

**Adults Learning Finnish as a Foreign Language: Role of Support,
Emotions and Reasons Connected with Learning**

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>The purpose of this research study was to examine adults learning Finnish as a foreign language while striving to understand the reasons behind their decisions to do so, the support that was individually offered to the participants, how they felt throughout the learning process, and whether or not they found themselves to be self-reliant learners, as per Knowles' andragogy theory. This study set out to examine adult language learners participating in the language and integration program at Palapeli2 project and in the Suomi 2 language course at the Open University. Through a two part (in the beginning and completion of the course) qualitative interview process, a total of eight learners were studied during the period of January 2014 and May 2014, followed by categorizing key ideas given through answers, into themes to help answer the research aims of this study.</p> <p>The results showed five main findings. First, both internal and external motivating factors were present when the participants decided to learn the language and throughout the learning process itself. Second, the learners desired further at home support in regards to assistance in allowing for more independent study time. Third, emotions were not directly connected with learning, although indirectly with the learner's well-being or desire to study and learning the language. Fourth, they were found to be mainly verbal and aural language learners, meaning they primarily sought out speaking and listening opportunities. Lastly, the adults in this study were identified as a combination of both self-reliant and teacher-reliant learners. In conclusion, this study determined that adults do learn differently than children in terms of realizing how best to learn Finnish and why to learn the language but also in terms of prioritizing their studies and the need to adapt into the Finnish culture due to many reasons including guilt.</p>	
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TABLES

Table 1	Participant language background	31
Table 2	Reason for moving to Finland	31
Table 3	Reasons for learning Finnish as a foreign language	35
Table 4	Self-Reliant vs. Teacher-Reliant Learners	40
Table 5	Strategies for learning Finnish as a foreign language	43

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	3
Tables.....	4
Contents	5
1 Introduction.....	8
1.1 Setting.....	10
1.2 Research tasks	12
2 Andragogy and the Influence of Malcolm Knowles.....	13
2.1 The beginnings of andragogy.....	13
2.2 The Andragogy Model.....	14
2.3 Andragogy vs. pedagogy	16
2.4 The Andragogical Process Design.....	17
2.5 Criticism towards Knowles and his theories regarding andragogy	18
3 Second Language Acquisition	20
3.1 History of Second Language Acquisition Research	20
3.2 Stephen Krashen’s language learning hypotheses	21
3.4 Language teaching vs. the self reliant learner.....	24
3.5 Motivation in the foreign language classroom.....	25
4 Methodology	27

4.1 Research design	27
4.2 Credibility & discourse of study	28
4.3 Participants.....	29
4.4 Data collection	32
4.5 Data analysis	32
4.6 Ethical issues.....	34
5 Findings.....	35
5.1 Reasons for learning Finnish	35
5.2 Support for language learning.....	36
5.3 Emotions while learning	38
5.4 Self reliant vs. teacher reliant learning	39
5.5 Strategies for learning.....	42
5.7 Summary of results	45
6 Conclusion	49
7 Discussion	51
7.1 Relevance of study	51
7.2 Limitations	53
7.2 Further steps for this study.....	55
References.....	56
Appendices.....	60

Appendix A: Consent form.....	60
Appendix B: Interview Questions Part 1	64
Appendix C: Interview Questions Part 2	65

1 INTRODUCTION

In order to understand adults as language learners and their differences from child learners, it is necessary to determine the reasons why adult foreigners in Finland wish to learn Finnish as a new language. This should be performed simultaneously while evaluating both the external and internal motivating factors contributing to the many reasons an adult may choose to learn a new skill, including a new language. Such reasons could be related to cultural, career or family expectations or also emotional reasons such as guilt or desire to learn the language. Additionally, understanding the kind of support offered to an adult learner is needed to evaluate an adult's learning as it represents a strong role in how well the adult succeeds when learning a new language. Institutional support is a key factor in the success of learning a new language through the use of instructors, class peers and other administration, mainly due to the opportunities the instructors and class peers can offer to the learner in regards to skill use and development (input and output opportunities) (Krashen 1982, 20). Additionally, it is not only important that the institution respond to learning needs, but also to the student's personal needs. Adult learners are typically in a situation where they are balancing familial needs with their learning and may feel marginalised or even face obstacles in the classroom that are irrelevant to already being a resident minority in Finland (Home 1998). Furthermore, additional support for the individual at home is a strong determining factor in successful learning. For example, if the support at home is lacking or negative, the learner will not strive or feel motivated to learn further. However, when support at home is found to be positive, the learner feels encouraged and more eager to continue in their efforts to continue learning and applying the language in everyday contexts. According to a 1997 study that looked at all the possible factors that may influence one's learning, it was determined that home support was the fourth most influential

reason for student success, while institutional support including the amount of time a teacher spends interacting with students was the fifth reason influencing students learning. Classroom management, meta-cognitive and cognitive skills were in the top three reasons that have the greatest impact on a student's learning (Wang et al. 1997, 2). Following the need to understand both home and institutional support and its impact on adult language learners, surveying and comprehending how emotions affect one's learning is important. Emotions can play a key factor on how adults acquire a foreign language. Many language classes emphasise or focus on grammar instruction rather than providing in class opportunities to apply new language knowledge (output strategies), which can lead adults to feel frustrated, overwhelmed or angry. By assisting students in being aware of their emotions and the need to consciously apply their language skills, learning a new language can become quicker, easier, more effective and fun, rather than frustrating or overwhelming (Krashen 1982, 20; Oxford 2002, 130; Tricomi 1986, 59). Furthermore, it has been highly determined that adults are recognized as self-reliant learners, as opposed to teacher directed or teacher oriented learners, making this the largest difference between adult and child learning, or andragogy and pedagogy. Adults are able to better determine what they should or need to learn in order to better their personal lives or employment prospects. Usually, an adult puts much consideration into the decisions surrounding new skills that need to be acquired, based not only on needs or expectations, but also on past experiences. Finally, recognizing the different learning strategies that adults apply, that is the "specific actions, behaviours, [learning] steps, or techniques" needed to learn or improve their new language skills, was needed for the researcher to understand the adult language learner as a whole (Oxford 2002, 124). Adults are usually capable of determining how they can best learn,

primarily based on past experiences as learners and it is necessary for the learners to come up with the best strategies to learn that will help with their optimal individual success.

1.1 SETTING

The city of Jyväskylä offers many opportunities for learning Finnish as a new language including several courses delivered through the University of Jyväskylä, at the local adult education centre Jyväskylän seudun kansalaisopisto, with JAMK University of Applied Sciences and other more informal settings such as parent and child play groups at the local multicultural centre. It was important for this study to find an array of adults from different settings who were learning Finnish as a foreign language for different reasons, which is why the Palapeli2 project and the Open University Suomi 2 course were selected for seeking out participants for the study. Without making comparisons between the two programs, as this was not relevant to this study, it was necessary to offer a description of each of the programs in order to better understand their overall aims that the courses offer to their participants. The Palapeli2 project is an integration program offered to new immigrants to Jyväskylä and throughout other major cities in Finland. One of the main aims of the project is to guide their participants through the adaptation period, with the central focus being on language assistance, where the participants will learn the Finnish language well enough to complete the course and be at an employable Finnish language level. The courses are intensively taught in Finnish and there is strictly no English spoken by the instructors. Before the beginning of the language course there is an intensive background assessment to determine the needs of each individual participant. Here, basic math, language (English and mother tongue), reading and writing skills are tested as well as a brief test into Finnish language knowledge following a thorough, yet brief, introduction into the language. From this test the administrators from the Palapeli2 project are able to determine which Finnish

language course, if any, is the most suitable for each participant. This is a detrimental factor to the project as they want to ensure that each student's individual needs are met in order to best help them with the adaption process here in Finland. One final note regarding the Palapeli2 project is that in the spring of 2014, following the completion of this course, the Jyväskylä location closed permanently.

