

**Examining the parental view of choosing a language other  
than English as a first foreign language – a narrative ap-  
proach**

Laura Moisio

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Faculty of Education and Psychology  
University of Jyväskylä

## ABSTRACT

**Moisio, Laura. 2024. Examining the parental view of choosing a language other than English as a first foreign language - a narrative approach. Master's Thesis in Education. University of Jyväskylä. Faculty of Education and Psychology. 51 pages.**

English is so greatly preferred in language selection that it has almost become a norm in Finland. Still some parents choose a language other than English (LOTE) on behalf of their children. These choices are a crucial part of more diverse language skills. Language choices were examined in three levels: 1) macro-level, 2) meso-level and 3) micro-level. These levels are formed based on different levels of society affecting the choice.

The purpose of this study was to map how different ways families choose a LOTE, as well as school's role during this process and finally gather the justifications parents provide for their choice. This study was conducted in one Southern Finland city via questionnaire. A total of 26 parents answered the questionnaire. The data was analysed narratively and thematically.

Narrative analysis constructed a flow chart of the language choice process that all the parents in this study followed. Thematic analysis found that schools' role in the process is appreciated and needed but parents also had proposals for improvement. Thematic analysis found as well that parents had justifications for their language choice that varied from language skills to language learning.

As every parent in this study followed the flow chart it could indicate that all parents choosing a LOTE go through similar steps. In addition, schools got a lot of positive feedback, but they should also ask local parents for improvement ideas. Justifications provided by participants were similar to the previous research with the exception of child's own motivation.

Keywords: language choice, parents, LOTE, narrative

## TIIVISTELMÄ

**Moisio, Laura. 2024. Examining the parental view of choosing a language other than English as a first foreign language – a narrative approach. Kasvatustieteen pro gradu -tutkielma. Jyväskylän yliopisto. Opettajankoulutuslaitos. 51 sivua.**

Englannin valintaa A1-kieleksi pidetään jo lähes normina sen suosion vuoksi. Osa vanhemmista valitsee lapselleen kuitenkin jonkin muun vieraan kielen eli ns. LOTE:n (language other than English). Nämä muut kielet ovat tärkeä osa monipuolisemman kielitaidon saavuttamista. Kielivalintoja tarkasteltiin kolmella tasolla: 1) makrotaso, 2) mesotaso ja 3) mikrotaso. Nämä tasot muodostettiin pohjaten eri tasoihin yhteiskunnassa, joilla kielivalintaan vaikutetaan.

Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli kartoittaa tapoja, joilla perheet päätyvät valitsemaan LOTE:n, kuten myös koulujen roolia tämän prosessin aikana sekä myös koota yhteen vanhempien esittämiä perusteluja kielivalinnalleen. Tutkimus toteutettiin yhdessä Etelä-Suomalaisessa kaupungissa kyselylomakkeella. Yhteensä 26 vanhempaa vastasi kyselyyn. Tutkimusdata analysoitiin narratiivisesti ja temaattisesti.

Narratiivinen analyysi tuotti kulkukaavion kielivalintaprosessin vaiheista, joita kaikki tutkittavat noudattivat. Temaattisen analyysin avulla saatiin selville, koulujen roolin olevan prosessissa arvostettu ja tarpeellinen, vaikkakin vanhemmilla oli myös kehitysehdotuksia. Temaattisen analyysin avulla saatiin myös selville, että vanhempien perustelut olivat jaettavissa kielitaitoa käsitteleviin ja kielten oppimista käsitteleviin perusteluihin.

Tutkimuksessa kaikki vanhemmat seurasivat kulkukaavion polkuja, mikä voisi osoittaa, että kaikki LOTE-vanhemmat Suomessa toimivat kaavion mukaisesti. Koulut saivat positiivista palautetta toiminnastaan, mutta koulujen tulisi myös kartoittaa vanhempien kehitysehdotuksia. Kielivalinnan perustelut olivat samansuuntaisia aiempien tutkimusten kanssa, lapsen omaa motivaatiota lukuun ottamatta.

Avainsanat: Kielivalinta, vanhemmat, LOTE, narratiivi

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

From the year 2020 onward in Finnish basic education A1 language, as in, the first foreign language will begin in the spring of first grade at the latest (Opetushallitus, 2019). The decision regarding which foreign language to take, in other words the language choice, must be made early in a student's school journey, maybe even before it starts. Kosunen, Bernelius, Seppänen and Porkka (2016) found in their study that parents' own language skills and language learning experiences can affect the language choices their child makes. As the language choice is made so early the parents have an even more active role in the decision-making process (Mård-Miettinen & Pitkänen-Huhta, 2022). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the parents' own experiences may affect directly to the language choice.

According to the basic education act (1998) foreign languages must be taught in basic education but it is not specified what these languages ought to be. When not given specific parameters, language choices have become one-sided throughout the education levels (Vaarala, et al. 2021, 6). However, there has been a gradual change from this compulsory-in-practise nature of English as the first foreign language since the 1990s but there are no official guidelines to support the change (Pitkänen-Huhta, et al. 2021). Moreover, the language competence of Finns does not meet the needs of multilingual working life (Honko & Mustonen, 2021, 13).

Skinnari and Sjöberg (2018) state that the language repertoire of the municipality and its population can affect the languages provided in schools. Likewise, the financial status of the municipality can influence language availability of the schools (Sajavaara, 2006). With these factors in mind schools and municipalities make their decisions regarding their language selection. From this selection families make their own decisions. In the school year of 2022-23 first graders across Finland started studying foreign languages. As shown in table 1 under 5 percent chose a language other than English.

**Table 1**

Language choices of basic education, grade 1, school year 2022-2023. (Opetushallinnon tilastopalvelu, 2023)

<b>Foreign languages</b>	<b>total: 47 196</b>	<b>100%</b>
English	45 516	96.4%
German	774	1.7%
French	627	1.3%
Spanish	288	0.6%
Russian	147	0.3%
Chinese	39	0.08%
Estonian	9	0.02%
Hebrew	9	0.02%
Norwegian	1-4	0.01%
Sami	1-4	0.01%

Kantelinen and Koivistoinen (2020) point out that parents appreciate the freedom of choice when it comes to A1 languages. This is quite interesting because it doesn't really show in the actualised language choices. The dominance of English as a first foreign language is undeniable as approximately 95% of first graders begin to study English each year (Opetushallinnon tilastopalvelu, 2023). This phenomenon has been studied in Hungary, where people tended to take up the study of English increasingly as a routine part of education rather than driven by an L2-specific motivated decision (Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017).

While goal-directed behaviour is of course core to most theoretical accounts of human motivation, the instrumental and pragmatic value of learning the dom-

inant global language has clearly become a significant factor in people's motivations for acquiring English and has thus strongly shaped how researchers have sought to theorise such motivation in terms of future goals or self-states linked to English language proficiency or certification (Ushioda, 2017, 471). However, the motivations for choosing a language other than English aren't always similar to motivations for choosing English. For example, the concept of studying a language because of family heritage rarely emerges from data when dealing with global English (Thompson, 2017). The justifications specific for choosing a language other than English can be overrun with the justifications for choosing English in research since the number of students studying English is much greater. Therefore, these specific justifications for languages other than English are not as thoroughly researched.

Global English tends to impact negatively on motivation to learn other languages despite the growing linguistic and cultural diversity of today's societies (Ushioda, 2017). Csizér and Lukács (2010) further suggest that even the chronological order of starting to learn different languages might shape the overall motivational tenor of students' choices. In a recent study researchers found that global English only exerts its full power when it was the first foreign language learned by a student rather than preceded by another foreign language (Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017). Learning languages other than English almost always occurs in conjunction with the learning of global English, and the learning of this "metaphorical Goliath", then, is likely to impact on the study of its lower profile non-global counterparts (Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017, 457).

Finnish educators' aim for children to become multilingual citizens in the future, not just employees with specific foreign language skills (Kangasvieri, 2022). Currently, languages are taught very separately from each other, although it might be more useful for students to have education available that promotes general language learning skills that cross language barriers (Kyckling et al. 2019). A new type of elective subject combining languages could be developed in schools if groups are not created in individual languages. A new kind of elective subject would naturally combine different languages and their rudiments. Such



an elective subject could be used to increase the language awareness of students more generally, which may later lead to the enthusiasm to study languages. (Vaarala et al. 2021, 62).

The increased demand for English as an international, high-prestige language should not be treated as a threat to multilingual diversity, but it should be considered as development towards a so-called “multilingualism with English” ((Hoffman 2000, 3 in Tódor & Dégi, 2016). The central contribution of the new concept of multilingualism to a family considering the language choices of home, daycare and school is both demanding and liberating. Decisions must be made about what languages are spoken in the family and support children's language learning by providing diverse opportunities to use all the languages of the family and the surrounding society. (Martin, 2016). The importance of home in the development of a child's strong language self and pro-language attitudes can never be overemphasized (Kangasvieri, 2022).

There is a need to adopt a ‘focus on multilingualism’ approach when conducting research and teaching languages so that the commonalities shared by different languages are highlighted and multilingual students benefit from their multilingual repertoire (Cenoz & Gorter, 2019, 132). When conducting this study, I focus on that five percent of families making the choice to study a language other than English which are referred to by the acronym LOTE in research (see for example Duff, 2017) reflecting the dominance of English. The primary motivator for conducting this study is seeking understanding of why families choose to study a LOTE in this English-dominant world.

The following theoretical framework outlines previous research of language choices in a way that provides additional information about the different ways a language choice is affected on the different levels of society.

## 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The term 'language choice' can be understood in three ways in research as: 1) the choice a family makes when deciding with which language to bring the child up, 2) the choice family makes when deciding what foreign language the child will study in school, and 3) what language a multilingual person chooses to use in a specific situation. This study will focus on the second aspect of the term language choice while bearing in mind that the first aspect could easily affect the second one as well as the consequences of the first two can affect the third aspect of language choice.

In addition to the tripartition presented above the term 'language choice' entails the word 'choice' which is essential for this study as there would be no choice to make without a variety of options. In other words, schools must offer LOTEs to ensure the possibility of choice. According to Vaarala et al. (2021) however, the municipalities and schools mostly just offer English and thus make parents choose it. Thus, indicating the reality of language 'choice' when the opportunity to choose a first foreign language is non-existent (Nevalainen & Syvälahti, 2000).

