, and some implications this has for the Finnish context and choosing the optional A2 language (the language starting in fifth grade at the latest, when students are 11 years old) will be examined.

#### **3.3.1 Parents and the motivation to learn foreign languages**

As Gardner (1985: 43) points out, parents influence their child's attitudes. He argues that although parents think they know how they are affecting their child's learning, for instance by encouraging them to learn FLs, they might not be conscious about the way they affect the formation of the child's attitudes (Gardner 1985: 108). He also states that parents may not have a direct role in their child's performance at school, but that they play a role in "willingness to continue language study", and the child's perception of what is needed for achieving the goal, learning a second language (Gardner 1985: 122). Interestingly, Gardner (1985: 122–123) argues that a more passive role of the parent, that of providing a "warm and supportive

environment which encourages within the child the development of an integrative motive toward language study”, enhances the child’s language acquisition the most. However, parents who give great value for the instrumental benefits of language study, according to Gardner (1985: 122), actually think they are providing the most encouragement for learning. This is an interesting point in the light of what has been discussed above, namely how to make children more motivated to learn FLs, and how instrumental reasons might be part of the problem, not the solution.

In the British context, the study by Coffey (2016: 7–8), already discussed above, revealed that parental encouragement, or the example parents gave by having studied a FL themselves, was important in some students’ decision to study FLs. This was especially prominent in independent schools collecting fees from their students, as these schools often have more financial options for offering FL education, and thus the attitudinal atmosphere toward language study is generally more positive. In Finland, independent schools are not allowed to collect fees, but more important than the way education is funded is that the funding exists, which is often not the case in smaller, financially struggling municipalities (Pyykkö 2017). The fact that FL study is promoted as something positive and enjoyable both by the school and the parents means that the child is surrounded by an environment with positive, motivational attitudes toward FL learning. This positive feedback from multiple sources means, borrowing Coffey’s (2016: 8) metaphor, that the child is in an “echo chamber of positive attitudes”.

However, as Coffey (2016: 9) points out, if this encouragement comes from one source only, for instance from the school, then the child might not develop much of an interest toward language study. If language study is something that is neither promoted nor of any greater relevance at home (or outside school in general), the child might feel as if he or she was brain-washed by the school advocating FLs, a view that arises in the interviews in Coffey’s (2016) study. Here, special caution should be paid that promoting language study does not lean too much on instrumental values, as they might feel even more intimidating for someone who, for instance, has not experienced the joy or benefits of FLs in use in everyday life.

### **3.3.2 Parents and the motivation to learn languages other than English**

Coffey’s (2016) findings were made in the British context, where English is a native language. Although they provide interesting insight for the present study, in contexts where English is a

FL, the phenomenon of declining interest to study languages other than English is quite different: in Finland, for example, the need for FLs is acknowledged much more widely than in Britain. Here, also the parents' role might differ from the British one. As discussed in the above, encountering English is becoming more and more commonplace in Finland (Leppänen et al. 2009). This might lead to a somewhat distorted image of FLs globally, from which parents' attitudes toward learning languages other than English might somewhat suffer.

If one builds upon the argument by Ushioda (2017: 471), that instrumental values have more weight in today's world, one can see the challenges those advocating languages other than English are facing. In the present discourse, taking place in a world where both individuals and institutions are competing for limited resources, the direct and undeniable *instrumental* value of English might lead to some parents believing English is enough. Making conclusions from the global hierarchy of languages based on their usefulness, which according to Wright (2004: 103) has always existed, some parents might get the illusion that studying other FLs is a threat to their child learning the "most useful" language, English.

Returning to Dörnyei's (2017: 458) argument that English is occupying the largest proportion of the learner's working motivational self-concept, something similar might appear in some parents' perception of what FLs are and how one learns them. The common belief discussed by Cummins in his lecture at the University of Jyväskylä (December 12, 2018), which appears every now and then in general discussion and in the media, that studying one FL takes up capacity to learn additional FLs, could be shared by many parents. This, again, limits one's motivational capacity to take up additional FLs. As Busse (2017: 575–576) points out, this might lead to parents "encouraging their children to concentrate on English".

Furthermore, McEown et al. (2017: 541) found in their study conducted on students in Japan, that parental encouragement has a significant, direct relationship to the students' integrative motivation to learn FLs other than English. Parental encouragement also predicts the students' ideal LOTE<sup>11</sup> self (McEown et al. 2017: 542). In a study conducted in Hungary by Csizér and Kormos (2009: 107), based on questionnaire data from 202 secondary school students (average age: 16.5), 124 college and 106 university students (both 21.5 years of age on average) in Hungary, parental encouragement was found to be very strongly connected to the learner's

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<sup>11</sup> Abbreviation for *Languages other than English*

Ought-to Self in English, but also to the Ideal Self, which again shows the influence parents have in forming their children's view of the world, and of its languages. Such encouragement, however, might be based on beliefs rather than knowledge.

### **3.3.3 Parental encouragement to study foreign languages in Finland**

As mentioned, parents do not only provide the attitudinal atmosphere, from which a great deal of their children's language learning motivation receives its fuel, but usually they also are involved in the decision-making process of whether a child begins FL study. As explained, in Finland, this decision-making first takes place when the compulsory A1 language is chosen. In over 90% of the cases, the choice falls on English, sometimes because there is no other choice provided by the municipality. The second decision, and the one the present paper focuses on, is whether one chooses an optional A2 language.

Kangasvieri et al. (2011: 37) point out that although parental influence is the greatest in making the decision about the A1 language, parents are also involved in choosing the A2 language. The parental influence can be very significant. The Master's thesis by Nevalainen and Syvälahti (2000), conducted through a questionnaire to which 643 parents of second graders responded, (2000: 74) found that when deciding the A1 language, in 71.4% of the cases, the choice was made in collaboration by the parents and the child. The child's siblings were also included in the decision making in 12% of the cases. In 5.9% of the cases, the parents had done the decision by themselves. Larvus (2010) also conducted her Master's thesis on choosing the A1 language, with a similarly large group of parents (620 in total) responding to her questionnaire, and found that parents' opinions on which language to study first was based on the status of the language, but also on practical issues, such as whether their child would have to move to another school in order to study the language. In addition, the parents found it important that their child him/herself is interested in the language, and also the role of the child's friends was acknowledged. Furthermore, the child's L1 played a role in the decision, as parents wished their child could study their mother tongue at school (Larvus 2010: 79–81).

The child's linguistic background affects the motivation towards language study, and studies such as Jones (2009) also reveal the chance of parents' own linguistic competence in FLs could have an impact on the child's educational paths. Jones (2009) argues that it is crucial whether or not the parents are able to help their children with their homework in FLs. However, this

should be put into the Finnish context, where parents give relatively little assistance in their children's homework, the most common reason being that the child does not accept help from their parents, according to the parents' own explanation (Varkey Foundation 2017: 28, 35). Furthermore, one could argue that the high trust in teachers' competence, which also comes up in the Varkey Foundation's large-scale (1,000 respondents in Finland, 27,380 globally) Global Parents' Survey 2018, reduces parents' pressure to help their children academically. When it comes to languages other than English this should be seen positively, as knowing that children will receive good instruction at school could encourage parents and their children to choose FLs the parents themselves do not know.

As Pomerantz et al. (2005: 217) explain, the roles parents take in the development of their child's motivation towards achievement (e.g. in FL learning) depends on "the characteristics children bring to their interactions with their parents, and the social context in which these interactions take place". This means that parents reflect their child's individual skills, needs, wishes, and visions (their child's *Ideal* and *Ought-to Self*, and the *Learning Experience*) to their own views and knowledge of the world. The role of the school is important, as school creates a context for children's achievement, and inevitably parents also consider the signals from school, and from the society in large, in making sense of what is best for their child.

This interplay of different agents – the child, his/her parents, the school, and the society – creates discourse that can be key in finding answers for developing educational systems that encourage children to learn FLs other than English. According to Jones (2009: 96) there is some evidence that the child's gender can play a role in how parents encourage FL learning, and that girls are encouraged to choose FLs more than boys. However, the small sample size of Jones' (2009) study (96 parents in total) does not allow generalisation. On the other hand, the issue of gender has been acknowledged in studies in the Finnish context as well (Kangasvieri et al. 2011: 44), and statistics (VIPUNEN 2017) show that in 2017 the percentage of Finnish girls studying an optional A2 language was higher than that of boys, 15.4% vs. 12.6% (these percentages include students from Swedish-speaking schools, in schools using Finnish-only-instruction they are 12.8% and 9.9%).

In Finland, relatively little research has been conducted on parents' involvement in choosing the A2 language, although they do play a major role in the decision making. As discussed repeatedly above, these decisions are highly based on the perceptions of the instrumental values

of languages. It is therefore important that the issue of parents' attitudes and beliefs about studying FLs other than English are investigated. In this decision-making, the global pecking order of languages, realised in rankings such as the Power Language Index (Chan 2016), and dominated by English, presumably play a very significant role. The attitudes received from home, and elsewhere in the society, play a significant role in the development of a child's vision of the world and the self-image. The fear is that this self-image is increasingly that of a bilingual, and not multilingual.

### **3.4 Why study German? – motivational and attitudinal issues**

Before moving on to presenting the data and methods of this paper, there must be a short discussion on the motivational and attitudinal issues described above and their impact on learning German, the language used here as an example of a “victim” of the so-called English hegemony. First, the discussion returns to some issues related to the global standing of German, then some possible impacts of the notion Multilingual Self on learning German are discussed, and also the role of the parents will be re-evaluated in terms of German with an example of a typical message many Finnish schools send to families about optional FL study, as the message contradicts the ideal of the Multilingual Self in many aspects.

#### **3.4.1 Setting the goals for learning German**

As discussed above, there are some voices arguing for re-setting of setting the goals for learning English, because of its undeniable value as a *lingua franca* (Piri 2003; Jenkins 2007). What, then, are the roles left (or available) for other languages? Which are the goals that would motivate students to learn multiple FLs? Ammon (2015: 34) argues that the global standing of German means that it is increasingly studied in order to understand and communicate with L1 speakers. However, learning a language also opens up opportunities to communicate with non L1 speakers (Ammon 2015: 35), although this aspect might often be neglected. In fact, this can indeed lead into rather unexpected situations, as proven by my own experience of an US exchange student in Germany who refused to speak English with those who could speak German.

One could argue that this difference in goal-setting – English increasingly for *symmetrical* (L2–L2) communication, and other languages increasingly for *asymmetrical* communication (L1–

L2) – is at the core of the motivation to learn and to use other FLs. For instance, it is an often-heard claim by opposers of the compulsory study of Swedish that Swedish L1 speakers prefer to use English in multicultural communication, because it removes the *asymmetry* of communication, in business meetings for instance. However, one could argue that communication is never *symmetrical*, as there are not only differences in proficiencies in speakers of L2 English, but also different roles taken in such situations by the interlocutors: when doing business, someone is the seller and the other one the buyer. Mystifying English as a language that removes *asymmetries* of communication could mislead one to think that it inherently offers something that other languages do not. In addition, Ammon (2015: 53–54) points out to the significance of using the L1 of the recipient for indicating politeness.

Jakobsen (2003: 187) argues that lowering the goals for learning English could be the solution for acknowledging the value of wider range of multilingual competence:

“Weniger gutes Englisch, z. B. Lese- und Hörverständnis einfacher Texte und eine basale kommunikative Kompetenz, soll als ein relevantes Lernziel anerkannt werden. ... Wir brauchen eine Vorstellung von einer mehrsprachigen Kompetenz, wo die Sprachen ... in ihren verschiedenen Funktionen in unserer persönlichen Geschichte und für unser gesellschaftliches Leben anerkannt und gefördert werden.”

[Not-so-good English, for example being able to understand simple written and spoken texts and holding a basal communicative competence, should be acknowledged as a relevant goal for learning. ... We need a conception of multilingual competence that acknowledges and promotes languages in [all] their different functions in our personal narratives and in our social lives.]  
(Jakobsen 2003: 187)

Although the main point of Jakobsen’s comment is acknowledging any proficiency in language as valuable, it is rather questionable whether “lowering the goals” is the way to make FL study more desirable. Instead, what should be ensured is that all languages remain relevant in contexts which are increasingly taken over by English, for example international business, science, or popular culture. As already explained, in the German-speaking countries the role of native speakers as the guardians of their own language is pivotal for German remaining relevant in various contexts on an international level (Ammon 2015). However, the role of FL speakers of German is similarly important, as they share the interest and experience of learning and using German and are part of the language community regardless of their proficiency.

### 3.4.2 Multilingual Self and the ‘holistic view’ of learning German

As already explained, the seemingly concrete instrumental value of FL learning is in many ways over-emphasized (see Taylor and Marsden 2014; Coffey’s 2016; or Ushioda 2017). In the case of German one would argue for the usefulness of the language in business and marketing, as knowledge in German would help understand one of the largest economies of the world. This economy-first view is visible in many of today’s calls for more FL study in school (see for instance EK 2012). However, it is unlikely that children become interested in FL study (i.e. feeling that a FL is part of his/her *Multilingual Self*) for such reasons, because they arguably seem very remote to most children. One could also question whether simplistic reasons such as travelling to German-speaking countries are very useful, as tourist destinations aim at catering for visitors regardless of their language skills, and thus make the usefulness of FLs unclear. In other words, the intrinsically derived interest in the language, culture, and the world comes first and other, instrumental reasons, come second. This view of motivation as not being related to specific languages but to deeper, more holistic ways in which we steer our actions and build our identities is in line with the ideas put forward by Ushioda (2017) and Henry (2017).

Although instrumental reasons do contribute to becoming interested and maintaining the motivation to learn a FL (see Dörnyei et al. 2006, and many others), one could argue that the power of these reasons derive from learner-intrinsic motivations: the learner must first acknowledge the role of language(s) as the enabler of a variety of activities and phenomena in the world, and his/her agency being something obtainable. It is questionable whether simple claims aimed at the child or his/her parents actually have any impact on the child’s motivation to learn FLs. Usually such claims lack the real context through which the relevance of FL learning would become clearer. Consider the following claim in the info letter addressed to parents in the Finnish city of Seinäjoki<sup>12</sup>:

”Kieliä kannattaa opiskella. Työelämä on koko ajan kansainvälisempää, ja siksi on hyvä hankkia monipuolinen kielitaito.”

[Studying languages pays off. Working life is increasingly international and for this reason it is advisable to acquire versatile language skills.]

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<sup>12</sup> Seinäjoki (2017). Vapaaehtoisen kielen (A2) valinta. Letter to third grade students’ parents (12.12.2017). [online]

[http://www.seinajoki.fi/material/attachments/seinajokifi/paivahoitojakoulutus/siv.keskuksenhallinto/hallinto/9A\\_K8ubmzN/Kielivalinta\\_vanhempainkirje\\_2018.pdf](http://www.seinajoki.fi/material/attachments/seinajokifi/paivahoitojakoulutus/siv.keskuksenhallinto/hallinto/9A_K8ubmzN/Kielivalinta_vanhempainkirje_2018.pdf)

Such statements are of course valid, but they lack any context relevant for the child (or the child's parents if they do not use FLs in their working lives). They also miss the targets of the Finnish national core curriculum for FL learning completely (POPS 2014), which only refers to issues related to cultural capital and make no reference to economics or working life. The message also misses some of the aims of the EU's language initiatives (European Commission 2018), in that no other "benefits" of FLs are mentioned than "work". The main emphasis of the aforementioned documents lies on the more holistic, cultural aspect of creating mutual understanding between people and cultures, in which language plays an essential role. Implementing the recommendations and aims of these (and other similar) documents in schools would require viewing FL motivation in Ushioda's (2017) and Henry's (2017) terms.

However, although languages are profoundly interconnected on a deeper level (compare, for instance, to classic models such as the Common Underlying Proficiency, the so-called "Dual Iceberg" by Cummins (12.12.2018); or Dalby's (2001) *Linguasphere*; and others) it is still important to acknowledge the language-specific features that separate languages from each other and make them distinctive and unique. As already stated, German works here as an example of the phenomena under investigation. The question arises, if one wants to advertise specifically the study of German, what should one do? This question will be answered after the analysis of the present data, but it is possible to make some assumptions already at this stage, based on the discussion above.

One could argue that if German were more present in school, for instance through the language-showers and other initiatives mentioned in **2.1.3**, children would become more interested in German in specific. Listening to German music, watching German movies at school (with subtitles), searching the internet for information about German, finding German YouTubers or streamers, collaborating with a German-speaking school, having a teacher of German in the history or geography class and let him/her tell about the German-speaking world. The possibilities are near endless. Teachers could also instruct children to find specific FLs in their environment (for many other concrete recommendations for teachers, see for instance Kalaja and Dufva 2005), as although English is the dominant FL in children's free time, other languages do exist everywhere around them, such as in instruction manuals, product labels, in the media, and so forth.

Students should be made more aware of the (instrumental) opportunities that learning multiple FLs at school enables. However, the impact of FL-specific activities and awareness-raising as described above should not in any way create a “competition” between specific languages. Advertising specific FLs should be done with the more profound idea of a multilingual and multicultural world in mind, rather than making up language-specific, and often simplistic and stereotypical reasons for studying some specific FL. Some stereotypical beliefs are surprisingly strongly attached to some specific FLs, and these beliefs are often repeated in the media and elsewhere. Such claims include, for instance, German as a straight-forwards and effective of business language through which Finland’s export deals are made, and French as the beautiful language of romance, art, or cuisine. Surely, every language is suitable in those contexts, but they all have some specific features that make them unique. Although a child becomes interested in some specific FL, one could argue, in line with Ushioda (2017) and Henry (2017), that the child possesses some deeper interest towards the world outside of his/her own, which manifests itself in the often seemingly illogical and surprising love for some language (see Busse and Williams 2010). A child, or an adult, who has fallen in love with a language does not care what the stereotypical uses for his/her language are. One should expect such person to find *instrumental* relevance for that specific language him/herself.

In the aforementioned information letter aimed at primary school students’ parents in Seinäjoki, in addition to the ill-advised emphasis on working life only, there are several mentions of the student’s “own interest” towards the FL. Consider the following two examples:

- (1) ”Oppilaalta tämä [saman kielitaitotason saavuttaminen A2 kielessä kuin A1-englannissa] edellyttää ahkeruutta ja **kiinnostusta** kielten opiskeluun. Jos epäilette lapsenne jaksamista tai pärjäämistä, asiasta kannattaa keskustella lapsen luokanopettajan ja englannin opettajan kanssa.”

[This (acquiring same level of proficiency in the A2 language as in the A1 English) requires diligence and **interest** in studying languages by the student. If you doubt whether your child will manage the workload and succeed, you are advised to speak with your child’s class teacher and the English teacher.]

- (2) ”Ryhmien muodostamisen ja käytännön järjestelyjen vuoksi kielen opiskelua ei voi peruskoulun aikana keskeyttää kuin hyvin painavasta syystä. ... Painava syy voi olla laajat vaikeudet koulunkäynnissä tai erittäin heikko menestyminen kyseisessä kielessä. **Mielenkiinnon** lopahtaminen ei ole pätevä syy keskeyttää opintoja.”

[Because of forming the groups and other practical arrangements it is possible to quit [A2] language study only for a very serious reason. ... Such reason can be major

difficulties in studies [in general], or very poor success in the language in question. Decline of **interest** is not a legitimate reason for quitting study.]

As Katajewa (2016: 121) points out, the reasons for studying a FL are always related to one's individual needs and expectations. *Interest* is a very vague term and can mean different things to different people. For example, how much *interest* is enough for some specific learning outcomes? Other questions that such message can raise in parents who most likely are not very aware of the targeted proficiency in FLs taught at school, can be 'How interested should my child be in order to achieve *the same* proficiency<sup>13</sup> in German [or in some other FL] as in English?' How should one know whether the child is still interested in the FL in the future? For instance, Ushioda (2017) argues against such *deficit* view of language learning. Furthermore, the rather oppressive tone of the message (failures are to be expected if one starts to study the optional FL) would allow for a more detailed discursive analysis than what is possible here, but at this stage one should point out that in general such messages sent from school to the child's parents most likely will fail in evoking genuine *interest* in a child who is in any way doubtful about his/her *success* in the FL. In other words, such messages clearly contradict the holistic reasons for FL study described above. A child who is already *interested* in German (or some other FL) will probably choose it as his/her A2. The child who is curious, but not quite certain about whether he/she will enjoy studying German somewhere in the future is indirectly advised to stop dreaming and concentrate on other subjects.

This chapter has provided an overview on some of the motivational issues surrounding teaching and learning German as a FL in Finland. First, the issue of goal-setting was discussed, and it was pointed out that the goals for German as a FL can be somewhat different to those of English as a FL, as the aim of learning the former is more often *asymmetrical* communication between L1 and FL speakers (Ammon 2015). However, the *symmetrical* FL–FL communication still exists, in that many proficient German learners might feel an urge to use German in as many situations and contexts as possible in order to keep their precious FL alive and thriving (Ammon 2015). Furthermore, Jakobsen's (2003) argument that all language competence should be acknowledged as relevant could offer new ideas for promoting FL study in Finnish schools, where, as was seen in latter part of this chapter, FLs are often depicted as difficult and burdensome. In addition, FLs should not be forced into a competitive situation, where a learner

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<sup>13</sup> Moreover, this is false information, as the Finnish Core Curriculum for basic education states that the target proficiency in syllabus A English is higher (B1.1) than in syllabus A in some other FL (A2.2). (POPS 2014) [https://www.edu.fi/download/172823\\_kehittyva\\_kielitaito\\_eri\\_kielissa.pdf](https://www.edu.fi/download/172823_kehittyva_kielitaito_eri_kielissa.pdf)

might feel the pressure to learn the “more useful one” at the expense of other FLs. These are all valuable in my analysis, which I will present further below. First, however, I must introduce the data and methods of the present study.

## **4 DATA AND METHODS**

This chapter defines the research questions, presents the questionnaire used for data collection, and introduces the methods used in analysing the data. In addition, the respondents of the study will be presented in detail. The purpose of this chapter is to set the aims of this study and to discuss why the research was conducted as it was. In addition, it is essential to briefly explain why some other methods were not used and, on the other hand, what could have been achieved by using some different method and how it could have changed the nature of this MA thesis. I shall begin by first presenting the research questions.

### **4.1 Research questions**

To start of this investigation into the uptake of optional FLs in Finnish basic education, I will now present the research questions used for targeting the aims of this study. The questions are as follows:

1. In what ways are parents involved in their child’s A2 uptake decision? What reasons do parents give for their child choosing or not choosing an optional FL, and how do these reasons reflect the choice their child made?
2. How is the special role of English as the most widely spread *global* language visible in this reasoning?
3. How is German as a formerly popular optional FL presented in the parents’ answers, and in what ways could one increase the popularity of German as an optional FL?

The rationale for these particular research questions (RQs) will be presented next. Firstly, in RQ1, the aim is to find out in what ways parents affect the choices their children make in terms of FL study. This is important, as the choices children make in basic education not only affect the rest of their educational path, but also other chances they will have in life. I do not mean to say that studying optional FLs is necessary for everyone, because it is not. However, it is in many ways important that there are enough people who are able to use FLs other than English

and Swedish, as discussed earlier in length. As I believe the decision of FL uptake should be done based on the child's personality, capacity to develop him/herself, and interests (and not that of someone else), it is important to know more about how parents are involved in making the decision, and how they support or discourage the FL uptake. RQ1 also aims at raising some of the reasons for the FL uptake decision. Acknowledging these reasons is essential in order to develop the way FLs are taught at school, how they are promoted for learners, and how the school system itself could better support learning of multiple FLs.

Secondly, RQ2 asks about the special role of English as a FL that has developed into one that is increasingly seen as a basic skill for any individual, at least in Finland. Being aware of how the urgency to learn English affects the role of other FLs, and the motivation of learners to choose FLs other than English is important for understanding the current trend towards English-only (or English-primarily) FL repertoire in Finnish schools.

Finally, RQ4 asks about the role of German, and what the future of German as a FL taught in Finnish schools might look like. More importantly, in answering the question, I will attempt to find out what could be done in order to make the future of German as a FL brighter. After all, as a language, German is important for the Finnish society as a whole, as proficient users of German can help Finland create new connections to the German-speaking world, in addition to keeping up and revitalising old ones, and to better understand the culture and the people who play a major role in Europe and globally.

Answers to the RQs will be provided by the investigation into the reasons behind the decision to *choose* or *not to choose* the optional FL (the so-called syllabus A2 language). At the focal point of this task will be the *Preactional stage* (Dörnyei 2005: 85) of the development of FL learning motivation, as this is the stage at which the learner chooses to study the FL (hence the term *Choice motivation* (Dörnyei 2005: 85) to refer to the type of motivation). Table 3, below, depicts this particular stage of motivation, and the so-called *motivational functions* it has, and what are the *main motivational influences* at this stage.

Table 3. *Preactional Stage* (from Dörnyei 2005: 85).

<b>Preactional Stage</b>	
<b>CHOICE MOTIVATION</b>	
<i>Motivational functions:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Setting goals</b></li> <li>• <b>Forming intentions</b></li> <li>• <b>Launching action</b></li> </ul>
<i>Main motivational influences:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Various goal properties (e.g., goal relevance, specificity and proximity)</li> <li>• Values associated with the learning process itself, as well as with its outcomes and consequences</li> <li>• Attitudes towards the L2 and its speakers</li> <li>• Expectancy of success and perceived coping potential</li> <li>• Learner beliefs and strategies</li> <li>• Environmental support or hindrance</li> </ul>

Above, Table 3 functions as a reminder of the issue already discussed in length in section 3.1.3, and I will not be explaining the *Preactional Stage* in detail here. However, I must point out that the qualitative content analysis conducted (which I will present below) utilises much of the terminology, and many of the core ideas presented in Table 3. After all, it is the *motivational influences* that will be visible in the reasoning for and against the A2 uptake.

At this point, it is important to note that the *Choice motivation* presented above in Table 3 regards the learner's own motivation to choose a particular FL. However, my questionnaire was filled in by the learners' parents, which adds to the complexity of analysing the reasons for choosing and not choosing the optional FL. In order to receive a clearer image of the approach taken here for bringing forth the learner's *Choice motivation*, below, Figure 3 offers a visualisation of how the parent's perception of his/her child's FL *Choice motivation* might be formed. For this, I will be using Dörnyei's (2005) notion of the *Motivational Self System*.