The Open University language courses are offered through the Language Centre at the University of Jyväskylä. The students are welcomed for whatever reason they need to learn the language: school or employment related or personal reasons such as family, integration needs or for pleasure. The Suomi 2 course is delivered to provide its students with the opportunity to learn Finnish as a foreign language and the skills needed to carry out daily activities easily and stress free. Furthermore, with a high emphasis on communication skills, developing as a language learner as well as understanding and searching for information in Finnish is an important aspect of the course. The Open University follows the same curriculum as the Finnish language courses offered on campus at the University of Jyväskylä however the instructors base their teaching on the students' needs while still focusing on the core-curriculum. Additionally, unlike the free tuition to attend the course through the language centre and with the Palapeli2 project, there is a small fee for the intensive Suomi 2 course. The course is taught almost exclusively in Finnish, however when it comes to discussing important grammatical rules, key words or concepts that need to be well understood by the language learners, the use of English is implemented by the teacher to ensure complete comprehension by the students. It should be noted, there are no strict expectations for students from the instructor to speak in Finnish although it is strongly encouraged even if it is through a mixture of Finnish and English.

The Palapeli2 project and Open University Suomi 2 were selected for this study due to the diversity of participants throughout both courses. Palapeli2 introduced the researcher to new immigrants to Finland, coping with everyday situations and the need to learn the language, while the Open University course found more participants who were learning the language for more personal reasons rather than for reasons related to survival in a new country.

1.2 RESEARCH TASKS

The purpose of this research study was to examine adults learning Finnish as a foreign language while striving to develop an understanding of the reasons behind their decisions to do so, the support that was individually offered to the participants, how they felt throughout the learning process, and whether or not they found themselves to be self-reliant learners, as per Knowles' andragogy theory. Furthermore, determining whether or not adults learn differently than children, and how they do so in a language learning context.

2 ANDRAGOGY AND THE INFLUENCE OF MALCOLM KNOWLES

2.1 THE BEGINNINGS OF ANDRAGOGY

It is believed that the term *andragogy* was first used by Alexander Kapp, a German high school teacher, in 1833 in a book titled *Platon's Erziehungslehre* (Plato's Educational Ideas), in which Kapp described andragogy as the “necessity for lifelong learning” (Henschke 2009, 3). According to Conner, the term was used through the early 1900s in France, Holland and Yugoslavia and it then became a regularly used term in America in the 1970s due to Malcolm Knowles. The notion that there were unique characteristics in an adult learner started to strongly emerge in Europe following World War I, which was primarily used as a term to regenerate the people of Germany following the war (Conner 2003, 3; Henschke 2009, 3). Although it was Malcolm Knowles who first popularized the term andragogy in published literature in North America (Knowles 1970, 42), according to Henschke (2009, 3) it was actually Lindeman who brought the concept to America after traveling to Germany in the 1920s and becoming acquainted with the Workers Education Movement. Lindeman wrote the book *The Meaning of Adult Education* in 1926 and not once used the term ‘andragogy’, but instead he discussed, described and explored the method and overall concept of andragogy thoroughly in one of the chapters. According to Conner (2003, 2) andragogy was first defined as “the art and science of helping adults learn,” and has now taken on a broader meaning since Knowles' first publications of *Andragogy, not Pedagogy* (1968) and *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species* (1973). Currently, the term andragogy is defined as an alternative to pedagogy and refers to “learner-focused education for people of all ages”.

2.2 THE ANDRAGOGY MODEL

According to Malcolm Knowles, the model of andragogy is based on several assumptions that differ from the assumptions of the pedagogical model (1968, 1973; Merriam 2001, 5). It was from these six assumptions that Knowles proposed a program-planning model that best coincides with adults' experiences, through a design, implementation and evaluation of the education process (Merriam 2001, 5). First, adults need to understand why they need to learn something before they begin the process of learning it, thus it is important for adults to weigh the benefits of what they will gain from learning something new and also look at the negative consequences if they decide not to learn the new skill. Secondly, adults "have a self-concept of being responsible for their own decisions, for their own lives" which differs from that of the pedagogical model and how children learn; children are typically not responsible for their own educational decisions. Knowles' believed that adults dislike and even resent situations in which they feel that others, primarily teachers, are imposing their own intentions on them, while Merriam goes on to acknowledge that "because adults manage other aspects of their lives, they are capable at directing, or at least assisting in planning, their own learning (Knowles 1984, 56; Merriam 2001, 5). The third assumption of the andragogical model is very important and that is that educators must take into consideration the role of the learner's experiences; children have very little to no life experience when they attend school, adults "come into an educational activity with both a greater volume and a different quality of experience" (Knowles 1984, 57). These experiences can impact adult education both negatively and positively, and because of these experiences, the group of adult learners will all be different. Therefore it will be necessary to emphasise on individualised teaching and learning strategies in the classroom. These experiences also affect the learner's self-identity; their experiences make up who they are and it

helps to build them as individuals. The fourth assumption is that adults also have a readiness to learn. They prepare themselves to learn something new, to learn things that they need to know and also be able to “cope effectively with their real-life situations” (Knowles 1984, 57-58). This readiness to learn is usually associated with adults who are moving from one stage in their life to another, including moving to a new home, beginning a new career or even getting married.

What they need to learn is based on what is happening in their life and also to “exposure to models of superior performance, career counselling, simulation exercises and other techniques” (Knowles 1984, 59). Additionally, Havighurst and Orr (1956, 1) believed that “people do not launch themselves into adulthood with the momentum of their childhood and youth and simply coast along to old age. . . Adulthood has its transition points and its crises; it is a developmental period in almost as complete a sense as childhood and adolescence are developmental periods”.

The fifth assumption according to Knowles that differentiates andragogy from pedagogy is that adults choose what to learn on the basis that it will help them personally, whether it is with dealing with problems that they are possibly confronting in life or that will better their performance. Additionally, according to Knowles (1984, 59) “[adults] will learn new knowledge, understandings, skills, values and attitudes most effectively when they are presented in the context of application to real-life situations”. Finally, the motivation to learn for adults is primarily due to internal pressures rather than the external pressures that children face, such as from family and their own educators. Adults must contend with self-esteem, job satisfaction and quality of life when it comes to deciding to become an adult learner. Allen Tough found that it is normal for all adults to want to continue to grow, develop and acquire new knowledge, but that the motivation can be blocked by barriers such as “negative self-concept as a [past] student, inaccessibility of opportunities or resources, time constraints, and programs that violate

principles of adult learning” (Knowles 1984, 61; Tough 1979). This final assumption regarding the internal and external pressures the learner encounters is crucial for the researcher in better understanding why adults are learning Finnish as a foreign language. Many of the participants are motivated to learn Finnish for many different reasons, whether it’s due to job expectations, family relations or adapting to the culture, which are in fact external and internal pressures.