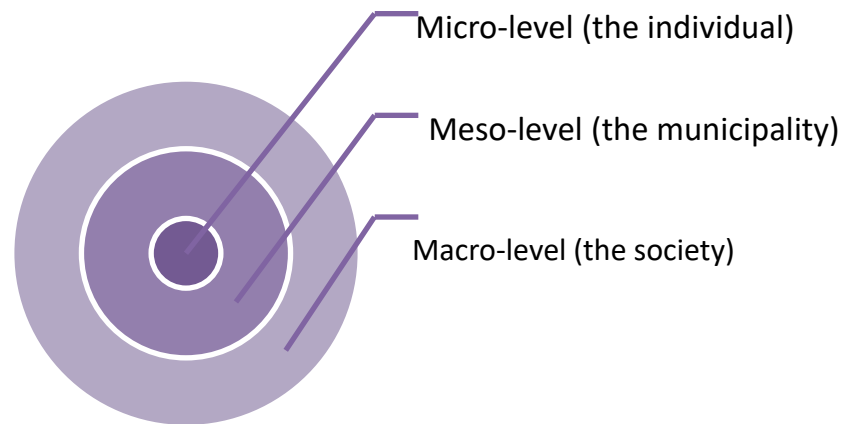
Multiple studies (Chen, et al. 2020; The Douglas Fir Group, 2016; Kangasvieri, et al. 2011) have theorized language learning and language choice. These theorizations tend to see the phenomenon centring around the individual and expanding outward to different aspects of society. On the other hand, other levels of society influence the individual and their language choice. Thus, in the theorizations the individual is in the centre of everything where all the aspects of society cumulate. The Douglas Fir Group (2016) presents a framework for second language acquisition in a multilingual world. They divided the levels as follows: *macro-level* of ideological structures, *meso-level* of sociocultural institutions and communities and *micro-level* of social activity.

According to Chen, Zhao and Tao (2020) at the *macro-level*, the political and ideological beliefs of the state underpin its efforts to plan and manage languages

within its control. At the *meso-level*, the language learning beliefs held by institutions such as universities directly influence the ways in which languages are used and taught within these institutions. At the *micro-level*, individual learners' language learning beliefs can influence the language learning process, and their engagement with learning in the classroom may be influenced by their beliefs about languages and language learning. (Chen et al. 2020, 1). In addition, Kangasvieri et al. (2011) have made a similar theorization of the factors influencing language choice: societal and political aspect, regional aspect, local aspect, and individual aspect.

As the choice of a LOTE has received little attention in research this study combines the presented frameworks to map different ways the language choice can be affected. For example, the schools in the meso-level decide which languages to offer in their school. This in turn affects the choice the parents will make. While each of the three levels has its distinctive characteristics, no level exists on its own; each exists only through constant interaction with the others (The Douglas Fir Group, 2016, 25).

As none of the frameworks presented above are tailored to suit language choice exactly, I have formed a framework based on the frameworks presented above. In this study I utilise a framework as seen in figure 1. The *macro-level* covers language policies, educational theories, and values as well as global, dominant ideologies. The *meso-level* contains municipal decision making, institutions' values and communities. The *micro-level* contains the individual and/or the family making the decision and their personal reasoning behind it. These different levels are explained in more detail in the following subsections.

**Figure 1***Overview of macro-, meso-, and micro-levels*

## 2.1 Macro-level

The fact that school politics is part of party politics is reflected in language education locally and nationally in funding and ideological regulation (Saarinen, Kauppinen & Kangasvieri, 2019, 121). As language is part of society, language education cannot be reformed without a focus on society (Saarinen & Ihalainen, 2020). Language perceptions and learning concepts are linked to national and international societal transformations, and thus in turn contribute to the shaping of language education policy (Saarinen, Kauppinen & Kangasvieri, 2019). Language skills are also a tool for influencing, which either brings people to be part of the community and society or separates them (Vaarala, et al., 2021, 6). All in all, languages are powerful tools that society wields, on occasion even trying to suppress the language or with the language.

Language ideologies are often unconscious assumptions and perceptions about the nature and societal connections of language (Lilja, et al. 2019, 177). It is important to identify language ideologies, as they characterize and at the same time regulate language policy decision-making by producing and strengthening perceptions of which languages are important and valuable to teach, and which remain marginal and thus unrecognizable (Saarinen, et al. 2019, 134-135).

The position of languages in society becomes visible when looking at the provision and accessibility of language education in general education (Kyckling et al. 2019, 5). In the school world, the value settings between languages are reflected in their position in the curriculum and their value to their students when applying for further studies (Kyckling et al. 2019). The so-called policy of freedom of choice also affects the accessibility of language education, as choices are always influenced by different structural i.e. socio-economic and cultural factors in addition to individual factors (Kyckling et al. 2019, 5).

The language competence of Finns, however, does not meet the needs of multilingual working life (Honko & Mustonen, 2021, 13). The EU has provided a policy for diverse language skills: this language policy is MT+2, which means that in addition to the mother tongue (MT) two foreign language ought to be studied. Typical for the Finnish situation in terms of MT+2 policy is the lack of variation as English and Swedish are the usual choices. A way forward might be to start thinking more consistently in terms of national languages plus two foreign languages (Nikula, et al. 2010, 33).

Skinnari and Sjöberg (2018) as well as Sajavaara (2006) state that in Finland, English has more of a second language than a foreign language status meaning English is learned outside of school as well. In an article in the *Opettaja* magazine, Hotokka (12/2021) summarizes the current language situation, stating that English is a basic skill, and other languages are the actual language skills. Still languages are studied in this educational system less and less while the multilingualism of society becomes more visible (Saarinen & Ihalainen, 2020). Still today, the focus in Finnish foreign language education is strongly on European languages, but the whole area of foreign language education is currently shadowed by growing concern about diminishing language repertoires (Pitkänen-Huhta, et al. 2021).

The debate about the Finnish language reserve and the supremacy of English is also marked by the illusion of monolingualism. This refers to the idea that everyone is believed to have one mother tongue, when in reality many are born and live in a multilingual environment (Laurinolli, 2020). The language reserve

is seen to be shrinking because the languages that immigrants know isn't seen as part of the Finnish language reserve (Vaarala et al. 2021, 21).

According to the law, municipalities must provide education in the A1 language and the other domestic language (Kangasvieri, 2022). In municipalities with more than 30,000 inhabitants, the obligation to offer more than one option as a first foreign language in primary school was repealed in 1998 (Pyykkö, 2017; 27). Early learning of the A1 language was thought to increase the enthusiasm to study also voluntary languages (Mård-Miettinen & Pitkänen-Huhta, 2022). In terms of increasing the language reserve, Pyykkö (2017) suggests that the A1 language would be a LOTE, with English instead offered as a voluntary A2 language, the beginning of which would also be earlier. Another option proposed to increase the language reserve was to oblige municipalities to provide a wider range of languages (Mård-Miettinen & Pitkänen-Huhta, 2022).

According to Veivo et al. (2023) there is interest in learning languages, and young people see languages and language skills as relevant and useful. However, this interest is not supported by the school system and language education policy decisions. (Veivo, et al. 2023). On the other hand, Nikula et al. (2010) state that it seems that finding ways of making studying foreign languages more attractive for pupils remains the core challenge. There seems to be disagreements on which is the cause and which the effect. Either way, it is essential to ponder, what message we send to the future generations about the value of diverse language skills without valuing languages differently (Kangasvieri, 2022).

The need for diverse language skills has been identified and recognized for years. It has also been found that early language learning is a good basis for later study of foreign languages and that it supports the learning of one's native language (Mikander & Vesalainen, 2023). In grades 1 to 2, the special task of foreign language and Sámi language teaching is to awaken the students' positive attitude towards language learning and to strengthen the students' confidence in their own abilities to learn languages and to use even minor language skills boldly (EDUFI, 2019, 24). Different aspects of macro-level from laws to values show how the atmosphere forms the ways municipalities and later individuals operate.

## 2.2 Meso-level

This subsection outlines the importance and role of the municipalities as the enabler of LOTE choice at the meso-level. Skinnari and Sjöberg (2018) state that the language repertoire of the municipality and its students can affect the languages they provide in schools. Likewise, the financial status of the municipality can possibly influence language selection of the schools (Sajavaara, 2006). In diversifying the supply of A1 language, municipal resources must also be considered to build a complete path for language learners throughout compulsory education (Vaarala, et al. 2021, 34). Teachers competent to teach LOTEs can be much harder to find compared to teacher competent to teach English since the overpower of English is present in universities as well. Municipalities can't offer languages other than English without teachers who are capable of teaching them.

The legislation does not specify the minimum size for a language teaching group. The group size requirement is the decision of the education provider (Mikander & Vesalainen, 2023). As municipalities, education providers, schools and especially their principals have more and more decision-making power in the organisation of language studies, the risk of segregation, fragmentation and inequality in studies is real (Saarinen, et al., 2019, 145).

The role of municipalities and schools in the language choice includes covering the entire process which leads to choosing a LOTE. The study Mård-Miettinen and Pitkänen-Huhta conducted (2022) indicates that Pyykkö's proposal to choose a LOTE as an A1 language is not a neutral language choice made between several equal languages. In many ways, English is the easy option, and the choice of another language is a conscious departure from the mainstream that requires daring. If a LOTE is chosen, it affects the child's entire language path, and when the choice is made at the very beginning of the school path, the resources of the

child, parent and school must be weighed (Mård-Miettinen & Pitkänen-Huhta, 2022, 240).

Information and informing are closely linked to the process of language choice (Skinnari et al., 2020; Mäntylä et al., 2021). Informing is the way municipalities, schools, teachers, and other authorities included at the meso-level try to affect the individual at the micro-level. Pietarinen, Kolehmainen and Kuosmanen (2011) set out to find what kind of support the pupils and their parents feel they need when making their language choices. They found that the school can influence a parent's possible negative attitude by providing sufficient and timely information on languages and language choices at parents' evenings, in bulletins and on the Internet.

Several other studies point out that informing parents and students about languages affects language choices (Skinnari et al., 2020; Lahti et al., 2020). Kantelinen and Koivistoinen (2020) similarly found that parents desired more information about language education. The survey of Mård-Miettinen and Pitkänen-Huhta (2022) indicated the need for parents to learn more about the benefits and areas of use of LOTEs to have the courage to make a bolder choice. According to Julkunen (1998, 73), the media plays an important role in getting to know different languages and cultures. Media also creates an image of the significance of different languages in the world, in turn affecting the language choices of students and parents. Therefore, both information available from schools and from the world has its effect on language choices.

In the study by Mäntylä et al. (2021), teachers highlight informing as a solution to diversify language choices. In addition to the typical information on elective subjects or parents' evenings, the teachers said that they had organised, among other things, an optional subject fair for the whole family, language carnivals, language Christmas parties and theme days for different languages (Pollari et al. 2021). In a study conducted by Vaarala et al. (2021) language teachers emphasized that there is a difference between advertising language choices when they are current and valuing the languages as a part of the school's operating culture. In the same study they note that it cannot be expected of only language



teachers to, by their own actions, influence language choices or advocate for a diverse language reserve (Vaarala, et al. 2021, 57).