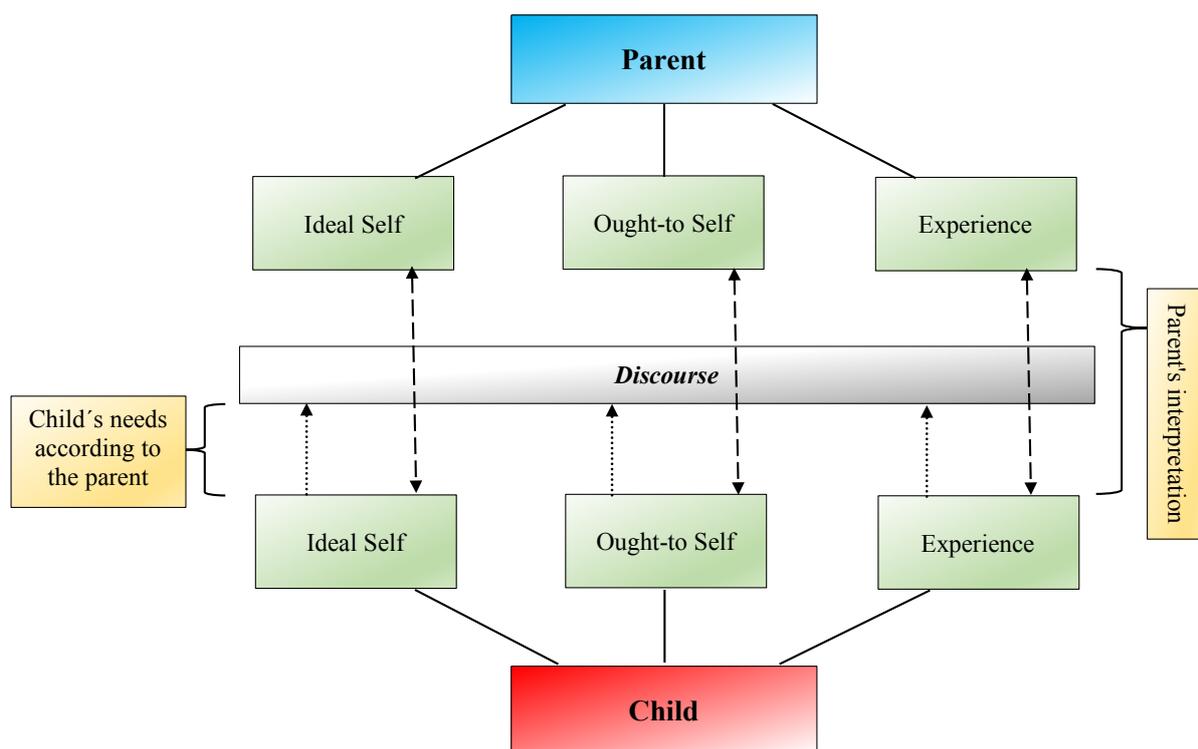


Figure 3. Visualisation of the Motivational Self Systems (Dörnyei 2005) of both the parent and the child, and the relationships between the two.

Figure 3, above, shows both the parent's and the child's *Motivational Self Systems*, comprising of the three main components, the *Ideal L2 Self*, *Ought-to L2 Self*, and *L2 Learning experience* (for limitations of space, these terms are abbreviated in Figure 3). It is clear that both the parent and the child have their own perception of the world, and obviously they have their own *Self systems*. The parent's *Self system* is seen at the top of Figure 3, and that of the child at the bottom. I argue that between these systems, there is *discourse*, which includes all the factors affecting the formulation of the three components, *Ideal Self*, *Ought-to Self*, and *Learning experience*. In sum, these factors are the *Main motivational influences* that were presented above in Table 3. I believe that through this discourse, the *Self systems* are negotiated: The parent reflects his/her *Self system* to that of his/her child, which then becomes the *parent's interpretation* of why optional FLs are chosen at school in general (seen on the right in Figure 3). However, I will mainly be examining only the minor part of this complex issue, namely the parent's interpretation of his/her *child's needs* (seen on the left in Figure 3), i.e. why the child either chose or did not choose the optional FL. This interpretation, again, functions as adding

to the overall *discourse* on FL uptake (hence the dotted lines from the child's *Motivational Self system* to the *discourse*).

One should be aware that Figure 3 is compiled without any empirical evidence and is probably an overly simplified version of how the parent's and the child's *Motivational Self Systems* are formed. One could ask, for instance, whether there really are any true connections between the two systems, although intuitively, such model would make sense. However, it is not in any case the aim of this MA thesis to theorise over issues such as how the *Motivational Self Systems* of different individuals might be interconnected and negotiated. Therefore, I kindly ask the reader to take Figure 3 as simply a visualisation of the issue under examination in this paper, as it hopefully helps in understanding the parent's role as a respondent who in his/her responses tries to make sense of his/her child's *Motivational Self System*.

## 4.2 Data collection

Above, the starting point of this small-scale study was presented in form of the research questions and by depicting the issue at hand. Next, I will present the method of data collection and the rationale behind choosing this particular method, and how the selection of some other method might have affected the outcome or the nature of this study. The data for this MA thesis was collected through an online **questionnaire** on *Webropol* platform, and the total number of questions in the questionnaire (see Appendix 1) was 37. These questions can be divided into the following groups:

- Five closed **demographic questions** on the parents' age, gender, education and language proficiency scale from not knowing the language at all to excellent, and finally L1. The languages listed were the most commonly studied languages in Finland: Finnish, Swedish, English, French, German, Spanish, and Russian, and it was possible to name two other languages not mentioned on the list.
- Eleven closed and open-ended questions on **the decision-making process**: whether or not the optional A2 language was chosen, which language was chosen and was it the child's first choice (and if not, which one was), who were involved in the decision-making, whose opinion influenced the decision the most, which were the reasons for the final decision (open-ended), and whether the parents received enough information about the A2 language choice, and from which sources this information came from and

what the information was. Additionally, parents were asked if there was any FL that was not offered as an A2 in their child's school, but that they had wished were offered.

- Nineteen **statements** (on a Likert scale with five stages, from totally disagree to fully agree) aimed at revealing parents' attitudes and beliefs on FL learning. These statements were divided into four sub-groups: **1) Importance of multilingualism** (questions 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 31); **2) Benefits of FL study** (21, 22, 20, 26, 34); **3) Policy and practices in schools** (23, 24, 25, 33, 35); and **4) Achievement in and experience of FL learning** (27, 28, 29, 30, 32). Questions 21 and 22 were considered primarily as belonging to sub-group 1, however, they are also clear "benefits" of FL study and were therefore also included in sub-group 2.
- Finally, one Likert scale question on the **importance** of teaching different FLs in Finnish primary schools. Languages chosen were large, widely-spoken languages, with some omissions for the sake of clarity and ease for the respondents. Languages were divided into three main groups, with mainly the aim of comparing German, the special language of interest for this study, to other FLs: a) large European languages, b) large non-European languages (Asian and Middle-East), and c) Finnish minority languages. Of course, some overlapping was inevitable, as Finland has L1 speakers of all the languages listed. Some consideration was also needed whether to include Sámi languages. They were decided to be left out, because asking about whether or not it is important to teach Sámi languages is highly controversial, especially in midst of the struggles Sámi communities are facing at the moment, and for the purposes of this paper the issue will not be discussed.

Questionnaire as the form of collecting data was chosen, because it offers a more efficient way of collecting information from a higher number of participants than, for instance, interviews or other methods of data collection (Dörnyei and Taguchi 2009: 6). Interviews, on the other hand, could have allowed more detailed inspection of parents' attitudes, values and beliefs, as they in general allow respondents to explain their thoughts more precisely and do more justice to the individual respondents' and their child's subjective and differing levels interests in FLs. The limited level of detail is indeed one of the downsides of quantitative research (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2011: 204). However, the quantitative approach was seen as the most suitable method for gathering data for the purposes of this study, and for the limitations of time and resources.

It is important to ensure that the items used in a questionnaire are relevant for the purpose of the research (Dörnyei And Ushioda 2011: 204). Therefore, the questionnaire first went through the initial inspection of my MA thesis supervisor and after some recommended modifications, on February 2, 2018, a link to a pilot questionnaire was sent to a parent (mother, 46 years old) of a then fourth grade student. Thus, the respondent matched the actual target group with good accuracy: the choice of the child's A2 language had only recently been made. After receiving the data from the pilot study, last minor changes were made to the questionnaire and the final version was constructed. Most notably, the piloting led to major changes to the final question (Q37), as it was initially a task for the respondents to place different languages to a ranking order according to their perceived importance. This, however, proved difficult, and it was reformulated into a five-stage Likert-type scale, inquiring the language-specific importance (*not at all important – very important*).

In hindsight, it could have been possible to formulate the ordering task into a chronological one: e.g. 'If your child had the opportunity to learn as many FLs at primary school as he/she liked to, in which order would you like him/her to learn them?'. Although there are some obvious shortcomings even in the final version of the Q37, for example the lack of clear contextualisation, as was indeed pointed out by one respondent who stated that for L1 or bilingual speakers it is always ideologically important to study those languages – which it is – it was hoped that the Q37 would give some relevant insight into the role of German in comparison to other FLs, and thus the rather artificial and somewhat provocative confrontation of each language was created.

According to Dörnyei and Taguchi (2009: 54) the importance of the piloting stage is sometimes neglected, resulting in possible shortcomings in the quality of the questionnaire. Here, it must be admitted that the piloting stage could have been more extensive, but this was unfortunately hindered by the lack of time. Dörnyei and Taguchi (2009: 54) acknowledge lack of time, and not the lack of willingness, as one of the main reasons for omitting an extensive piloting stage. One also needs to remember the scale of this study, and thus some limitations in the quality of the questionnaire were not unexpected.

Simultaneously as the construction and modification work of the questionnaire was underway, I contacted the headmasters of three primary schools in order to find a solution for distributing the questionnaire. Initially, the idea was to contact the parents through the schools' official

communication and assessment platform *Wilma*, where the link to the questionnaire would be given out to the parents. After receiving some conflicting answers from the schools concerning the possibility of using this distribution channel, I followed the kind advice of one headmaster to contact the municipal education services and request a research permit for the distribution of the questionnaire through *Wilma*.

After receiving the permit, I contacted several schools in one large Finnish city on their interest in participating in the study. The schools were chosen based on the information found on their official websites, and only schools with relatively large number of pupils and with existing groups in A2 language were contacted. Eventually, three primary schools agreed to take part in the study and sent the link to the questionnaire to the parents of third graders in March–April 2018. For the purposes of this study, it was seen positive that the respondents had only a few weeks earlier finished the process of choosing or not choosing the optional A2 language, meaning the decision-making was assumingly still in good memory. In total, the estimated number of families targeted with the questionnaire was around 200 (the total number of individual parents or guardians is not available). As the questionnaire was filled in by 50 respondents, the estimated response rate is somewhere around 12 to 14% (this depends on the number of individual parents or guardians, or the number of those signed up on the *Wilma* platform).

The analysis of the questionnaire data was conducted by utilising both qualitative and quantitative methods. Q11 ‘*What were the reasons behind the final decision?*’ forms the core of my investigation, and the responses to that question were analysed using the so-called *theory-guided* qualitative content analysis (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2018: 4.4.5). This method was chosen, as it provides a way to connect the complex theories behind the issue of optional FL uptake at school, ranging from micro-level motivational issues to macro-level phenomena such as globalisation and *lingua franca* English. As Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2018: 4.4.5) explain, the commonly used data-driven analysis (inductive) and the theory-guided analysis (abductive) begin with the same procedure of choosing various themes and subthemes that rise from the data. However, after the data are categorised into these themes, the two methods diverge, in that the inductive one creates a new theory based on the evidence available in the data, and the abductive one makes various connections between the data and different, relevant theories (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2018: 4.4.5).

Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2018: 4.4.5) also point out that the theory-guided method differs from the theory-driven (deductive) content analysis in the way that evidence is not picked out from the data based only on some particular theory, but the data themselves provide the important information that is connected to one or more theory at hand. This, to my mind, is the most fruitful approach considering the complexity and broadness of theories surrounding the issue of FL study and uptake. The fact that in their responses, parents bring up issues that might not be included in any present theories as such also supports the choice of the abductive approach. In addition, the Finnish school system as the context of this study presents its own, unique challenges, which might not be best suited to any existing theory. Thus, the data are best examined in their own rights.

After the main themes from the data were categorised by giving each of them a name and a label (e.g. the theme *Workload, strain (t3)*, and the sub-theme *Length of the school days (st3.1)*, etc.), the discussion on the themes was complemented by relevant data from quantitative analysis. All the closed-ended questions in the questionnaire were analysed by quantitative methods using *SPSS*, and the analysis utilised basic statistical tools, such as Pearson Chi-square in crosstabulation ( $p$ -value), and Pearson correlation ( $r$ ). It is important to point out that the statistical analysis is very limited due to the nature and the small scale of this paper, and the core of my own expertise lying on different subjects. Thus, the results of the statistical analysis are to be interpreted with caution. They do, however, provide useful information about the issue of FL uptake at school.

### **4.3 Respondents**

In total, 50 parents filled in the questionnaire, 43 (86%) of whom were female and only 7 (14%) of whom male, and thus there was a major disproportion in the respondents' gender. This, along with the small sample size, means that the results are not generalisable. The average age of the respondents was just under 40 years, the minimum being 28 and the maximum 52. The gender distribution of the respondents' children was relatively even: 28 (56%) were girls and 22 (44%) were boys. Respondents with graduate and postgraduate degrees were overrepresented. This might have to do with highly educated parents being more poised to take part in studies such as this one. However, considering the small-scale and therefore non-generalisable results of this study, and the fact that parents' education level should not largely affect subject choices made

in the earlier stages of basic education – OPH (2019: 3) seems to regard this as largely a geographical issue – this should not be considered a major flaw.

In the analysis, the anonymity of the respondents was protected. In the questionnaire, the names of the respondents were not collected, neither were the names of the children. Had there been any names or details that could have revealed the identities of the respondents or their children, they would have been censored from the published thesis. Same goes for teachers and other people who could have been mentioned by their name in the responses. Details about the participating schools and the area where the data were collected are information that remains between me, the participants, and the schools.

## **5 ANALYSIS & RESULTS**

This chapter is divided into two sections. First, in section **5.1**, the focus is on the language choice, and I present the analysis of the reasons that lead to the uptake of the optional syllabus A2 language, and the reasons for not choosing the optional FL. The choice is also compared to the demographical information of the respondents, and there are multiple references made to the underlying attitudinal factors, as well. In section **5.2**, I discuss the implications the results presented in **5.1** have for one specific FL, German, the study of which used to be very common in Finnish basic education but whose decline in the number of learners has been the most radical of all FLs in the recent years. Due to issues of practicality and most of all clarity, this chapter combines the discussion of both the analysis and the results, i.e. they are not discussed separately. This is also fitting to the nature of the qualitative content analysis as the method, as there are frequent references made to the responses in the data, which build the backbone of the whole chapter.

### **5.1 Language choice**

The decision to choose or not to choose an optional A2 language is the starting point of this investigation. 40% (20 respondents) reported that their child had chosen the A2 language and 60% (30 respondents) reported that the optional language was not chosen. The respondents' answers to this question (Q6 '*Did your child choose the optional A2 language starting next year?*') were first compared to the respondents' (i.e. the parents') demographic information

possibly relevant to the choice, namely the child’s gender, the parent’s education, and the parent’s own language skills (i.e. plurilingualism). The results from this investigation can be found in section 5.1.1. After that, the choice was compared to the reasoning that led to the final decision. Sections 5.1.2 and 5.1.3 are organised around these reasons, as provided by the responses to Q11 ‘*What were the reasons behind the final decision?*’. In the discussion of the findings, I will be making references to other relevant data, most importantly to the attitudinal statements (Q17–Q35), but also to other parts of the questionnaire.

### 5.1.1 Gender, parents’ educational background, and parents’ multilingualism

It is acknowledged that girls choose optional FLs more often than boys in Finnish schools, but also elsewhere in Western societies (see e.g. VIPUNEN database for statistics; Kangasvieri et al. 2011; Jones 2009). This can be seen in the data of the present study, as well. Unsurprisingly, the number of girls choosing the optional A2 language was higher than that of the boys: 16 girls (out of 28) and 4 boys (out of 22). The crosstabulation in Table 4 shows the choice for boys and girls and the statistically relevant gap between the both genders ( $p=0.05$ ). Unfortunately, at this stage it is clear that the small sample size means that there will not be enough valuable evidence available of the boys who *chose* the A2 language, as there are only 4 boys (20.0%) who did so and 18 who did not (60.0%). However, as the child’s gender has been shown to somewhat affect the way parents encourage FL study (see Jones 2009), the issue of gender is important here, too, although the data do not allow for further statistical analysis of much relevance.

Table 4. Crosstabulation of Q2 ‘*What is your child’s gender?*’ and Q6 ‘*Did your child choose the A2 language starting next year?*’ (N=50,  $p=.005$ )

Question: <i>What is your child’s gender?</i> (Q2)		Question: <i>Did your child choose the A2 language starting next year?</i> (Q6)		
Response		Yes	No	Total
Secondary education	Count	1	6	7
	Percentage	5.0%	20.0%	14.0%
Upper-secondary level education	Count	4	3	7
	Percentage	20.0%	10.0%	14.0%

A second factor that initially was believed to possibly have some impact on the optional language choice was the parent’s (the respondent’s) educational background, based on earlier studies in other countries (such as Jones 2009, Taylor and Marsden 2014, and Coffey 2016). In

the present data, however, the parents' education level was not related to the final decision (see Table 5, below).

Table 5. Crosstabulation of Q4 'What is your educational background?' and Q6 'Did your child choose the A2 language starting next year?' (N=50, p=.194)

Question: <i>What is your educational background? Please select your highest qualification.</i> (Q4)		Question: <i>Did your child choose the A2 language starting next year?</i> (Q6)		
Response		Yes	No	Total
<b>Secondary education</b>	Count	1	6	7
	Percentage	5.0%	20.0%	14.0%
<b>Upper-secondary level education</b>	Count	4	3	7
	Percentage	20.0%	10.0%	14.0%
<b>Undergraduate degree</b>	Count	3	5	8
	Percentage	15.0%	16.7%	16.0%
<b>Graduate degree</b>	Count	11	10	21
	Percentage	55.0%	33.3%	42.0%
<b>Postgraduate degree</b>	Count	1	6	7
	Percentage	5.0%	20.0%	14.0%

This result could be explained by parents' high awareness of the positive effects of FL study regardless of their educational background. This awareness may have been raised by the parents' own experiences of FLs, as undoubtedly language skills have become important at work and are present in many areas of life. The information of the importance of FLs other than English may possibly be received from the child's school or from other sources, for example from the media. All in all, this result was not very surprising, as in the Finnish context, education and learning is seen as both the provider and the measure of equality inside the society, and the school system is in many ways different from the British one, where the above-mentioned studies were conducted. In Finland, the study of FLs, or education in general is not seen as an elitist pursuit, or as something that only those from more affluent or highly educated backgrounds ought to do, but as an opportunity for all, which can contribute to parents' education as such not having a clear effect on the child's choice of studying optional FLs.

Although it is not possible to make generalisations based on this small amount of data, it is helpful for my later analysis to acknowledge that the decision to study FLs seems to be more about the child's individual attributes, or the way his/her parents view them, rather than a

straight-forward process of “inheriting” certain interests and ways of life. As seen from the present data, this interpretation seems reasonable. FL study is indeed often perceived as something that girls do. When such views are present in the society and in schools, to a boy’s parent not choosing additional FLs might appear something different than to the parent of a girl. A boy struggling with making the decision, perhaps considering questions such as How much work is it going to be? Will I like it?, or What will my friends think?, might not receive the same level of support from their parents (or other people) as a girl considering the exact same questions. This result would then be in line with the argument by Pomerantz et al. (2005: 217) that parents’ support is dependent on the interaction between children and their parents, and the social context of that interaction. Further below, in section 5.1.3, more evidence of problems somewhat similar to these will be discussed in more detail.

When it comes to the parents’ own linguistic repertoire, responses to Q5 ‘*What is your own language proficiency?*’ show that, as expected, English is clearly the most commonly known FL among these respondents. Almost 80% of the parents (N=50) estimated their English skills as either *good* or *excellent*. The respondents estimated their FL skills using the following 7-point scale: *no skills–poor–passable–satisfactory–good–excellent–L1*. The use of such scale is of course rather inaccurate, as it is based on self-evaluation and the interpretation of the scale can vary across respondents. However, at this point, using the commonly used CEFR scale, for instance, would have meant adding reference texts of the skills levels, which arguably would have made filling in the list of languages rather tedious for the respondents. Below, Figure 4 illustrates the parents’ language repertoire.

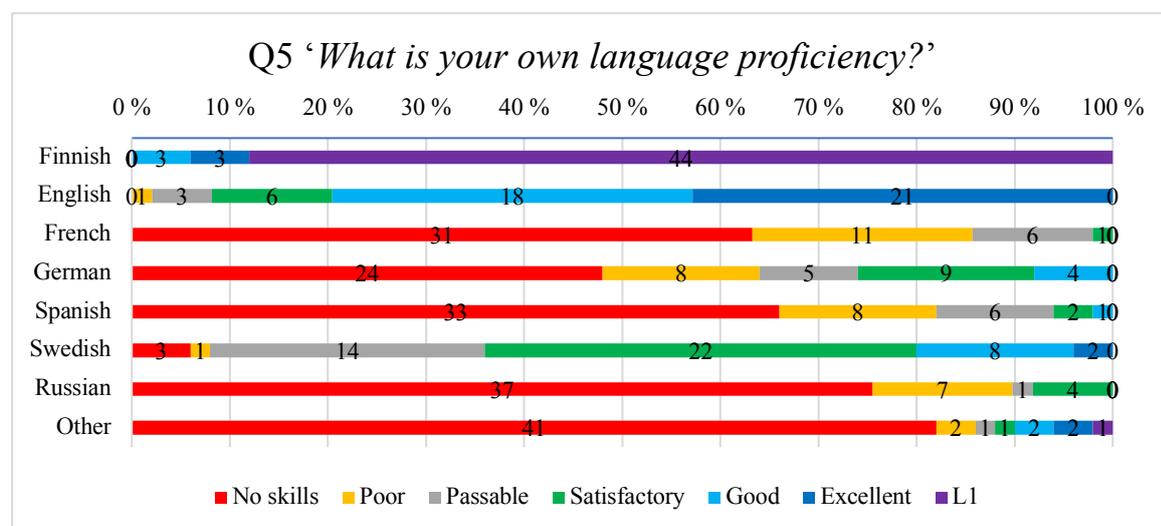


Figure 4. Respondents’ language repertoire based on Q5 ‘*What is your own language proficiency?*’ (N=50).

As seen above in Figure 4, in total 44 respondents (88%) reported Finnish as their L1. However, it seems that not everybody actually reported their L1, as only one respondent had reported some *Other* language as his/her mother tongue. It is clearly visible in Figure 4 how English (avg. 5.1, *good*) and Swedish (avg. 3.7, *satisfactory*) are the most commonly known FLs among the parents who participated in this study. This is obviously due to Swedish having already been the compulsory FL in Finland when the parents were in school, and it probably has been taught at all the education levels after basic education. By the time the respondents were still in school, English had already established itself as the most commonly studied FL alongside Swedish (Leppänen et al. 2011), and arguably the role of English has become increasingly important in Finland afterwards, as well. Some traces of German as a formerly popular FL can be seen in that its average (2.2, *poor*) is somewhat higher than other “additional” FLs. Obviously, quite few respondents report at least *satisfactory* skills in German (n=13). A closer comparison between skills in German and other FLs is offered further below in 5.2.

Although one could have expected that the parents’ linguistic repertoire – which here simply means the number of languages in which the parents report at least *satisfactory* skills – would have had some effect on the choice of A2 uptake, no difference was found between those who had skills in multiple languages and those who did not (p=.228). This of course can be related to multiple issues with the questionnaire itself, namely that only one or both of the child’s parents were able to answer the questions, which means that no full image of the child’s parents’ linguistic background is available. Of course, one could also question the underlying assumption that the parents’ FL repertoire would in any way contribute to the child’s *Choice motivation*. However, as will be discussed in 5.1.3, the parents’ own *Experience in FL learning* seems to affect the way the *goal relevance* of A2 learning is viewed. One could therefore argue that it is not the number of FLs a parent speaks but the *experience* of whether or not learning those FLs was enjoyable and whether the individual is satisfied with the results of FL learning at school. This is an interesting issue to which I will return later. Next, I will examine closer the reasons that led to the decision to choose or not to choose the optional A2 language.

### **5.1.2 Reasons for choosing the optional FL**

Here, I will present reasons that led to the child choosing the optional FL (syllabus A2 in the Finnish school system). As already stated above, 40% (n=20) of the respondents’ children had chosen the A2 language. In Q11, the parents were asked to explain in their own words what

reasons led to the final decision. Table 6, below, compiles the reasons that led to the child choosing the optional A2. These reasons are divided into different themes and their sub-themes, and the number of times the issues related to those themes were mentioned in the responses. The complete qualitative content analysis can be found in Appendix 2.

Table 6. Themes in Q11 ‘Which were the reasons behind the final decision?’ – reasons that led to the child choosing the FL.

Theme (code)	Sub-theme (code)	Number of times mentioned
Child showed <b>Interest</b> towards the language (t1) <i>Total=21</i>	<b>Child-derived:</b> strongly stemming from the child him/herself (st1.1)	11
	<b>External A:</b> stemming from school, e.g. language showers, visitors at school etc. (st1.2)	2
	<b>External B:</b> stemming from outside school (st1.3)	5
	<b>External C:</b> stemming from the child’s friends (st1.4)	3
<b>Rational</b> reasoning in which the parent is involved (t2) <i>Total=10</i>	Believed <b>Benefits</b> or other instrumental argument by the parent (st2.1)	4
	<b>Linguistic background</b> of the parent, or languages at home or in child’s environment (st2.2)	6

The analysis of these responses found two main explanations for choosing the FL: first, the child’s own *Interest* in the language (t1; mentioned 21 times in total) and second, some type of *Rational reasoning* (t2; mentioned 10 times in total), in which the child’s parents (i.e. the respondents themselves) were involved in one way or another. Content analysis shows that there seems to be both FL-specific (e.g. “*She can already speak Italian so maybe Spanish felt like the most familiar option...*”) and more general motives for choosing the optional FL (e.g. “*The child’s own desire to learn a new language...*”), and often these two appear to be intertwined in the child’s Ideal Self. According to some parents, children had become highly motivated by encounters with FLs both in- and out-of-school contexts, and social factors (friends, siblings, etc.) also played a role. *Instrumental* reasons seemed to be used more often as supplementary, supportive arguments for the child choosing the A2 language than as the primary motivation for the uptake. Thus, my findings are in line with those of Coffey (2016)

and Taylor and Marsden (2014). In addition, the data include issues supporting the arguments made by Ushioda (2017) and Henry (2017) that there is a need for endorsing the “grassroots interest in language learning” (Ushioda 2017: 479) and a more holistic view on learning FLs.

As discussed earlier, it is often quite difficult to pinpoint or explain what is meant by the child being *interested* in a FL. Furthermore, as Katajewa (2016: 121) states, the reasons for FL motivation always depend on the individual. In the data at hand, however, most of the respondents (n=21) whose child chose the optional FL state that the child was *interested* in the FL or showed a *desire* to study the language. In roughly half of the responses (n=11), the interest that led to choosing the FL was seen as stemming from the child (later: *Child-derived*). In these cases, it was either clearly stated that the interest stemmed from the child him/herself, or in some cases there was no interpretation of the reasons given for the decision. Mentions of *Child-derived* motivation (st1.1) were not divided further into subcategories. *External* reasons, however, were divided into three categories *External A*, *B*, and *C* according to the source from which the encouragement or motivation reportedly stemmed (sub-themes st1.2, st1.3, and st1.4). It is important to notice that one response given by the parent can include mentions themed as *Child-derived* and *External*. In such cases, *Child-derived* motives (stemming from the child) are clearly visible but complemented by the parent’s interpretation, often including explanations of an *External* source for the child’s behaviour.