To summarise, the andragogy model consists of six main assumptions: understanding the reasons to learn the new skills; the desire to be self-reliant learners, rather than dependent learners like a child; past, current and future experiences all impact an adult’s learning and therefore it is important to consider these experiences when teaching and learning as an adult; adults have a continuous readiness to learn which is usually associated with different stages in one’s life; understanding what to learn in order to help better oneself and finally, there are both internal and external motivational factors which guide ones learning.

2.3 ANDRAGOGY VS. PEDAGOGY

Zmeyov (1998, 104) believed that “the main goal of education today is to provide individuals with a multifaceted training, and principally with knowledge and skills for creative activities, for adapting to the changes in the natural and social environment... for lifelong learning”, and this should be elaborated on further since it was not Knowles’ intention to label pedagogy as solely for child learning and andragogy for adult learning (Conner 2003, 2). Pedagogy is an ideology, a set of principles or beliefs whereas andragogy is a system of alternative sets of assumptions. Although many of the assumptions can indeed be applied to child learners as well as adult learners, the biggest difference between them is the experience factor; adults definitely have more experience when it comes to life in comparison to children. Educators’ responsibility is to understand and determine which assumptions concerning

andragogy are realistic in any given situation (since no situation is alike) (Knowles 1984, 62).

Adults, in comparison to children, are more self-reliant learners than dependant and according to Conner (1997, 1), “teachers assume responsibility for making decisions about what will be learned, how it will be learned, and when it will be learned”, meaning that teachers direct learning in child education. Adults, though open to suggestions and guidance when it comes to how one should learn and what they should learn, are more keen on being independent and self-motivated when it comes to their own learning. It is important and perhaps necessary that teachers respect and understand what adult self-directed learning is, and that adults are autonomous learners, as opposed to dependent learners, as children are.

2.4 THE ANDRAGOGICAL PROCESS DESIGN

According to Knowles (1995), there is a second main idea to the andragogical model which was discussed previously and that includes the eight components of the andragogical process design, which are steps for creating adult learning experiences (Houlton 2001, 120). These components are: preparing learners for the program; establishing a learning environment that is conducive to learning; involving the learners in joint planning; involving class participants in determining their own individual learning needs; involving class participants in establishing their learning outcomes; allowing class participants to design their own learning plans; assisting with successful implementation and carrying out of learning plans and allowing students to evaluate their own learning outcomes (Houlton 2001, 119-120). There is not much importance to the eight components of the andragogical process design in regards to this study except that “the single most critical difference between children and adults as learners is the difference in assumptions we make about their self-concepts, and this is why these assumptions and their technological implications have been dealt with in such detail” (Knowles 1970, 49).

2.5 CRITICISM TOWARDS KNOWLES AND HIS THEORIES REGARDING ANDRAGOGY

Merriam, states that the founding of adult education as a professional field of practice was in the 1920s however it is said that there is still not one single answer, theory or model to describe adult learning nor explain all that is known about adult learners, the various contexts where learning takes place and the process of learning itself. Initial research was focused around the question of whether or not adults had the capability to actually learn. Tests were performed that essentially placed a child against an adult in a learning competition with the results depicting that children could do better in timed testing; thus it was concluded that adults were not good learners. However, once the timing factor was removed from the situation adults proved to learn just as well as children (Merriam 2001, 1-4). Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, there was much criticism targeted towards Malcolm Knowles and his theories concerning andragogy. In 1984, Anne Hartree questioned whether or not there was an actual theory concerning adult education, suggesting that maybe these assumptions concerning andragogy were only principles of practice, or a description of what the adult learner should be like (Merriam 2001, 5; Hartree 1984, 205). Following Hartree's critiques, Knowles stated in 1989 that "andragogy is less of a theory of adult learning than a 'model of assumptions about learning or a conceptual framework that serves as a basis for an emergent theory'" (Merriam 2001, 5; Knowles 1989, 112). As was mentioned earlier, the emphasis of adult learning and the difference of it compared to that of pedagogy, primarily falls on the experiences of adult learners. Furthermore, Merriam (2001, 5) argued that many adults are dependent on their teachers, similarly to children being independent or self-reliant learners, contrary to Knowles' second assumption. Following the criticism, Knowles' in his 1984 book *Andragogy in Action: Applying Modern Principles of Adult Education*, revised his andragogy vs. pedagogy stance, focusing solely on the differences of the

two methods, and acknowledged that his approaches concerning andragogy could be applied to both children and adult learners. It was “this acknowledgement by Knowles [that] resulted in andragogy being defined [as] more by the learning situation than by the learner [himself]” (Merriam 2001, 6; Knowles 1984, 13). It can easily be argued that Knowles’ theories can be applied to pedagogy, however the researcher will continue to emphasise that there is a strong difference between pedagogy, the art and methods of teaching children and that of andragogy and Knowles’ assumptions concerning adult education.

3 SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

There is a distinction between second language and foreign language learning, primarily being that second language is following that of one's mother tongue and has "some social functions within the community it is learned" (Littlewood 1984, 6), whereas a foreign language is of no familiarity at all to the learner and is primarily "for contact outside one's community" (Littlewood 1984, 6). Though it is a useful distinction, the researcher will use the term 'foreign language' to cover both terms throughout the study. In order to better understand the focus of the study it is important to briefly understand the history of foreign language learning.

3.1 HISTORY OF SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION RESEARCH

Second language acquisition (SLA) research began emerging as a field in itself in the 1950s (Larsen-Freeman 1991, 315) and one that became a bigger phenomenon during the second half of the twentieth century (Ellis 1997, 3). Prior to its emergence, the process of research being conducted was similar to that of the behaviourist view where the belief was that learning was through conditioning, overcoming habits of the learner's first language (L1) learning while developing the new patterns of the second language (L2) learning and that therefore language acquisition would be facilitated; "Ironically, it was the learners' errors, so threatening to the behaviorists which were to lead to the shift in awareness that spawned the SLA field" (Larsen-Freeman 1991, 316). Ellis (1997, 3) stated that due to the explosion of the Internet, the need for constant communication between people and the pressure of employment has required that foreign language acquisition and research become the norm. Additionally, Noam Chomsky, an American linguist, believed that children are born with the ability to acquire any human language based on the environment around them and has developed the Universal Grammar theory, which is reliant upon grammatical and linguistic theories rather than cognitive or development aspects

of analysis (Larsen-Freeman, 1991; Mansouri 2008, 2). Chomsky argued strongly with language researchers who supported the behaviourist idea in the 1960s in order to convince them that language learning is not just habit formation, imitation or repetition. Rather, he proposed that the process of acquisition was that of rule formation and not that of habit formation (Littlewood 1984, 6). Stephen Krashen who is also an American linguist and education activist and theorist in the area of language acquisition and bilingual education, also follows this same idea when it comes to the language acquisition process.

3.2 STEPHEN KRASHEN'S LANGUAGE LEARNING HYPOTHESES

Krashen (1982, 2) has theorised that there are five-key hypothesis which are “generalizations that are consistent with experimental data” concerning foreign language learning which include: the learning-acquisition hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the input hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis and finally, the affective filter hypothesis. Furthermore, he believed that the main concept of language is communication. It is important to understand each of these five hypotheses individually in order to understand the full context of Krashen's language learning theory.