In addition to informing the families, it would be important to underline to the parents that they do not have to know the language the child is learning (Pollari et al. 2021). This is also addressed in the Aamuposti article 17.1.2023 by Collin, which compares language learning to a hobby: a parent does not need to know figure skating, but they should support their child in both hobbies and language learning. In both hobbies and studies parents trust the professionals, which is why it is important for municipalities to have competent LOTE teachers.

In conclusion, the language choices are anything but simple and free from values affecting from the outside. The challenges and opportunities of language learning are structural, as well as those of interest and motivation, but also those of information and knowledge (Mikander & Vesalainen, 2023). Municipalities, schools, and even individual teacher have their role at the meso-level effecting the individuals decision making.

## **2.3 Micro-level**

Language choices are always influenced by socio-economic and cultural factors in addition to individual factors (Kyckling et al. 2019, 5). This subsection covers these individual factors in the form of previous findings on the justifications behind choosing a LOTE.

Arguably the most important unique characteristic of the motivation to learn LOTEs is the fact that the process typically takes place in the shadow of global English (Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017, 457). Dörnyei and Al-Hoorie (2017) state that it is natural to expect an individual reason or a story that justifies a significant time and effort-consuming commitment to a LOTE instead of English.

Previous studies (see, e.g., Hukka & Husu, 2019; Nevalainen & Syvälahti, 2000; Skinnari et al., 2020) have found various justifications for the actualised language choices. There are similarities in justifications across studies by combining slightly divergent a reasonably comprehensive picture comes into focus. It should be noted, however that a significant portion of the studies has surveyed justifications for all language choices and has not focused solely on LOTEs. Therefore, there is not abundant research on the specific choice of LOTEs.

The dominance of English can affect the result of studies conducted because reasons for choosing a LOTE can differ greatly from the justifications on choosing English. For example, Thompson (2017) points out that the concept of studying a language because of family heritage rarely emerges from data when studying global English. According to Mård-Miettinen et al. (2014), children consider knowing and learning multiple languages as natural, but the lack of language contact reduces enthusiasm, especially for studying LOTEs.

Research to date has found at least the justifications for choosing a LOTE presented in table 2. These justifications are briefly explained in the table as well. As seen in the table 2, many studies have found multiple justifications. Therefore, no matter the number of participants or the amount of LOTEs there are always many justifications present. Likewise, many of the studies have found similar justifications, excluding the public opinion found by Julkunen (1998). These studies therefore complement each other.

In research findings must be present in a meaningful and informative way. Mård-Miettinen and Pitkänen-Huhta (2022) divided their findings on language choice justification to *language and language skills* and to *language learning*. In terms of language and language skills, in the parents' arguments utility, economics, necessity and sophistication aspects stood out. In terms of language learning, parents' arguments were built around workload and familiarity aspects. (Mård-Miettinen & Pitkänen-Huhta, 2022). Most of these findings can be found in other studies as well (see Table 2), but this kind of division isn't utilized elsewhere.

**Table 2***Justifications for LOTEs in previous research*

<b>Justification</b>	<b>Previous studies</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<i>Competitive advantage</i>	(Skinnari et al. 2020; Hukka & Husu, 2019; Nevalainen & Syvälahti, 2000)	Language is a tool for a better future
<i>Sophistication</i>	(Skinnari et al. 2020)	Language is seen as something valuable
<i>Ease of English</i>	(Skinnari et al. 2020; Hukka & Husu, 2019; Skinnari & Sjöberg, 2018; Sajavaara, 2006; Nevalainen & Syvälahti, 2000)	Better to start with something else since English is so easy it is learned anyway
<i>Languages used at home</i>	(Lahti et al. 2020; Nevalainen & Syvälahti, 2000)	Multilingual family chooses another of their languages
<i>Language awareness</i>	(Hukka & Husu, 2019; Duff, 2017)	Language is an opportunity to broaden the view of the world
<i>Public opinion</i>	(Julkunen, 1998)	Status of a certain language
<i>Language nests and immersion</i>	(Sajavaara, 2006; Mård-Miettinen et al. 2014)	Language is introduced to the child before school
<i>Parents' language skills and experiences</i>	(Hukka & Husu, 2019; Nevalainen & Syvälahti, 2000; Kosunen et al. 2016; Pietarinen et al. 2011)	Parents have personal relationship with the language

In addition to the justifications above, Nevalainen and Syvälahti (2000) state that one of the main justifications they found was the language choices of siblings and friends. The child's own interest in the language has come up in studies where the subjects themselves were children (e.g., Julkunen, 1998), but in studies examining parents' justifications, the child's own motivation is rarely brought up not to mention the children's friends as motivators. This type of justification has probably gone down in number because of the increasing role of parents in the decision-making process.

Since in almost all cases learning English is socially valued and institutionally encouraged far more than LOTEs, some people high in reactions may, perhaps unconsciously, resist learning it, while some others might fall in love with

a LOTE that is not encouraged or is explicitly discouraged by authority figures (Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017). In addition to this, as L1 English speakers do not need to learn another language to compete in the English-dominant global market, some sort of rebellious self or the anti-ought-to self is emerging to be an essential aspect of Anglophones' L2 selves (Thompson, 2017, 495).

This study combines the earlier theorisations to investigate how parents come to choose a LOTE for their children. This study aims to map out parents' experiences in the process of language choice and the reasons behind said choice. The descriptions of the choosing process will help to understand the phenomenon as a whole and will provide cities and schools with tools to develop their operation regarding language choice.

### 3 RESEARCH TASK

The language choice process has not been studied almost at all, especially not from the parents' point of view. This study can provide an outlet for parents to give feedback to the city and schools based on their experience. This feedback will provide valuable information regarding what the parents want and need from teachers, principals and city officials during the period of language choice.

Language choice itself has been an interest of research, but the presence of English has dominated the results. Research only focusing on LOTEs has not really paid attention to the reasons behind the choice but more on the motivation to study said language after the choice. Moreover, not much attention has been paid to parents making the language choice. In the few studies that asked parents the question 'why' also provided the participants with options to choose their reasons from. This study will let the parents tell their story with their own words and those words will be analysed with a narrative approach which has not been done before.

These narratives combined with the arguments parents provide for their language choice will bring a comprehensive outlook of the phenomenon. This outlook will hopefully provide us with an understanding of what we should be doing in schools, in cities and in municipalities to ensure the growth in numbers of children studying LOTEs.

The research questions of this study are as follow:

1. How do the parents narrate their experiences of the language choice process?
2. What role does the schools play in the parents' experiences of the language choice process?
3. How do the parents justify the language choice?

## 4 RESEARCH IMPLEMENTATION

In the following subsections I will go through the practical implementations of this study. First, I will set the scene for narrative approach and its use in this study. Then following with detailed section on subjects and data collection. After that I describe thoroughly the data analysis. This section comes to an end with ethical solutions, where I go over the ethical aspects of this study.

### 4.1 Research Context

Studies on LOTE have not delved much into the underlying reasons and justifications for the choice, especially from the perspective of the parent. Parents' experiences have been studied mostly, when the child is already studying the language (Mård-Miettinen & Pitkänen-Huhta, 2022). Similarly, the language choice process has been scarcely examined, especially from the viewpoint of parents' own experiences. Mapping the entire process through a narrative method allows for the identification of challenges and the rewarding of successes that arise during the process.

This study was conducted in one city in Southern Finland. This city was chosen because of the exceptional number of actualised LOTE-groups in different schools. Thus, the city chosen doesn't represent the actualised language choices in the context of whole Finland and this works for the advantage of this study. To study LOTE choices, it was needed to have LOTE choices actualised each year as much as possible. The selected city was somewhat exceptional as it has a policy of providing at least one LOTE as the first foreign language in addition to English at every school. This provided this research an opportunity to compare different LOTEs with each other. When contacting the specific schools, it was made sure that LOTE groups had been formed in recent years. A school was excluded from the study because of the lack of actualized LOTE groups.

## 4.2 Subjects and Data Collection

The data was collected via questionnaire of mostly open-ended questions. The survey was piloted with two parents in the fall of 2023. Based on the pilot study, minor adjustments were made to the final design of the survey. The data collection was done by sending the survey to two principals. Before forwarding the survey, the principals had the opportunity to suggest changes to the survey but neither gave any suggestions. The principals approved the survey questions beforehand.

Then the principals forwarded the survey to a total of 256 children's parents in the end of the year 2023 and the beginning of the year 2024. They used the communication tool Wilma to contact the parents of children who had started studying a LOTE as a first foreign language. In qualitative research, samples are selected with an intention to understand the central phenomenon (Nasheeda et al. 2019) and therefore only LOTE parents were contacted. Out of the 256 families contacted 26 responded to the questionnaire. The answer rate then being 10.1 percent.

The answers were divided between French (54%) and German (46%) chosen as the first foreign language. This is because those were the languages these schools provided in addition to English (both) and Russian (one of them). As seen in Table 3, parents' children had started school anywhere from 2013 to 2023. Therefore, the data covers a ten-year period. However, the system for the language choice has changed during this period, first foreign language start moved from third grade to first grade, and that must be taken into consideration when analysing the data.

The survey contained two multiple choice questions regarding the chosen language and the year their child started school. The survey also contained four open-ended questions regarding parents' language background, reasons for choosing said language and the experiences of the whole language choice process.

**Table 3***Percentages of the parents' children school starting year*

Year	n	%
2023	4	15,4 %
2022	6	23,1 %
2021	2	7,7 %
2020	3	11,5 %
2019	1	3,8 %
2018	4	15,4 %
2017	1	3,8 %
2016	2	7,7 %
2015	2	7,7 %
2014	0	0,0 %
2013	1	3,8 %
Total	26	100,0 %

In the narrative research strategy, the interest lies in the stories told about the research subject or the narrative through which the research subject exists in culture or society. The strategy is based on seeing language and language use as primary in producing meanings. A narrative allows an insight into individuals' personal experiences that can be studied within their unique life circumstances and context (Riessman, 2008). Narrative research allows for delving into the experiences of parents and understanding the experience of language choice from their perspective.