As mentioned, some responses that had mentions grouped under the *Child-derived* (st1.1) category included no further explanations for the decision, i.e. *External* reasons or *Rational reasoning*. Here, one interpretation could be that the child’s willingness to start learning a new FL was so powerful that there was little or no need to discuss why the FL should be chosen or not. Of course, it is also possible that some of the shorter, straight-forward responses in this category are simply due to the respondents’ lack of elaboration on the matter, which is to be expected when conducting a questionnaire (Dörnyei and Taguchi 2009). However, some responses give clearer evidence of the child him/herself being strongly active in the decision-making. This is visible in the following example:

- (1) *Kiinnostus maahan ja siihen miltä kieli kuulostaa*

[Interest towards the country and how the language sounds like] (P14)

Here, the parent explains that the child had an *intrinsic* motivation to choose the optional language (*intrinsic* adapted from Noels' (2001) terminology). The parent's own participation is not mentioned, which perhaps implies that it was not needed as the decision was clear from the start, and that the parents' own opinion on the FL was irrelevant, the child having such a strong willingness to choose the language. The parent was presumably supportive towards the child's interest, and the child's own will was respected. It would be interesting to know where the *Interest* towards the country where the FL is spoken comes from, but such reasoning is not provided by the parent. However, the interest stemming from the country can be seen as implying at least some level of Integrativeness (Gardner 1985; 2001), as the child acknowledges that there is a country and a community in which a language is spoken that the child thinks sounds pleasant.

In Dörnyei et al.'s (2006) terms, Integrativeness is better understood under the Ideal L2 Self, which includes Attitudes Toward the L2 Speakers. Example 1 above could thus be taken as an implication of the child's Ideal Self including some aspect of wanting to belong to the language community in question. Here, one could argue that although Henry's (2017) notion of Multilingual (not L2-specific) Self System tempts one to relabel the sub-category embedded in the Ideal Self to a broader 'Attitudes Toward the Multilingual Community', the power of L2-specific factors, such as the speaker community, makes one question the need for it. Although the definition of the English speaker has become blurred (Dörnyei et al. 2006; Graddol 2006), it is probably not the case for other languages, which might still be envisioned as being more connected to certain groups of people.

This brings us to a more complex example found in the data. One response to Q11 indicates, again, that the child has a very strong willingness to learn a new FL. However, as seen in the example below, this urge was connected, according to the parent, to the linguistic knowledge of the child's family members (st2.2) and to the choices her friends made (st1.4):

- (2) *Lapsi halusi kielen jota äiti ei osaa hyvin ja joka on eri kuin sisarusten valinta ja sama kuin kavereilla. Tärkeintä oli kuitenkin että saa ottaa uuden kielen omassa koulussa. Lapsi olisi halunnut opiskella Koreaa jos sitä olisi ollut tarjolla koska heillä oli käynyt korealainen vieras koululla.*

[The child wanted a language that her mother doesn't know well, and which is different to the one her siblings chose and the same as the friends chose. Most important, however, was that the new language is available in her own school. The child would

have wanted to study Korean, had it been offered, because they had had a Korean visitor at school.] (P21)

This example shows not only *interest* towards the FL, but also gives implications of the child's awareness of the multilingualism around her. According to the parent, the child acknowledges the linguistic proficiency of the mother, but also that of the siblings, both of which reportedly affected the decision. Here, related to the discussion above, one is able to find evidence of both L2-specific and non-L2-specific attitudinal issues. For this child, it seems clear that there was a language she was interested in, Korean, but as this was not available she was apparently quite happy to choose another FL. This choice was also consolidated by the friends' decisions. The influence of the friends is also visible in the undeniably practical decision to choose a language available at the child's present school, i.e. there is no need to go to another school, something which could also mean separating from one's friends. The issue of wanting to stay at the same school has also been pointed out earlier by many (e.g. Nevalainen and Syvälahti 2000; Larvus 2010).

What results in Example 2, above, is a complex case where positive L2-specific attitudes and positive attitudes towards multilingualism in general intertwine. It seems that multilingualism, and not only a desire to learn a specific FL, plays a role in this child's Ideal Self, namely the child portrays some interest or curiosity towards multiple FLs. The fact that the child first wanted to choose Korean (a language presumably no one in the family knows), and the fact that when it turned out this was not possible she was determined to learn another language that the others do not know shows some mild rebellion, something which indeed has come up in earlier studies on FL learners' study paths (Busse and Williams 2010). The expectations of others (i.e. the child's Ought-to Self) do not contradict the child's vision of the Ideal Self as a FL learner, as her friends were similarly interested in choosing the A2 language.

In Example 2, the Korean person visiting the child's school (st.1.2) is a prime example of how encounters with FL speakers can contribute to increased motivation to start studying optional languages. Although not everyone would get similarly excited about FLs as the child in Example 2 did after meeting the Korean visitor, recognising excitement in others might increase the awareness in those who might not be that interested in FLs initially. Here, Coffey's (2016) metaphor of 'echo chamber' resonating positive attitudes towards languages might come into

play. One's peers being excited about language learning might encourage someone who is not too interested initially to at least consider optional FL study.

Further evidence of native or fluent FL speakers contributing to motivation in language study can be seen in Example 3 below:

- (3) *Lapsi harrastaa aktiivisesti joukkuevoimistelua, jossa valmentaja on puoleksi venäläinen. Hän olisi halunnut opetella venäjää sen takia. Tulevaisuutta ajatellen muutenkin venäjä olisi hyvä kieli oppia. Espanja tuli vanhempien toiveesta toiseksi vaihtoehdoksi, koska matkustamme paljon maissa, joissa puhutaan Espanjaa.*

[The child actively does gymnastics, where they have a coach who is half-Russian. She would have wanted to learn Russian because of that. Thinking about the future, Russian would be a good language to learn anyway. Spanish became the second option, after we parents wished for it, because we travel a lot in countries where people speak Spanish.] (P23)

In this example, there is evidence how encountering FLs and their speakers *outside school* (st1.3) can contribute to increased motivation to choose an optional FL at school. Here, it is once again a speaker of a FL who inspires the child to start studying the language. The exact role of the gymnastics coach in motivating her group towards language learning is obviously not explained, for instance whether there is systematic encouragement to study FLs, but this shows the motivating effect of pleasant pastime activities combined with encountering FLs. From an innovative point of view, one is able to imagine how the language of instruction in sports activities could in cases similar to this be sometimes switched from Finnish (or the primary language) to something else, thus enabling authentic and meaningful out-of-school use of a FL in the learner's free time. Even small amount of exposure, for example basic vocabulary, and something related to the activity itself, could contribute to positive Learning Experiences outside school, which possibly could manifest themselves in more confidence to choose optional FLs at school.

Interestingly, two other respondents mentioned the same gymnastics coach as being the main motivator for choosing the optional A2. Based on inferential evidence, two of these three accounts regard the same child (as both parents were able to fill in the questionnaire). Nevertheless, it is striking that the parents see the role of an adult outside school, and the child's hobby, as the main cause for their child's interest towards FLs. The parents' own contribution (st2.1) in encouraging FL study can be seen in the way they suggested Spanish as the secondary

option in case there were not enough students to form a Russian group. This choice they base on their frequent holidays in Spanish-speaking countries.

One could argue that exposure seen in Example 3 is what Ushioda (2017) means when she argues that too often the importance of FL study is based on instrumental reasoning, and that there should be more emphasis on finding multilingualism relevant to the learner's own experiences and consciousness. The lack of such experience and awareness, she argues, often leads to the goals of FL learning appear remote and unimportant to some learners (Ushioda 2017: 478). FL-speaking adults or peers in different situations and in pastime activities that are important to the child could contribute to his/her Ideal Self developing into such that allows for accumulating one's linguistic multi-competence, which attracts the child's attention to broadening his/her linguistic and cultural capital.

However, in Example 3, the parents themselves seem to explain their support for the child's FL learning in ways which Ushioda (2017) deems as *instrumental*, and thus not very motivating to most. For instance, "*Russian would be a good language to learn anyway*" implies that the language is *useful*, and advocating learning Spanish because of travelling to Spanish-speaking countries is something used by Ushioda (2017: 472) as an example how language learning emphasises the importance of language in *transactional* contexts, where the learner is primarily a tourist or a customer. Here, one needs to point out to the earlier discussion on *instrumental* and *holistic* views on languages, in which it was concluded that although the curiosity towards FL learning in children evolves in a far more complex fashion than listing out the *useful* aspects of language knowledge, people understandably apply *instrumentality* in explaining and rationalising their choices and motivations. Thus, in a way, *instrumental* values seem to be used in cementing what originates from more *integrative* or "hard-to-explain" issues. It is also important to remember that the responses to my questionnaire are the parents' own interpretations of the child's motivation, or the lack of it.

Example 4 shows the above-mentioned dynamic of making the decision:

- (4) *Lapsi halusi Saksan, myöntelin päätöksen olevan hyvä siinä mielessä että voisin auttaa sanoissa kun itsekin jonkun verran puhun*

[The child wanted German, I agreed that it was a good choice also in that I would be able to help with the vocabulary, as I speak [German] a little myself.] (P30)

Above, the main reason for the child's interest (st1.1) towards German in particular is not explained any further. However, the parent contributes to the decision by offering a supportive argument "*I would be able to help with the vocabulary*" (st2.2). Here, the child's interest seems to suddenly "make sense" to the parent, who begins to consider ways in which she could be involved in the child's learning: The child offers the initial spark to the discussion and the parent supports him. Similar case can be found in Example 5, below, where the child's interest is backed up with a *rational* (st2.1) argument by the parent:

(5) *Lapsen halu oppia uutta kieltä, oma espanjankielen taito (voin auttaa lasta)*

[The child's desire to learn a new language, my own proficiency in Spanish (I can help the child)] (P38)

Such support arguably validates the child's Ideal Self-image as a language learner (i.e. the Ought-to Self supports the Ideal Self). However, this also raises the concern whether parents feel they should be able to actually offer such support for their children. As discussed above in 3.3.3, Finnish parents usually trust the school highly in giving their children support and seldom help their children academically themselves – in their homework, for instance (Varkey Foundation 2017). However, the data seem to demonstrate that some parents do feel obliged to give academic support to their child, and that this worryingly seems to affect the decision to take up optional FLs (see chapter 5.1.3, below, for examples where it has been given as a reason for not choosing the A2 that the parent does not feel able to offer any help or support).

More information on this issue is offered by responses to the statement Q29: '*It is important that I can help my child in studying a foreign language myself, for example in his/her homework*'. On average, the respondents *Somewhat agreed* with this statement, and the vast majority *Agreed* either somewhat or fully with the statement (76%; n=38). No one *Fully disagreed*, although eight respondents (16%) *Somewhat disagreed*, and four (8.0%) *Neither agreed nor disagreed*. For the purposes of crosstabulation, the responses to Q29 were re-grouped in three: *Disagree*, *Neither agree nor disagree*, and *Agree*. The results of this can be found in Table 7, below:

Table 7. Crosstabulation of Q29 ‘It is important that I can help my child in studying a foreign language myself, for example in his/her homework.’ and Q6 ‘Did your child choose the A2 language starting next year?’ (N=50, p=.088)

Statement: <i>It is important that I can help my child in studying a foreign language myself, for example in his/her homework.</i> (Q29)		Question: <i>Did your child choose the A2 language starting next year?</i> (Q6)		
Response		Yes	No	Total
<b>Disagree</b>	Count	5	3	8
	Percentage	25.0%	10.0%	16.0%
<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	Count	3	1	4
	Percentage	15.0%	3.3%	8.0%
<b>Agree</b>	Count	12	26	38
	Percentage	60.0%	86.7%	76.0%

Although the results from this small sample (N=50) are not generalisable, Table 7 shows the intriguing distribution of responses to both the statement in Q29 and the A2 uptake in Q6. The result does not reach the significant level of 0.05 (p=.088), but it is remarkable that parents of both those who chose and those who did not choose the A2 largely agreed on the statement that it is important that they can help their child in their FL homework. This begs the question whether the parents’ own FL repertoire has affected the choice, as it is rather worrying if the parents’ feel somehow incapable of offering their children enough support in a FL they do not speak themselves. Furthermore, it is questionable whether parents should even be targets of such pressure, as it is the school’s responsibility to support learning even if the parents cannot. This could potentially be a threat to the children’s equality in education.

Unfortunately, the data do not offer clear answers to whether there is a connection between the parents’ FL repertoire or proficiency in specific FLs and their children’s uptake of the optional FL, as the questionnaire was in most cases filled in by only one of the parents even if there were more than one parent significantly present in the child’s life. Furthermore, the role of other important people around the child (siblings, friends, relatives, etc.) should not be forgotten. If the responses to Q5 ‘*What is your own language proficiency?*’ are compared to the attitudinal statements (Q17–Q35), the only statistically significant correlation can be found between the reported number of language in which the respondent has “satisfactory” skills and Q27 ‘*In language learning, [aptitude] plays a significant role*’ (in Finnish, aptitude to learn something is often referred to as one having “the head” or “the brain” to learn, therefore the term *kielipää*

in the original questionnaire, which literally translates to *language head*). In this case, however, the correlation is a negative one,  $r = -.383$  ( $p < .01$ ), which would imply that higher the number of languages spoken by the respondents at a “satisfactory” level, the less likely the respondents were to agree with the statement.

The fact that correlations were not found between the number of languages spoken by the respondents and the attitudinal statements requires some consideration. First and foremost, one should question the underlying assumption that the actual number of languages spoken would in any meaningful way contribute to the attitudes towards learning FLs. Not finding correlation is, in my mind, in line with the idea that FL learning should not be viewed as that of counting languages as apples (Dalby 2001), or as individual tools in a toolbox. FL learning is about the individual finding the relevance of proficiency in any given FL, or in a combination of multiple FLs. Secondly, the number of FLs can be affected by simply having an L1 other than the majority language. Although all of the non-L1-Finnish respondents reported at least “good” proficiency in Finnish, one could argue that most likely these respondents had learnt Finnish as a FL for rather different reasons – it is the majority language, or maybe the language of someone one loves, etc. – than the reasons for which L1 Finnish-speakers had learnt FLs – which are not spoken by the majority, although they could include personal reasons similar to the non-L1-Finnish situation. It would be a very naïve assumption that the number of languages one speaks correlates with the general attitudes towards language learning in a straight-fashioned way. Thirdly, one must remember that the respondents’ own perception of their FL proficiency might not equal their actual proficiency, and, in addition, “bad” FL learning experiences or dissatisfaction with the results of FL learning (*Postactional Stage*, Dörnyei 2005: 85) arguably affects one’s attitudes.

As already stated, it seems that *instrumental reasons* (st2.1) are most often used for backing up or giving rational reasons for the *child-derived interest* (st1.1) to learn a new FL. Therefore, Example 6, below, offers an interesting sample of directly referring to the FL-specific *usefulness*:

(6) *Yritettiin miettiä, mistä kielestä olisi tulevaisuudessa eniten hyötyä.*

[We tried to think which language would be the most useful one in the future.] (P2)

Here, the question arises whether it is the perceived *usefulness* of FLs that led to choosing the optional A2 language, or has the decision to take up the A2 led to further considering the *usefulness* of FLs? Surely, it can be the combination of both. As Dörnyei (2005: 85) argues, at the *Preactional Stage* one considers the *relevance*, and the *specificity* of the goal, which I believe is visible in Example 6, above. The *expectancy of success* might be rather high, or it could be taken for granted (at least there is no reference to any doubtful thinking), and the parents act as providers of *support* for the child's interest to learn a new FL. Here, I believe, the parents role becomes very important, as they provide information on the decision that the child should not be expected to possess, i.e. wider knowledge of the world.

Whether or not, however, this support is one-sided, and to what extent the school offers support on the *usefulness* of FLs, is an important question that could play a key role for promoting optional FL study. I must raise the issue of the school supporting the child-derived interest towards FLs here, as there turned out to be some problems with providing such support in the reasons for not choosing the A2 (these will be discussed below in **5.1.3**). Again, it is a matter of equality that the parents are not left alone as those providing arguments for and against the *goal relevance* of FL learning. In order to illustrate this question, I will next briefly present the sum variables compiled from the attitudinal statements (Q17–Q35).

As explained above in **4.2**, the attitudinal statements in the questionnaire used for the present study could be divided into four groups:

- 1) Importance of multilingualism (Q17, Q18, Q19, Q21, Q22, Q31),
- 2) Benefits of FL study (Q21, Q22, Q20, Q26, Q34);
- 3) Policy and practices in schools (Q23, Q24, Q25, Q33, Q35), and
- 4) Achievement in and experience of FL learning (Q27, Q28, Q29, Q30, Q32).

Based on these groups, sum variables were created in SPSS. However, as it turned out that the first group '*Importance of multilingualism*' did not achieve an adequate level of internal consistency (measured by Cronbach's alpha), it was not used as a sum variable. However, the other three groups formed sum variables showing moderate to high reliability<sup>14</sup> (Hinton et al.

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<sup>14</sup> Hinton et al. (2004: 364) suggest the following cut-off points:  $\alpha < 0.5$  for low reliability,  $\alpha > 0.5 < 0.7$  for moderate reliability,  $\alpha > 0.7 < 0.9$  for high reliability,  $\alpha > 0.9$  for excellent reliability. However, other rules of thumb for "acceptable" reliability exist, such as  $\alpha > 0.6$ , or  $\alpha > 0.7$ .

2004: 364). In the second group ‘*Benefits of FL study*’, Q34 ‘*It is difficult to estimate which foreign languages are the most useful ones in the future*’ did not show correlation with the other statements and thus it was left out from the final sum variable. The internal reliabilities were as follows: *Group 2* ( $\alpha=.508$ ), *Group 3* ( $\alpha=.651$ ), *Group 4* ( $\alpha=.712$ ). The full tables of inter-item correlations can be found in Appendix 3.

In regard to the discussion above about the parents’ role in articulating the *goal relevance* (Dörnyei 2005), one particularly interesting finding was made using the sum variables, namely that the parent’s educational background (Q4) and the sum variable ‘*Benefits of FL study*’ (*Group 2*) showed statistically significant correlation ( $r=.335$ ;  $p<.05$ ). This could result from respondents with higher educational level having jobs that require higher levels of FL proficiency. As stated by Grin (2015), there are many jobs where there is little to no use of FL skills, which could also explain the result here. It could in theory be the case that some parents might be well-aware of the *instrumental* benefits of FL study in many occupations but if such skills have little benefitted their own careers or every-day work (see also Leppänen et al. 2009: 43–44), they might find it difficult to point out the *goal relevance*, or *proximity*, and maybe have trouble helping a child find the FL relevant and meaningful. In some cases, for instance below in Example 7, the need for FL skills in work might be considered as something very normal. Furthermore, the multilingual surroundings of the child add to the normality of FL usage and study. In such cases, it would be rather easy to point out the (instrumental) *relevance* of FLs.

- (7) *Espanja ja Venäjä olivat lapsesta yhtä kiinnostavia, mutta lopulta Espanja tuli ykköseksi. Kotona osataan espanjaa ja isän työkieli englanti&portukali. Ystäväperheessä puhutaan venäjää ja lapsi suomi&Venäjä kielisessä koulussa. Sieltä kiinnostus Venäjään.*

[The child was equally interested in Spanish and Russian, but eventually Spanish became number one. At home, there are people who can speak Spanish and the father uses English and Portuguese in his work. Russian is spoken in the friend’s family and the child is in a Finnish–Russian school. The interest towards Russian comes from there.] (P5)

One should point out, however, that in the present data no relationship between the participating parents’ education level and the final uptake decision was found, as already explained in 5.1.1. In addition, FL learning should not only be considered in regard to work, as discussed earlier. However, it is clear that the way we use FLs in our every-day lives affects the way we consider

FLs in terms of their *relevance* for us as meaningful goals for learning. The finding that the educational background and perceived usefulness of FLs are inter-related should therefore not come as a surprise. One could argue that the school's responsibility is to *normalise* FL use in different contexts and thus make FLs more approachable also for those children for whom they might not be that regularly present outside school, and therefore maybe not elaborated upon in terms of the opportunities learning them could offer.

To conclude, I bring up the aforementioned finding that in those cases where the optional A2 language was chosen, there is often some *child-derived*, internal interest or curiosity towards FLs in general, which is then elaborated upon by the child's milieu, for example the parents. This is what Dörnyei (2005: 85) means with the term *Environmental support*: the child's significant others help him/her find the *relevance* of the goal (i.e. FL learning), and maybe *specify* the needs for some particular FL, and most importantly verify the child as possessing what it takes to "succeed" in learning the FL, i.e. supporting his/her *Ideal Self* as a future FL learner. The role of the school is important as a provider of meaningful encounters with FLs, as illustrated by the Korean visitor who had led to the encouragement of one child to start a new FL. However, as will be shown below, such encouragement is not always available, and that schools can fail in providing children with the opportunity to envision themselves as FL learners, and for *setting the goals*, *forming intentions*, and *launching action*, which are the motivational functions of Dörnyei's (2005) *Preactional stage*.

### **5.1.3 Reasons for not choosing the optional FL**

Above, I presented reasons that contributed to choosing the optional FL (syllabus A2 in Finland). In this subchapter, the focus shifts onto reasons that, in the parent's view, led to not choosing the A2 language. The main issues will be discussed through examples from the data, primarily with responses given to Q11 '*Which were the reasons behind the final decision?*', which will then be expanded upon with data from elsewhere in my questionnaire. Here, it is useful to draw some conclusions by connecting the evidence from the discussion above and comparing those ideas to the findings made in this section. In regard to this, I will ask and answer the question whether there are any similarities between the rationale given for choosing the FL and not choosing it.

To summarise the results, it can be said based on the data that parents are indeed highly involved in making the decision not to start the optional A2. However, the level and type of parental involvement differs in that sometimes it can be very direct, i.e. advising the child away from the optional FL, or indirect, i.e. the parent comes up with reasons why it is a *good* thing that the child did not show interest towards the additional FL. The urgency to learn English is visible in the data, and so are the pressures of the child managing and succeeding in other school subjects. More surprisingly, the child's hobbies – and the amount of time and stress involved in them – were also mentioned as a reason not to choose the optional FL.

Another rather worrying issue is that many parents seem to play a crucial role in making some of the most central decisions about the “*goal relevance*”, which is pivotal in the *Preactional stage* (Dörnyei 2005: 85). They also seem to make statements about the “*values associated with the learning process ... [and] its outcomes and consequences*” and predictions about the “*success and perceived coping potential*” (Dörnyei 2005: 85), and sometimes base these on their own experiences from the past and not on the child's attributes and his/her future. The reality that parents can have rather great impact on their child's motivation has been acknowledged by, for instance, Pomerantz et al. (2005). I argue, however, that the child should be more involved in making the decisions that affect his/her own school path. As it seems, children are sometimes not given the opportunity to try out their *Possible L2 Selves*, and they do not even know their friends' decisions regarding the FL uptake. Ensuring that the uptake decision is not made based on false information, unnecessary fears, or even without any real thought given to the decision, is the responsibility of schools.

In order to better make sense of the responses to the open-ended Q11 ‘*Which were the reasons behind the final decision?*’, the data were encoded according to four main themes. This encoding was conducted in the same way as in 5.1.2 (reasons for choosing the optional FL). This follows the guidelines provided by Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2018) on conducting theory-guided qualitative content analysis. Table 8, below, shows the four main themes, and their sub-themes together the number of times they were mentioned by the parents in their reasoning for their child's final decision on the A2 uptake.

Table 8. Themes in Q11 ‘Which were the reasons behind the final decision?’ – reasons that led to the child not choosing the FL. (Total number of responses = 28)

Theme (code)	Sub-theme (code)	Number of times mentioned
Child showed <b>no interest</b> towards the A2 (t1) <i>Total=29</i>	<b>Child-derived:</b> stemming from the child (st1.1)	9
	<b>External A:</b> Child’s friends involved (sst1.2.1)	2
	<b>External B:</b> Parents involved (sst1.2.2)	12
	<b>External C:</b> School system itself involved (sst1.2.3)	6
Consciously <b>investing</b> in something else (t2) <i>Total=26</i>	<b>English</b> (st2.1)	8
	<b>Other school subjects</b> (st2.2)	8
	<b>Hobbies outside school</b> (st2.3)	3
	<b>Time: Postponing FL study</b> (st2.4)	7
<b>Workload, strain</b> (t3) <i>Total=12</i>	<b>Length of the school days</b> (st3.1)	5
	<b>Too much work</b> (st3.2)	5
	<b>Hinders learning other languages</b> (st3.3)	2
<b>Learning difficulties</b> (t4) <i>Total=6(+1)</i>	<i>No sub-themes</i>	6 (+1)

Child showed no interest

As seen in Table 8, reasons related to the child’s *Interest*, or in this case the lack of it, were mentioned 29 times in total. Although *interest* being the main reason for the decision is rather obvious, as already discussed above in 5.1.2, the sub-themes of the *No Interest* (t1) category are the ones most intriguing for the purposes of my analysis, namely the sub-themes *Child-derived* (st1.1), i.e. (dis)interest seen as stemming directly from the child, and *External* (st1.2), i.e. the child’s (dis)interest stemming from an external source that the parent is able to identify. These sub-categories are helpful in explaining the lack of motivation to choose the optional FLs, when it comes to issues related to the child’s Ideal Self. In addition, theme st1.2 (*External*) was divided into three extra-categories (e.g. sst1.2.1) according to what was seen as the cause for the lack of motivation: *External A* (friends of the child; sst1.2.1), *External B* (parents of the

child; sst1.2.2), and *External C* (structures inside the school system; sst1.2.3). Such external factors are often related to the Ought-to Self, which plays a significant role in shaping the Ideal Self.

As discussed above, in reasons that led to the child choosing the A2, the child's own *interest* was often mentioned as the driving force which gradually accumulated positive attitudes from all around the child, as a kind of motivating snowball effect. Similarly, in reasons that led to the child *not* choosing the A2, the child's lack of interest was mentioned as the main cause for not choosing the language: Apart from the *Learning Difficulties*, which will be briefly discussed at the end of this sub-chapter, the child's (dis)*interest* was mentioned in almost every response concerning why the A2 was not chosen (the use of *almost* is due to there actually being responses containing no mention of the child's own interest, but I will return to these later).

At this point, it will be interesting to see whether the "motivational snowball effect" also functions in the opposite direction, namely gathering reasons for *not* choosing the optional FL. Example 8 could provide some insight into this question:

- (8) *Lapsi itse koki ettei halua aloittaa vielä tässä vaiheessa uutta kieltä. Myös se vaikutti lapsen päätökseen ettei hän ollut varma aloittaako kukaan kavereista kieliä, kaveripiirissä asiasta ei oltu keskusteltu. Vanhempina ei haluttu painostaa opiskelun aloittamiseen vaikka jonkun verran yritettiin kannustaakin ja asiasta keskusteltiin useampaan otteeseen.*

[The child herself felt that, at this point, it isn't yet time to start a new language. Also the fact that she wasn't sure if any of her friends would start the language affected the decision. The issue hadn't been discussed between friends. We as parents didn't want to pressure her to start studying the language although we did try to encourage her a little bit and we discussed about it many times.] (P18)

Although the parent explains that the child was rather determined (st1.1) that it was not time to start learning a new FL, one is able to sense that the decision was not all that easy for her, after all. The fact that the child was not sure whether her friends would choose the A2 or not made him/her hesitate the decision: the issue had not even been discussed. Even if the parents tried to come up with arguments supporting the uptake of an optional FL (sst1.2.2), the child's relationship with her friends (sst1.2.1) was more important to her personally. However, when it comes to the question about the so-called "motivational snowball effect" presented above, one could argue that this child had not even finished making her own "snowball", the core onto which more and more "snow" is accumulated.