According to Krashen (1982), the first assumption is that there is a distinction between acquisition and learning; acquisition is believed to be a more comfortable and subconscious process for adult language learners and is similar to how a child may learn a language. This is particularly for their first language since they are typically not aware that they are developing a language. Krashen also believed that acquisition is, plain and simply absorbing the language. On the other hand, learning is a conscious process, meaning the learner is aware of the grammar structures and rules, and comes to realise when they are making errors in their speech and seek to correct them (through the output hypothesis, to be discussed later) (Krashen 1982, 10; Krashen

2009, 10; Tricomi 1986, 59). Some other theorists (including Malcolm Knowles) believed that adults and children are different in how they learn languages. Adults are only able to learn a language, while children acquire a new language although the “acquisition-learning hypothesis claims that... adults also acquire [a language], that the ability to ‘pick up’ [a] language does not disappear at puberty” (Krashen 1982, 10). The researcher does not think it necessary for this study to make a strong distinction between learning and acquiring and will continue to use both terms interchangeably.

Secondly, there is the natural order hypothesis which indicates that there is a certain order in which learners learn a language. According to Krashen (1982), this is one of the most exciting discoveries in language acquisition research to have happened in recent years. Early on, it was Dulay & Burt who found that children acquiring English as their second language also exhibited “natural order” tendencies when it came to grammatical morphemes, regardless of their first language. For example, very early on in second language learning, English students learn the suffixes “-ing” and “-s” to indicate plural words were among some of the first morphemes acquired (Krashen 2009, 12; Dulay & Burt 1974, 43). Dulay & Burt reported these results within child learners, and it was Krashen and Madden (1974) who reported finding a natural order of learning sequence that was very similar to that of a child.

Following the natural order hypothesis, Krashen developed the input hypothesis, which is how a language learner develops competency in their learning over time, thus we acquire knowledge only once when we understand the language as a whole. According to Krashen, “the single most important source of L2 learning is comprehensible input, or language which learners process for meaning and which contains something to be learned, that is linguistic data slightly above their current level” (Ortega 2009, 59; Krashen 1982, 20). It is through listening that

learners obtain the most knowledge (through input) and by connecting what is being heard to that being seen, such as reading material, street signs and advertisements. Furthermore, Ortega (2009, 59) states that “when L2 learners process these messages for meaning (which they will most likely do if the content is personally relevant, and provided they can reasonably understand them), grammar learning will naturally occur”.

The input hypothesis and the following two theories will be emphasized on in this study; the monitor hypothesis, or sometimes termed the output hypothesis, is described as focusing on forms and rules, such as grammar. Here, the learner is able to monitor their own learning in order to correct or modify themselves when it is necessary (Tricomi 1986, 60). The input hypothesis and monitor hypothesis are linked since learners begin to notice and realise that there may be a linguistic problem when it comes to their input and output transfers and they seek ways to modify it. This pushes learners to modify their learning in a way that will help them with their comprehension (Ortega 2009, 60).

Finally, there is the affective filter hypothesis, which is the external and internal factors that may impact the learning of a new language. Krashen (1981) confirmed that motivation, self-confidence and anxiety are affective variables that can be related to the success of a foreign language learner. He described the affective filter hypothesis as “captur[ing] the relationship between affective variables and the process of second language acquisition by positing that acquirers vary with respect to the strength or level of their affective filters”. Often, adult learners suffer from anxiety and frustration during the learning process, partially based on the new situation they are experiencing and thus those who have a more positive attitude towards learning a new language will allow themselves to obtain more input and find more opportunities to do so and will have a lower or weaker filter. Therefore, those language learners whose attitudes are not

quite conducive for second language learning will seek less input opportunities and will also have a high or strong affective filter language acquisition. The impact and the effects of the affective filter are the primary cause to why language learners do not reach full native language status, when they inevitably have the potential to do so (Krashen 1981, 31; Krashen 1983, 31).

3.4 LANGUAGE TEACHING VS. THE SELF RELIANT LEARNER

As was stated above, the input hypothesis is labelled as one of the most important contributors to successful language learning, since the learner is given opportunities to absorb and listen to the language. According to Krashen (1981, 34), language teaching does help at the beginning stage of language learning, since it offers the students chances to engage in comprehensible input at a limited and simple level, where it would not otherwise be available outside of the classroom. Like any classroom subject, second language acquisition teachers cannot be told how to teach in the classroom, however Lightbrown (2000, 431) suggests that it is necessary for language teachers to stay up to date on the current SLA research in order to better understand how to “set appropriate expectations for themselves and [for] their students”.

It can be stated that all learning is self-directed, a concept associated with adults rather than children, or that the learner must be self-reliant, and this is especially true with adult learners. Adults are able to decide what they should learn and how they should learn it. Adults base their learning of new skills on experience and need, whether it is employment related or personal reasons, such as self-interest or familial needs. Although self-directed learning is a key concept within literature concerning adult learning and andragogy, according to Jarvis (1992) “self-directed learning is one of those amorphous terms that occurs in adult education literature but that lacks precise definition. ...it is so broad as to be almost meaningless” (Leach 2000, 9). Knowles described self-directed learning as both “the ability to learn on one’s own” and as “...a

process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others”. Furthermore, other researchers have confirmed that for “effective acquisition of knowledge, especially in the adult-learning environment, requires high level of student self-direction, regardless of the academic field and instructional field”, with Candy (1991) continuing by describing self-directed learning as personality characteristics, such as completing a goal, outcome or product and as an instructional method such as a process or method of learning (Knowles 1975, 17-18; Nikitengo 2011, 2503; Brookfield 1993, 1; Leach 2000, 12).

3.5 MOTIVATION IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

Motivation is one of the main reasons behind learning a new language and according to Dornyei both teachers and researchers accept it as being the number one influence in either the success or failure in language learning courses and it is the overall force in sustaining the learning process. In addition to environmental and cognitive factors that are normal to learning, in foreign language learning there is also personality and social factors, including the individual’s identity and the cultural surroundings of the student. This corresponds to Knowles’ affective filter hypothesis that adult learners consider the internal, and sometimes external, pressures to learn such as job requirements and performance or self-satisfaction, as was discussed above. Furthermore, in regards to motivation in language learning, Dornyei has determined that it is necessary to understand that there is not a straightforward definition of what exactly motivation is and additionally, “current cognitive approaches [to motivation] place the focus on the individual's thoughts and beliefs (and recently also emotions) that are transformed into action” (Dornyei 1994, 273; Dornyei 1998 117-118). R.C Gardner (2007) has further determined that there are two types of motivation when learning a new language: classroom motivation and language learning motivation. The focus of classroom motivation is on the

individual's view or perception of the activity they are given to complete. The motivation to complete the task can be influenced by many different factors present within the classroom including, the class atmosphere, the content and materials of the course and the facilities being offered to the learner, as well as the type of personality traits the student themselves demonstrate. Language learning motivation therefore simply refers to the motivation to learn or acquire a foreign language. Gardner states that motivation "is not a trait, as some individual's [or theorists] contend, but it is a general characteristic of the individual that applies to the opportunity to learn the language. [Motivation] is relatively stable, because of its presumed antecedents, but it is amenable to change under certain conditions" (11).