Dörnyei and Al-Hoorie state in their article (2017) that it is natural to expect an individual reason or story that justifies a significant time and effort-consuming commitment to LOTE instead of English. They also note that high-level proficiency in LOTE is usually associated with very specific and personal reasons for the learner. In addition, Kaasila (2008) points out that when a person is asked why they did something they did, usually the answer comes out as a story. This accurately describes the possibilities of the narrative research approach in this context. Parents themselves get to articulate these personal thought processes and value judgements that have led to the choice of LOTEs. The questions in the survey way formed in a way to enable story-like answers. Each question was provided with a set of supporting questions to ensure a thorough answer.



### 4.3 Data Analysis

The data was covered from the Webropoll questionnaire platform in a Microsoft Excel-table where each participant had their own row. When getting familiar with the dataset I read it through participant after participant but also question by question. This allowed me to start seeing the similarities and differences in the data. Keeping in mind the three topics of my research questions I started to color-code different topics that emerged from the data.

Narrative analysis is a flexible method, and there is no single procedure to be followed in attempting to create stories from data collected (Nasheeda et al. 2019). In this study, I utilised the plot analysis (juonentaminen) presented by Kaasila in the book "Narratiivikirja" (2008). In addition, Ljalikova et al. (2022) and Nasheeda et al. (2019) have used similar narrative analysis called 'storying', which is quite similar. The method allows for identifying the plot of the narrative by finding the key events in subject's story. I used a combined version of these methods when analysing the language choice process where I utilized the way plotting allows the researcher to identify and create the crucial points in one's story and added to it the way storying focuses on creating a chronological story from the data.

In narrative analysis, some sort of typical stories are often formed from the data (Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka, 2006). While analysing the language process I started gathering crucial phases most of the parents went through before making the decision to choose a particular LOTE. For example, every participant mentioned a language briefing or a parents' evening at some point and from their answers it was clear that this event was monumental to their decision making. The answers given by the parents didn't clearly state any days or actual time and therefore the chronological order of the phases had to be formed from analysing their whole stories. For example, in the data there was a time before language briefing, the event of the language briefing and then the time and events after language briefing but before the final decision making.

From these phases and events, I had written down, I formed a flow chart. When making the chart I would choose a random participant and see if their story followed the path of the chart. Every participant answered to the open-ended questions in a way and length of their own and therefore every answer of the participant had to be read to comprehend their experience. Once the chart worked on randomized participants' stories, I went through all the data and made sure each of the stories followed a path of my flow chart.

One of the most important premises of the analysis is to decide whether you are interested in the content of the narrative or the form of the narrative (Laitinen & Uusitalo, 2008, 131). When analysing the justifications and the role of schools the interest was in the content of the data. So much, that thematic analysis is the best fitting term to describe the process. Thematic analysis was used to explore participants' narratives for reasons and justifications for the language choice as well as for the school's role in the language choice process. Thematic analysis focuses on the content to understand deeper meaning of stories from the holistic point of view (Ljalikova et al. 2022, 240).

The thematic analysis focused on identifying both the reasons for language choice and the role of schools and cities from the data. Justifications and the role of schools were colour-coded from the answers and gathered to form clusters and themes. Each response was color-coded carefully so that each theme emerging from it would be discovered. Justifications and thought on the schools' role could come up in any part of the answers and therefore it was crucial to know the data as well as possible.

An example of forming justifications is seen in the table 4. Similar ideas from participants were grouped together to form a theme as seen in table 5. Different themes found will be presented in the Results chapter. These extracts show how intertwined the different aspects of findings can be. While forming the flow chart going through the data was broad strokes but finding every possibly theme and aspect to schools' role and justifications was more meticulous work.

**Table 4***Thematisation of few reasonings found in one parent's answer*

Themes	Verbal description
Parent's own experiences	Choosing German was logical as I had studied it myself. Also knowing German brings a lot of opportunities at the job market and supports the learning of other languages due to their likeness. (G7)
Competitive advantage	
Supports learning other languages	

**Table 5***Thematisation of parents' reasonings about cultural understanding*

Theme	Verbal descriptions
Cultural understanding	I find studying foreign languages very important because through it one can understand other cultures better. (G3)
	At least it broadens our worldview to see cultural differences. (G6)
	Even if you didn't know the language perfectly it still helps you understand other cultures better. (F14)

#### 4.4 Ethical Solutions

The selection of the research topic in itself is an ethical question (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018). Studying this topic is justified since it provides new information, and that information is beneficial to the future. Ronkainen, Pehkonen, Lindblom-Yläne and Paaavilainen (2011) state that there is no research without the researcher and no method can eliminate the effects of the researcher. It is important to note that in this study I have interpreted the data by myself, and the subjects didn't have opportunities to clarify their answers in case of misinterpretation. However, I have been transparent with all the interpretations and have tried to

be true to the data. Interpreting the data is especially important to do carefully with the narrative analysis which is why I have included as many extracts and quotes from the data as possible.

Consent to perform this study was obtained from the city officials before starting the data collection. Consent to forward this study was obtained from the schools' principals as well as consent to take part in the study from the parents themselves. Participation to this study was completely voluntary and it was also a partitioner's right to leave the questioner unfinished (TENK, 2019). This ensured the respecting of the subjects' autonomy and ensuring their right of self-determination (Clarkeburn & Mustajoki, 2007). The privacy notice was provided to them in the beginning of the questionnaire. In addition, all data were anonymous.

This study was forwarded to the parents via the principals and therefore the researcher never had the information who the contacted parents were, or who of them answered the survey. The survey was formed so that there was as little personal data as possible. Other than their own experiences, shared willingly, the survey had no identifiable information. Research participants and people who have provided information for the research must not be promised complete anonymity if this cannot be guaranteed (TENK, 2019). Therefore, complete anonymity was not promised but it was the aim when conducting this study.

In this study, all findings will be provided so that there is no way to recognise a specific person from their answers. As is ethically correct, everyone's privacy is protected (TENK, 2019). This is done by paraphrasing any personal information given in the answers. In addition, individuals quoted in the findings-section the participants will be given pseudonyms such as F15 for choosing French for their child and G6 for choosing German for their child. The numbers indicate their location in the research data only known to the researcher.

The data is stored behind various passwords and is never saved to the cloud but on the JYU server. All data will be deleted within a year of publishing this study.

## 5 RESULTS

This section first covers the results regarding the language choice process in the form of a flow chart. After that the results for school's role in the language choice process are presented and finally the variety of justifications for choosing a LOTE are provided.

### 5.1 The language choice process

The results of this subsection have been gathered and combined into one flow chart (see figure 2). The flow chart is a simplification of the phases a parent or a family goes through before deciding to choose a LOTE. At least based on the understanding formed by the analysis of this study. The data was collected from parents, the flow chart starts from the parents' own experiences, then moves on to parents identifying the values they have about languages. After that parents get information about the upcoming language choice via language briefing which guides the families to make the decision.

There were two starting points found for the parents. The ones that love languages, have studied them a lot and are perhaps still studying. These parents are called language enthusiasts in the flow chart. The other type of parents are the ones that regret their own lack of effort regarding language studies. They wish better for their child and therefore appreciate languages just as much as the parents who study languages themselves.

**Extract 1.** I see myself as a pro-language person and I wish my children will get a better premise for their language learning than I had. (F12)

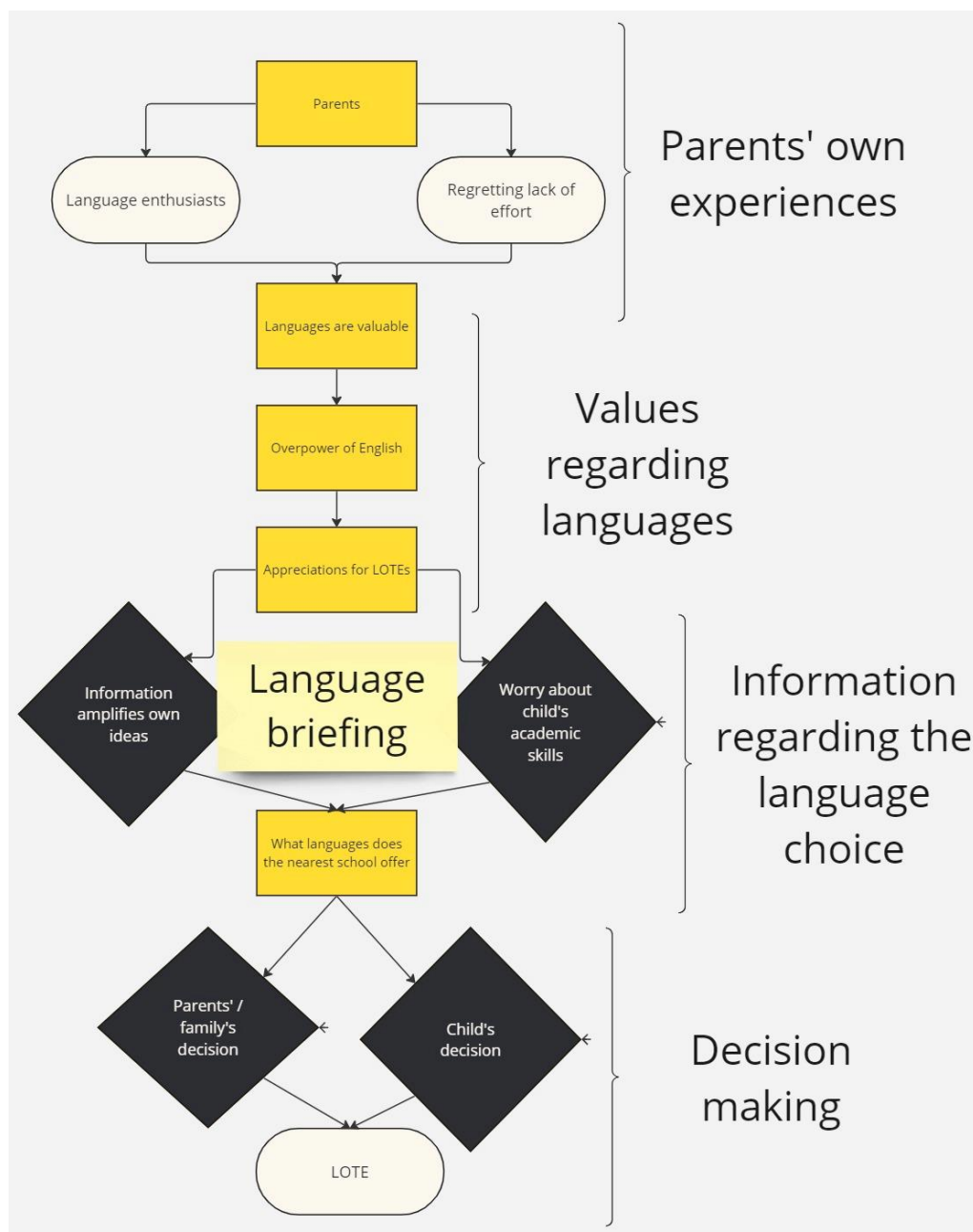
The second phase of the flow chart, values regarding languages, lays the ground before any official decision making regarding the language choice. Based on their own experiences, parents have come to value languages, especially languages other than English. Almost all participants stated that English will be learned even if the child doesn't start studying it right away. Therefore, parents have acknowledged the overpower of English. Simultaneously or right after they

start to think other options for their child as they realize English is not a desired option. From there we move on to the next step in the flow chart which is appreciating LOTE.