Dörnyei (2009: 19) states that in order to any *motivational self-guides* to be affective they need to be vivid enough. One could argue that the child in Example 8 had not had a real opportunity to try out the possible *Selves* regarding FLs. Moreover, she lacked the contribution from the important people around her, namely her friends. Thus, the possible *self-guides* had not been elaborated upon. The parents reportedly tried to bring forth the possibilities of FL learning, but inevitably this is not enough if there is no discussion on the matter in the school context. This creates a discrepancy between the school and out-of-school context, as discussed already by Coffey (2016: 9). Arguably the FL uptake situation, and indeed the “need” to learn FLs, might seem very blurred and confusing from the perspective of a nine-year-old child. I argue it is the responsibility of the school to offer opportunities for this conversation with friends and peers to take place, and to guide children towards trying out their *Ideal Selves*, and to openly discuss the possibilities of studying FLs. It should not be the case that some children do not even get the chance to talk about the A2 uptake with their friends.

Next, I will turn to another issue which highly affects the child’s own *interest* in FL learning. Although, FL-related motivation is of course crucial in a child becoming *interested* in choosing an optional FL, it is the overall satisfaction and motivation at school that is obviously essential. After all, learning the optional A2 language means spending more time at school. In Example 9, the parent (P26) explains how her child’s general lack of school motivation led to their joint decision not to choose the optional FL:

- (9) *Lapsella ei ollut omaa kiinnostusta ja toisaalta opiskelu edellyttää ilman kielivalintaakin sen verran tsemppaamista, että todettiin yhdessä, että panostetaan pakollisiin aineisiin ja harrastuksiin. Ruotsinkieli tulee kuitenkin jo 6 lk ja aikanaa C-kielen ja halutessaan D-kielen opinnoissa pääsee motivoitunut yhtä pitkälle kuin A2-kielessäkin.*

[The child had no own interest, and on the other hand, even without the optional language studying requires quite an amount of motivating that we came together to the conclusion that we are going to concentrate on the obligatory subjects and hobbies. After all, Swedish starts already in sixth grade and then eventually you can choose [two more optional FLs], in which you can get as far as in the A2 language if you are motivated.] (P26)

Of course, it is the ultimate question of how to get children enjoy their time at school. If there is no motivation towards learning at school in general, there most certainly is no motivation to spend additional time there. The (*L2*) *Learning Experience* (Dörnyei et al. 2006) plays a role

here in the development of the *Future self*: if the experiences of learning at school, either in FL or in some other subjects, are primarily associated with experiences of struggling, failing, or otherwise as having negative consequences, one should not be surprised to see little interest towards the uptake of optional FLs. On the other hand, Example 9 also shows how the parent (P26) is involved in making the decision. The child’s lack of interest is transformed into a rational choice made in collaboration with the child and the parent. Instead of choosing the optional FL, the child can now “*concentrate on the obligatory subjects*”, and there are many more opportunities to start additional FL study later on. However, the child’s own motivation is seen as key to “*getting far*” in FL study.

External issues: Ought selves and compulsory FLs

Child showed <b>no interest</b> towards the A2 (t1) <i>Total=29</i>	<b>External A:</b> Child’s friends involved (sst1.2.1)	2
	<b>External B:</b> Parents involved (sst1.2.2)	12
	<b>External C:</b> School system itself involved (sst1.2.3)	6

In Example 9, one could argue that the limited motivational space is occupied by the envisioned efforts needed to manage school in general (sst1.2.3). This notion of the limited motivational resources available, i.e. the limited capacity of one’s working *self-concept* is brought up by Dörnyei and Al-Hoorie 2017, regarding the decreased motivation to study FLs other than English. In this case, English can be seen as taking up motivational capacity, as explained by the parent who states: *we are going to concentrate on the obligatory subjects and hobbies*. The obligatory A1 language, in this case English is the subject the child needs to concentrate on, but also the obligatory B1 language starting in sixth grade (here: Swedish) plays a role in how the child’s future is envisioned by his/her parents, and by him/herself.

As explained above in 2.1.2, the role of Swedish in the Finnish education system has been under heated discussion for a long time. Here, one could argue that in many cases, it is not only English, but also the obligatory Swedish that occupies the motivational space, i.e. turns the attention towards what one *must do*, and not what one *could do*. In other words, the obligatory Swedish, although it starts two years later than the optional A2 language, occupies valuable motivational space, affecting the *Ought-to Self*. Many parents might think – and even rightfully so as school grades are valuable later on in the child’s educational path – that it is important to

“succeed” in the obligatory FLs, which in practice means receiving “good grades”. Thus, the optional FLs, believed to cause additional stress and worries to the child, are regarded as “not important at this stage” (the issue of postponing FL study will be discussed later).

In fact, responses to the statement Q23 ‘*In basic education, learning Swedish is compulsory. Choosing some other foreign language instead of Swedish should be allowed.*’ shows the respondents’ stance towards the obligatory learning of Swedish at school. Here, the context of the study is an area with less than 0.5% Swedish-speaking population, i.e. little Swedish is encountered in the respondents’ everyday lives. The majority of the respondents (64%, n=32) had the opinion that one should be allowed to choose some other FL than Swedish. 16% (n=8) disagreed with this statement, and 20% (n=10) neither agreed nor disagreed. The results of Q23 can be found in Figure 5, below.

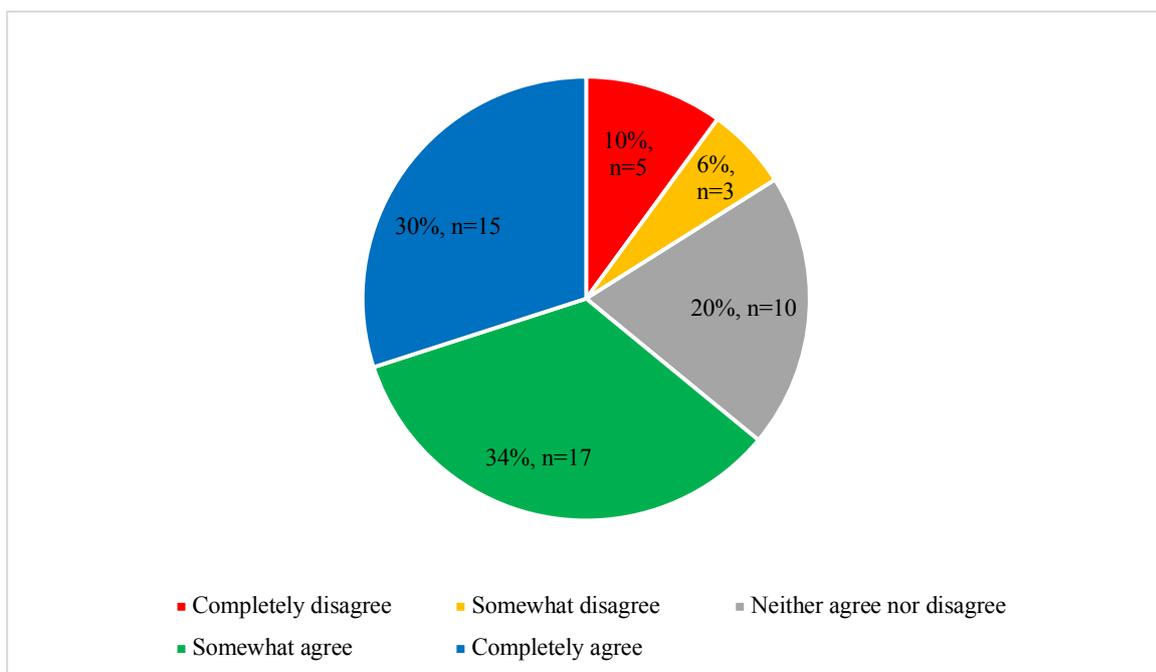


Figure 5. Responses to Q23 ‘*In basic education, learning Swedish is compulsory. Choosing some other foreign language instead of Swedish should be allowed.*’ (N=50)

Although the statement in Q23 can be viewed as somewhat polemic, it is part of a real on-going discussion in Finland on which languages are “useful” and which are not, or more precisely, which languages should be taught at school and to whom. As explained earlier, the arguments for and against the compulsory study of Swedish revolve around *instrumental* and *intrinsic* values, realities of the economics and of the cultural capital, and around bureaucratic and practical issues. Without taking too much of a stance for or against the compulsory study of

Swedish here, I argue that the fact that Swedish is compulsory affects people's attitudes towards the school system (and therefore the uptake of optional FLs), as some might protest the top-down pressure caused by the school regulating what is seen *important* and what is not. On the other hand, people's attitudes towards Swedish might be based on misinterpretations of how and why it is studied in Finnish schools. These attitudes are taken up by children from their parents and from the broader discourse, and then these ideas are developed further socially with peers: for some, objecting the study of Swedish can function as a form of rebellion and belonging to a group, thus having an impact on the *Ought-to* and *Ideal Selves*.

In addition to what is obligatory at school, there are realities inside the school system (sst1.2.3) that have other implications on FL motivation. Learning FLs naturally involves issues such as *code-switching* and the learner trying out different, perhaps "un-grammatical" language forms which are part of the normal learning process. In the school context, however, these otherwise normal aspects of FL learning are being disapproved of, perhaps even leading to lower grades in FL subjects: in an exam, a grammatical mistake lowers the score. Although grades themselves could play little role in what will be the child's FL proficiency later on in his/her adulthood, they do play an important role in how the child's educational path will proceed by giving feedback on the *must-dos* and *should-dos* (the *Ought Self*), and what is being *rewarded* and what leads to *failure*, or are the lessons or learning FLs in general fun, or are they ponderous (the *Learning experience*), regardless of how misleading such feedback might be in the broader perspective of the individual's development. Below, Example 10 shows how grades can affect the choice of the A2 uptake:

- (10) *Lapsi on kaksikielinen. Isosisko opiskelee espanjaa ja nyt kuutosluokalla hänellä on 5 kieltä ja Englannin arvosanat romahtivat. Toisen vieraan kielen valinta oli suuri virhe eikä siitä päästä eroon vaikka mitä yrittäisi.*

[The child is bilingual. Her older sister is learning Spanish and now in sixth grade she has five languages and the English grades came crashing down. Choosing the second foreign language was a big mistake and there is no way of getting rid of it however hard you try.] (P29)

Of course, there can always be many reasons for declining grades, which are not discussed or speculated upon here, but one explanation for such experiences could be the grading system that stresses the goal of FL learning being native-like proficiency, as discussed above (see also the discussion on the *deficit* view on FL learning (Ushioda 2017), in 3.4.2). Here, the respondent's experience from the child's older sister (sst1.2.2) having chosen the optional FL

led to the younger child not choosing the A2. Choosing to study multiple FLs simultaneously is seen as a “*big mistake*”, which led to a stark decline of the older sister’s English grades, and according to the parent, there is no way of quitting the optional FL, which here is seen as the *cause* of the declining grades. Although the older sister arguably will have some level of proficiency in multiple languages in the future, the present situation is what counts the most. This, in turn, is very understandable considering the changes that take place after sixth grade in the Finnish school system, namely the transition to the last three grades of basic education, and also the individual changes in the child’s own self-image and identity due to his/her puberty. Example 10, above, is perhaps rather exceptional, but it does reveal how the *Learning experiences* of older siblings can affect the choices made in regard of the younger child.

It is clear that something should be done inside the Finnish school system itself in order to support learning of multiple FLs and promoting multilingualism. It seems that the idea of FL learning is indeed widely characterised by mono- or bilingual emphasis, and by the aspiration of “native-like fluency” in one (i.e. English) or maximum two FLs (English and Swedish). This view of multilingualism as a collection of specific FLs primarily competing with each other and not supplementing each other can also be seen in the parents’ responses to the statement Q19 ‘*It is better to speak one foreign language well than it is to speak multiple languages passably*’. Below, Figure 6 shows the portions of the responses.

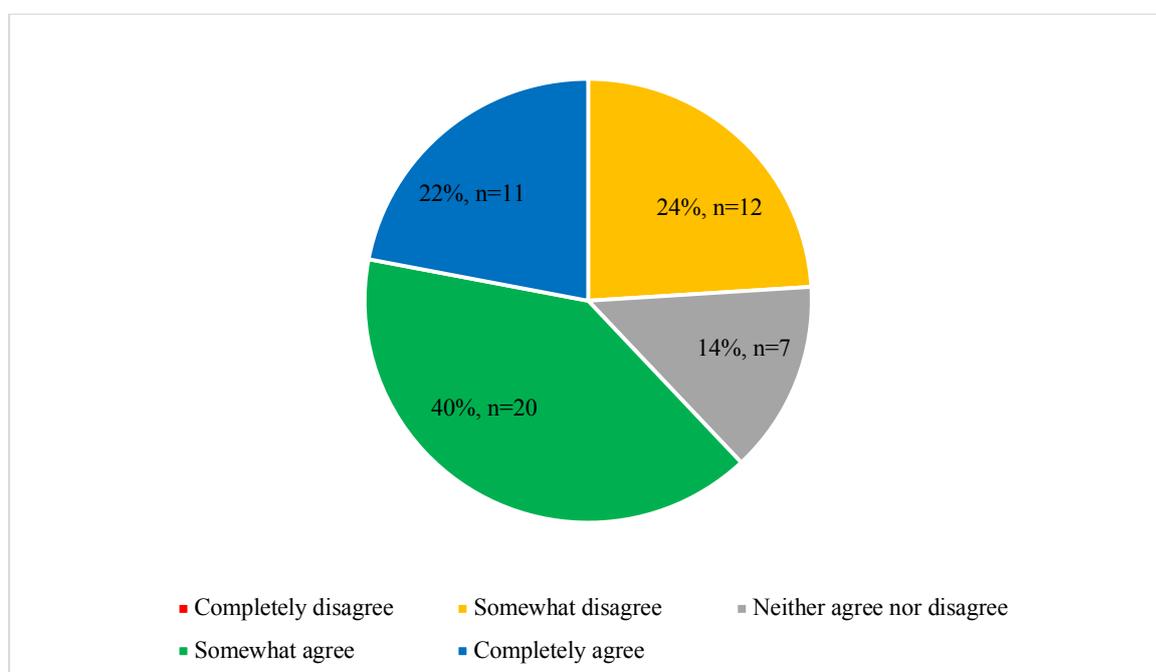


Figure 6. Responses to Q19 ‘*It is better to speak one foreign language well than it is to speak multiple languages passably*.’ (N=50)

In Figure 6, the responses to Q19 reveal that most of the respondents (62%, n=31) find proficiency in one FL a more valid goal than being able to speak multiple FLs at a lower level. Twelve respondents (24%) disagreed somewhat with this statement and seven (24%) neither agreed nor disagreed. This, in my view, shows how FLs are valued primarily for *instrumental* reasons. Although the statement in Q19 is rather simplistic – namely, it does not take into account the most common situation where one is highly proficient in one FL but also has some skills in other FLs – it should be interpreted as being one of the many attitudinal issues leading to the decline in choosing to start the optional A2 language. Statistically, the results from Q19 are significantly different ( $p=.018$ ) between those respondents whose child chose the optional FL and those whose did not. With this small a sample, it is not possible to make any generalisations but it one would easily agree with the finding that those parents whose child chose the optional FL support the child’s interest to learn at least some skills in multiple languages. On the other hand, those parents whose child did not choose the optional FL support the idea that their child concentrates on learning one FL well. See Table 9 for the comparison.

Table 9. Crosstabulation of Q19 ‘It is better to speak one foreign language well than it is to speak multiple languages passably’ and Q6 ‘Did your child choose the A2 language starting next year?’. (N=50,  $p=.018$ )

Statement: <i>It is better to speak one foreign language well than it is to speak multiple languages passably.</i> (Q19)		Question: <i>Did your child choose the A2 language starting next year?</i> (Q6)		
Response		Yes	No	Total
<b>Disagree</b>	Count	9	3	12
	Percentage	45.0%	10.0%	24.0%
<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	Count	2	5	7
	Percentage	10.0%	16.7%	14.0%
<b>Agree</b>	Count	9	22	31
	Percentage	45.0%	73.3%	62.0%

Without a doubt, if there is one language the majority of Finnish people finds important to learn it is English. In the present data, many parents stress the urgent need for their child to learn English (st2.1). Again, although learning English has become somewhat of a basic skill (Graddol 2006), and of course the positive attitudes towards learning it should be warmly welcomed, for some people the urgency of learning English perhaps occupies too much motivational space for there being any left for additional FLs, although there would not be any other obstacles for the child to learn multiple FLs. On the other hand, English can also be seen

by many as a “lifebuoy”: if the child does not show interest in learning additional FLs, he/she will at least learn English. In the present data, the difference in viewing the *importance* and the *usefulness* of FLs (here English vs. others) can be seen in the way parents of children who chose the optional FL and those whose children did not choose it responded to the statements ‘*Learning foreign languages other than English is important*’ (Q18), and ‘*English is the only useful foreign language*’ (Q31). Crosstabulations of these statements and the final decision (Q6) are found in Table 10, below.

Table 10. Crosstabulations of Q18 ‘*Learning foreign languages other than English is important.*’ and Q6 ‘*Did your child choose the A2 language starting next year?*’ (N=50, p=.042), and Q31 ‘*English is the only useful foreign language.*’ and Q6 ‘*Did your child choose the A2 language starting next year?*’ (N=50, p=.002).

Statement: <i>Learning foreign languages other than English is important.</i> (Q18)		Question: <i>Did your child choose the A2 language starting next year?</i> (Q6)		
Response		Yes	No	Total
Disagree	Count	0	2	2
	Percentage	0.0%	6.7%	4.0%
Neither agree nor disagree	Count	0	6	6
	Percentage	0.0%	20.0%	12.0%
Agree	Count	20	22	42
	Percentage	100.0%	73.3%	84.0%
Statement: <i>English is the only useful foreign language.</i> (Q31)		Question: <i>Did your child choose the A2 language starting next year?</i> (Q6)		
Response		Yes	No	Total
Disagree	Count	20	16	36
	Percentage	100.0%	53.3%	72.0%
Neither agree nor disagree	Count	0	4	4
	Percentage	0.0%	13.3%	8.0%
Agree	Count	0	10	10
	Percentage	0.0%	33.3%	20.0%

Responses to both of these statements differed by whether the optional FL was chosen or not with statistical significance (in Q18:  $p < .05$ ; in Q31  $p < .01$ ). Again, the small sample size does not provide room for generalizations, nor adequate reliability. However, it is clear that some parents really feel that learning FLs other than English is *unimportant* ( $n=2$ , 6.7%), and that English is the only *useful* FL ( $n=10$ , 33.3%). This result is worrying if one considers the difficult task of improving intercultural communication in Europe and globally. As already discussed above, some parents seem to emphasise the urgency for their child to learn English (st2.1).

Although the high *instrumental* value of English is unquestionable in today's world, the *instrumentality* of English seems to, in some cases, outweigh the *instrumentality* of plurilingualism. Although English does not in any reasonable way hinder the acquisition of the basics in additional FLs, the discourse that places one FL over the others might at some point later on affect the child's way of viewing multiple FL learning as *unimportant* or *uninteresting*, thus limiting his/her view of learning in general: the idea of different levels of *importance* even at such an early stage (in basic education) can be applied to other school subjects, as well.

One has to point out that the vast majority of respondents (84%) found that learning FLs other than English is important, and that the majority (72%) also disagreed that English were the only *useful* FL. As mentioned, the *usefulness* of different languages is very subjective, and one could self-evidently state that it depends merely on what *use* one makes of the particular FL. However, as Coffey (2016: 7) argues, the attitudes towards FLs affect how eagerly they are used in "real life situations", for instance when travelling. This makes the responses that *Neither agree nor disagree* with the two statements (Q18, and Q31) rather intriguing. Is it so that some parents think that *theoretically*, there is nothing wrong with learning multiple FLs, but *in reality, in regard to my child* there is little "real" need for them, and therefore optional FLs are not chosen in a strange, precautionary style? Below, Example 11 could shed light on the issues behind such views.

- (11) *Sitoutuminen kielivalintaan yhdeksänteen luokkaan saakka on liian suuri vaatimus. Olen itse opettaja ja olen yläkoulussa nähnyt, miten suureksi taakaksi kieli välillä koituu. Tämä on vaikuttanut koulumotivaatioon. Kielten osaaminen on hienoa, mutta tämä sitoutumisen vaatimus on liian kova. Lapsi voi aloittaa halutessaan kielen yläkoulussa.*

[The fact that one has to continue studying the language you choose until the (end of) ninth grade is too big a requirement. I am a teacher myself and have seen how large a burden the language sometimes develops into during the last three years of basic education. This has affected the school motivation. Being able to speak (foreign) languages is great, but this requirement to keep on studying the language is too harsh. The child can start language study during the last three years of basic education if he wants to.] (P3)

This respondent (P3) rationalises her opinions on optional FL learning based on her experiences as a teacher (sst1.2.2). Here, the attitude seems to be similar to what I proposed above, namely that in theory FL study is desirable, but that FL study is something 'better left for others/those with aptness/motivation/interest, etc.' Here, P3 uses this type of argumentation in "*Being able*

*to speak [foreign] languages is great, but...*” Again, the *external* pressure created by the school system itself (st1.2.3) is seen as the main obstacle hindering the A2 uptake, namely that one is obliged to continue studying the chosen A2, and one is allowed to quit it only if the child’s grades are very low (see 3.4.2 for accepted reasons for quitting A2 study). However, there seems to be no willingness to try out whether the child will enjoy optional FL learning or not, and this reminds me of the question discussed earlier, namely ‘How should one know whether the child is still interested in the FL in the future?’ (see 3.4.2). It seems that parents see the risk of the child eventually becoming demotivated as too big. What is worrying, however, is that this “risk” is taken as a given: one is destined to struggle, or to “fail”.

Although motivation is dynamic and includes three stages at which different factors are at play and affecting the learner’s motivation (Dörnyei 2005: 84), many parents in the present data seem certain that the FL study *will* become a burden in the future. Of course, this evaluation is most likely based on various individual factors of the child, but it is hard not to see this as some level of underestimation of the child’s capability to learn FLs (or an overestimation of the target proficiency). Surely, such underestimation can be based on wrong assumptions of the goals (crucial at the *Preactional Stage*), or what FL learning is and how *language* is “stored” inside the brain (compare to lecture by Cummins 12<sup>th</sup> December 2018, discussed above). In a way, parents seem to make some of the most important decisions about the “*goal relevance*”, articulate the “*Values associated with the learning process ... [and] its outcomes and consequences*”, although one could argue that should be the child’s task. Parents also seem to make claims about the “*Expectancy of success and perceived coping potential*” (terminology by Dörnyei 2005: 85).

Connecting this finding to the issue covered earlier, namely that the learner had not discussed the A2 uptake even with her friends (Example 8), one could argue that parents can play a major role in creating the *Imagined Self* of the child, and that sometimes this seems to be done based on the parents’ own *Motivational Retrospective* (in the *Postactional Stage*). For instance, P41 argues in Example 12, below, that she “*only knows the basics*” of German, although she spent six years learning it:

(12) *Itse lukenut saksaa lisäksi kuusi vuotta, silti osaan vain alkeet.*

[In addition, I have studied German myself for six years, and still I only have elementary skills.] (P41)

On the Finnish version<sup>15</sup> of the CEFR (2001) scale used in the core curriculum for basic education (POPS 2014), the FL proficiency targeted in school learning is A2.2, which is labelled in Finnish as *'kehittyvä peruskielitaito'* (in English: developing basic proficiency), which is still relatively low, yet on the verge of turning into a more “functional language proficiency” (OPH 2014). Achieving this level of proficiency would be rewarded the school grade 8 (good) at the end of basic education. The fact that P41 reports holding “*only*” elementary proficiency in German means that she maybe would have reached the level between A1.1 and A1.3 (in Finnish: *'alkeiskielitaito'*), had the reported six years of learning took place during basic education (which is not explicitly stated by P41). Here, the parent draws on her own FL learning experience (and possibly school grades she received) and does not see the proficiency gained from school learning as a relevant goal for her child, either (st1.2.2).

Thus, the rationale for children *not to start* learning additional FLs can include parents' own experiences as FL learners (as in Example 12), or the child's older siblings' experiences (as in Example 10, above), or experiences as a teacher (as in Example 11), and the *Retrospective* on the outcomes. P41's argument obviously includes a logical fallacy: if I do not *use* nor *need* a FL myself, then someone else (here: the child) does not either. Q9 in the questionnaire asks who were involved in making the A2 uptake decision. The respondents were asked to choose *everyone* involved in the decision-making process, but three respondents did not choose neither *the parents* nor *the child him/herself*. This might be counted as a possible mistake by the respondents. However, it is clear that both parents and the child are involved in almost every case: 47 respondents (94%) reported that both had been making the decision. In addition, 8 respondents (16%) told that the child's siblings had been involved, and in some cases (n=4; 8%) the child's friends or peers had taken part in the uptake decision. One respondent told that a teacher had been involved in the decision-making, but I will return to this later. In none of the cases were the child's relatives or family acquaintances mentioned.

The question that follows is who had the greatest impact on the decision? Returning to Example 12, above, the emphasis behind no choosing the A2 seemed to lie on *instrumentality* of the basic FL proficiency, or on the fact that it may not be very *utilisable* in P41's opinion. One could

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<sup>15</sup> Opetushallitus (2014). Kehittyvän kielitaidon asteikko – toinen kotimainen ja vieraat kielet. [online] [https://www.edu.fi/download/172824\\_kehittyvan\\_kielitaidon\\_asteikko.pdf](https://www.edu.fi/download/172824_kehittyvan_kielitaidon_asteikko.pdf)

argue that these might have little to do with an individual child’s own experience of *Ideal Self* as such, but as Dörnyei (2005) argues, these issues do play a crucial role in that they create an *Environmental hindrance*. The data provide evidence that the final A2 uptake decision differed with statistical significance ( $p < .05$ ) according to ‘*Whose decision affected the final decision the most?*’ (Q10). Crosstabulation of Q10 and Q6 (the uptake decision) is provided in Table 11.

Table 11. Crosstabulation of Q10 ‘*Whose opinion affected the final decision the most?*’ and Q6 ‘*Did your child choose the A2 language starting next year?*’ (N=50,  $p = .024$ ).

Question: <i>Whose opinion affected the final decision the most?</i> (Q10)		Question: <i>Did your child choose the A2 language starting next year?</i> (Q6)		
Response		Yes	No	Total
Parents’	Count	0	9	9
	Percentage	0.0%	30.0%	18.0%
Child’s own	Count	20	19	39
	Percentage	100.0%	63.3%	78.0%
Child’s friends’ or classmates’	Count	0	1	1
	Percentage	0.0%	3.3%	2.0%
Someone else’s, whose*?	Count	0	1*	1
	Percentage	0.0%	3.3%	2.0%

\*Special education teacher’s opinion

Although the small sample size leads to non-generalisable and rather unreliable results, one could argue that opinions in the child’s environment sometimes are the most salient ones in the decision not to choose an optional FL (here, 36.9% of cases where the A2 was not chosen, the final decision was made primarily based on the opinion of someone else than the child). There might be various reasons for this result, for instance that the child’s parents decide that their child’s learning difficulties would mean that additional school work would be unreasonable (LDs will be discussed briefly below). However, P26 argues that the special education teacher’s opinion, i.e. his/her message sent via *Wilma* (online communication and assessment platform between school and home) was the main cause for their child not choosing the A2 language. This of course is rather worrying, because the school should always promote learning rather than discourage children.