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

In order to better understand how emotions affect an adult's ability to learn Finnish as a foreign language, what types of strategies are used when acquiring a new language and what types of support are offered to adult language learners, a narrative inquiry research method was employed. A narrative inquiry is a qualitative research approach to help gain personal opinions based on past and current experiences from the research participants. Furthermore, the purpose of using narrative inquiry in educational research is that humans are reliant on storytelling and are in fact "storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives" (Clandinin & Connelly 1999, 2). Within this research approach, the researcher conducted a two part interview, at the beginning and upon completion of two separate language courses with eight selected participants from the Palapeli2 project and the Open University. In order to best understand the participants' learning experiences, it was deemed necessary to complete an interview at the beginning of the course to understand learning expectations, goals and to establish a relationship between researcher and participant. This was followed by a second interview upon completion of the course, where questions reviewing the learning process and follow up questions to the first interview were conducted. As each participant is unique in their learning experience and learning background, it was determined that a smaller amount of participants would be adequate for this study, which is why eight participants were selected to participate in the interview. Following the interviews, the researcher transcribed the audio recorded interviews and categorized main ideas and concepts into themes in regards to the research tasks. The primary objective of narrative inquiry is the understanding of experience and to see the research problem as "trying to think of the continuity and wholeness of an individual's

life experience” (Clandinin & Connelly 1999, 17). With this phenomenon, the researcher hopes to gain and offer an insight into the adult language learners’ perspective into the learning events that will occur during the research study as the data is collected and analysed.

4.2 CREDIBILITY & DISCOURSE OF STUDY

In order to address validity and reliability through this study of adults learning Finnish as a foreign language, the use of participant feedback and verification was necessary. Verifying what the participant expressed during the interview process for the researcher’s knowledge and understanding is a major factor to ensure reliable data is collected. Following the interviews during the transcription process, if the researcher felt there was some uncertainty with the meaning behind what was spoken during the interviews, participants were emailed for clarification or better understanding of what was said. This allowed the participants an opportunity to correct any errors the researcher may have had while interpreting the data collected. Furthermore, the use of credibility criterion was necessary as it focuses to match the responses given by the study participants and those “realities” represented by the researcher and the research being done in the study (Simon 2011, 1-2). Validity is not significant to one method in qualitative research; rather it is concerned with the data collected, the participant’s accounts of personal experiences and the conclusions reached by the researcher.

The researcher’s past experiences as an adult learner, as well as a foreigner in Jyväskylä learning Finnish as a new language made it important to continuously reflect on personal experiences as an adult language learner before, during and after each participant inquiry. It is also paramount that the researcher is able to fully explore a topic with the participants, which is reflective to the narrative inquiry process and the stories regarding past and present experiences. Participant narratives in an interview format offer a better insight for the researcher in which

case the narrative describes “what happened, defines outcomes, or presents the stage of a social process” (Rubin & Rubin 1995, 24), further adding that researchers must demonstrate certain characteristics in order to be successful during the qualitative interview process. These characteristics include: intense and critical listening, a respect for the interview participants, a deep curiosity for what the participants have to say and an overall strategic process to really understand and comprehend what the participants are saying (Rubin & Rubin 1995, 24).

4.3 PARTICIPANTS

Bell (2002) has suggested that human beings make sense of their experiences through the structure of stories; that is “we select those elements of experience to which we will attend, and we pattern those chosen elements in ways that reflect the stories available to us” (207). Through narrative inquiry, a relationship is built between the researcher and the participants and amongst the researcher and the experiences studied. Participants in the study relate and begin to live through the stories that are being shared “that speak of and to their experiences of living” (Denzin & Lincoln 2011, 542).

As previously discussed, the interview process was divided into two segments: the first was conducted at the beginning of the language course and the second was upon completion. The same eight adult learners participated in both stages of the interview process however Participant 7 was unable to complete in the second interview phase despite many attempts from the researcher to set up a suitable time to do so. Furthermore, Participant 4 was uncomfortable being audio recorded and therefore the responses that were shared to each question were noted as verbatim as possible. The researcher participated in the first class and introduction of each of the courses, where she was then introduced as a Masters of Education student from the University of Jyväskylä and given an opportunity to introduce the study. Upon a brief introduction, the

researcher asked for four volunteers to participate in the study within each course. The only guideline that had to be met by the study participants was a minimum age requirement of eighteen. Following the initial introduction and brief exchanges through email to set up suitable interview times and locations, the eight adults involved were questioned by the researcher in order to understand their own personal experiences when learning a new language. Most of the interviews took place in a local coffee shop in Jyväskylä, Finland. This type of location was important to keep the atmosphere relaxed and thus the participant's responses are as natural and honest as possible.

It was important to understand the adult learners of this study and their backgrounds, however for anonymity purposes it will not be included in this study in which study program (Suomi 2 or Palapeli2 project) the participants were registered. Questions concerning native tongue, past language learned, arrival to Jyväskylä Finland and reasons for learning Finnish as a foreign language were asked during the first phase of interview questions in January 2014.

Participants were asked to share when they arrived in Jyväskylä. The majority of them arrived in Jyväskylä in 2013 (P3, P4, P5, P6, P7 and P8), however Participant 1 arrived in 2008 and Participant 2 arrived in 2011.

To better understand each the learner's language background, each participant was asked which language(s) they speak in their home and which language(s) they have previously learned, whether in an institutional setting or through members of their family. As the following table illustrates, only two of the participants were native English speakers, whereas the remainder have learned English as a second or foreign language.

Table 1. Participant Language Background

PARTICIPANT	NATIVE TONGUE	OTHER LANGUAGES LEARNED
P1	Bengali	English, Hindu
P2	Egyptian	English, French, Greek, Arabic, Russian
P3	English	Russian, Swedish
P4	Chinese	English, Korean, Japanese
P5	Arabic	English
P6	Bahasa	English, Dutch, French
P7	Bengali	English
P8	English	Spanish

Table 2 illustrates the reasons why each of the participants arrived in Jyväskylä, Finland. In reference to the table, the majority of participants relocated to Finland due to family reasons, primarily that of a spouse or partner. It can be noted that Participant 1 was offered full time employment with the University of Jyväskylä, while Participant 4 was anticipating seeking out future employment opportunities here upon their graduation.

Table 2. Reason for moving to Finland and learning Finnish

PARTICIPANT	REASON FOR MOVING TO FINLAND
P1	Employment Opportunities
P2	Friends and Desire
P3	Family
P4	Employment Opportunities, Education, Desire
P5	Family
P6	Family

P7	Education
P8	Family, Education

4.4 DATA COLLECTION

The researcher collected the data, which included minor observations and field notes at the very beginning of each course, followed by the interview and transcribing phase. Upon completion of both interviews, themes were categorized based on the answers given during the interview process. It was originally planned to conduct observations within the classroom throughout each of the courses, however intensive observation of the pedagogy in the classroom was unnecessary since the focus on the study was on the participant's learning experiences and their descriptions of their own learning paths. To continue observing how the teaching was done in the classroom had the potential of creating a biased opinion resulting in influenced data collection during the interview process. Although it was important for the researcher to reflect on her experiences as an adult language learner it was not necessary for her to reflect on the teaching and whether it was seen as a correct method or not.