**Extract 2.** It was somehow clear that the first foreign language would be other than English. For the child school has been easy and pleasant. Additional language doesn't take anything away from the child and I think it is good to learn languages as a child. (F23)

**Figure 2**

*The language choice process flow chart*



The third phase, information regarding language choice, covers the information gathered in the parents' evening and in the language briefing. Some parents referred to the meeting held at school about languages as a parents' evening and some as a language briefing. From here on out they are treated as the same thing since in both the aim is to give parents information about languages.

Some parents have made the decision before entering the language briefing and have their opinions verified there. For example, they might have an idea of LOTEs. In the language briefing they might meet a student with experiences of studying some LOTE or a language teacher who convinces them to make that choice they were already considering. However, some parents might have doubts concerning their child's academic abilities. These doubts may be acknowledged and laid to rest in the language briefing. In each case parents need support and encouragement to make the decision.

**Extract 3.** I feel the language briefing is very important nowadays because the choice must be made before the school starts. The language briefing held by language teachers at the school and possibly the opinions of the preschool teachers about the child's ability to learn new things are important. (G8)

In addition to the third phase, it is crucial to the parents to get the information of what languages does the nearest school provide. Because of the nearest school policy in Finland, many parents stated that language isn't a reason to change schools. Therefore, it is invaluable to know which languages are the options in a specific school. Most parents got this information in the language briefing, but some searched for it online.

**Extract 4.** The most important piece of information was that the school had German as an option. We didn't need any additional information about language choice because the choice was so clear. (G17)

Based on all this information and previous experiences, either the parent or the family together make the decision, which gets us to the final phase of the flow chart, the decision making. In some cases, the child does the decision making by themselves. In these cases, the parents are usually supportive and encouraging but let the child decide for themselves. Most likely the child has had previous contact with the language to spark their interest.

**Extract 5.** The child had an interest towards the language, and they were in a German club while in second grade. (G10)

All in all, there are various paths on how a family ends up choosing a LOTE. However, based on the data gathered in this study it was possible to form this flow chart to show how the process evolves from parents' own experiences to the actualised language choice. The flow chart has shown that schools play a part in the language choice process. In the following section the role of the school is analysed more thoroughly.

## **5.2 The role of schools in language choice process**

In this section I will cover the findings for the schools' role in the language choice process. The findings have been divided in to two sections: the role of schools seen as currently and the hopes and wishes of the parents regarding the schools' role in the language choice process.

### **5.2.1 The current role of schools**

Even though most parents had already an idea of what language to choose they still attended and valued the language briefings. Almost all the participants mentioned the language briefing / parents' evening. Most of these mentions were positive.

**Extract 6.** --the info package from the language evening provided good support to the decision making. (F25)

**Extract 7.** I think these language briefings were good, they were the reason why we chose a language other than English. (G9)

For the parents who were sure of their choice, the language briefing was useful but not as necessary as for those who hadn't made the choice beforehand. While there were fewer negative comments, they nevertheless highlighted important considerations. The parents still pondering their options felt that the first briefing was held too late considering the schedule to make the choices. It was also pointed out that the information before the briefing wasn't as clear as the parents



hoped. Some parents even stated that with better language briefings and communication they think even more LOTE groups could have been formed.

**Extract 8.** The first language briefing of A1 language was held somehow quite late and it was a bit unclear. It wasn't clear to us parents if the briefing was mandatory or not and on what grounds should the choice be made. (G5)

In addition to unclear information several parents stated that the language selection was too narrow. They felt that they often had to choose the next best option. They also pointed out that the language choice wasn't a reason enough to change schools, suggesting they might have settled for the second-best language choice rather than go after the number one choice in another school. There were two cases where it was decided to change schools, but it was very rare in this data set.

**Extract 9.** The nearest school only had French as an option (F27)

**Extract 10.** -- because French group wasn't formed in their new nearest school due to lack of participants the child decided to apply to a music class in a school 5km away where there was an opportunity to choose German as the first foreign language. (G3)

**Extract 11.** There were too few options. We may have chosen Spanish if it were possible. (G6)

In addition to the language briefing the input of language teachers and preschool teachers was seen as valuable and useful. The role of the briefing was seen as more valuable since the teachers aren't as available since the school hasn't started before the decision needs to be made. The input of the preschool teachers on the other hand has increased due to their ability to evaluate the child's aptitude for learning languages.

**Extract 12.** I feel the language briefing is very important nowadays because the choice must be made before the school starts. The language briefing held by language teachers at the school and possibly the opinions of the preschool teachers about the child's ability to learn new things are important. (G8)

**Extract 13.** It would be good to somehow evaluate by a professional if it is a good idea for the child to study an additional language or if the resources should be directed to the other subjects and English. (F19)

**Extract 14.** The school's language teacher was our best informant in addition to our own experiences. (F13)

In the statement given by F13 the language choice has been made all the way back in 2015 when the foreign language started from the third grade. Then the

classroom teachers and language teacher were much more present in the decision making because the parent's had had years to talk to them about their concerns. Both other statements were made in recent years when the teachers weren't as available due to the earlier start of the language learning. This shows how the change from starting the first foreign language on the first grade instead of third grade has affected the decision-making process as well.

### 5.2.2 The hoped-for role of schools

This section addresses the question of the role of schools as what it is hoped to be. The answer to this question was derived from what some parents reported is already present in some schools. The findings include the feedback as well given by parents regarding new ideas for bettering the language choice process. The findings include both positive and negative feedback but mostly parents stated things they wished for in a positive and encouraging tone.

As stated in the section above, some sort of overlap and co-operation are needed to ensure a smooth transition from daycare to school, since the choice needs to be made in this transition phase. The parents are trying to get information from both the school and the daycare, and it would be for everybody's benefit if these institutions worked together on this. Parents also thought that the children should be introduced to the language already in daycare and preschool.

**Extract 15.** Some sort of language showers would be good to have in the daycare. If the interest and talent would somehow show itself already there. (G6)

**Extract 16.** Our youngest is now a preschooler and they liked that the older siblings' teacher came to teach language showers in their preschool, and now they are very much so choosing German for themselves. (G18)

**Extract 17.** Language choices should be talked about more directly with the children and perhaps enable trying out languages. (F14)

Parents also stated that the nature of early language learning should be made clearer. This links to the wish for the information also being clearer. Parents wished that they had known early language learning is mostly just "singing and playing", as G5 states. Many parents seemed to believe language learning

being similar to when they studied languages. Schools and cities should bear in mind that language learning has been very different to the parents than it is now. That difference should be explained. It could be beneficial to have older students tell the parents how they are studying the language.

**Extract 18.** From the very first email about language choice, it should be clear that in the first grade they merely play and sing and learn the colours and other simple stuff. (G5)

**Extract 19.** If the way of studying languages was discussed more openly during the choice process, it could spark interest to other choices. (F16)

As mentioned above older students' own experiences were seen as a way of relieving parents' doubts. The participants pointed out several times that in the language briefings it would be very helpful to hear real experiences from student who have made the same choice before and from their families as well.

**Extract 20.** We attended a language briefing held by the school where a young man who had chosen German and now studies it in university was telling us how he experienced studying German as A1 language. (G5)

**Extract 21.** In addition, it would be good to hear families' experiences about learning other languages. (F15)

**Extract 22.** Schools should ask older language learners to tell the parents, who are about to make the decision, how the extensive language skills have benefitted them. (F20)

Some parents also brought up that they had used a foreign language as a tactic to get their child in the nearest school or in the same class with a friend. Therefore, it needs to be noted that the language itself isn't always the reason for choosing it. Some parents were hoping that the same selected language would guarantee friends a spot in the same class. Others hope the opposite: for a child and their friend to be in the same class despite the language chosen.

**Extract 23.** Schools should think about if they can promise for friends to stay in the same class despite the language choice. Parents think about language choice from the aspect of friends. The language choice should not separate friends into different classes. This was especially emphasised when the choice was made after second grade. (F28)

**Extract 24.** We were told at the language evening that all the French readers would get their own class. Based on this we wondered the chance to get friends in the same class. To our surprise the classes were mixed after all, in two classes both French and English readers. (F25)

As F28 states, these requests seem to be toned down since the choice is now made before school starts and therefore classes aren't divided at a later stage because of language choices. However different tactics to school admission might be more present than ever since the choice of school and choice of foreign language are done at the same time.

In addition to language briefings, some of the parents said that they searched for information about the language choice online. They also pointed out that schools' and city's websites could be clearer and more informative. Even a new section to the websites was proposed.

**Extract 25.** -- maybe there could be demand for some kind of "support for language choice" section if someone is still thinking, how the school is starting for a child in general. (F23)

All in all, parents appreciate what the schools, the city and even individual language teachers do for them, but they also desire more concrete examples of experiences and better communication regarding this topic. This comes to show that the micro-level and meso-level should and perhaps could be more closely linked. That way the different levels could be in conversation with one another and have more positive results regarding actualised language choices.

### 5.3 The justifications for choosing a LOTE

This section focuses on the justifications for choosing a LOTE. There are various justifications to go through, and it is fruitful to divide them into sections. The findings will be divided in similar vein as in Mård-Miettinen and Pitkänen-Huhta's (2022) study with the justifications for language choice divided between *language and language skills* and *language learning*. This section of the study will utilize the same division since the findings supported similar themes.

Previous findings of this study have shown that the language selection of certain school affects one's language choice. However, it isn't a justification on its own since it is a meso-level aspect that affects the language choice and not a

justification on its own. In addition, there is always something else behind the made choice since English is always an option in the schools as well, but it isn't even considered. Therefore, schools' language selection is not considered a justification below.

### 5.3.1 Language and language skills justifications

Justifications in this subsection are mostly based on the fact that languages and language skills are somehow useful. Majority of the parents stated that languages are valuable, and others continued to say why languages are valuable.