Due to the risk of identification – because the message was sent to each third grader’s parents in the participating school – I cannot quote the SE teacher’s message itself, although P26 had kindly provided it in its entirety in her response to Q13 ‘*From which source or whom did you*

*receive information concerning the A2 uptake?* However, I can say that the message contained some clear miss-judgements in the choice of words, which turned the message into a very negative one, steering children and their parents away from the optional FL. Although the message was probably sent with good intentions, it provides yet more sad evidence of how the school staff themselves can make intimidating statements about the “horrors” of FL learning, and are therefore to blame for sustaining many of the myths about FLs (some of these myths provided in the lecture by Jim Cummins on December 12, 2018, e.g. that one language hinders the learning of the other, and many other claims). In fact, P26 felt that the message was deliberately aimed at steering children away from choosing the optional FL:

- (13) *Tämä on varmasti todenmukainen viesti ja kannustuksen ja "varoittelun" yhdistelmänä lopulta se pitäisi tulkita neutraalisti. Koin kuitenkin itse, että tällainen viesti saattaa epävarmat keikauttaa ennemminkin kielivalinnan ulkopuolelle kuin kielivalinnan puolelle. Itselläni heräsi epäily, että onko tällaisessa varoittelussa tavoitteena kieliryhmien vähentäminen / rahallinen säästö / kielten opettajien työmäärät tai työn haasteet tai jokin muu nykykoulujärjestelmän "hulina" ja sen vähentämisyritys. Jään miettimään, että onko A2-kielen opiskelun keskeyttäminen tai siinä "reputtaminen" yleinenkin ongelma, että näin pitää varoitella?*

[This is certainly a realistic message combining encouragement and “some warnings”, and in the end, it should be interpreted neutrally. However, I felt that this kind of message could more likely steer those who are insecure towards not choosing the language rather than towards choosing it. I started to suspect that this type of warning could be a deliberate attempt at reducing language courses / saving money / attempting to reduce the amount of work of language teachers or challenges in their work, or some other “hullabaloo” in today’s school system and the attempt to reduce that. I was left wondering whether quitting the study of the A2 language or “failing it” is such a universal problem that there is a need to warn people like this?] (P26)

Although I do not believe that in this case the intention was to “*save money*” or make the teachers’ jobs easier, such cases are indeed found in the anecdotes coming from the FL teaching field in Finland. However, I do believe that when sending out such messages, teachers do evaluate the state of the education system, for instance how well children are supported when they face learning difficulties, and what the resources are for individualising teaching for the needs of different children. In this sense, P26’s argument that schools deliberately try to reduce all the “*hullabaloo*” could be valid. On the other hand, such messages sent by teachers to learners are based on teachers’ own beliefs that FL learning is *too difficult, burdensome, and boring*, which in turn makes FL learning at school exclusive to those with some “accepted” level of FL learning aptitude. In addition, maybe one of the most worrying aspects of P26’s response is that some parents seem to have lost faith in the Finnish school system in providing

good quality education for everyone, which in turn could also explain some of the responses to Q29 ‘*It is important that I can help my child in studying a foreign language myself, for example in his/her homework.*’, which was discussed earlier. If messages such as the one discussed here (but not concerning FL learning only) are very frequent, they might gradually reduce the parents’ faith in the school system significantly and make their attitudes towards school less positive.

In my opinion, this finding calls for further examination into issues related to how schools inform parents on the A2 choice. Some evidence for this can be found if one examines Q12 ‘*Did you receive enough information on the A2 choice?*’, Q13 ‘*From whom or which source did you receive information on the A2 choice?*’, Q14 ‘*What information or what details did you receive or learn concerning the A2 choice?*’, and Q15 ‘*What additional information would you have wanted?*’. These will be discussed somewhat briefly below. I have already established those involved in the decision-making process and their power-relations, which is obviously valuable information. More important, however, is what kind of information those stakeholders receive and how they perceive that information.

Regarding the amount of information received (Q12), most parents (n=46; 92%) reported that they had received enough information to make their decision. Only four parents (8%) were unsatisfied with the amount of information. The information some parents reported lacking, as provided in Q15, concerned the choices of the child’s friends, the A2 teaching methods, but one parent also would have liked to know what happens if the primary choice for A2 does not receive enough students for forming a group. The parent reported that they were *afraid* to choose more than one secondary choice, had the primary one not been fulfilled. This of course shows interesting FL-specific attitudes by the parents.

The sources of information (Q13) are illustrated in Figure 7, below. The responses were categorized according to whether the information was received from *School only* (n=27; 67.5%), from *School and experience(s) of others* (n=7; 17.5%), from *School and the media/internet* (n=4; 10%), or from all of the above (n=1; 2.5%). Only 40 parents responded to Q13.

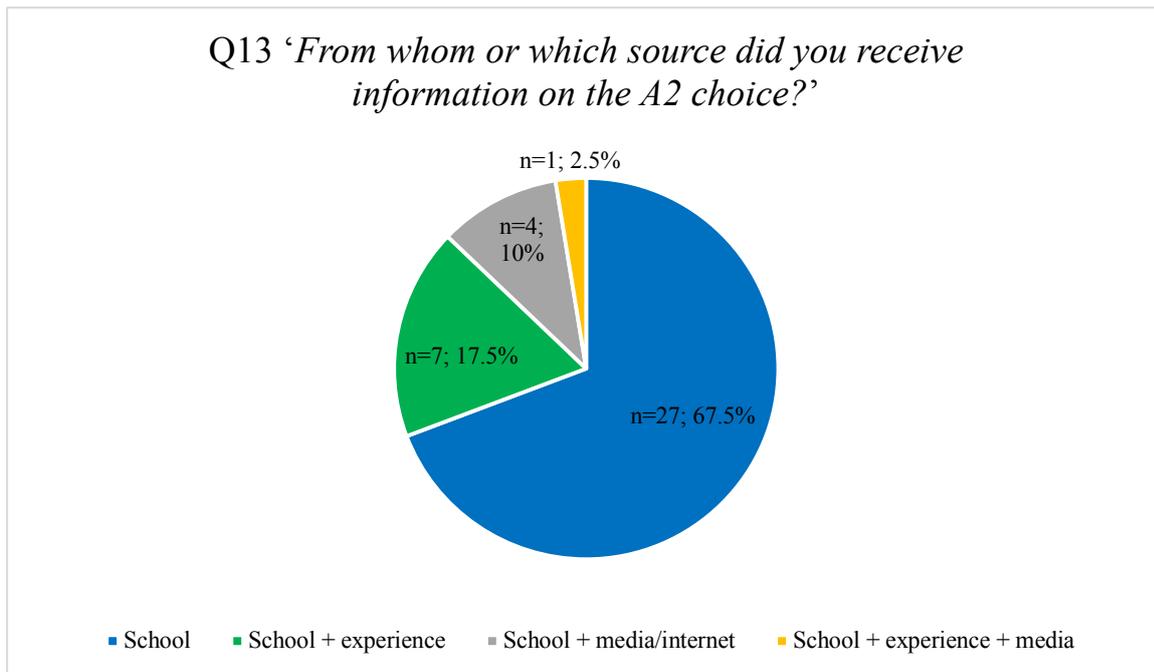


Figure 7. Sources of information concerning the A2 choice. (N=40).

It is clear that the school plays the most important part in spreading information. However, if one takes a closer look at the responses to Q13, one could question whether the most common source of information, a message sent via *Wilma* (an online communication tool between the school and the parents) gives best results in making the parents involved. One parent reported that even though information might have been available, the information did not reach their family as well as it should have. It is of course rather difficult for schools to send information to parents as their involvement in the child’s education might vary quite considerably. There are experiences of parents not very actively participating in parent’s evenings, or other events where information about the A2 choice were available. This then leads to parents seeking information online and asking other parents about the A2 choice. There are indeed multiple online forums with threads where the A2 choice is debated by parents, sometimes with varying level of awareness and knowledge on FL learning. The rationalising arguments for and against the A2 uptake are often shared and developed further in these contexts.

If one then wants to know how the parents perceive the information received from these different sources, Q14 ‘*What information or what details did you receive or learn concerning the A2 choice?*’ provides some interesting data. Of the 27 responses given to Q14, 11 (41%) mentioned the fact that if one chooses the optional A2 language, one is obliged to continue studying it until the end of the basic education (ninth grade). 7 mentions (26%) were made to

the additional hours one needs to spend at school or the extra work involved, and 3 (11%) mentions concerned the fact that the A2 choice can affect in which school the child will study. Ten responses concerned other than these issues, such as how FL learning is like in primary school. It seems that many parents point out the rather negative issues of the A2 choice, namely that the choice is *binding*, or that there are fears of additional time and effort needed for FL study. Although these are facts that the parents need to know when making the decision, one should be very clear that they only function as the frame for the uptake decision and not become central in making it. The A2 choice should not turn into a bureaucratic, but an affective and encouraging one. However, as schools and municipalities are trying to save money, one can expect the former becoming more of an issue.

At this point, I believe it would already be possible to answer the question presented earlier whether parents give *rationalising* arguments for the final decision on their child's A2 uptake similarly in those cases where the optional FL *was chosen* (where the outcome seemed to be a "positive motivational snowball-effect") and cases where it *was left unchosen* (perhaps causing a "negative motivational snowball-effect"). However, I will present some further evidence before stating my conclusion on this issue. I have argued that parents make claims regarding the *Actional* and *Postactional Stage*, which have an impact on the child's *Preactional Stage*. In some cases, this can lead to claims that FL study is not for everyone, and that the child's time and effort would be better invested into something else than language learning. I have also found some evidence that schools themselves – be it deliberate or unintentional – could make the more doubtful children and their parents steer towards not choosing the optional FL. Next, I will present some more rationale parents give for their child not choosing the optional FL, and how they see this as an opportunity for their child to *invest* their time and effort into something else. I will discuss how such *Investments* are made into English and other core subjects, but also in the child's free time.

Consciously investing in something else

Consciously <b>investing</b> in something else (t2) <i>Total=26</i>	<b>English</b> (st2.1)	8
	<b>Other school subjects</b> (st2.2)	8
	<b>Hobbies outside school</b> (st2.3)	3
	<b>Time: Postponing FL study</b> (st2.4)	7

It was already seen in Example 9 above that the decision to not start studying the optional A2 language is often backed up with the rationale that the child will *concentrate* or *invest* his/her time and effort in other school subjects (t2). The optional FL seems to be often viewed as an unsurmountable hinderance, which is a threat to “succeeding” in other subjects. In terms of FL learning, this can mean the above-discussed monolingual bias, namely concentrating on English (st2.1) and firmly believing that English is “enough”, and that mixing English with other FLs is somehow harmful to the learning process (as discussed, it can affect grades but that is a question of how FL proficiency is being assessed and how that assessment is used in applying for upper secondary education). Next, I will present some additional examples where not choosing the A2 is seen as an *investment* in other school subjects (st2.2), or in some cases in the child’s hobbies (st2.3). Firstly, Example 14 shows how the parents are highly involved in making the decision:

- (14) *Koemme tärkeimmiksi oppiaineiksi tässä vaiheessa äidinkielen, matematiikan ja englannin ja haluamme että lapsi panostaa näihin eniten. Harrastus vie myös paljon aikaa ja koska pidämme tärkeänä että pakolliset aineet koulussa sujuu hyvin, emme halunneet lapselle lisäpainetta ylimääräisestä kielestä. Kieliopinnot vie paljon aikaa ja jos lapsi olisi itse osoittanut suurta kiinnostusta, olisi kielivalinta tehty. Nyt toivomme, että lapsi jaksaa panostaa englannin perusteisiin, kielitaitoa jatkossa tarvitaan yhä enemmän.*

[We think that the most important subjects at this point are the mother-tongue [L1 Finnish], mathematics, and English, and we want that our child invests [his time and effort] in these the most. His hobby also takes up a lot of time, and because we think it is important that the compulsory school subjects run smoothly, we didn’t want the child to get additional pressure from an additional language. Language study takes up a lot of time, and if the child himself had shown great interest, the language would have been chosen. Now we hope that the child will be able to invest his efforts in the basics of English, knowledge of languages will be needed more and more in the future.] (P37)

In Example 14, the parents want that the child first concentrates on the “basics”, namely L1 Finnish, mathematics (st2.2), and English (st2.1). As will be discussed later, it is indeed very important that the child learns his/her mother-tongue well, as it not only builds the basis for further learning but also is central to the child’s identity. Therefore, investing time and effort in learning one’s mother-tongue is essential, especially if there are any learning difficulties, for instance in reading. Similarly, no one would question the importance of improving one’s mathematical skills, either, and learning English has also become a basic skill in many respects (Graddol 2006). However, in many cases, claiming that not choosing optional FLs is an *investment* in other subjects (st2.2) seems rather questionable, and will surely not help in making children more interested towards FLs.

Example 14 provides an interesting insight into the decision-making process, namely it seems that major parts of the normal every-day lives of most children, school and hobbies, are seen as causing stress even in children this young (9-year-olds). This raises the question whether school and hobbies fail in creating an atmosphere where children can simultaneously improve their skills and enjoy themselves. After all, some parents viewed hobbies actually being the motivational force that led to *choosing* the optional FL (see 5.1.2, above). The time and effort taken up by the child’s hobbies (st2.3) is mentioned many times by the parents. For instance, the comment below is rather telling:

(15) *Pohdimme koulupäivän pituutta / työmäärää: lapsella harrastuksia ja tärkeää, että myös vapaata, huoletonta aikaa jää riittävästi.*

[We considered the length of the school day / workload: the child has hobbies and it is important that there also remains enough free, carefree time] (P40)

It is very interesting that hobbies are not always seen as “*free, carefree*” time. One would assume that hobbies are taken up exactly for that purpose, namely for counterbalancing the school work which obviously requires effort from children. However, if hobbies are seen as serious business by the parents, which increasingly seems to be the case also according to the Finnish media, it is no wonder that many parents try to “balance” the workload of their children by not choosing any additional courses at school. Examples 13 and 14 should thus be taken as proof of the increasing demands we adults make children face at school but also in their free time, thus narrowing down the child’s opportunities to *get interested* and to *enjoy learning* new skills. In the worst case, this negatively contributes to the child’s *working self-concept* by adding external pressure and making the *Learning experience* cumbersome, thus possibly

making it seem rather unattractive for a child to start learning additional skills (e.g. FLs). Thus, any *Motivational retrospective* (Dörnyei 2005: 85) by the child could lead to the conclusion that no extra *burden* is needed.

However, there is another side to the coin, which I need to discuss. Namely, why is it that so often parents view learning FLs as too cumbersome? Why does hardly anyone see spending a couple of hours after school learning the basics of an additional FL not as *carefree* time? After all, as discussed earlier, FLs can be one's hobby through inspiration received from books, films, music, and other resources. On paper, there should not be any pressure of receiving good grades in the optional A2, either: It is possible to inform the school to not include the grades of optional FLs in the child's diploma at the end of the basic education. The question arises, how many parents are aware of this? Another relevant question is whether optional FL study should be "awarded" in the final diploma, as the child has shown positive attitudes towards learning at school and aimed at acquiring new skills voluntarily? It is clear that optional FLs should not cause any threat to the average grades in the school diploma which are used when applying for upper secondary education, be it vocational or general education.

One explanation for the views that FL learning is cumbersome can obviously be found in the way FLs have been taught (*Motivational retrospective*) and are being taught at school (reflecting the child's current *Executive motivation*). For many, the FL *Learning experience* (Dörnyei 2009) is that of learning lists of words and expressions, rather than that of "accumulating cultural capital" and "intercultural competence", although they are set as the main goals for FL learning (see e.g. European Commission 2005; Coffey 2016; Ushioda 2017). This in turn can lead to the conclusion that school is only about grades and how well one "succeeds" in individual subjects (e.g. how well one remembers single words in FLs), which then could lead to the idea that time and effort spent in one school subject can hinder the success in others, i.e. leaving out any optional FLs is an investment into other subjects. One could argue that such learning inevitably becomes burdensome. Below, the issue FL learning as a *burden* will be discussed.

*Workload and FLs as a strain*

<b>Workload, strain (t3)</b> <i>Total=12</i>	<b>Length of the school days (st3.1)</b>	5
	<b>Too much work (st3.2)</b>	5
	<b>Hinders learning other languages (st3.3)</b>	2

As seen from the examples above, learning FLs is often seen as a cumbersome activity, causing too much workload and strain on the child (t3). Especially learning multiple FLs at the same time seems to many as too difficult, too laborious, or maybe even too boring, all of which FL learning can be if the learning methods used are not suitably motivating for the learners. This, of course, belongs to the *Actional Stage* of motivation, which is not the focus of the present study. However, it affects the *Preactional Stage* and is therefore useful for my purposes. In my questionnaire, responses to the statement ‘*Studying multiple foreign languages simultaneously is very laborious*’ (Q28) reveal that most parents who participated in my study see multiple FL learning as very burdensome. 46% (n=23) of the respondents somewhat agreed, and 8% (n=4) fully agreed with the statement in Q28. 20% (n=10) somewhat disagreed, and 6% (n=3) fully disagreed, whereas quite many (20%, n=10) neither agreed nor disagreed. I will compare this result to the responses from Q30 ‘*Foreign language learning at school is fun*’. First, Figure 8 shows the responses to both Q28 and Q30.

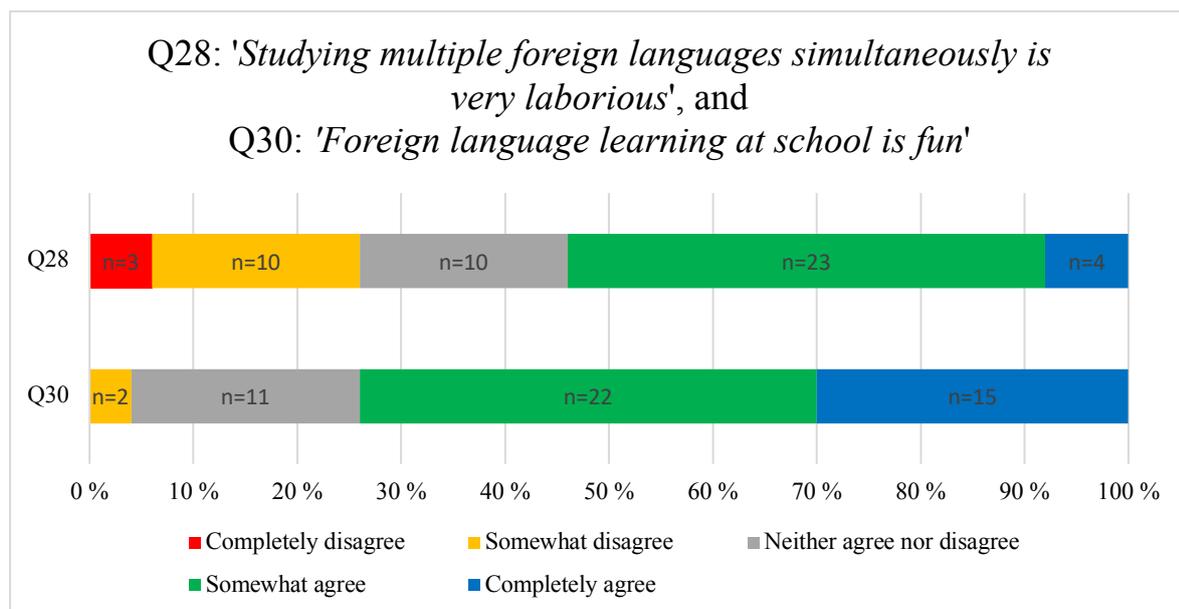


Figure 8. Responses to Q28 ‘Studying multiple foreign languages simultaneously is very laborious.’ (N=50), and Q30 ‘Foreign language learning at school is fun.’ (N=50)

It is important to notice that these statements are not mutually exclusive, as *laborious* activities could also be *fun*, or *vice versa*. Neither are the statements on the same level, as *laborious* refers perhaps to FL learning on a general level, whereas *fun* could be interpreted as *fun activities* inside the otherwise *laborious* task of learning FLs. In regard to the present data, however, it is interesting that learning *multiple* FLs at the same time seems to be seen by the respondents as laborious but FL learning *in general* is seen as *fun*. Surely, this can be result of the respondents trying to please the researcher by giving an answer that would be ‘generally acceptable’, and the statements can be understood differently by different respondents. For instance, what does *laborious* mean in terms of multiple FL learning: Is it understood as something requiring unreasonable cognitive effort from the child, or does the *laboriousness* derive from the amount of work needed (e.g. homework), or hours spent learning FLs at school? The data provides some evidence of what is meant by *workload* and *strain* (t3) when they are mentioned as the main cause for not choosing the optional FL.

As seen in Example 15, P40 states that she and her child “*considered the length of the school day ... [and the] ... workload*” when deciding not to choose the optional FL. Similarly, in Example 14, P37 argues that “*language study takes up a lot of time*”. Below, Example 16 provides an intriguing explanation of how the child’s *Choice Motivation* (Dörnyei 2005) diminished when he found out that choosing the optional A2 would mean spending extra hours at school (st3.1):

- (16) *Ensin lapsi halusi valita kielen, mutta sitten tajusi koulupäivien pitenevän. Keskusteltiin asiasta yhdessä. Juteltiin, että myöhemminkin ehtii kieliä opetella. Näin kieli jäi valitsematta.*

[At first, the child wanted to choose the language, but then he realised that it would lengthen the school days. We discussed about the issue. We talked about the fact that one can always learn languages later. This is how the language was left unchosen.]  
(P8)

Here, one could argue that the main influence for the child not becoming motivated to choose the A2 was what Dörnyei (2005: 85) calls the “*Values associated ... with [the] outcomes and consequences*” of the choice. Although the optional FL only adds two hours weekly to the time spent at school, this is seen as too much by some children. It is obvious that children value the free time they can spend with their friends outside school, but one needs to wonder where the negative attitude towards the time spent at school originates from, because these attitudes seem

to outweigh the opportunities to learn additional skills. Surely, it is the *Experience of FL learning* (at the *Actional Stage*) that affects this the most: learning at school feels burdensome. However, it is interesting that some parents seem to validate such attitudes in their discourse (sst1.2.2). In Example 16, above, P8 discussed the issue of longer school days with her child, perhaps trying to also offer *the pros* of optional FL study, which the words *discuss* would imply. However, in Example 17, below, the parent (P27) seems to have a clear stance on FL learning at school, and it seems to be clear from the beginning that no additional hours should be spent at school:

- (17) *Kielen tunnit ovat ylimääräisiä tunteja, joten koulupäivät venyy. Lisäksi uskon, että kieltä voi oppia myös muualla kuin koulussa ja ehkä tehokkaammin (eli esim. matkustelun yhteydessä ja peleillä). Kaiken kaikkiaan siis suhtaudun hyvin myönteisesti kielten opiskeluun mutta en pidä välttämättömänä sitä, että niitä opiskellaan koulussa. Päätökseen vaikutti myös sen sitovuus. On hankala päättää tässä vaiheessa asiasta, johon täytyy sitoutua peruskoulun loppuun saakka. Tämä oli ehkä päätökseen eniten vaikuttava seikka.*

[Language lessons are additional, so the school days lengthen. I also believe that language can be learnt elsewhere than school and maybe even more efficiently (for example during travel and with games). All in all, I do have very positive attitudes towards learning languages, but I don't think it's essential to study them at school. The decision was also affected by the fact that it is binding. At this point, it is difficult to decide on something that you are obliged to continue until the end of basic education. This was probably the factor that affected the decision the most.] (P27)

In Example 17, the parent states that she has very positive attitudes towards learning FLs, but she does not see much point in studying them at school. Although there is a point to her argument that FLs can be learnt outside school by using them in real situations for “real” needs, I find that such an argument could, once again, reflect the somewhat blurred goals for FL learning at school. After all, the goal is not to become *perfect* but to learn the *basics* so well that the individual can rather easily build on that later in life if he/she encounters some “real” need for FLs in real situations, for instance when he/she decides to move abroad for education or work, or other reasons (see discussion above, concerning Example 12). Furthermore, as Coffey (2016) points out, even some of those who have studied a FL at school for years do not necessarily use it when travelling to a country where the FL is spoken. I argue that the threshold to start using, and thereby learning, a completely new FL is rather high, by which I mean to say that learning the basics in the school-environment should be seen as something that lowers the threshold to use the FL, and thereby learn it more in “the real life”.

Moreover, in Example 17, the argument that one can better learn FLs outside school could be seen as providing an added rationale for the child not wanting to spend more time at school. Therefore, it is rather similar to P41's reasoning that "*I have studied German myself for six years, and still I only know the basics*" (discussed earlier as Example 12), which can be interpreted as a way of reducing the negative issues related to the child not being interested in choosing the A2. Thus, I argue that parents do try to find *the pros* of their child not choosing the optional FL in a similar way they tend to be found in cases where the A2 was chosen: it is the snowball effect I discussed earlier, or the "attitudinal echo-chamber" proposed by Coffey (2016) which are at play in the *Preactional Stage* (Dörnyei 2005) of choosing to study an additional FL. Parents do not only make decisions about the "*goal relevance*" and articulate the "*values associated with the learning process ... [and its] outcomes and consequences*", but also seem to re-evaluate their own perceptions of these issues according to the child's interests and his/her individual factors.

Hence, parents seem to affirm the child's *Self-image*, even though it were in conflict with their own views on the positive effects of choosing the optional FL. For instance, not one respondent disagreed with the statement that '*Knowing foreign languages is helpful for employment*' (Q20) – 22% (n=11) agreed somewhat and the remaining 78% (n=39) agreed fully with this statement. Whereas the child might be more concerned about the decisions of his/her friends (*Ought-to Self*) and other social factors, the parents may re-contextualise (sst1.2.2) the child's motivations onto the institutional level of the school system (sst1.2.3), of which they have built their own perceptions through their experiences and knowledge of school and FL learning in that context (*Motivational Retrospective*). Surely, most parents are aware of and consider the positive, *instrumental* effects of learning FLs (better employment being only one of them), but their interpretation of the school system and the goals for FL learning may steer them towards disclaiming such benefits in a complex, even defensive fashion.