Through the interview process, the researcher gained first hand opinions and accounts from adults who are learning Finnish as a foreign language in Jyväskylä. Interviews were important for the researcher and participant relationship in regards to the development of a strong and detailed narrative.

4.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Following the interviews with the adult language learners, the researcher transcribed the audio recorded interviews, which lasted approximately one hour for each participant's interview session, and then categorized main concepts into themes concerning; emotions regarding the

learning process in and out of the classroom, institutional and personal support for the language learner and the different ways in which adults learn in a foreign language classroom. Themes were developed from the transcribed audio, which included approximately 15 hours of voice recordings due to one participant's refusal to being recorded and Participant 8 being unable to participate in the second interview process. Themes were developed based on repetitive ideas or key words that were said throughout the interviews by the participants, with the aims of the study as a guide for determining necessary themes. The data of this study was analyzed inductively, meaning that the researcher through the data collected did not intend on proving or disproving a hypothesis. Furthermore, the theories of qualitative research are described as a "piece of art that is yet to be created, rather than a puzzle where the image is already known" (Bogden 1982, 2). The overall purpose of using the inductive analysis approach is to summarize raw text data into a brief format and to establish links between the research aims or objectives and the findings found in the summary that was found in the original data. Additionally, even though the findings in the study were influenced by the research questions and tasks earlier developed by the researcher, the results were found directly through the analysis of the gathered raw data (*i.e.* the interviews) and not from any prior expectations, hypotheses or models. The intended outcome of the inductive analysis approach is to interpret the data and code it into themes, labels or categories (Thomas 2006, 238-240).

Furthermore, the intended purpose of the narrative inquiry research approach is to re-tell an individual's story, however, based on the required data needed, full individual stories were deemed unnecessary and thus, re-telling the participants' stories and combining their experiences into a whole was seen as adequate. It will also be necessary to validate the accuracy of the report

by collaborating with the participants, which is a step that may occur throughout the entire study (Creswell 2002, 486-487).

4.6 ETHICAL ISSUES

As with all research of this type, there is a chance that confidentiality could be compromised, however the researcher ensured that precautions were made to minimize this risk. Participation in the interview process was completely anonymous; no names were published. For easier transcription along with adequate understanding of participant's answers, interviews were audio recorded. However, the adult learners had the right to refuse to be recorded and one participant did in fact refuse thus very intensive field notes were taken. In addition, nationality of the participants remained confidential, though gender, age and mother tongue may have been used in the analysis and discussion of findings. During the interviews, if the participant felt uncomfortable with any of the questions being asked by the researcher they had the right to not answer or to even stop the entire interview process. To ensure that participants understood the possible risks involved and their rights as a participant in this study of adults learning Finnish as a foreign language, they were provided a consent form prior to the first interview (see Appendix A). The researcher had one signed by the participant for her own records and the participants were given their own copy for their own personal records as well. Additionally, it was explained that the transcribed interviews and consent forms would be kept in the researcher's personal files for 24 months following the first interview. It should also be noted that no compensation was offered to the study participants, as it was a done on a volunteer basis.

5 FINDINGS

5.1 REASONS FOR LEARNING FINNISH

Throughout the interview process, the adult learners addressed many reasons as to why they desired to learn Finnish as a foreign language. As previously stated, adults generally look at the necessity of learning a new skill and whether it will impact their life in a positive or negative way.

Table 3. Participants' reasons for learning Finnish as a foreign language

PARTICIPANT	REASONS FOR LEARNING FINNISH AS FOREIGN LANGUAGE
P1, P 3	To cope with everyday situations in Finland
P1	Guilt
P1, P4, P5, P7	Employment expectations (requirement for job, co-exist with peers)
P1, P2, P3, P4, P8	Better adapting with the local culture
P3, P4	Fear of isolation within Finnish society
P3	Interest in languages
P3, P6	Familial reasons
P4, P8	Social reasons and making friends

Table 3 illustrates the many reasons why the study's participants chose to learn Finnish as a foreign language. Despite their reasons for learning the language, four of the participants (1, 2, 3 and 8) expressed in their answers during the first interview that it is unnecessary to learn Finnish at a fluent level due to the large majority of the local population being able to speak English at a communicable level. This statement appears to be true; according to Statistics Finland (2013), English is the sixth most spoken language in Finland at 0.27% of the population using it as a first

language. English is preceded by Finnish (89%), Swedish (5.4%), Russian (1.15%), Estonian (0.71%) and Somali (0.27%). Furthermore, 63% of Finland's population know English well enough to carry on a conversation. However, during the first interview, Participant 8 went on to say that speaking English only is "...not ideal, especially with a lot of the older generation, they don't know English that well". Furthermore, Participant 3 expressed a level of awkwardness that arises in situations where the native Finnish speaker may not speak English at a level that makes communication easy. Participant 2 went on to say that not only does learning the language help when adapting into a new culture, but that it is frustrating for them that people come into a new culture and refuse to learn the language, going on to say that "...if you are in a country, you must [learn the language] if you want to integrate in this country. ...If you don't want you can live being a foreigner all your life". Referring back to table 4, it is evident that the majority of the participants believe that learning Finnish will help make the adaptation process within the society easier. Additionally, it should be noted that although many of the participants have come to understand that having strong Finnish language skills will help with their employment endeavors, as well as make for a more positive work environment, it was only Participants 1 and 3 that expressed impractical reasons for learning Finnish as a foreign language.

5.2 SUPPORT FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING

During the first phase of interview questions, the adult learners were asked to list what kind of support they felt they had in their home setting. Four of the participants stated that they had "none to very little support" at home due to their current living arrangements such as they live alone, or for other reasons such as lack of a spouse's interest or unwillingness to assist, despite being a native Finnish speaker. Two of the participants listed a non-Finnish partner in

the household as supportive of their learning, despite not being familiar with the language themselves.

A further finding was not the need for learning support in the household, but general support through assistance with daily chores, childcare, etc. Participant 3 expressed their frustration with finding the time to adequately study for their Open University Suomi 2 course because they had household chores to complete and a child to care for. This participant expressed during the second phase of the interview process that they should have asked for more help, rather than just expecting it.

Participants were asked whether or not they believed that having adequate support in the household would help their language learning. Almost all of them expressed that having support at home as helpful to their learning except for one participant (7) who believed that having support at home is unnecessary for their learning outcomes, although they do appreciate and find it beneficial to have the language spoken in the home, allowing for additional speaking opportunities outside of the classroom. A few of the participants also described support at home as a key motivator in their learning as well as a good source for emotional support, rather than just learning support.

During the second phase of the interviews, the adult learners were asked a follow up question regarding the personal support they had and whether they believed it to be sufficient for their learning. Participant 5 agreed that there was strong support in their home and that it was enough, however they also expressed the desire to have had more native speaking friends in order to help and improve on their learning. Since this participant has continued with their language learning within another establishment, they stated that they now “tell others [I] do not speak any English... they then have to speak Finnish to me even if slow”. This practice allows

them to speak as much Finnish as possible on a daily basis. Some of the other participants believed they had enough support at home (P2, P5 and P8) and despite Participant 1 living alone, they found they were able to communicate minimally with their native speaking co-workers although they believed it offered no additional benefits to their own personal language learning.