**Extract 26.** I think languages and language skills are valuable assets which are helpful in life generally, at work and while traveling. (G7)

**Extract 27.** I think that knowing French will help in the future career wise and at least there isn't any harm to it. At least the language skills are useful while traveling in their free time. (F14)

G7 states, languages are seen as an asset for child's future. Parents especially think that learning LOTEs gives their child an advantage while searching for jobs in the future. Languages are also seen useful for travelling as seen in both quotes. It is interesting to see that both the language itself, French in F14's case, is seen as useful but also general language skills are seen as useful.

Although parents seem to think that studying any language will be beneficial for the future, these hopes for the usefulness of the LOTE come to play a part in choosing a certain language as well. It is important to the parents that the language chosen has influence in the world and opportunities to use it at least in Europe.

**Extract 28.** I see German as an all-around useful language like English. (G26)

**Extract 29.** French is an important language in the EU and in the world. (F20)

As seen in the answers given by G26 and F20 both French and German are seen as important languages in the global setting. For many LOTE parents it isn't

just about a specific language but about diverse language skills. For many parents diverse language skills are the goal and choosing a LOTE is a way to get the process started.

**Extract 30.** I want my child to have diverse language skills, I think that the skills can be useful for them in the future. (G18)

**Extract 31.** In the future the child will have a broad knowledge of languages, broader than many of their peers - - (F20)

Moreover, diverse language skills are thought to give a child a chance to communicate better and to get to know more people. In addition to the usefulness of the language skills in the future career wise, the parents also think ahead to make sure their child can communicate with and appreciate people from other cultures.

**Extract 32.** I find studying foreign languages very important because that way one can understand other cultures better and one has an opportunity to communicate more versatile. (G3)

**Extract 33.** I think language skills are valuable, they open doors and bring diversity, different influences and point of views to one's life. Also new acquaintances and friends. (F23)

Language skills and languages are seen as beneficial to the child's communication skills and future employment alike. Justifications were both LOTE-related and not language specific. This goes to show that parents value language skills no matter the language but there can be additional benefit of a certain language as well.

### 5.3.2 Language learning justifications

As the justifications of the previous sections are future-oriented this section focuses on the present and pays attention to the act of learning languages. For example, couple of parents stated that language learning can be fun and that is why they chose a LOTE for their child. These justifications are also formed based on the benefits of language learning.

One benefit according to the parents is that when learning a foreign language, it becomes easier to learn other languages as well. Similarly learning languages are seen as beneficial to the brain and cognitive functions. This justification doesn't value the language itself or even the diverse language skills you might get from it but the additional benefits that comes from the process of learning a foreign language.

**Extract 34.** In addition, learning languages helps and supports learning other languages. (F14)

**Extract 35.** -- studying foreign languages probably has anyway some benefits for the development of child's cognitive skills, I believe (G18)

**Extract 36.** Studying languages improves brains and thinking. (F20)

Where the two previous justifications concentrate on the benefits of learning a language this next one shows the parents motivation to utilise the opportunity for getting those benefits. Some parents stated that the time to learn the language is now because of the ease a child learns a language but also because it is much cheaper now at school than as an adult. Parents therefore felt that the time to study LOTEs is now, and the chance might not come again.

**Extract 37.** I also thought little bit that the language would be easier to learn as a child, how to write etc. (F23)

**Extract 38.** It is also so much cheaper to study a language at school than as an adult when language courses are expensive. (F20)

Many parents are seizing an opportunity to get their child to learn a language now as shown above. Almost every parent in this study stated that this is a good opportunity to learn another language than English since English would be learned later anyway. This way these parents were also ceasing a rare moment of making their child learn something other than English.

**Extract 39.** English on the other hand is very easy and it is also learned partially automatically since one hears it daily through different channels. (G7)

**Extract 40.** We thought that English would be learned anyway, and we thought it to be an amazing opportunity to learn something other than English as an A1 language. (F12)

**Extract 41.** We thought it would be good to start with German because English would come later anyway. (G17)

English was said to be present in children's everyday lives and that way the learning would be that much easier. Almost all the parents stated that learning English would come later. Some parents meant that learning English would start in the fourth grade and that way would be learned later. Other parents referred to the presence of English in children's everyday life. Either way this choice was seen as an opportunity too good to pass up.

This opportunity is even more tempting if the language to be chosen isn't completely foreign to the family. Many of the parents had some kind of connection to the language they chose for their child.

**Extract 42.** German is dear to both us parents and because the nearest school offered it as A1 was the choice quite easy. (G18)

**Extract 43.** I have studied French I persuaded my child to choose it. (F11)

If the child was the one making the language choice, they almost always had some kind of connection to it as well. The connection could have been anything from language showers to grandparents teaching it to them or siblings already studying the language.

**Extract 44.** Our child has gotten to know little German before school from their grandparent and is excited about it. (G17)

**Extract 45.** Our youngest has also wanted to choose French as the first foreign language and is very eager to learn other languages. (F15)

It is worthwhile to note that in families with multiple children many times all of them study LOTEs if it just is possible in the nearest school. It doesn't have to be the same LOTE as long as it is a LOTE.

**Extract 46.** When our youngest (whom this questionnaire is about) was about to start a foreign language, we chose French because our two older children have been studying it and we have found it useful. (F20)

**Extract 47.** French for the older siblings: natural choice: widely spoken world language, I was able to help along the way. German for the youngest: "the next best" choice even if parents can't really help. (G3)



There are plenty of justifications and factors affecting them and the choice itself. Some justifications were mentioned more than others but for the parents all of them are just as valid and reasonable. Parents want what is best for their children and above they have shown how they justify and validate the choice they have made. Parents think ahead quite a bit when making the first foreign language choice and a lot of pressure is put on the path they have chosen.

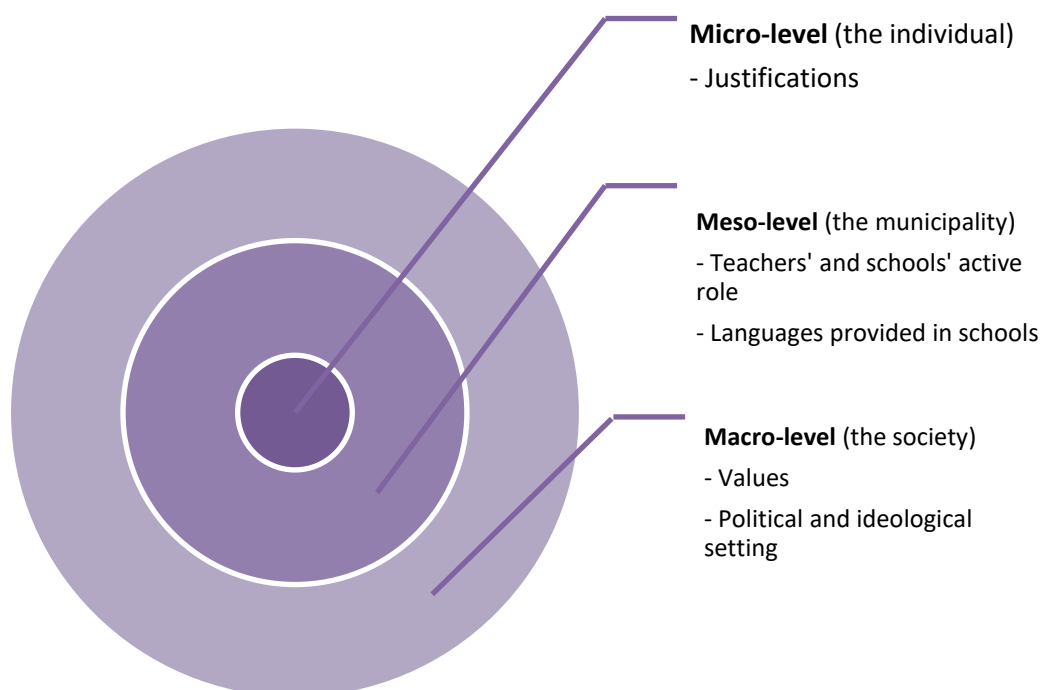
## 6 DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to map out the different ways families end up choosing a LOTE, as well as to report school's role during this process and finally aggregate the justifications parents provide for their choice. All this information gathered from different aspects of language choice will help to understand how the decision is made and how can the decision making be affected. The purpose is not to learn how to manipulate future parents but to understand their needs and ways of thinking during the language choice process.

The three research questions and the main findings of this study represented the three layers of the theoretical framework as presented in the figure 3.

**Figure 3**

*Overview of findings in macro-, meso-, and micro-levels*



The language choice process provides information about the experiences and values behind each LOTE choice and thus forming the macro-level of this study. The operators of macro-level weren't identified by the subjects in their answers but modern ideologies such as diverse language skills were present in most of the answers. The role of the school represents the meso-level where the institutions and teachers are seen as the main influencers. The operators in the meso-level are strongly influenced by the political and ideological aspects of macro-level. The operators of the meso-level on the other hand strongly influence the reality in which the individuals operate. On the individual (micro-) level of the framework, this study was interested in mapping out the justifications given by each parent to choose a LOTE. All in all, the framework inspired by Chen et al. (2020), The Douglas Fir Group (2016) and Kangasvieri et al. (2011) proved itself to be useful and an accurate way for dividing aspects of language choice even though it hadn't been done before.

Previous research has found various justifications for language choice (e.g. Skinnari et al. 2020; Hukka & Husu, 2019; Skinnari & Sjöberg, 2018; Sajavaara, 2006; Nevalainen & Syvälahti, 2000), but the research has most of the time included the choice of English. Still, plenty of justifications for LOTEs have been found and the studies conducted have found similar justifications even if the LOTEs differed. Schools' role in language choice process have been studied only to the extent of informing the parents (e.g. Skinnari et al., 2020; Lahti et al., 2020). Previous research hasn't been interested in how the parents would change the active role of schools. Any kind of figure or chart hasn't been provided by previous research regarding the language choice process. Holistic view of the whole process hasn't been utilised before either.

The primary results of this study were that 1) there is a certain path parents go through before choosing a LOTE, 2) parents mostly rely on the information provided to them by the schools but parents also have a lot to say about the ways schools can improve the language choice process, and finally 3) when choosing a

LOTE, parents have justifications that are based on both language skills and language learning. All in all, languages are seen as a useful skill and a tool for everyday life.

My assumption was that the parents would have an increasingly active role in the process of language choice since the choice has to be made earlier than before. This assumption was supported by previous studies being conducted with parents and not the children themselves. The findings proved the assumption somewhat wrong: although most of the parents were part of the process and gladly provided a description of their own language background, still some of the parents stated that the language choice was their child's idea. This was an interesting finding since it hasn't shown up in research examining the parents but only when the subjects were the children (e.g. Julkunen, 1998). This could indicate that despite the children's young age they are more active and vocal about their interests and parents are more willing to listen to their opinions.