The way parents may verbalise the *burden* (st3.2) of an optional FL can also be seen in Example 18, below. Here, P40 sees that it is strongly the parents' responsibility to reduce the *workload* from the child:

- (18) *Emme vanhempina juuri nyt pysty olemaan kovin vahvasti mukana esim. läksyjen teossa/ jos kieli olisi teettänyt extratyötä, se olisi aikalailla jäänyt lapsen harteille. Mainittakoon, ettei oppimisen pulmia ole ollut, koulu sujunut hyvin*

[Right now, we as parents cannot be very strongly involved in doing the homework, for example/ if the language would have required extra work, that work would have fallen almost entirely onto the child's shoulders. I must mention that there have not been any problems learning, school work has run smoothly] (P40)

It is very interesting that the parents should feel guilt of not being able to prevent school work from falling onto the shoulders of the child. After all, it is the main responsibility of the school to issue the suitable amount of work for the learners so that they will learn but not get exhausted. The decision not to choose the optional FL can be seen as a preventive measure, which in fact is done without the child having encountered any problems in learning: as P40 points out everything “*has run smoothly*”. One could question whether it is harmful for the child to experience that learning requires work, and that work then eventually pays out – assuming the goals for learning have been set at a reasonable, achievable level, and by not emphasising the *deficit view* of FL learning (Ushioda 2017). P40 continues her rationale in Example 19, below:

- (19) *Emme käyttäneet asian pohditaan tässä kohtaa kovinkaan paljon energiaa ja aikaa. Jonkinlaisena ohjaavana tausta -ajatuksena oli, että myöhemminkin ehtii elämässä monenlaista. Lapsilähtöisesti menttiin, vaikka vanhemmat periaatteessa kielen valinnan puolesta liputtivat.*

[We did not spend much energy or time thinking about this issue at this stage. As some kind of guiding principle, we thought that one will have time to do all sorts of things later in life. Our approach was child-oriented, although in principle, we as parents flew the flag for choosing the language. (P40)

I believe this is once again evidence for the child not having the real opportunity to develop his *Ideal Self* in terms of FL learning or becoming plurilingual (*Ideal Multilingual Self*, Henry 2017). There is little help of parents “*in principle ... [flying] the flag for choosing the language*”, if the child is little involved in the process him/herself. It is interesting, however, that P40 calls this approach “*child-oriented*”, although it seems clear that the child did not have any interest towards the optional FL because he did not have the chance to become interested. In her response to Q11, P40 calls for schools to inspire the children themselves in terms of FL study, which indeed should be the case. However, I argue that in Example 19, the decision has primarily been made or affected by the adults at school and at home: learning is not seen as something for which the child should spend much time or effort, neither is the school capable of offering enough support should any problems arise, neither has much (re-)envisioning of *Self* taken place in making the decision.

## Learning Difficulties

<b>Learning difficulties (4)</b> <i>Total=6(+1)</i>	<i>No sub-themes</i>	6 (+1)
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At this point, I will briefly discuss the issue of learning difficulties (abbreviated here as LD). First of all, I need to point out that the term *learning difficulties* used here derives from the evidence provided by data, and is used for multiple obstacles for learning, which are always individual and rather complex. The abbreviation LD is most often used for referring to *learning disability*, but in my opinion this term is too narrow, and suggests that someone is *not able* to learn, although that would not be the case. The approach I take here will be very simplified, as I will concentrate on the issue of the optional FL uptake and the LDs will not be categorised in any way. However, it is important to present some examples of the issue, as it obviously hinders the uptake of optional FLs.

In total, 6 responses included some mention of LDs. One additional case could also be interpreted as an LD, however, it is possible to interpret the response as not referring to an LD specifically, but to an issue more related to the child's motivation or attitude. I will come to this example later. First, I will present a more common case where LDs were mentioned. In Example 20, below, P10 explains how her child's reading skills in L1 Finnish meant that the additional FL was not chosen:

(20) *Lukeminen on hidasta suomeksikin, ensin kannattaa opetella se.*

[Reading is slow even in Finnish, so first you should learn that.] (P10)

It is obvious that learning one's L1 should be prioritised before learning FLs. It is the child's right to his/her own mother tongue that should always be respected, and it would not make any sense to cause additional burden by adding further FLs. The two basic skills, reading and writing, are learnt in L1, and those skills form the basis for any further learning. As Grin (2015) argues, proficiency in English or any other FL should not be viewed as a *basic skill* if English or some other FL is not the majority language. Thus, the argument by P10 that first one should learn to read in the L1 is a well-advised one. It would be hard to see any sense in starting to learn any additional FLs when learning to read in the L1 is causing problems.

Below, Example 21 reveals further evidence of parents' concerns about the child learning the basic skills:

- (21) *Lapseni on ollut hyvin vaikea oppia lukemaan. Hän kävi ekaluokan kahteen kertaan, mutta lukeminen ja kirjoittaminen on yhä nyt kolmannellakin hidasta. Englanti on juuri alkanut ja sen kanssa hämmentää, että kirjoitusasu ei vastaa ääntämystä. Halusimme lapsen pärjäävän niin hyvin kuin hänen tasollaan on mahdollista ja lujittavan äidinkieltään hyväksy perustaksi muulle oppimiselle. Ylimääräinen kieli tässä vaiheessa olisi luultavasti enemmän sotkenut kuin ollut ilona.*

[Learning to read has been very difficult for my child. She had to visit the first grade twice, but even now in the third grade, reading and writing is still slow. English has just started, and it is confusing that the spelling does not match the pronunciation. We wanted the child to manage as well as it is possible on her level and to consolidate her mother tongue as a good basis for further learning. An additional language at this stage would have probably caused more confusion than joy.] (P17)

The account by P17 shows the struggles some children face in learning at school. Here, the same applies as above, namely it is of the utmost importance that the child learns to read and write in his/her L1. One intriguing issue is the role of English, as a difficult language to learn for its *deep orthography* (spelling and pronunciation do not match very well). Here, were it not for the role of English as the near *basic skill*, the *lingua franca* that everyone needs to learn (at least it brings with it great benefits and is sometimes even a requirement), it could be that some other FL would provide an easier path towards learning FLs for a child with difficulties in learning to read and write. For instance, German has much *shallower orthography* (although it still differs from the Finnish spelling rules), and a FL such as Italian would share some of the features also present in Finnish (such as *geminatio*). However, calls for better acknowledging the non-native standards of English pronunciation (see Jakobsen 2003; Jenkins 2007; and many others) could offer some new ideas on learning English in the future.

The response by P49 in Example 22, below, provides a more difficult case to make sense of.

- (22) *Lukemisessa muutenkin haasteita vaikka englanti menee hyvin.*

[There are already difficulties in reading as it is, although English is going well.] P49

Here, P49 presents a rather interesting explanation, which I interpret as the child experiencing some LDs in reading in her L1, but in English, these difficulties have not caused so much harm that learning it would have become a burden for the child. In other words, learning English could be something the child enjoys even if there are some difficulties in reading it. Of course,

this is just my assumption and it cannot be taken for granted. However, this example shows how LDs do not automatically hinder learning, which is implied by the often-used term *learning disability*, as discussed above. Although FL learning is much about reading and writing, speaking and listening are equally important, and in the case of difficulties in the former two, the latter two can still create joy in the learner, or even *vice versa*, for instance with hearing loss. However, as already stated, I will not go into much detail about such individual cases. On the contrary, I will next move to the hard-to-categorise response, which was already mentioned above.

In her response to Q11 ‘*What were the reasons behind the final decision?*’, in Example 23, P6 states the following:

- (23) Lapsella haasteita jo yhden kielen (englanti) opiskelussa, joten lisäkieli olisi ollut ylimääräinen rasite.

[The child already has difficulties in studying one language (English), so an additional language would have been an additional burden.] (P6)

It would be possible to categorise this as belonging to either *Learning difficulties* (t4), or to *Consciously investing in English* (st2.1). However, I think that the latter is the more likely categorisation, as there is no explicit reference to an LD, and the Finnish word *haasteita* [in English: difficulties] can be interpreted as *challenges*, which to my mind implies to a more motivational, rather than LD-related issue. Surely, this interpretation can be false, for which reason it is included in brackets under the theme t4 (*Learning difficulties*). It can namely be the urgency to learn English, which is visible above in Example 23. The reasoning by P6 that “*an additional language would have been an additional burden*” belongs to those presented above, regarding the theme t3: *Workload, strain*. There is no need to return to the discussion about how the way school subjects are turned into a burden by raising the stakes, i.e. switching the focus from the fun involved in learning something new to the grades, but I believe Example 23 could reveal some of the *External pressure* (t2) that rules out the study of optional FLs for some.

To summarise the findings in the present section, it is clear that children with difficulties in learning basic skills their L1, such as reading and writing, or in learning basic mathematical skills should concentrate on developing those skills. Accessible special education and quality support available for children with LDs is important from the point of view of FL learning and

teaching, as well. One should also consider how the special support in FL learning is offered for those who need it. The fact that children and their parents know that help and support is available could encourage uptake in optional FLs, as the fear of “failing” would somewhat diminish. However, it is also important that FL study is not depicted as more *difficult* than it actually is. The objectives of optional FL curricula should be set so that they acknowledge *any* FL proficiency and offer *achievable* goals for the learners. Teachers should be encouraged to emphasise communicative skills in FL teaching, rather than concentrating on grammar rules, which are important but should not become *the language* in the learners’ minds. *Language* should be presented as communication, culture, action, and fun. Children should be given opportunities to *envision* themselves as FL learners and users, and to *set goals* for their learning. The learner’s vision and goal-setting are the fuel for FL learning motivation (Dörnyei 2005).

## 5.2 Why no German?

In the sections above, the reasons for choosing and not choosing the optional A2 language was examined. It was found that particularly in *not choosing* the FL, parents can play a major role. Moreover, that role and the overall influence of parents can be both rather *direct*, for instance steering the child away from the optional FL subjects, but there is also *indirect* support for the child not being interested. Such indirect influence can include the parent providing rationale for why it is a good thing not to be interested in multiple FL, for instance that one is then able to concentrate on “the more important” subjects, such as English. This of course is worrying, as learning one language does not negatively affect the acquisition of other languages. On the contrary, multiple languages support each other.

This chapter is about German, a FL which used to be a very popular subject in Finnish schools, but which in the recent years has experienced the most substantial decline in the number of learners of all FL subjects studied in Finnish schools (OPH 2019). All of the reasons for choosing and not choosing optional FLs presented above also apply to German. This is the *non-L2-specific* motivation, as pointed out by Henry (2017). However, *L2-specific* motivation does play a role in the *Preactional stage* (Dörnyei 2005: 85), i.e. in making the choice. This was also seen in 5.1.2, above, as some parents reported their child having a strong *FL-specific* interest,

for instance due to the way the FL sounds like or the culture(s) in which and people by which the FL is spoken. This should be taken as a resource for motivating children towards learning multiple FLs.

Below, I will present examples where German came up in the parents' responses. Two of these are Q7 '*Which A2 language does your child start to study?*' and its follow-up question, Q8 '*Was the A2 language starting next year your primary choice?*'. I will also present those responses to Q11 '*Which were the reasons behind the final decision?*' in which German is mentioned, in order to gather some of if German had some *FL-specific* influence on the *Choice motivation*. However, I shall begin by briefly discussing Q36 '*How important would it be in your opinion to study the following languages at school?*', which aimed at giving some clue of *FL-specific* attitudes, in this case by exploiting the rather simplistic notion of *importance* of specific FLs.

### **5.2.1 Perceived importance of German as a school subject**

The *importance* of a language is a problematic issue which has been addressed multiple times in the discussion above. It is common to "measure" the importance by various factors of *instrumentality*, i.e. how the language can be utilised. One example of such report is the WEF's Power Language Index (Chan 2016), in which German ranks "the seventh most powerful language in the world" in terms of geography, economy, communication, knowledge and media, and diplomacy. However, as already discussed, such rankings are hugely simplistic, and in the case of the PLI (Chan 2016), the main problem lies – if not in the underlying question – in the treatment of languages as nation states (Pyykkö 2017: 20). The way of treating languages in terms of power rankings and other simplistic measures is also objected by Dalby (2001), who argues that languages are not countable in the same way as apples (or some other *things*) are. In addition, earlier I pointed out the issue of *importance* of a language at the *global* level and on the *local* level, which creates paradoxes such as the one presented by Phillipson (2004: 55), as already discussed above in 2.4.1. Furthermore, one should remember that the *importance* of a language is always the matter of an individual: For instance, what could possibly be the (*instrumental*) *value* of one's L1 and how would that compare to *non-instrumental* values?

This said, it might seem somewhat contradictory to ask the question '*How important would it be in your opinion to study the following languages at school?*' (Q36). However, I firmly

believe it is important to somehow elicit the power relations between languages, as they do exist in many contexts. One such context is obviously school. Thus, I will now present the way parents view the *importance* of learning specific FLs at school. Figure 9, below, shows the distribution of responses to Q36, where 1=*Not important at all*, 2=*Not very important*, 3=*Somewhat important*, 4=*Quite important*, and 5=*Very important*.

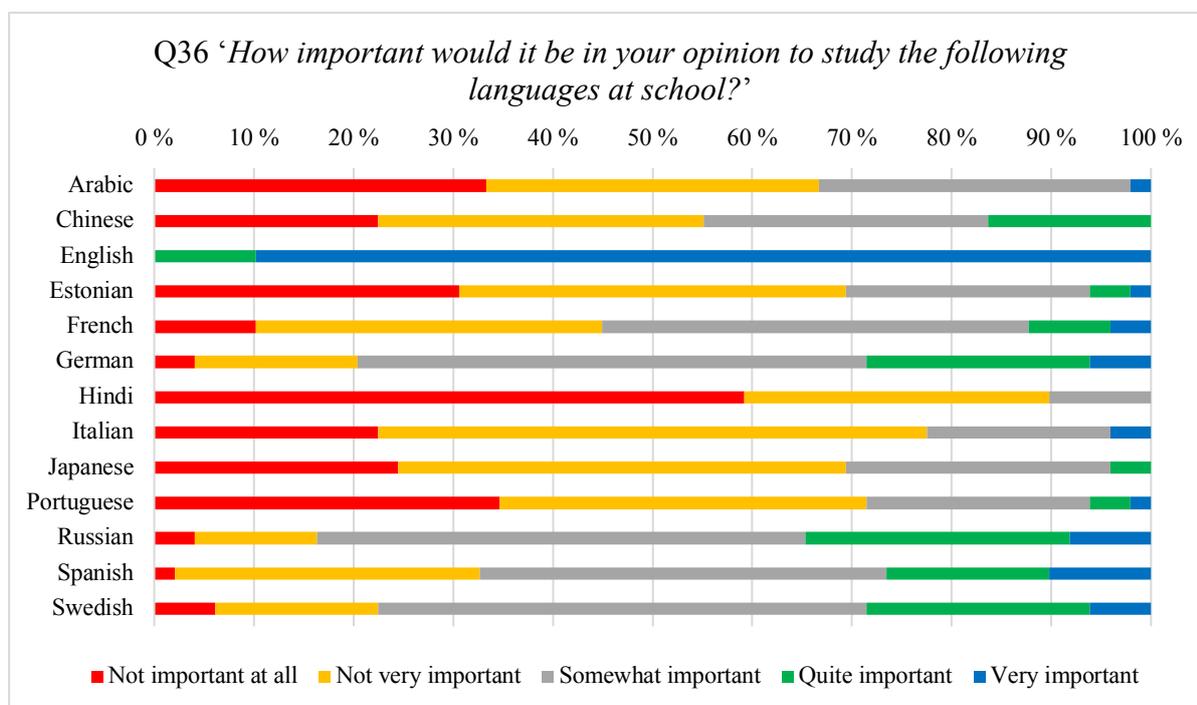


Figure 9. Responses to Q36 ‘How important would it be in your opinion to study the following languages at school?’. (n=49)

Based on the results shown in Figure 9, above, it is clear that English is perceived as the most important FL to learn at school. It received an average score of 4.9 and is thus viewed as *Very important* to learn at school. English is followed by large European languages, such as Russian (avg. 3.2), German (avg. 3.1), Swedish (avg. 3.1), and Spanish (avg. 3.0). Large, non-European FLs, such as Hindi (avg. 1.5) received much lower average scores, although Chinese (avg. 2.4) was perceived as important as some “smaller” European languages, such as Portuguese (avg. 2.0) and Italian (avg. 2.1). Table 12, below, shows the grouping of these FLs based on their median scores.

Table 12. FL groups based on the median score of their perceived *importance* in descending order. The scale used in the original question (Q36): 5=*Very important*, 4=*Quite important*, 3=*Somewhat important*, 2=*Not very important*, 1=*Not important at all*. (n=49)

<i>Language</i>	PLI ranking*	Average	Median	FL Group
English	1.	4.9	5	A
Russian	6.	3.2	3	B
German	7.	3.1	3	
Swedish	28.	3.1	3	
Spanish	4.	3.0	3	
French	3.	2.6	3	
Chinese	2.	2.4	2	C
Japanese	8.	2.1	2	
Italian	12.	2.1	2	
Estonian	56.	2.1	2	
Arabic	5.	2.0	2	
Portuguese	9.	2.0	2	
Hindi	10.	1.5	1	D

\*see Chan (2016)

As seen above in Table 12, English is in its own league in terms of perceived importance (*Group A*). *Group B* includes European languages commonly taught and learnt as FLs in Finnish schools, whereas *Group C* consists of more “exotic” languages, less commonly taught at school. Hindi as a non-European FL remains alone in *Group D*. Although the result is rather expected as it is notably similar to some earlier findings, such as the one by Dörnyei et al. (2006), it does present some interesting issues concerning the *importance* of FL learning at school. Firstly, it reveals that Chinese (avg. 2.4) is actually considered somewhat more important by these respondents than Italian (avg. 2.1), and almost as important as French (avg.2.6). Of course, one must remember not to draw any false conclusions based on such a small population (n=49).

It is also interesting, although not too surprising, that Hindi (avg. 1.5) differentiates from other “non-European” languages, such as Arabic (avg. 2.0) or Japanese (avg. 2.1). Maybe the latter two are considered somewhat more *useful*, as Arabic is widely spoken in Europe and in Finland as a minority language, and Japanese might be perceived more relevant for various cultural and

economic ties between Japan and Finland, which are often referred to in the media. Furthermore, Japan as a country might, for instance, be considered more “accessible” as a possible travel destination than India. In addition, English is often depicted as the language of India in the Finnish English class, which might make the idea of learning Hindi rather distant, although the distribution of English-speakers in India might not, in fact, be so much different to the situation in countries such as Japan – for instance, Graddol (2006: 94; citing Kachru 2004) points out that only 35% of the population in India read English, and 16.5% speak it.

On average, learning German, which ranks 7<sup>th</sup> in the PLI (Chan 2016), is perceived as *Somewhat important* to learn at school in Finland. Its average score of 3.1 falls just behind Russian (avg. 3.2) and is tied with Swedish. It would be interesting to know why German is perceived somewhat more *important* to learn at school than Spanish, which, as will be seen later, is the FL starting as the A2 for almost every child whose parent responded to the questionnaire and who chose the optional FL. Here, the question arises, whether German is seen more important by those whose child did not choose the optional A2, or whether there is some other explanation. However, the scale of this paper does not unfortunately allow for such analysis, and one could even question the real need for it, as the scores are almost tied (Spanish avg. is 3.0). One way of investigating this issue is to examine the responses to Q7 ‘*Which A2 language does your child start to study?*’, and Q8 ‘*Was the A2 language starting next year your primary choice?*’. I will discuss these questions next.

### **5.2.2 Who chose German?**

In this section, I will examine the data looking for willingness to choose German. When choosing the optional A2, one can pick more than one FL and list them in order from most favourite to least favourite. If there are enough students who chose some FL, the group will be formed in that FL. Although this can lead to situations where the child cannot start studying the specific FL he/she or his/her parents primarily wished for, I believe based on the findings presented above in 5.1.2 that by steering the motivation and the learner’s *Ideal Self* more towards a multilingual and not a FL-specific one (see Henry 2017), also the possible FL-specific disappointments could become less of an issue. From the motivational perspective, it might be important that children get to study FLs on which their primary *Choice motivation* is based on, because if the motivation in the *Preactional stage* is tightly bound to a specific FL the learner has set his/her goals based on that FL only. If it turned out that no groups in that specific FL

are formed, the learner could perhaps find it difficult to re-motivate him/herself to the new FL, which later in the *Actional stage* could lead to problems such as the feel of being forced to study a FL he/she did not want to in the first place, i.e. there is a lacking *Sense of autonomy* (terminology from Dörnyei 2005: 85).

Looking at Q7 ‘*Which A2 language is your child going to study next year?*’, of those 20 respondents whose child had chosen the A2 (Q6, discussed earlier in 5.1.1) 17 reported that the FL would be Spanish. One parent reported that the FL would be German, and another reported that the FL would have been German had there been enough students for forming a group. Presumably, this child was specifically motivated to start learning German but other FLs were for some reason not an option. Again, one must emphasise the need for a shift in schools to promote learning of any FLs, although it is obvious that FL-specific attitudes do play an important role in the *Choice motivation* (Dörnyei 2005: 85). Thus, FL-specific disappointments such as this one could possibly be avoided.

Interestingly, one respondent reported that his child would not be beginning to study the A2 because forming the group would have needed *one* student more (it is unclear whether this concerns the same student as above). Here, one is able to see how the strictly set minimum requirements for A2 group sizes can have very negative consequences. One could question the economic reasoning behind such arrangement, as lacking one student suddenly leads to a whole group of students (e.g. ten or more) not being able to learn the language at school. This is rather short-sighted educational planning if one puts it into the perspective of the total losses of 100 billion euros annually in the EU because of lacking FL skills (ELAN 2006) and the urgent need for FLs in the Finnish economy (EK 2014). Furthermore, from the point of view of an individual, the profits gained from FL skills, as calculated by Grin (2015), also point out the ill-advised management of group sizes: larger salaries would return higher municipal taxes.

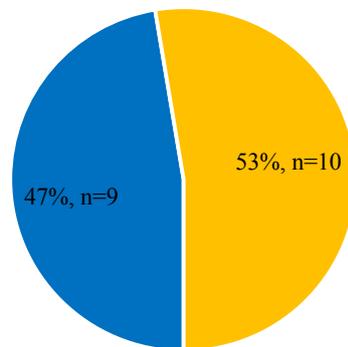
Examples such as the one above shows the problems faced by those who want to promote optional FL learning at school. There are many regulatory and bureaucratic issues involved in forming the groups in the first place (see also Helenius 2011). At the initial stages of writing this MA thesis, I discussed my topic informally with some people who shared their own experiences from optional FL choice at school. One of these people, a parent whose child had been through the choice-process, told me that in one Finnish municipality where the group size requirement is relatively high, a group of parents had tried to convince other parents and their

children to choose the A2 in order to get enough students to form a group. However, this had proven difficult and the attitude of the municipality's education department had also been rather non-supportive. Similar stories are worryingly common in Finland, and as Kangasvieri et al. (2011) point out, attitudes of individual decision-makers can affect the situation of FL learning in the municipality.

However, there are also reasons to believe that the parents themselves are finding it difficult to follow the regulation set by decision-makers. In the case presented above, the child's father states in his response to Q7 that "*it seemed strange that [two primary schools locating some 500 metres away from each other] were not handled as one unit but as individual schools*" in regard to A2 choice. I wanted to verify this statement from the local education department, who denied this parent's claim. It seems that the A2 choice is surrounded with various kinds of misunderstandings, not only regarding FL study as such but also the administrative side of the issue. Here, the problem is how to best spread information to students' parents and guardians.

Although the administrative and technical aspects are important to acknowledge, one needs to return to the underlying issue of not getting to study the specific FL which one was wishing for, i.e. based on which the *Choice motivation* has been developed. First, one needs to point to some numerical data on the choice. In the questionnaire, Q8 asked whether the A2 which the child begins to study was the primary choice, or if there was some other FL that he/she had wished to study. The results, shown below in Figure 10, indicate that quite often the latter can be the case.

Q8: 'Was the A2 language which your child begins to study next year your primary choice?'



■ Primary choice ■ Other choice

Figure 10. Responses to Q8 'Was the A2 language which your child begins to study next year your primary choice?' (n=19)

As seen in Figure 10, out of the 19 respondents who answered to Q8 about the half (n=10) reported that their child's primary FL choice had been some other than the one that is starting during the next semester. The primary choices mentioned had been German (n=3), French (n=2), Russian (n=4), and Spanish (n=1). Although the results are not generalisable, they show how important it can be to motivate children towards the *Ideal Multilingual Self* (Henry 2017), as it can well be that the FL-specific choice made changes if the number of students is too low in that specific FL. For individual FLs, such as German, this creates at least some level of competition between them and other FLs. The question arises whether a teacher of German should only promote German for his/her school's students in order to ensure groups in his/her own subject? Although one could argue that schools should not support the competitive view of FLs, similarly to the PLI (Chan 2016), as that could lead to monolingual bias such as the one already existing in the case of English (see Phillipson 2004; Ushioda 2017; and many others). Such views can lead to some parents making their children "concentrate on the most *useful* FLs" or the ones that are obligatory (in Finland, Swedish or Finnish), as was seen in **5.1.3**.

To continue on this issue, I will next revisit some of the responses given to Q11 'What were the reasons behind the final decision?', which were already discussed in length but in more general terms. This time, the responses are examined from the point of view of German specifically. As already stated, all of the reasons for choosing and not choosing the A2 also apply for each specific FLs: for example, the length of the school days is one such issue. However, some

responses mentioned German in specific and there are other responses that have indirect implications for promoting German at school. Next, I will present and discuss some of the issues these particular responses raise in terms of German.

In 5.1.2, I presented Example 4, which can be seen here as well:

*Lapsi halusi Saksan, myöntelin päätöksen olevan hyvä siinä mielessä että voisin auttaa sanoissa kun itsekin jonkun verran puhun*

[The child wanted German, I agreed that it was a good choice also in that I would be able to help with the vocabulary, as I speak [German] a little myself.] (P30)

The fact that German has been a very popular FL subject at school means that there are indeed still quite many who have studied it and maybe have some level of proficiency in it, as well. P30, above, is one such example, as she argues for the child's decision to choose German because she herself can help with learning the vocabulary. Such *Environmental support* (Dörnyei 2005) possibly has encouraged the child to choose German in the first place. Whether or not the interest towards German specifically is somehow related to the parent's linguistic repertoire is obviously unclear.

If one examines the responses to Q5 '*What is your own language proficiency?*', one can see that although there are quite many parents (n=26, 52% of the respondents) who report having some level of proficiency in German (see Figure 11, below), only four of them estimate their skills in German as *good*. Nine parents estimate their skills as *satisfactory*, five as *passable*, and eight as *poor*. 24 respondents did not have any skills in German. Figure 11 illustrates the respondents' German proficiency in comparison with that of French and Spanish.