It was mentioned by some of the adult learners that outside of the classroom, there were few opportunities to speak the language, even if they had friends or family who were native speakers. This is important to elaborate on, since all of the participants live in a community where Finnish is the primary language used and yet they found they had no outside opportunities to use the skills they had learned in the classroom. However, Participant 6 forced themselves out of their comfort zone and dropped the fear of being judged by others (and by their own self-judgement), which may explain why others did not seek opportunities to use the language outside of the classroom, when it came to speaking in public:

“The teacher said to only speak Finnish in class, but to [also] try and speak it on break. We, all of the students, had little confidence so we would speak in English. And that’s holding you back, the fear of judgement. “Is it right, or not?” My confidence to go into a cafe and order is a new development. I think it came when I realised that I could go in and say something correct and your voice becomes a little louder but I can say... inside of me, don’t say more than necessary”.

5.3 EMOTIONS WHILE LEARNING

Throughout the interviews, the adult learners were not directly asked about what emotions they had felt while learning Finnish as a foreign language beyond whether or not they felt a sense of being overwhelmed during any point of the learning process. However, they were able to express their emotions in regards to their learning and the language itself. It was

intriguing to speak with Participant 3 regarding their learning experiences following the course. When they were asked what their overall opinion of learning the language and of the language itself was, they had a very difficult time answering the question. They found that the language was overall an easy skill to learn however, depending on their outlook towards the course, topic or even the day itself had a major impact on their studying. It was easy they shared, to find them self feeling overwhelmed, angry and even frustrated with the language and their learning:

“If I am in a pretty good frame of mind, I think ‘ok, this language can be learned, it is possible, it just takes some work’... But when I am feeling a bit more discouraged or tired, or doing it late at night [I] remember thinking ‘this doesn’t make sense’. ...There is just so much to overcome before you are at a decent level. I can see why people give up”.

Participant 1 also shared their frustrations with the learning, saying:

“I would say [pauses] it’s a difficult language and a bit frustrating because you have to spend so much time to even [hesitates] to even improve slightly. But maybe because it is a difficult language, you can improve [and] that gives you confidence and a good feeling”.

It is interesting to note that Participant 3 believed that by being pushed to learn the difficulties that Finnish offers in its grammar rules, new vocabulary and spoken vs. written rules that they say it was a positive motivator and as a way to boost their own self-confidence.

5.4 SELF RELIANT VS. TEACHER RELIANT LEARNING

At the beginning of the first interview, participants were directly asked whether they believed themselves to be self-reliant or teacher-oriented learners, on the basis of whether or not they are able to take control of their learning, or if they are a learner that solely depends on their

teacher for guidance and instruction. Although some of them were unsure of the term ‘self-reliant’, they did not hesitate to ask the researcher and it was then that the researcher would use an alternative expression, independent learner, in order to help clarify any possible confusion being felt by the participant. Once they understood the meaning of the term and the question, the participants were able to decide which category they believed themselves as learners to fall under. It should further be noted that the question was used to only seek a general self-assessment or opinion on one’s learning type. Table 4 illustrates the answers given by the participants:

Table 4. Self-Reliant vs. Teacher-Reliant Learners

	Self-Reliant or Independent Learner	Teacher Reliant Learner	Both
Participant	P1, P6	P3, P8	P2, P4, P5, P7

It was immediately noted that the two adult learners in the study that are Native English speakers were they only learners to admit to being reliant on the teacher when it comes to their learning, during the first round of interview questions. Participant 3 did state that although they do like to “sit down and figure things out” for themselves, what they find the most difficult about relying on independent work is finding the time and being disciplined in regards to time management. Furthermore, they expressed a fear of feeling overwhelmed as an independent learner, which is why they welcomed teacher guidance and support freely in the language classroom. Although Participant 7 initially stated they were a self-reliant learner, they believed that teacher instruction in a language classroom will make learning easier, while Participant 6 also mentioned that an instructor assists in learning. Participant 4 expressed that they were both

an independent and teacher-reliant learner, while also expressing that although they welcomed pressure from an instructor, if they believed it to be becoming too overwhelming then they have a tendency of pulling away from the learning situation. They believed that pressure can be “sometimes good and sometimes bad”, although they appreciated being directed in the correct direction when it came to learning Finnish as a foreign language. However they also believed that following this bit of teacher guidance they were capable of being responsible of their own language learning, to the point where they felt it was unnecessary to attend class regularly.

At the beginning of the second interview, the researcher reflected back on this question and asked the participants if they still believed themselves to be a self-reliant learner, a teacher-reliant learner or both, based on the answers they shared during the first interview. The only participant who changed their mind was Participant 8; during the first interview, they believed they were reliant on the teacher when it came to their own learning however, following the completion of the course they decided that they were less reliant on the teacher and more reliant on themselves for their learning. They had described themselves as needing instruction from a teacher to succeed during the first interview, however due to having an understanding of the basics and having a spouse at home who speaks Finnish (but is not a native speaker), had helped tremendously with the learning process and allowed the participant to become a more independent learner;

“I would say I am less reliant on the teacher now, but maybe not completely and I would say that that is because I do know and understand the basics and can speak more with my [spouse] now and I am not constantly asking my [spouse] what [they are] saying every time. And so, I would say I am more independent... and feel like, ok, I can learn this by myself a lot easier. You definitely still need to have some reliance on someone who

knows how to speak it. Even if you look up how to speak it, it can be wrong and that's not how people talk”

Participant 4 expressed during the first interview that they were reliant both on themselves and the teacher when it came to their own learning, however during the second interview they expressed that during the course they had to be more independent due to having to miss many sessions. It was still necessary for them to receive some guidance from the instructor to ensure they understood where the class was in the text book, however they relied on themselves for teaching and understanding what was taught and missed in class, and therefore for preparing themselves for the final exam.

Participant 5 seemed slightly indecisive in their answer. As stated above in table 4, during the first interview they believed themselves to be both a self-reliant and teacher-reliant learner when it came to their language learning. However, during the second interview they were not very clear in whether or not this opinion had changed; they expressed that you do not learn the language very fast and that it is necessary to hear the language. They also said that “you need to understand what you hear. It's not important to know 1000 words, but you need to know 500 words and use those words”. It is unclear if the participant misunderstood the question all together, or if they believed this to be a concrete and clear response therefore labeling them self as still a self-reliant and teacher-reliant learner. It was not until the transcribing phase of the data analysis that the researcher realized how obtuse of an answer this was.

5.5 STRATEGIES FOR LEARNING

People tend to learn in many different ways, such as: orally, where they learn best when speaking; aurally, where learning is best done through listening; logically, where the learner does

best with tasks such as repetition or memorization and solitary learning, where the learner finds they learn best in situations where they are alone and are able to concentrate on themselves (Dickinson 1996; Lepi 2012). During the first interview, the adult learners shared with the researcher the many learning strategies that they planned on utilizing when studying and learning Finnish as a foreign language, which could be applied to the following four learning styles.