It was also found that the parents that have decided to choose a LOTE were most likely to choose a LOTE for all their children. It didn't matter if the language was the same one as long as it was a LOTE. This goes to show that parents are actively choosing anything but English instead of a specific language. Although the study didn't have a chance to get answers from parents that chose English when there wasn't a specific language offered so this interpretation might be obscured by the data gathered in this study. However, this particular finding is supported in the acronym "LOTE" as the languages other than English can be lumped together even in research.

In previous studies informing the parents has played a role while studying language choices. Information and informing are closely linked to the process of language choice (Skinnari et al., 2020; Mäntylä et al, 2021). However, since language choice process as a whole hasn't been studied the focus hasn't been in the role of schools either and therefore the findings in previous research were never primary. Nevertheless, the role of adequate informing was found in this study as well.

As seen in the schools' role in the language process, there was a lot of variation on how the language briefings were handled not to mention the participations of language teachers outside of school (i.e. daycare). This goes to show that parents' experiences and the support they get is not equal in the context of this study. It can be assumed that it is even more unequal in the context of the whole Finland. As municipalities, schools and especially their principals have more and more decision-making power in the organisation of language studies, the risk of segregation, fragmentation and inequality in studies is realistic (Saarinen, et al., 2019, 145). Perhaps some kind of national guidelines are needed to ensure the change towards more diverse language choices and equal opportunities for all.

In addition to unjust aspects of language choice process, language showers done in preschool and daycare were mentioned as a justification for language choice but even more so as an idea for improvement of schools' role. Language teachers can advertise their language to the children and their parents in the daycare setting, but there are no guidelines for this procedure. Some kind of language immersion has been found as a justification for LOTE choice in previous research (e.g. Sajavaara, 2006; Mård-Miettinen et al. 2014) as well highlighting its part in the process, but the research hasn't stated the unequal nature of it. Since every family isn't provided with this opportunity, the starting point for language learning, knowledge of different options and the child's interest in languages are not the same to everyone.

The findings reported here highlight that parents are most of the time not willing to change schools based on the languages offered. Therefore, the choice is made between the languages available at the nearest school. Parents pointed out several times that they thought the school's language selection to be too narrow. It is possible that with a wider selection more people would be intrigued to choose a LOTE. Reflecting this finding, Mård-Miettinen and Pitkänen-Huhta (2022) have stated that another option proposed to increase the language reserve was to oblige municipalities to provide a wider range of languages. Although it is possible that with a wider selection the choices would scatter and therefore not enough people would choose the same language causing the group size to remain

too small. This is an issue I encourage to be discussed within the municipalities. Maybe variety could be provided by ensuring that schools near each other have different languages to offer.

The justifications found in this study were very similar with previous research. So much, that I was able to utilise a sorting from the study done by Mård-Miettinen and Pitkänen-Huhta (2022). This goes to show that the findings of the justifications are confirmed by previous research. The results didn't show much difference in the reasoning between the languages chosen. Perhaps German (chosen by 1,7% in Finland) and French (chosen by 1,3% in Finland) are in similar position in Finland (Opetushallinnon tilastopalvelu, 2023). Therefore, the reasons behind both languages can be similar (e.g. useful in the future and familiar to the parents). It remains to be seen if the justifications would have been less alike if there would have been parents who had chosen Chinese or Arabic.

This study didn't take a stand on whether the earlier start for language learning is good or not but, maybe the earlier start is necessary since the wider language reserve is the goal for both parents and the government as well. Dörnyei and Al-Hoorie (2017) found that students are more likely to not study other languages if they select English as a first foreign language. Therefore, it is crucial for a wider language reserve of Finns to select LOTEs particularly as first foreign languages.

In addition, a plus side to foreign language starting from the very first grade is that perhaps families can decide which near school is the best based on the language selection. It was found that language selection isn't a reason enough to change schools but maybe the foreign language wasn't considered when choosing the school in the first place. Now that the language choice is more acute in choosing the school it can bare more weight. Perhaps families don't have to settle for the second-best option anymore.

Since many parents aim for diverse language skills and therefore choose a LOTE maybe instead of choosing a language schools could provide a subject that concentrates on these language skills. Then parents would have more time and information about their child's academic skills before making the choice of the

foreign language. According to Vaarala et al. (2021) new type of elective subject combining languages could be developed in schools if groups are not created in individual languages. A new kind of elective subject would naturally combine different languages and their rudiments. Such an elective subject could be used to increase the language awareness of students more generally, which may later lead to the enthusiasm to study languages. (Vaarala et al. 2021, 62).

## 6.1 Limitations of the study

There are no unambiguous guidelines for assessing the reliability of qualitative research. It is more important to look at the research as a whole, in which case its internal conductivity, as in, coherence, is emphasized. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018). My study is a balanced entity which formed a comprehensive theoretical background and a framework based on it. All areas of the research were conducted carefully and with immense attention to detail. The integrity of my research is strengthened by making the different stages of the research process visible and replicable.

The narrative approach allows an insight into individuals' personal experiences that can be studied within their unique life circumstances and context (Riessman, 2008). Thus, narrative approach made the forming of the flow chart possible and provided new information on language choice process. Understanding parents' experiences was a lot more fruitful with the narrative approach. Thematic analysis supported the narrative approach nicely and provided additional and more precise information on the justifications as well as the role of schools.

It needs to be pointed out here that this survey was available only in Finnish so some parents might have not been reached. For example, immigrant parents might have had very different paths and justification for choosing a LOTE. It would be interesting to provide a similar study in different languages and see how the different subject pool affects the results.

Mäntylä et al. (2023) point out that researchers' role is seen in the research design and task instructions that also have their effect on the result. In their study they investigated drawings done by pupils, but this applies in my study as well. For example, it came clear that for one parent one question in the survey had been formed in a way that didn't suit their situation. In forming those questions, I had made assumptions that didn't fit everyone responding.

Conducting qualitative research is always interpreting of research data. That's why one of the limitations of my study is that I didn't work with a pair. Therefore, I couldn't compare the thematizations or forming of the flow chart with another researcher, but the decisions I made are entirely my own responsibility. In addition, I didn't have a partner to compare translations with. The answers sampled were translated by the researcher and it is possible that some interpretation has affected the translation. Other answers particular subject has given might have affected said interpretations. To ensure transparency all the extracts in the original language are available for examination in the appendices-section.

## **6.2 Future research and practical applications**

This study provides new information on the language choice process. The flow chart about language choice process allows city officials and other parties interested to see the language choice through parents' eyes once this research is published. As stated above the flow chart could look very different depending on the languages and the city's activity, but at least in this setting with these languages the flow chart tells us exactly what steps the parents take before choosing a LOTE.

Similarly, the role of schools is dependent on the specific city, but the information gathered in this study can be generalizable to an extent. Mostly parents had positive feedback to give but there were also some suggestions for the bet-



terment of the language choice process such as clearer communication and websites. All municipalities and cities in Finland can take something from these findings and apply them to their own context.

The justifications for choosing a LOTE were mostly found in previous research (i.e. Skinnari et al. 2020; Hukka & Husu, 2019; Skinnari & Sjöberg, 2018; Sajavaara, 2006; Nevalainen & Syvälahti, 2000) which is an interesting finding in itself. In addition, it was verified how much parents' own experiences actually influence the language choice for their child. Now we have even more information on what grounds the language choice is made. Again, it needs to be remembered that this study only covered the choosing of two languages so the justifications might not all be transferable into other LOTEs. Although similar findings in other research with other languages (i.e. Skinnari et al. 2020; Hukka & Husu, 2019; Nevalainen & Syvälahti, 2000) supports the assumption that all LOTEs have similar justifications behind them.

I have already made some small suggestions on what future studies could include, but one interesting aspect remains unaddressed. The interest of this research didn't allow me to concentrate too much on the differences between the year the choice had been made. There were parents who had made the decision once their child was starting third grade and other parents whose child started first grade when doing the decision and the findings emphasized the lack of contact parents have with schools when the school year hasn't started yet. It would be interesting to see if the change of the starting year of the first foreign language (from third grade to the first) has affected the LOTE choices some other ways as well.

Similarly, it would be very interesting to study the language choice process of parents choosing something else i.e. Chinese or Spanish. Because the flow chart created in this study is one of a kind in this field of research the results cannot be accurately compared. The generalizability of this flow chart cannot be accurately evaluated since it can't be verified if the participants of this study follow the path of the flow chart due to choosing a LOTE or due to choosing one of these two specific languages. It would be beneficial to study different paths with

wider participant pool and wider language choices. Of course, the context of the language choices also affects greatly to the language choice process and since all the participants were from the same city, they all had quite similar experiences of the process. The process can alter greatly depending on the role of the schools and city.

All in all, this study achieved its goal of gathering more information of the language choice process and presenting it in a visual and progressive way. This broader understanding hopefully increases the possibilities of choosing languages other than English as the A1 language in the future and thus widens the language reserve of Finns. However, LOTEs need and deserve more room in research and in schools. Just one of the two isn't enough: if we want more diverse language skills and therefore better opportunities in the global world, we need to start valuing different languages. Language selection in schools can't be the place from where to save money in the municipality. It can't be only teachers' responsibility to try to encourage parents to choose LOTEs either. As Vaarala et al. (2021, 57) stated in any shape or form, large-scale, structural, and national changes are needed in the future.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1, Questions in the questionnaire

- Minä vuonna lapsesi on aloittanut koulunkäynnin?
- Mitä ensimmäistä vierasta kieltä (A1) lapsesi opiskelee?
- Kerro, millainen on sinun oma kielihistoriasi. Pohdi asiaa esimerkiksi alla olevien kysymysten avulla. Mitä kieliä olet opiskellut? Mikä on suhtautumisesi vieraita kieliä kohtaan? Miten ja mitkä kielet ovat osa arkeasi?
- Kerro kokemuksistasi koskien lapsesi kielivalintaprosessia. Kerro siis vaiheittain, mitä tapahtui. Alla taas apukysymyksiä. Mistä idea sai alkunsa? Miten prosessi eteni ensimmäisestä tiedon murusesta lopulliseen valintaan? Ketkä osallistuivat päätöksentekoon? Heräsikö prosessin aikana huolia tai mietityttikö jokin asia päätöstä tehdessä?
- Kerro kokemuksistasi koskien hyödyntämiänne tietolähteitä (infot, keskustelut, nettisivut yms.) ja millaisia apuja jäit kaipaamaan. Pohdi asiaa esimerkiksi alla olevien kysymysten avulla. Mitä tietolähteitä ja tahoja hyödynsitte päätöksentekonne tueksi? Saitteko riittävästi tietoa päätöksentekoa varten? Mistä tietolähteestä oli erityisesti hyötyä? Miksi? Jäittekö kaipaamaan jotakin päätöksenteon tueksi? Mitä koulujen kannattaisi tehdä, jotta yhä useampi valitsisi ensimmäiseksi vieraaksi kieleksi muun kuin englannin?
- Kerro mahdollisimman kattavasti, mistä syistä valitsitte lapsellenne kyseisen kielen. Alla taas esimerkkikysymyksiä. Miten perustelisit tekemäänne kielivalintaa? Miksi valitsitte kyseisen kielen lapsellenne? Miksi juuri se kieli, eikä jokin muu? Koetko valitsemastanne kielestä olevan jotakin hyötyä lapselle? Mitä?
- Tähän voit lisätä vielä aiheeseen tai tutkimukseen liittyviä ajatuksiasi.