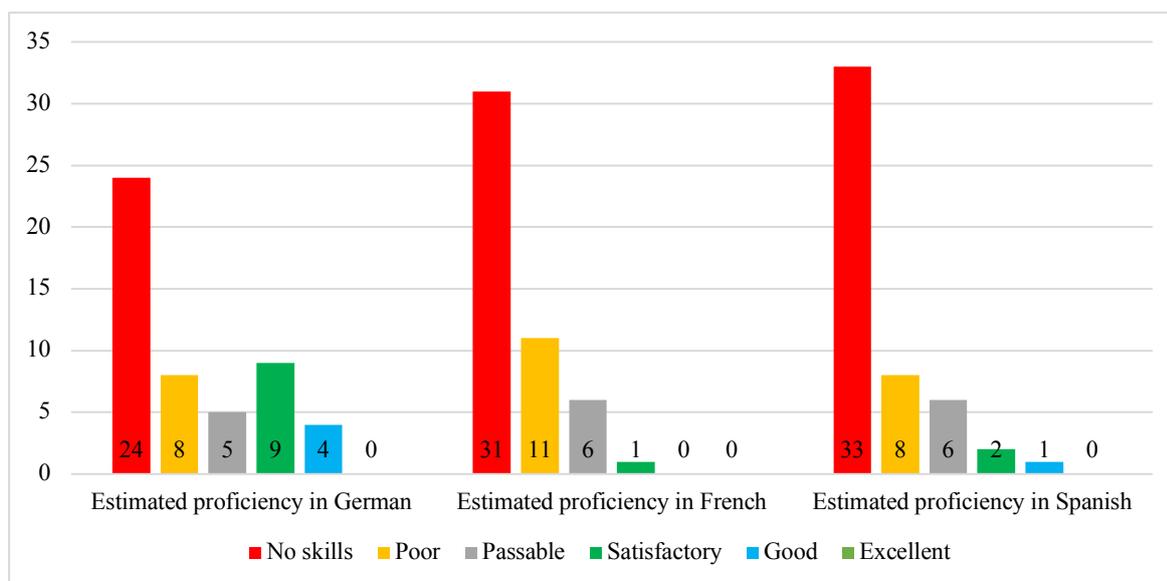


Figure 11. Respondents' own estimation of their proficiency in German, French, and Spanish. Results from Q5 'What is your own language proficiency?'. (n=50)

Above, Figure 11 shows how the respondents are somewhat more proficient in German than in French or Spanish. In some sense, this is important for the future of German, as the parents also stated in their responses to Q29 that it is important that they are able to help their child in studying the FL (46%, n=23, *somewhat agreed* and 30%, n=15, *fully agreed* with the statement 'It is important that I can help my child in studying a foreign language myself, for example in his/her homework'). As already pointed out, it is questionable whether this should play any role in the way children choose optional FLs at school, as it could lead to inequality if those whose parents do not know some specific FL are discouraged to choose any FLs. In the future, if less people are studying German as a FL, and if the parental FL proficiency does play a significant role in FL-uptake, then the number of those studying German might decline even more. However, at least the present data did not show any relationship between the parent's FL repertoire and the A2 uptake. The overall linguistic background of the child could play a more significant role, but the present study does not allow for any speculation on that matter.

Example 12, presented and discussed earlier in 5.1.3, showed another side of the coin in the parent's FL repertoire. The response can be seen below, as well:

*Itse lukenut saksaa lisäksi kuusi vuotta, silti osaan vain alkeet.*

[In addition, I have studied German myself for six years, and still I only know the basics.] (P41)

Here, one could argue that the recommendation by Jakobsen (2003: 187) that “*Not-so-good [FL skills] ... should be acknowledged as a relevant goal for learning*” seems intriguing. In the original quote<sup>16</sup>, Jakobsen (2003) is talking about English proficiency but it could be applied to any FL. In the example presented above, P41 argues that her own experience of not “learning enough” German in six years verifies there being little need for someone else to study additional FLs either. As discussed, this is an example of parents voicing out the *goal relevance, outcomes and consequences of learning, and expected success and coping potential* (Dörnyei 2005: 85).

To my mind, this calls for some consideration in terms of the target proficiency level of the syllabus A2 in the Finnish core curriculum for basic education. At present, the aim is that at the end of basic education the “*good*” proficiency of a student who has studied the optional A2 language for five to six years is A2.2 in the slightly modified Finnish version of the CEFR (POPS 2014). As pointed out in 5.1.3, POPS (2014) calls this *developing basic proficiency*. P41’s proficiency in German was significantly lower than this, were one to take her response word for word and apply them to the POPS (2014) scale (which is obviously problematic). One could ask whether the goals of the optional A2 language could be made clearer for students and their parents, or if they should at some point be somehow adjusted. I do not believe that simply lowering the target proficiency in the A2 would provide much help, as there would always be learners who would not reach the proficiency needed for school grade 8 (*good*) and then perhaps become demotivated and later claim that they have not learnt “anything” or have learnt “too little” and never develop their proficiency further, or even deprecate the aims of others to learn FLs. Probably the best solution would be to use various self-assessment tools, such as a language portfolio, where the learners could better monitor their development and adjust their learning goals in the *Actional stage*. Such tools could perhaps better take into account out-of-school learning, as well, which would make the learning experience and the goals more relevant for the learners.

Obviously, one needs to take into consideration Ammon’s (2015), or even Meyer’s (2004) arguments that it is the responsibility of the German-speaking community consisting of L1, L2, and FL speakers to take care of the language by using it and therefore developing it further.

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<sup>16</sup> Original quote in German: “*Weniger gutes Englisch, z. B. Lese- und Hörverständnis einfacher Texte und eine basale kommunikative Kompetenz, soll als ein relevantes Lernziel anerkannt werden. [...] Wir brauchen eine Vorstellung von einer mehrsprachigen Kompetenz, wo die Sprachen ... in ihren verschiedenen Funktionen in unserer persönlichen Geschichte und für unser gesellschaftliches Leben anerkannt und gefördert werden.*” (Jakobsen 2003: 187)

Surely, it would be a misjudgement to state that German as such were in any sense endangered, but as a FL learnt at school it might well be. This obviously means that the German FL-speaking community could be endangered, and if and when one considers non-L1 communities as one developing the language similarly as the L1 community, German could face losing some of its richness and diversity. Therefore, statements such as the one in Example 24, below, are rather worrying.

(24) *Englanti riittää ja sillä pärjää.*

[English is enough, and you make do with that.] (P34)

This response was given to Q11 ‘*What were the reasons behind the final decision?*’ Here, one could ask ‘*What is English enough for?*’, and ‘*Why should it be enough?*’. In my view, this example from the data goes into the core of the decline in FL learning in Finland. No *need* is seen for developing oneself. No *benefits* are to be found from understanding the world better and being able to do more or observing the world from multiple perspectives than one is able to at present, or the *need* and the *benefits* are both acknowledged, but they are not seen as *relevant* for oneself. Somebody else is expected to act, and somebody else can maybe learn FLs *better* than oneself. Somebody else’s child is *more apt* for FL learning so one’s own child should not even bother trying. In a sense, one could question whether the argument by Wright (2004) that FL learning has lost its stigma of being only for those belonging to “the cosmopolitan elite” is valid. The exclusive stigma of FL learning has probably vanished in the case of English. However, for other FLs such stigma could still exist. Of course, English can be *enough* for an individual, but the problem is that it is not enough for the society, or the world at large. Therefore, I will next move on to the question of how German or other FLs should be promoted so that more children would consider learning them a relevant goal.

### **5.2.3 Promoting German as a FL**

Next, I will briefly summarise the discussion above and draw some conclusions on promoting German as a FL. As it was seen, German ranked among the *somewhat important* FLs to learn at school based on the data used for this study. However, English is considered much more important than other FLs. Obviously, this result was also expected. However, what must be emphasised here is that although parents seem to acknowledge the benefits of multiple FL study, including that of German, they often do not seem to consider this as a relevant goal for children. Optional FL study, the study of German for instance, is seen very difficult based on

earlier personal experiences. Here one should ask whether teaching of German or other FLs has changed from the days when the current primary school students' parents were at school? It might be that FL teaching has indeed not changed enough. However, considering the pressures set by the present Finnish school system emphasising school grades at the end of basic education and even more considerably in the upper secondary education, one could question whether a shift towards more motivating FL teaching which leaves room for learners to visualise themselves as future multilinguals can even be possible. If the school system itself, and the municipalities offering basic education as a *service* emphasise economic reasons instead of the learners' development as individuals and continue the arguably short-sighted cost-cutting aimed at optional FL study. Any efforts towards developing FL teaching might be rather irrelevant if decision-makers are still against offering optional FLs in schools.

On the bright side, however, the awareness of the need for FLs other than English seems to be growing in the Finnish media, politicians and businesses (see e.g. EK 2014). In addition, the reform that resulted in the A1 language (the first FL in basic education) to start from the first grade in 2020 might provide some relief to the current state. Although English will still most certainly be the most common FL chosen as the A1, the fact that FL study begins earlier might encourage parents and their children to choose additional FLs in the fourth grade, as it could give them more space to consider their options. This is surely an issue which will provide opportunities for future research. At this point, one can only speculate whether the interest towards other FLs than English will grow.

When it comes to promoting German as a FL, one could argue that the ideas presented above in 5.1 could be useful. The fact that the child's own interest and curiosity was mentioned by the respondents as the main factor behind the FL uptake decision, it shows that more efforts should be targeted at motivating children by helping them set their *own* goals for future FL learning. One should also carefully consider the way in which learning German or other FLs as an optional school subject is presented to the children. Based on the present data, I believe there are different ways of doing this. Firstly, the least motivating (or demotivating) one is to ask: 'How would you like the idea of spending two additional hours after school intensively studying German grammar – which by the way is difficult and boring, and in which you will probably *fail* to learn?' Secondly, a somewhat better way of making children visualise themselves as FL learners would be to ask: 'Would you like to learn something new about new cultures and languages and better understand the world?' However, considering the present realities, the

answer to this question for quite many children would be ‘No way!’: it still greatly depends on how children perceive learning in the school context and it would not leave enough *Motivational space* to consider the future selves.

Maybe the best way of motivating children to learn FLs, in this case German, would be to introduce them “along the way”, not binding FL together with learning at school as such, but giving samples of the FL and the culture(s) it is used in. Introducing the food, the music, the people, and other cultural features related to the FL would make choosing the FL a much more tempting idea than referring to *instrumental* factors such as “*FL skills will be much valued in the working life*” or “*you can become a foreign diplomat by learning German*”. It is not difficult to see how such goals could be the *last* thing some children would want to aim at.

The present data also provides evidence of such *integrative* or *non-instrumental* motivation taking place. In 5.1.1, there were mentions of foreign visitors at school and language showers (where learning grammar rules is not in the curriculum). In addition, P19 gives the following reason (among a few others) for her child wanting to choose Spanish as the A2 language:

(25) *latinobiisit ovat tällä hetkellä suosikkeja*

[Latin songs are her favourites at the moment] (P19)

If we allow children find their *favourite music* in a FL, they most likely will become interested in that specific language. At present, Latin music is widely played on the Finnish radio stations, and one could speculate if that is one reason for the slight increase in Spanish uptake in some schools. However, German-speaking music on the radio is rather rare, apart from old songs from *Rammstein* or individual songs such as *99 Luftballons*. It is not the case that there is no wide range of German music made anymore, it is just that one does not come across it very easily: one needs to look for it. Here, it is the native-speakers’ responsibility (Ammon 2015) to actually continue making music (or films, or books, etc.) in their L1, and after that it is the (German) FL community’s responsibility (including teachers of German) to promote and introduce the FL culture to children.

Here, one should also point out that although the internet is increasingly multilingual (Graddol 2006), most of its platforms are by American companies, or the platforms are localised into the L1 culture. This could make it more difficult for children to *come across* German in the web, for example on YouTube. One could go as far as Phillipson (2003) who argues that such

developments have been very deliberate, or one could argue that the present state is result from basic neglect by the speakers of other languages to take care of their language or simply *eagerness* to do something in (their own) English (see e.g. Pennycook 2006). In any case, the responsibility of German FL teachers, or any FL teacher, is to offer the starting point for children to visualise themselves as learners and users of multiple FLs, and not to offer them the expected visions of some poor outcomes based on their own assumptions that most students will “fail” learning FL grammar rules and vocabulary. The *instrumental* value of a language depends on the way an individual *utilises* that language. Why should it not be the child who gets to use his/her imagination freely and then choose how and why the language is used? We as adults should have little say in that.

## **6. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS**

In this chapter, I will first return to the research questions of this study and answer them based on the analysis presented above. The implications of these results will also be discussed. Secondly, I will discuss the results from the point of view of their accuracy and meaningfulness and point out any possible issues with the study. To conclude, this chapter offers possible avenues for future research on FL study in Finland.

### **6.1 Implications of the present study**

This small-scale study set out to give answers to the following questions:

1. In what ways are parents involved in their child’s A2 uptake decision? What reasons do parents give for their child choosing or not choosing an optional FL, and how do these reasons reflect the choice their child made?
2. How is the special role of English as the most widely spread *global* language visible in this reasoning?
3. How is German as a formerly popular optional FL presented in the parents’ answers, and in what ways could one increase the popularity of German as an optional FL?

With help of the analysis above, I will now answer these questions and summarise the findings made in this small-scale study. After that, I will briefly discuss what implications my findings have on promoting optional FL study in Finnish basic education.

First, it can be said with confidence that parents are often deeply involved in their child's A2 uptake decision. My findings revealed how the initial spark, the child's curiosity towards FLs (some specific one or multiple FLs) was often created by some encounter with the FLs and their speakers. These encounters were found to take place in both in- or out-of-school environments. Based on the analysis, the thing in common with all these encounters was that they were or had become somehow *relevant* to the child him/herself. The parents' role seemed to be that of encouraging this curiosity, to fan the initial spark, by offering *rational reasoning* for the child's interest. Such reasoning could involve the *parents' own FL repertoire* or believed *benefits* of the FL study. Although the parents' role seemed to be the most important one in making the final decision together with the child, the role of other significant people as supporters of FL study was also seen significant in case of some children.

Interestingly, the role of the parents' as offering the *rationale* for the child's decision was also seen in cases where the optional FL was not chosen. Surprisingly often the parents seemed to support the child's lacking *Choice motivation*, which revealed some hidden attitudes and prejudices about FL learning at school. Sometimes parents seemed to draw conclusions on the *relevance* of FL study as a goal for their child based on their *own* experience of not achieving the FL target proficiency they had wished for. Rather worryingly, some parents seemed to deem FL study as too *difficult* and *burdensome* for their child although the child him/herself had not experienced any greater difficulties at school. However, teachers and the school system itself also seemed to contribute to the beliefs of FL study as difficult and burdensome, which obviously does not attract children to spend additional time at school.

Secondly, the role of English was clearly visible in the parents' reasoning for their child not choosing the optional FL. However, it was not mentioned by those whose child had chosen the A2. Learning English was seen very important and some level of urgency to learn it well was visible in the parents' answers. This of course is understandable, English being so significant in today's world. However, some parents felt that if their child had chosen an additional FL, it could have hindered learning English. Although this is a false belief, as all FLs support each other, some parents try to verify it, for instance with their experiences of falling school grades.

Here, the FL teachers' responsibility is to reassure parents that multiple FL learning is not in any way harmful to the language learner but also to ensure that children themselves feel the benefits and enjoyment of having skills in multiple FLs. On the other hand, schools should provide enough support in FL subjects, as this would lessen the worries parents might have in terms of their child learning English.

Finally, German as a formerly popular FL in Finnish schools was seen in the data in that the respondents reported having some skills in it more commonly than other FLs apart from English and Swedish. German was rather commonly mentioned as a possible choice as the child's A2 language, but in almost all of the cases, Spanish was the FL in which the number of children was enough for forming groups. Reportedly, only one child was about to start learning German. Whereas Spanish can be rather commonly encountered as a FL on the radio, and Spain being a popular travel destination, German is not that often present in Finland, at least as something relevant for children. This being the case, schools should invest in raising the multilingual awareness in children by offering them different types of activities in FLs. This would be in line with Ushioda's (2017) and Henry's (2017) notions on the *Ideal multilingual self*.

In short, the implications which can be made and suggestions one is able to offer based on the findings above are as follows:

1. From a motivational perspective, children must be given more opportunities to visualise themselves as learners of multiple FLs. Awareness-raising FL activities should be planned and implemented in collaboration between the whole school staff and all teachers – be it classroom teachers or subject teachers – and in a way that children get to genuinely imagine themselves as FL users together with their friends. The child should be the one to make the decision based on his/her own interest, and significant others – parents, teachers, friends, relatives, and so forth – ought to take the role of encouraging the child's enthusiasm.
2. Parents should be given realistic information about multiple FL learning, its goals, its demands, and its benefits. Persistent attempts should be made to raise parents' awareness also through means other than *Wilma* messages some weeks before the actual A2 choice is made. For instance, multilingualism could function as a theme for school events or larger student projects, the outcomes of which could be presented to parents in one way or another. The most important thing would be to present FLs and

multilingualism as an every-day reality at school, which in turn would reassure parents of schools investing in and valuing FL learning and teaching.

3. Teachers and school staff should continuously revise their knowledge on FL learning and become aware of their own attitudes and beliefs about it. FL learning is still envisioned as something primarily involving *failure, bad experiences, memorising vocabulary and grammar rules by heart*, and other stressful issues. Such beliefs diminish the true meaning of FLs, namely that of *enjoyment, inclusion, success, and broadening world views*.
4. On a broader level, ensuring children's overall well-being at school should be kept a priority. Schools should invest in giving support in all school subjects. This would be seen by the parents as evidence for the school caring about the students. On an even broader scale, *learning* should be put into the main focal point in schools, and *grading* should not. This would require overall reform of the school system, namely in terms of the transition from basic education to upper secondary and vocational education, not to mention that between upper secondary school and higher education. Students who have chosen to learn an optional FL in primary school and continued studying it until the ninth grade should be rewarded for showing willingness to voluntarily develop one's skills and knowledge. At the moment, the only reassurance parents receive is that the grade of the optional A2 language can be omitted from the final school diploma, which implicitly implies that *failures* are to be expected.
5. One solution to make optional FL learning more tempting would be to simply add the number of weekly lessons per year in basic education by 12 (the current number A2 lessons) and teach some other similar skills needed in today's multilingual and -cultural world to those who do not want to choose an optional FL subject. This would not only improve equality between children, but also remove one of the main reasons for not choosing the A2, namely additional hours spent at school. This would require additional funding from the state.

## **6.2 Evaluation of the study and its results**

Questionnaire as the method of data-collection was chosen because it allowed gathering information that was found to be most beneficial for the purposes of the present study. Although the number of respondents was somewhat low, it still allowed reaching a saturation point where

most of the relevant issues concerning optional FL uptake in Finland were covered. The fact that the issues found in this study are in line with those of earlier ones made on similar topics (see e.g. Larvus 2010; Helenius 2011; or similar) should be seen as proof for this claim. Overall, the theory-guided qualitative content analysis (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2018) proved to be a useful method of analysis as it allowed making connections between the findings in the data and the complex and multifaceted theories of FL motivation, globalisation, and relevant features of the Finnish school system as the context of this study. In addition, using the statistical analysis mainly for elaborating on the findings of the content analysis can be seen justifiable, as the small sample size would not have allowed for very detailed statistical analysis and the results would not have been in any way generalisable either way.

However, as mentioned above, questionnaire as a method of data-collection is prone to issues such as respondents giving answers that are either generally more acceptable or please the researcher (Dörnyei and Taguchi 2009). In my questionnaire, the attitudinal statements can be seen as rather sensitive to this issue. Responding to statements about the *usefulness* of FL learning, for instance, can lead to the participant giving his/her response according to the norm. Even if that person did not see *any point* in learning FLs other than English, it could be somewhat difficult for him/her to state that to a FL-teacher-to-become student, even if the response was anonymous as in this case. However, this is the exact reason why relying too much on the statistical data can be problematic, and why I included open-ended questions in the questionnaire and used responses to them as the core of my analysis.

One issue related to the respondents themselves can be found in the way the link to the questionnaire was sent to the parents. Using *Wilma* (the online messaging tool between school and home) for distributing the link can be seen as somewhat problematic. *Wilma* is widely known to be a target of antipathy by many parents, and therefore messages not directly related to the child's studies sent through it are easily neglected. This, together with the subject of my study, can be expected to lead in only more dedicated and active parents participating in the study. This could leave out some of the most important comments and reasons for choosing or not choosing the optional A2 from the data. However, as mentioned above, as the findings included most of those found in earlier studies of larger scale, this issue should not be seen as too serious, keeping in mind the limited scale and nature of this study.

### 6.3 Ideas for future research

This MA thesis took the somewhat novel approach to investigating the development of the *Choice motivation* (Dörnyei 2005) of the child in the context of Finnish syllabus A2 choice by asking the child's parents' perceptions on the matter. Although this revealed very interesting issues regarding the way parents provide *environmental support or hindrance* in the *Preactional Stage*, future research should emphasise the child's point of view. Surely, this has been done in many earlier studies, but given the newer notion of *Ideal Multilingual Self* (Ushioda 2017; Henry 2017), future investigations should consider *Choice motivation* from not FL-specific but a holistic, multilingual viewpoint.

In addition, it would be important to examine motivation in the *Actional Stage*, as dropping out the optional FL, most notably in the Finnish upper secondary school, is a worrying issue. Here, the actual purpose of upper secondary school as the provider of broad general knowledge and skills should be taken into new consideration. The current trend is that the results of the matriculation examination at the end of the upper secondary school will increasingly affect the entry into higher education through selection based on the matriculation certificate. There is a real threat that this transforms the upper secondary education into a “certificate production line” with little interest of broadening skills in subjects other than those required and rewarded for the entry into higher education. Signs of this development are already visible.

Furthermore, future research should also shed light on the perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs of teachers about the issue of *Multilingual Self*, as teachers' role in supporting the child's *Choice motivation* is essential. If teachers are deeply attached to their own subject, a specific FL, they could fail to notice their role in the larger picture of FL education in terms of promoting multilingual and -cultural knowledge and skills. Other possible avenues for this type of research could be conducted on people making the decisions concerning FL education in schools, municipalities, and on the national level. This would be important for gaining knowledge about the reasons why FL courses are or are not offered in some schools.

As discussed above, in 2020, the first compulsory FL (syllabus A1) will begin in every Finnish primary school in first grade. The implementation of this reform and its outcomes are expected to be under the microscope in the near future and some implications of it are expected to be

found regarding the optional FLs, mainly the syllabus A2. The fact that the A1 starts at an earlier point can give children and their parents more time to think about the goals and demands of the optional A2 study, which could indeed encourage more children to choose the optional FL. The urgency to learn the basics of English, the language which is expected to continue to be the most common syllabus A1 language, regardless of the recommendations to choose some other FL, could somewhat diminish and there could be more motivational capacity to learn additional FLs beginning in the fourth or fifth grade. The *Choice motivation* of both syllabus A1 and A2 should thus be investigated in the years to come.

## 7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

This MA thesis has attempted to tackle the issue of the declining interest to choose the optional A2 language in Finnish basic education. The study took place in a larger municipality where the optional FL study has been in decline in some FLs, but where positive trends have been witnessed in others, such as Spanish. One must remember that this study could provide a rather one-sided view on the issue of optional FL study in Finland, as the main problem lies in the institutional structures which lead to optional FLs not being offered in some municipalities, and, moreover, to children and their parents considering their own interests, which obviously are increasingly affected by the institutional emphasis on school grades and *success* in one or two “core” subjects.

I shall give one final remark in terms of *offering* optional FLs in Finnish schools. Although the current realities of the Finnish basic education have been that of large reforms, such as the new core curriculum (POPS 2014), digitalisation in schools, and cost-cutting in municipalities, the basic mission of the school should not be forgotten. The objective is to teach children basic skills and knowledge through which they can thrive later on in life, be it academically, career-wise, or simply as a thinking, understanding, and empathic person. It is widely accepted that in today’s globalised world, English as the only FL does not offer an individual all the *tools* he/she needs for understanding the global developments and events, and for him/herself becoming a genuinely active member in that world. The fact that only about the half of the Finnish municipalities offer optional FLs (OPH 2019) is therefore scandalous. Too often the argument

for this is that there is not enough money, which begs the question whether the decision-makers at national and local level believe that by making budget cuts to teaching FLs will provide some help. On the contrary, such decisions ultimately lead to a decline in those parts of Finland where FLs are not being offered, as they cannot possibly keep up with the challenges presented by the globalised world, without citizens with a wide arrange of language skills. One can only hope that this reality will be realised before it is too late.

To conclude, I must return to one important issue that came up in the analysis of the data, namely that of hobbies and optional FL learning competing for resources of time and effort. This is mere speculation, but there could be some connection between the focus on “productiveness” in one’s hobbies and the small interest towards FL learning. In many currently popular hobbies, such as sports, the results of learning are easily visible: one is able to measure the speed of a slap shot in ice hockey, or how far and how accurately one is able to kick a football. In basketball, every minor detail can be turned into statistical data, such as the number of passes leading to score, or calculating offense efficiency ratings, but one could also say that a *slam dunk* is the ultimate measure of one’s mastery. In language learning, one’s development is often not recorded the same way. Although use of language looks impressive in neuroimaging, any external equivalent of a *slam dunk* does not really exist outside poetry. The solution to this problem lies in creating emotions in FL learners, such as joy, surprise, and confidence, through actual use of FLs. This is what should be done in a FL class in order to make FL learning a more tempting goal for children. FLs can offer us something we are not even aware of before experiencing it ourselves.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1. Questionnaire

### Kysely A2-kielivalinnoista

Arvoisa kolmasluokkalaisen huoltaja,

tämä kysely koskee äskettäin tehtyjä A2-kielivalintoja (neljännellä luokalla alkava vapaavalintainen vieras kieli). Tässä kyselyssä kartoitetaan A2-kielen valitsemiseen tai valitsematta jättämiseen johtaneita syitä, sekä yleisemmin ajatuksia vieraisiin kieliin liittyen.

Tämä kysely on tarkoitettu täytettäväksi nykyisen kolmasluokkalaisen huoltajalle, ja mikäli huoltajia on kaksi, olisi toivottavaa, että molemmat huoltajat täyttävät omat lomakkeensa erikseen.

Kyselyn tulokset käsitellään anonymisti, eikä niitä yhdistetä yksittäisiin henkilöihin, kouluihin tai asuinpaikkakuntiin. Tämä kysely on osa Jyväskylän yliopistoon tekemääni pro gradu -tutkielmaa, joka julkaistaan valmistuessaan verkossa. Linkkiä julkaistuun työhön voi kysyä koulunne rehtorilta.

Kiitän yhteistyöstä ja vastauksista jo etukäteen!

yst. terv.  
Tuure Tabell  
opiskelija, englannin kieli  
Jyväskylän yliopisto

#### 1. Mitä sukupuolta edustat?

- Mies
- Nainen
- Muu/En halua kertoa

#### 2. Mitä sukupuolta lapsesi edustaa?

- Poika
- Tyttö
- Muu/En halua kertoa

#### 3. Mikä on ikäsi?

**4. Mikä on ammatillinen koulutuksesi? Valitse korkein suorittamasi koulutusaste.**

- Ei ammatillista koulutusta
- Ammattikurssi tai vastaava (alle 6 kk)
- Alempi keskiasteen ammattitutkinto (esim. ammatti- tai kauppakoulu)
- Ylempi keskiasteen ammattitutkinto (esim. sairaanhoito- tai kauppaopisto, teknillinen opisto)
- Ylempi korkeakoulututkinto
- Alempi korkea-aste (esim. hum. kand.)
- Ylempi korkea-aste (esim. maisteri, ekonomi, diplomi-insinööri)
- Tutkijakoulutus (lisensiaatti, tohtori)
- Muu, mikä? \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Mikä on oma kielitaitosi?**

	En osaa kieltä	Heikko	Välttävä	Tyydyttävä	Hyvä	Erinomainen	Äidinkieli
Suomi	<input type="radio"/>						
Englanti	<input type="radio"/>						
Espanja	<input type="radio"/>						
Saksa	<input type="radio"/>						
Ranska	<input type="radio"/>						
Ruotsi	<input type="radio"/>						
Venäjä	<input type="radio"/>						
Muu kieli, mikä? _____	<input type="radio"/>						
Muu kieli, mikä? _____	<input type="radio"/>						

Seuraavat kysymykset koskevat A2-kielivalintoja (alakoulun 4. luokalla alkava valinnainen vieras kieli).