## Appendix 2, original quotations

**Extract 1.** Mielestäni olen kielimyönteinen ja toivon, että lapseni saisivat paremmat lähtökohdat kielten oppimiselle kuin itselläni oli. (F12)

**Extract 2.** Oli jotenkin selvää että A1 muu kuin englantia. Lapsille koulu ollut helppoa ja mielekästä. Lisäkieli ei ole ainakaan mistään pois, mielestäni hyvä opiskella kieliä lapsena. (F23)

**Extract 3.** Koen että koulujen info on nykyään hyvin tärkeä, koska valinta tulee tehdä jo ennen kouluikään. Tässä kielten opettajien info paikan päällä koulussa ja mahdollisesti myös eskariopettajan näkemys lapsen kyvystä oppia uusia asioita on tärkeä. (G8)

**Extract 4.** Tärkein tieto oli että onhan *kyseisessä* koulussa mahdollista valita saksa A1 kieleksi. Emme kaivanneet kummempaa tietoa kielivalinnasta, koska valinta oli niin selkeä. (G17)

**Extract 5.** Kiinnosti lasta ja oli saksa kerhossa toisella luokalla ollessaan. (G10)

**Extract 6.** -- kieli-illan infopaketti oli hyvä tuki päätöksentekoon. (F25)

**Extract 7.** Minusta nämä kieli-infot olivat hyviä, niiden vuoksi valitsimme muun kielen kuin englannin. (G9)

**Extract 8.** A1 kielen ensimmäinen info tuli jotenkin aika myöhään ja oli vähän epätarkka, ei oikein auennut meille vanhemmille että onko se pakollinen vai ei ja millä perusteilla valinta pitäisi tehdä. (G5)

**Extract 9.** Lähikoulussa oli vain Ranska kieli vaihtoehtona. (F27)

**Extract 10.** --koska sitä [*ranskaa*] ei hänen kohdallaan tullut vähäisen oppilasmäärän vuoksi uuteen lähikouluun vaihtoehdoksi (oli vain englantia), päätti tyttö pyrkiä 5km päähän musiikkiluokalle kouluun, jossa oli mahdollisuus valita ensimmäiseksi vieraaksi kieleksi saksan. (G3)

**Extract 11.** Vaihtoehtoja oli liian vähän. Olisimme saattaneet valita Espanjan jos se olisi ollut mahdollista. (G6)

**Extract 12.** Koen että koulujen info on nykyään hyvin tärkeä, koska valinta tulee tehdä jo ennen kouluikään. Tässä kielten opettajien info paikan päällä koulussa ja mahdollisesti myös eskariopettajan näkemys lapsen kyvystä oppia uusia asioita on tärkeä. (G8)

**Extract 13.** Jollakin tapaa olisi lapsesta hyvä arvioida ammattilaisten toimesta, onko ylimääräisen kielen opiskelu hyvä idea vai pitäisikö voimavarat ohjata niihin muihin aineisiin ja englantiin. (F19)

**Extract 14.** Koulun kielten opettaja oli paras tiedonlähteenne omien kokemusten lisäksi. (F13)

**Extract 15.** Päiväkodin puolelle olisi hyvä saada jonkinlaista kielikylypyä. Jospa kiinnostus ja lahjakkuus tulisi jotenkin esille jo siellä. (G6)

**Extract 16.** Nyt nuorimmaisemme on esikoululainen, ja hänestä oli kiva, kun isompien lastemme saksan opettaja oli heidän eskarissa pitämässä kielisuihkutusta, ja hän on nyt myös kovasti valitsemassa itselleen saksan kieltä. (G18)

**Extract 17.** Lapsille kannattaisi suoraan puhua kielivalinnoista ja vaikka mahdollistaa kielikokeilut. (F14)

**Extract 18.** Ihan ensimmäisestä infoviestistä alkaen olisi hyvä kertoa, että ekaluokalla leikitään ja lauletaan ja opetellaan värit ja muuta ihan simppeleitä. (G5)

**Extract 19.** Jos valintatilanteessa kerrottaisiin avoimemmin kuinka vierasta kieltä opiskellaan, voisi innostaa muihin valintoihin. (F16)

**Extract 20.** Osallistuimme koulun järjestämään kieli-infoon, jossa oli pitkän saksan opiskellut ja nykyisin yliopistossa saksaa opiskeleva nuorimies kertomassa siitä, miten hän koki A1 kielenä aloitetun saksan. (G5)

**Extract 21.** Lisäksi olisi hyvä kuulla aikaisempien perheiden kokemuksia muiden kielten opiskelusta. (F15)

**Extract 22.** Koulujen kannattaa pyytää vanhempia vieraiden kielten opiskelijoita kertomaan kielivalintaa miettiville miten heillä on ollut hyötyä laajasta kielitaidosta. (F20)

**Extract 23.** Asia, jota koulujen kannattaisi pohtia on se, voiko vanhemmille luvata kavereiden pysyvän kielivalinnasta huolimatta samalla luokalla. Vanhemmat pohtivat kielivalintaa kavereiden kannalta. Kielivalinnan ei pitäisi erottaa kavereita eri luokille, jos heillä on eri kieli valittuna vieraaksi kieleksi. Tämä korostui varsinkin silloin, kun valinta tehtiin tokaluokan jälkeen. (F28)

**Extract 24.** Meille kerrottiin kieli-illassa kuinka ranskanlukijoille tulee oma luokka. Tällä mietittiin mahdollisuutta kavereiden saamiselle samalle luokalla. Yllätykseksemme kuitenkin luokat on nyt sekaluokkia, kahdessa ryhmässä ranskan sekä englannin lukijoita. (F25)

**Extract 25.** --ehkä joku voisi kaivata jotain valinnan tueksi -osiota jos miettii vaikka vielä kuinka koulu lähtee yleensä sujumaan. (F23)

**Extract 26.** Mielestäni kielet ja kielitaito ovat rikkaus jotka auttavat yleisesti elämässä, töissä ja matkailussa. (G7)

**Extract 27.** Ajattelen, että Ranskan kielen osaaminen auttaa jatkossa uravaihtoehtoissa eikä siitä ainakaan ole mitään haittaa. Vähintään kielitaito on hyödyksi ihan vapaa-ajalla matkusteltaessa. (F14)

**Extract 28.** Näen saksankielen yleishyödyllisenä kielenä kuten englanninkin. (G26)

**Extract 29.** Ranska on EU:ssä ja maailmalla tärkeä kieli. (F20)

**Extract 30.** Haluan lapselle monipuolisen kielitaidon, ajattelen, että siitä voi olla hänelle hyötyä tulevaisuudessa. (G18)

**Extract 31.** Lapsella on tulevaisuutta ajatellen laaja kielitaito, laajempi kuin useimmilla ikätovereilla – (F20)

**Extract 32.** Pidän vieraiden kielten opiskelua erittäin tärkeänä, koska sitä kautta voi ymmärtää muita kulttuureja paremmin ja on mahdollisuus kommunikoida monipuolisemmin. (G3)

**Extract 33.** Mielestäni kielitaito on rikkaus, se avaa ovia ja tuo elämään monipuolisuutta, erilaisia vaikutteita ja näkökulmia, myös uusia tuttavuuksia ja ystäviä. (F23)

**Extract 34.** Lisäksi kielten opiskelu auttaa ja tukee muiden kielten oppimisessa. (F14)

**Extract 35.** varmaankin jotakin hyötyä vieraiden kielten opiskelusta on joka tapauksessa lapsen kognitiivisten taitojen kehitykselle, näin uskoisin. (G18)

**Extract 36.** Kielen opiskelu kehittää aivoja ja ajattelua. (F20)

**Extract 37.** Hieman sekin ajatus että sen oppisi lapsena helpommin, miten kirjoitetaan jne... (F23)

**Extract 38.** On myös todella paljon halvempaa opiskella kieli koulussa kuin aikuisiällä jolloin kielikurssit ovat kalliita. (F20)

**Extract 39.** Englannin kieli on taas erittäin helppo ja sen oppii osittain myös automaattisesti kun sitä kuulee päivittäin eri kanavien kautta. (G7)

**Extract 40.** Ajattelimme, että englannin kielen oppii muutenkin ja mielestämme oli hieno mahdollisuus opiskella A1-kielenä jotain muuta kieltä kuin englantia. (F12)

**Extract 41.** Ajattelimme, että saksan kieli olisi hyvä aloittaa nyt ensin koska englantia tulee sitten joka tapauksessa myöhemmin. (G17)

**Extract 42.** Saksan kieli on meille molemmille vanhemmille läheinen, ja koska lapsen lähikoulussa oli tarjolla Saksa a1 -kieleksi, valinta oli aika helppo. (G18)

**Extract 43.** Olen itse opiskellut ranskaa ja suostuttelin lapsen valitsemaan ranskan. (F11)

**Extract 44.** Lapsi on tutustunut saksan kieleen jo ennen koulun aloittamista isovanhemman kanssa ja on siitä innostunut. (G17)

**Extract 45.** Kuopus taas on itse halunnut valita ranskan ensimmäiseksi kieleksi ja on innokas oppimaan myös muita kieliä. (F15)

**Extract 46.** Kun kuopus (jotka kysely koskee) oli kielenvalinnan edessä, valitsimme A-ranskan, koska kaksi vanhempaa lastamme ovat lukeneet A-ranskan ja olemme kokeneet sen hyödylliseksi. (F20)

**Extract 47.** Ranska isosisaruksille: luonnollinen valinta: paljon puhuttu maailmankieli, osasin auttaa paljon matkan varrella. Saksa nuorimmalle: "toiseksi paras" vaihtoehto vaikka ei vanhemmista juuri apuja. (G3)