**6. Valittiinko teillä ensi vuonna alkava A2-kieli?**

- Kyllä  
 Ei

**7. Mikä A2-kieli lapsellanne alkaa?**

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**8. Oliko A2-kieli, joka lapsellanne ensi vuonna alkaa, ensisijainen valintanne?**

- Kyllä  
 Ei, ensisijainen valinta oli \_\_\_\_\_

**9. Ketkä kaikki olivat mukana päättämässä A2-kielivalinnoista? Voit valita useamman vaihtoehdon.**

- Vanhemmat  
 Lapsi itse  
 Sisarukset  
 Sukulaiset tai tuttavat  
 Lapsen ystävät tai koulukaverit  
 Muut, ketkä? \_\_\_\_\_



**13. Keneltä tai mistä lähteestä sait tietoa kielivalinnoista? Voit mainita useita.**

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**14. Millaista tietoa tai mitä asioita sait selville kielivalintoihin liittyen?**

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**15. Mistä olisit halunnut saada lisätietoa?**

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16. Olisitko toivonut, että tarjolla olisi ollut jokin muu kuin nyt tarjottu kieli?

- Kyllä, mikä? \_\_\_\_\_
- Ei

Seuraavat väittämät ja kysymykset koskevat vieraita kieliä ylipäätään, eivät siis pelkästään A2-kieltä.

17. Vieraiden kielten opiskelu koulussa on tärkeää.

Täysin eri mieltä 1	Jokseenkin eri mieltä 2	Ei samaa eikä eri mieltä 3	Jokseenkin samaa mieltä 4	Täysin samaa mieltä 5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. Muiden vieraiden kielten kuin englannin opiskelu on tärkeää.

Täysin eri mieltä 1	Jokseenkin eri mieltä 2	Ei samaa eikä eri mieltä 3	Jokseenkin samaa mieltä 4	Täysin samaa mieltä 5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

19. On parempi osata yhtä vierasta kieltä hyvin kuin monta kieltä auttavasti.

Täysin eri mieltä 1	Jokseenkin eri mieltä 2	Ei samaa eikä eri mieltä 3	Jokseenkin samaa mieltä 4	Täysin samaa mieltä 5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**20. Vieraiden kielten osaaminen auttaa työllistymisessä.**

Täysin eri mieltä	Jokseenkin eri mieltä	Ei samaa eikä eri mieltä	Jokseenkin samaa mieltä	Täysin samaa mieltä
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**21. Se joka osaa useaa vierasta kieltä, ymmärtää maailmaa paremmin kuin se, joka osaa vain yhtä vierasta kieltä.**

Täysin eri mieltä	Jokseenkin eri mieltä	Ei samaa eikä eri mieltä	Jokseenkin samaa mieltä	Täysin samaa mieltä
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**22. Usean vieraan kielen opiskeleminen kehittää ajattelua.**

Täysin eri mieltä	Jokseenkin eri mieltä	Ei samaa eikä eri mieltä	Jokseenkin samaa mieltä	Täysin samaa mieltä
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**23. Peruskoulussa pakollisen ruotsin kielen tilalle tulisi voida valita jokin muu vieras kieli.**

Täysin eri mieltä	Jokseenkin eri mieltä	Ei samaa eikä eri mieltä	Jokseenkin samaa mieltä	Täysin samaa mieltä
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

24. Vieraiden kielten opiskeleminen tulisi aloittaa peruskoulussa aikaisemmin kuin nykyisin.

Täysin eri mieltä 1	Jokseenkin eri mieltä 2	Ei samaa eikä eri mieltä 3	Jokseenkin samaa mieltä 4	Täysin samaa mieltä 5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

25. Vieraiden kielten opiskeluun käytetty aika on pois muilta, hyödyllisemmiltä aineilta.

Täysin eri mieltä 1	Jokseenkin eri mieltä 2	Ei samaa eikä eri mieltä 3	Jokseenkin samaa mieltä 4	Täysin samaa mieltä 5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

26. Vieraiden kielten osaaminen auttaa pärjäämään muissa kouluaineissa paremmin.

Täysin eri mieltä 1	Jokseenkin eri mieltä 2	Ei samaa eikä eri mieltä 3	Jokseenkin samaa mieltä 4	Täysin samaa mieltä 5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

27. Vieraiden kielten oppimiseen vaikuttaa erityisesti oppijan niin kutsuttu kielipää.

Täysin eri mieltä 1	Jokseenkin eri mieltä 2	Ei samaa eikä eri mieltä 3	Jokseenkin samaa mieltä 4	Täysin samaa mieltä 5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**28. Usean vieraan kielen opiskeleminen samanaikaisesti on erittäin työlästä.**

Täysin eri mieltä	Jokseenkin eri mieltä	Ei samaa eikä eri mieltä	Jokseenkin samaa mieltä	Täysin samaa mieltä
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**29. On tärkeää, että osaan itse auttaa lastani vieraan kielen opiskelemisessä, esimerkiksi läksyissä.**

Täysin eri mieltä	Jokseenkin eri mieltä	Ei samaa eikä eri mieltä	Jokseenkin samaa mieltä	Täysin samaa mieltä
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**30. Vieraiden kielten opiskeleminen koulussa on hauskaa.**

Täysin eri mieltä	Jokseenkin eri mieltä	Ei samaa eikä eri mieltä	Jokseenkin samaa mieltä	Täysin samaa mieltä
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**31. Englanti on ainoa tarpeellinen vieras kieli.**

Täysin eri mieltä	Jokseenkin eri mieltä	Ei samaa eikä eri mieltä	Jokseenkin samaa mieltä	Täysin samaa mieltä
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**32. Usean vieraan kielen opiskelu samanaikaisesti vaikeuttaa niiden oppimista.**

Täysin eri mieltä 1	Jokseenkin eri mieltä 2	Ei samaa eikä eri mieltä 3	Jokseenkin samaa mieltä 4	Täysin samaa mieltä 5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**33. Vieraiden kielten opiskeleminen olisi hyvä aloittaa jostain muusta kielestä kuin englannista.**

Täysin eri mieltä 1	Jokseenkin eri mieltä 2	Ei samaa eikä eri mieltä 3	Jokseenkin samaa mieltä 4	Täysin samaa mieltä 5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**34. On vaikeaa arvioida, mistä vieraista kielistä on tulevaisuudessa eniten hyötyä.**

Täysin eri mieltä 1	Jokseenkin eri mieltä 2	Ei samaa eikä eri mieltä 3	Jokseenkin samaa mieltä 4	Täysin samaa mieltä 5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**35. Koulujen tulisi tarjota nykyistä enemmän mahdollisuuksia kokeilla eri kielten opiskelemista ennen sitoutumista yhteen vieraaseen kieleen.**

Täysin eri mieltä 1	Jokseenkin eri mieltä 2	Ei samaa eikä eri mieltä 3	Jokseenkin samaa mieltä 4	Täysin samaa mieltä 5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**36. Kuinka tärkeää olisi mielestäsi opiskella seuraavia kieliä peruskoulussa?**

	Ei lainkaan tärkeää 1	Ei kovin tärkeää 2	Jokseenkin tärkeää 3	Varsin tärkeää 4	Erittäin tärkeää 5
arabia	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
englanti	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
espanja	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
hindi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
italia	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
japani	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
kiina	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
portugali	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ranska	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ruotsi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
saksa	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
venäjä	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
viro	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



## Appendix 2. Content analysis of Q11

### Kyllä

Vastaajan nro	Perustelu	Teeman koodi
P2	Yritettiin miettiä, mistä kielestä olisi tulevaisuudessa eniten hyötyä.	2.2
P5	Espanja ja Venäjä olivat lapsesta yhtä kiinnostavia, mutta lopulta Espanja tuli ykköseksi. Kotona osataan espanjaa ja isän työkieli englantti&portukali. Ystäväperheessä puhutaan venäjää ja lapsi suomi&Venäjä kielisessä koulussa. Sieltä kiinnostus Venäjään.	1.1 2.2 1.3
P7	Ensisijaisen kielen opetusryhmää ei muodostunut liian vähäisen kiinnostuksen vuoksi. Opiskelukieleksi on sen takia tulossa 1. varakieli.	muu
P9		
P13	Lapsi harrastaa joukkuevoimistelua, siksi mielenkiinto oli kova venäjän kieltä kohtaa. Espanja valikoitui toiseksi vaihtoehdoksi kavereiden takia ja ilmeisesti myös oli koulussa hyviä "maistiaisista" tullut kielestä.	1.1; 1.3 1.4 1.2
P14	Kiinnostus maahan ja siihen miltä kieli kuulostaa	1.1
P19	Hän osaa ennestään jo italiaa, joten ehkä espanja tuntui tutuimmalta vaihtoehdolta. Lisäksi latinobiisit ovat tällä hetkellä suosikkeja.	1.1 1.3
P20	Lapsen kiinnostuksen mukaan	1.1
P21	Lapsi halusi kielen jota äiti ei osaa hyvin ja joka on eri kuin sisarusten valinta ja sama kuin kavereilla. Tärkeintä oli kuitenkin että saa ottaa uuden kielen omassa koulussa. Lapsi olisi halunnut opiskella Koreaa jos sitä olisi ollut tarjolla koska heillä oli käynyt korealainen vieras koululla.	1.1 1.4 2.1 1.2
P23	Lapsi harrastaa aktiivisesti joukkuevoimistelua, jossa valmentaja on puoleksi venäläinen. Hän olisi halunnut opetella venäjää sen takia. Tulevaisuutta ajatellen muutenkin venäjä olisi hyvä kieli oppia. Espanja tuli vanhempien toiveesta toiseksi vaihtoehdoksi, koska matkustamme paljon maissa, joissa puhutaan Espanjaa.	1.3 2.1 2.2
P24	Lapsen oma valinta oli venäjä. Hän harrastaa voimistelua ja hänen valmentajansa on kotoisin venäjältä, mikä vaikutti valintaan. Itse suosittelimme mieluummin espanjaa, joka laitettiin toiseksi vaihtoehdoksi. Lopulta venäjän kieliryhmää ei järjestetty, jolloin A2-kieleksi tuli espanja.	1.3 2.1
P30	Lapsi halusi Saksan, myöntelin päätöksen olevan hyvä siinä mielessä että voisin auttaa sanoissa kun itsekin jonkun verran puhun	1.1 2.2
P31	Oman mielenkiinnon mukaan.	1.1
P32	Joku lapsen luokkakavereista houkutteli valitsemaan kielen.	1.4
P38	Lapsen halu oppia uutta kieltä, oma espanjankielen taito (voin auttaa lasta)	1.1 2.2
P42		
P44	Lapsen halu aloittaa kieli.	1.1
P46	Lapsen kiinnostus	1.1
P48	Venäjän ryhmä ei toteutunut ja toisena vaihtoehtona oli espanja josta tiedettiin, että se luultavasti toteutuu.	muu
P50	Keskusteltiin kielistä, ja siitä mitä nykyaikana olisi hyvää oppia ja , mitä niistä on helpoin ja on läheinen kieli äidinkielellemme.	2.1 2.2

Ei

Valinta (excel)	Perustelu	Teeman koodi
P1	Englannin opiskelu on haastavaa. Ei ole tarvetta sekoittaa vielä muita kieliä opiskeluun.	2.1
P3	Sitoutuminen kielivalintaan yhdeksänteen luokkaan saakka on liian suuri vaatimus. Olen itse opettaja ja olen yläkoulussa nähnyt, miten suureksi taakaksi kieli välillä koituu. Tämä on vaikuttanut koulumotivaatioon. Kielten osaaminen on hienoa, mutta tämä sitoutumisen vaatimus on liian kova. Lapsi voi aloittaa halutessaan kielen yläkoulussa.	1.2.3 1.2.2 5.1 5.3 2.4
P4	Lapsi ei halunnut lisätunteja. Koulunkäynti on ollut lapselle muutoinkin ollut raskasta	3.1 3.2
P6	Lapsella haasteita jo yhden kielen (englanti) opiskelussa, joten lisäkieli olisi ollut ylimääräinen rasite.	2.1 (4) 3.2
P8	Ensin lapsi halusi valita kielen, mutta sitten tajusi koulupäivien pitenevän. Keskusteltiin asiasta yhdessä. Juteltiin, että myöhemminkin ehtii kieliä opetella. Näin kieli jäi valitsematta.	3.1 2.4; (1.2.2)
P10	Lukeminen on hidasta suomeksikin, ensin kannattaa opetella se.	4
P11	Kun kaveritkaan ei ota mitään, en mäkään ota. Päätös olisi ollut sitova 9 luokkaan saakka. Emme tiedä vielä kuinka paljon kielet jaksaa häntä kiinnostaa.	1.2.1 1.2.3 5.1
P12	Kiinnostuksen puute sekä se, että kieltä on opiskeltava 9.lk asti	1.1; 1.2.3
P15	Lapsen vaikea lukihäiriö.	4
P16	Lapsi ei kykene opiskelemaan kieliä ja jo nyt olevissa kouluaineissa on paljon tekemistä.	4 2.2
P17	Lapseni on ollut hyvin vaikea oppia lukemaan. Hän kävi ekaluokan kahteen kertaan, mutta lukeminen ja kirjoittaminen on yhä nyt kolmannellakin hidasta. Englanti on juuri alkanut ja sen kanssa hämmentää, että kirjoitusasu ei vastaa ääntämystä. Halusimme lapsen pärjäävän niin hyvin kuin hänen tasollaan on mahdollista ja lujittavan äidinkieltään hyväksy perustaksi muulle oppimiselle. Ylimääräinen kieli tässä vaiheessa olisi luultavasti enemmän sotkenut kuin ollut ilona.	4 2.1 2.2
P18	Lapsi itse koki ettei halua aloittaa vielä tässä vaiheessa uutta kieltä. Myös se vaikutti lapsen päätökseen ettei hän ollut varma aloittaako kukaan kavereista kieliä, kaveripiirissä asiasta ei oltu keskusteltu. Vanhempina ei haluttu painostaa opiskelun aloittamiseen vaikka jonkun verran yritettiin kannustaakin ja asiasta keskusteltiin useampaan otteeseen.	1.1 1.2.1 5.1
P22		
P25	Lukemaan oppiminen on ollut hidasta ja lukeminen edelleen hidasta. Englannin lisäksi tuntui liian raskaalta tämän lapsen kohdalla.	4
P26	Lapsella ei ollut omaa kiinnostusta ja toisaalta opiskelu edellyttää ilman kielivalintaakin sen verran tsemppaamista, että todettiin yhdessä, että panostetaan pakollisiin aineisiin ja harrastuksiin. Ruotsinkieli tulee kuitenkin jo 6 lk ja aikanaa C-kielen ja halutessaan D-kielen opinnoissa pääsee motivoitunut yhtä pitkälle kuin A2-kielessäkin.	1.1 2.2 2.3 2.4

P27	Kielen tunnit ovat ylimääräisiä tunteja, joten koulupäivät venyy. Lisäksi uskon, että kieltä voi oppia myös muualla kuin koulussa ja ehkä tehokkaammin (eli esim. matkustelun yhteydessä ja peleillä). Kaiken kaikkiaan siis suhtaudun hyvin myönteisesti kielten opiskeluun mutta en pidä välttämättömänä sitä, että niitä opiskellaan koulussa. Päätökseen vaikutti myös sen sitovuus. On hankala päättää tässä vaiheessa asiasta, johon täytyy sitoutua peruskoulun loppuun saakka. Tämä oli ehkä päätökseen eniten vaikuttava seikka.	3.1 2.4 5.3 1.2.3
P28	Lapsi sai itse päättää, keskusteltiin asiasta.	1.1
P29	Lapsi on kaksikielinen. Isosisko opiskelee espanjaa ja nyt kuutosluokalla hänellä on 5 kieltä ja Englannin arvosanat romahtivat. Toisen vieraan kielen valinta oli suuri virhe eikä siitä päästä eroon vaikka mitä yrittäisi.	1.2.3 3.3
P33	Haluaa keskittyä matematiikkaan, äidinkielen ja englantiin	1.1; 2.2+2.3
P34	Englanti riittää ja sillä pärjää.	2.1
P35	Ei valittu koska koulunkäynti on muutenkin haastavaa.	2.2
P36	Emme valinneet ylimääräistä kieltä, koska kielivalinta vaikuttaa yläkoulussa valinnaisiin aineisiin liikaa. Lisäksi haluamme panostaa "pakollisiin" kieliin.	2.2
P37	Koemme tärkeimmiksi oppiaineiksi tässä vaiheessa äidinkielen, matematiikan ja englannin ja haluamme että lapsi panostaa näihin eniten. Harrastus vie myös paljon aikaa ja koska pidämme tärkeänä että pakolliset aineet koulussa sujuu hyvin, emme halunneet lapselle lisäpainetta ylimääräisestä kielestä. Kieliopinnot vie paljon aikaa ja jos lapsi olisi itse osoittanut suurta kiinnostusta, olisi kielivalinta tehty. Nyt toivomme, että lapsi jaksaa panostaa englannin perusteisiin, kielitaitoa jatkossa tarvitaan yhä enemmän.	2.2 2.1 2.3 3.2 1.1 5.3
P39		
P40	Keskustelimme lapsen kanssa eri vaihtoehtoista. Vanhempina kannatamme kielten opiskelua ja olemme tietoisia, että lapsena kielten opiskelu sutjakkaa. Perusteita jotka vaikuttivat : -Lapsella itsellään ei tässä vaiheessa ollut halukkuutta tai erityistä motivaatiota ottaa uutta kieltä. - Oma innostus ja motivaatio oppimisen taustalla tärkeää. "Pakko" voi vaikuttaa kielteisesti (kielen oppimisen) asenteeseen myös myöhemmin. - Emme halunneet tehdä päätöstä täysin lapsen puolesta. - Kielen voi valita vielä myöhemminkin, yläkoulussa. - Sama kieli jatkuisi vielä yläkoulussa; ehkä lapsella silloin olisi jo oma toive / motivaatio ja ehkäpä jonkun muun kielen suhteen. - Nyt lapsen kielenä englanti ja pian ruotsi, erityisesti englannin kieleen ja opiskeluun luodaan nyt vankka pohja. - Pohdimme koulupäivän pituutta / työmäärää: lapsella harrastuksia ja tärkeää, että myös vapaata, huoletonta aikaa jää riittävästi. - Emme vanhempina juuri nyt pysty olemaan kovin vahvasti mukana esim. läksyjen teossa/ jos kieli olisi teettänyt extratyötä, se olisi aikalailla jäänyt lapsen harteille. Mainittakoon, ettei oppimisen pulmia ole ollut, koulu sujunut hyvin. - Emme käyttäneet asian pohdintaan tässä kohtaa kovinkaan paljon energiaa ja aikaa. Jonkinlaisena ohjaavana tausta -ajatuksena oli, että	5.3 1.1 5.1 2.4 1.2.3 2.1 3.1 / 3.2 3.2 2.4 5.3

	<p>myöhemminkin ehtii elämässä monenlaista. Lapsilähtöisesti mentiin, vaikka vanhemmat periaatteessa kielen valinnan puolesta liputtivat.</p> <p>- Ajatuksena vielä. Minkähän verran lapsille itselleen annetaan tietoa / esitellään koulussa uuden kielen opiskelua? Voisivatko esim.käydä tutustumassa kielen tunnilla? Kuinka herätellä lapsessa se fiilis ja into, että itsekin haluaa lähteä mukaan? Kotona toki puhutaan ja kerrotaan kielen merkityksestä kommunikaation välineenä ja mahdollisuutena elämässä. Uskon, että moni lapsi silti kiinnostunut siitä, mitä kielen opinnot konkreettisesti lapsen osalta tarkoittavat koulussa. Ehkä tätä onkin, riippuen koulusta, opettajasta jne. Tsemppiä gradun kanssa!</p>	
P41	<p>Englanti on pakollinen ja kaikkein tärkein kieli osata erinomaisesti. Sitten tulee ruotsi pakollisena, itse olen ruotsinkielinen ja tässä toinen kieli joka opetellaan hyvin. Tuntui että kolmas kieli tähän joukkoon sotkisi niin, ettei kaikkia kieliä opi kunnolla. Itse lukenut saksaa lisäksi kuusi vuotta, silti osaan vain alkeet. Eli ajatuksella, muutamat kielet kunnolla on parempi kun että osaa montaa huonosti.</p>	<p>2.1 2.2 3.3 1.2.2</p>
P43	<p>Lapsen kiinnostuksen mukaan.</p>	<p>1.1</p>
P45	<p>Lapsi harrastaa kovalla tasolla urheilua ja siihen kuluu useita tunteja viikossa. Emme halunneet tämän vuoksi pidentää lapsen kouluviikkoa. Ajattelemme, että tärkeintä tässä vaiheessa on rakentaa hyvä englanninkielen taito ja lisätä tähän myöhemmin tarvittaessa kieliä.</p>	<p>3.1  2.1 2.4</p>
P47	<p>Lapsella itsellä ei ollut aiheeseen luontaista kiinnostusta.</p>	<p>1.1</p>
P49	<p>Lukemisessa muutenkin haasteita vaikka englanti menee hyvin.</p>	<p>4</p>

## Appendix 3. Inter-item correlations (sum variables)

Sum variable 1: deleted

Sum variable 2: Monikielisuuden hyödyt (Benefits of multilingualism)

### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,508	,571	4

### Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

Se joka osaa useaa vierasta kieltä, ymmärtää maailmaa paremmin kuin se, joka osaa vain yhtä vierasta kieltä.:	Usean vieraan kielen opiskeleminen kehittää ajattelua.:	Vieraiden kielten osaaminen auttaa työllistymisessä.:	Vieraiden kielten osaaminen auttaa pärjäämään muissa kouluaineissa paremmin.:
Se joka osaa useaa vierasta kieltä, ymmärtää maailmaa paremmin kuin se, joka osaa vain yhtä vierasta kieltä.:	,547	,117	,077
Usean vieraan kielen opiskeleminen kehittää ajattelua.:	1,000	,437	,071
Vieraiden kielten osaaminen auttaa työllistymisessä.:	,117	1,000	,250
Vieraiden kielten osaaminen auttaa pärjäämään muissa kouluaineissa paremmin.:	,077	,071	1,000

### Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Se joka osaa useaa vierasta kieltä, ymmärtää maailmaa paremmin kuin se, joka osaa vain yhtä vierasta kieltä.:	10,45	1,185	,333	,323	,430

Usean vieraan kielen opiskeleminen samanaikaisesti on erittäin työlästä.:	10,95	3,734	,631	,525	,586
On tärkeää, että osaan itse auttaa lastani vieraan kielen opiskelemissa, esimerkiksi läksyissä.:	10,35	4,661	,543	,364	,638
Vieraiden kielten opiskeleminen koulussa on hauskaa.:	10,30	5,695	,208	,222	,748
Usean vieraan kielen opiskelu samanaikaisesti vaikeuttaa niiden oppimista.:	11,30	3,695	,637	,486	,583

Usean vieraan kielen opiskeleminen kehittää ajattelua.:	10,00	1,571	,530	,445	,277
Vieraiden kielten osaaminen auttaa työllistymisessä.:	9,83	1,933	,343	,263	,439
Vieraiden kielten osaaminen auttaa pärjäämään muissa kouluaineissa paremmin.:	10,69	1,722	,148	,072	,584

Sum variable 3: Koulujärjestelmän toimivuus (Policy and practices in school)

#### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,651	,680	5

#### Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

	Peruskoulussa pakollisen ruotsin kielen tilalle tulisi voida valita jokin muu vieras kieli.:	Vieraiden kielten opiskeleminen tulisi aloittaa peruskoulussa aikaisemmin kuin nykyisin.:	Vieraiden kielten opiskeluun käytetty aika on pois muilta, hyödyllisemmiltä aineilta.:	Vieraiden kielten opiskeleminen olisi hyvä aloittaa jostain muusta kielestä kuin englannista.:	Koulujen tulisi tarjota nykyistä enemmän mahdollisuuksia kokeilla eri kielten opiskelemista ennen sitoutumista yhteen vieraaseen kieleen.:
Peruskoulussa pakollisen ruotsin kielen tilalle tulisi voida valita jokin muu vieras kieli.:	1,000	,246	,337	-,132	,322
Vieraiden kielten opiskeleminen tulisi aloittaa peruskoulussa aikaisemmin kuin nykyisin.:	,246	1,000	,577	,400	,299

Sum variable 4: Kokemus kielten opiskelusta (Achievement in and experience of FL learning)

#### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,712	,696	5

#### Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

	Vieraiden kielten oppimiseen vaikuttaa erityisesti oppijan niin kutsuttu kielipää.:	Usean vieraan kielen opiskeleminen samanaikaisesti on erittäin työlästä.:	On tärkeää, että osaan itse auttaa lastani vieraan kielen opiskelemissä, esimerkiksi läksyissä.:	Vieraiden kielten opiskeleminen koulussa on hauskaa.:	Usean vieraan kielen opiskelu samanaikaisesti vaikeuttaa niiden oppimista.:
Vieraiden kielten oppimiseen vaikuttaa erityisesti oppijan niin kutsuttu kielipää.:	1,000	,488	,208	-,075	,294
Usean vieraan kielen opiskeleminen samanaikaisesti on erittäin työlästä.:	,488	1,000	,385	,077	,650
On tärkeää, että osaan itse auttaa lastani vieraan kielen opiskelemissä, esimerkiksi läksyissä.:	,208	,385	1,000	,433	,474
Vieraiden kielten opiskeleminen koulussa on hauskaa.:	-,075	,077	,433	1,000	,210
Usean vieraan kielen opiskelu samanaikaisesti vaikeuttaa niiden oppimista.:	,294	,650	,474	,210	1,000

#### Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Vieraiden kielten oppimiseen vaikuttaa erityisesti oppijan niin kutsuttu kielipää.:	11,10	5,147	,348	,258	,708

Vieraiden kielten opiskeluun käytetty aika on pois muilta, hyödyllisemmiltä aineilta.:	,337	,577	1,000	,306	,352
Vieraiden kielten opiskeleminen olisi hyvä aloittaa jostain muusta kielestä kuin englannista.:	-,132	,400	,306	1,000	,276
Koulujen tulisi tarjota nykyistä enemmän mahdollisuuksia kokeilla eri kielten opiskelemista ennen sitoutumista yhteen vieraaseen kieleen.:	,322	,299	,352	,276	1,000

#### Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Peruskoulussa pakollisen ruotsin kielen tilalle tulisi voida valita jokin muu vieras kieli.:	8,91	6,356	,269	,261	,672
Vieraiden kielten opiskeleminen tulisi aloittaa peruskoulussa aikaisemmin kuin nykyisin.:	9,39	4,976	,539	,403	,523
Vieraiden kielten opiskeluun käytetty aika on pois muilta, hyödyllisemmiltä aineilta.:	10,26	6,747	,611	,403	,554
Vieraiden kielten opiskeleminen olisi hyvä aloittaa jostain muusta kielestä kuin englannista.:	10,30	7,130	,282	,285	,648
Koulujen tulisi tarjota nykyistä enemmän mahdollisuuksia kokeilla eri kielten opiskelemista ennen sitoutumista yhteen vieraaseen kieleen.:	8,61	5,885	,454	,229	,573