Table 5. Strategies for learning Finnish as a foreign language

PARTICIPANTS	AURAL	VERBAL	LOGICAL	SOLITARY
P1			X	
P2	X	X		
P3	X	X	X	X
P4	X	X	X	
P5	X	X	X	
P6	X	X		
P7	X	X		
P8		X	X	

Based on the participants opinions and study plans, both the Suomi 2 and Palapeli2 project learners demonstrated similar ideas in how they planned on learning Finnish to the best of their ability. Although the majority of the participants suggested some form of aural learning when doing their language course, it was worth noting that although Participant 1 emphasized the importance of speaking Finnish as often as possible in order to achieve optimal success during the course, they did not mention using any oral activities as a mean of learning strategies. Speaking with Participant 1 at this stage of their learning, there was no doubt that when learning they employed logical strategies such as learning one thing at a time, *e.g.* vocabulary or grammatical rules. Some aural strategies that some of the learners listed included watching

Finnish and English television, talking and listening to family and friends and listening to what is being said around them in social settings.

Despite the adult learners having to regularly attend classes and living in a community where Finnish is the primary language, only one of the participants touched on the idea of using social settings as a good and optimal way of learning Finnish as foreign language. However, it was only mentioned that listening to what was being said around them in social settings, not actually engaging in conversation in social settings was not shared as a strategy for learning. Participant 3 believed that being pro-active with their studying would be the best for optimal success during their Suomi 2 course and at this stage, wanted to be able to ask other Finnish speakers whom they were speaking with to correct any mistakes that may have been said by Participant 3, as well as finding and maintaining time management for studying. When the researcher followed up on the idea of being proactive with other speakers and maintaining good time management, Participant 3 had this to say in regards to asking others to correct their mistakes:

“...I think the goal was, in retrospect, a little ambitious for my level of Finnish. At this point for me, being pro-active is just speaking Finnish with people, especially when they know English well. When I was speaking with [spouse’s] parents in Finnish I would often stop mid-word as I tried to get the right ending or tense and then I would basically push [spouse] to help me get through the sentence. I think this method was more a plea to be understood and not appear too foolish then it was a pro-active approach to learning Finnish. The end result, though, was that I was corrected, granted before I made the mistake. ...I think that being pro-active by asking people to correct you really depends on your language level and the context. Also, I think that it would help to ask that people

would correct major, obvious mistakes. Otherwise, the conversation could quickly breakdown as you try to work through every mistake”

Although two separate and diverse courses, especially in terms of delivery of the content, were explored for this study it was difficult to determine any concrete or major differences between the Suomi 2 and Palapeli2 project adult learners when referring to their learning strategies. Both sets of participants demonstrated good ideas on how to apply different strategies when learning Finnish as a foreign language. While their answers shared during the first interview regarding what types of learning strategies they planned on employing during the course were opinion based, it is easy to determine that the adults in the study have a concrete idea of what strategies work best for their own individual learning and how to achieve optimal success when learning Finnish.

5.7 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

In determining reasons for learning Finnish as a foreign language, the participants were able to reflect on both the internal motivating factors (*e.g.* guilt or desire to learn the language), as well as the external motivating factors (*e.g.* adaptation into the local society or job expectations). The results show that primarily, external factors were the foremost reasons for learning Finnish as a foreign language and it was determined that the primary reason for foreigners to learn the language is to better adapt within the society and culture, closely followed by employment expectations. Additionally, the support offered within the household had an impact on the adults’ learning; it was not necessarily having someone else in the household who was fluent in the language that was the support that was needed, although helpful, it was additional support from spouses and family members to allow for additional study time out of the classroom that the participants sought. It was also discovered that despite many of the

participants having a Finnish spouse or other family members, these family members were not entirely willing to assist in the learning that the participants were doing due to lack of interest, comfort in assisting or understanding what the participant needed. These findings show that the lack of support at home resulted in a somewhat lesser learning experience, but it is unclear if this impacted their overall grades negatively since the adult learners were not asked to share their final grade results with the researcher as this was deemed unnecessary. It was when the participants were discussing the feelings they had experienced during the learning process, that understanding how support at home impacted the language learning experience.

The learners expressed many negative emotions when learning Finnish as a foreign language, including 'anger', feeling 'overwhelmed' and 'frustration'. These emotions were targeted towards the oral aspect of the language, the grammar component and also in regards to a sometimes lack of support from family members, as indicated above. The results indicate that adult learners desire more speaking or 'output' opportunities both in and out of the classroom. Furthermore, they found the process of learning Finnish very slow due to the overwhelming amount of new rules and vocabulary being taught during each class. Despite feeling negatively towards the language learning process, some of the participants found these negativities to be learning motivators, enabling them to work harder both in the classroom and independently.

Adults are typically viewed as independent or self-reliant learners, and most teachers are able to respect this. However, it was determined that the adults of this study are more self-labeled as a combination of both self-reliant and teacher-reliant learners which contradicts Knowles' theory that although adults need some guidance in regards to their learning they are mostly self-reliant in how they learn. The results from this study illustrate that the adult learners

required teacher guidance and thorough instruction within the classroom, followed by necessary independent study following the class session.

When learning a new language, the participants expressed many ways on how they planned on learning the language and assisting their learning, including the use of visual aids such as television and reading material, aural aids such as music, radio and other fluent speakers or through logistical aids such as memorization and repetition. By understanding their own limitations and learning abilities, they were able to utilize whichever strategies they believed would be most optimal for their individual learning. The results indicate that the most common learning strategy was verbal aids; almost all of the adult learners determined that in order to succeed in the language course, practicing their oral skills as frequently as possible, in a number of settings would be essential to their overall learning, which coincides with Krashen's output hypothesis, in which the learner is able to monitor their own learning in order to correct or modify themselves when it is necessary.

Overall, learners from both the Suomi 2 and the Palapeli2 project groups showed many similar adult learner characteristics when it came to learning Finnish as a new language. However, a major difference that was predominant was the length of time the participants have been in Finland, with Palapeli2 project students being in Finland for a much shorter period of time, resulting in much different reasons for learning the language. At this stage, those from the Palapeli2 project were mainly concerned with employment and cultural expectations, whereas those who were participating in the Suomi 2 program demonstrated different needs for learning the language such as familial reasons and emotional reasons such as guilt. Additionally, familial differences are indicative of differences between the groups of learners; some of the participants have young families at home (Participant 3, for example), whereas others either live on their own

or are recently married without any children. It can be determined that this influenced the learning process, especially in terms of support at home. As was already briefly mentioned above, both groups of adult learners demonstrated similar strategies for learning the language including speaking and listening to Finnish as much as possible. They also exhibited a strong individualized understanding of their own learning needs and what ways would best assist their language learning.

6 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this thesis sought to study adults learning Finnish as a foreign language. It aimed to answer the questions surrounding why they were learning the language, how they planned to learn the language, the emotions they experienced during the learning process, the support offered to them during their learning of a foreign language and understanding whether or not they labeled themselves as self-reliant or teacher-reliant learners, and why.

The results showed that many of the adult learners relied on external motivators as cause for learning Finnish as a foreign language, primarily the need to adapt within the community and job expectations. In addition, the participants' at home support impacted their learning both in a negative and positive way, since it was determined that some desired more in home support beyond assistance with learning the language, but rather more assistance to allow for study time and whether or not there was support offered at home, this was seen as a motivator to continue working to learn the language. It was also determined that the participants of this study often felt over-whelmed, frustrated or angry at some point during the language learning process, primarily with the oral and grammatical aspects of the language. Also, despite Malcolm Knowles' theories surrounding adults being self-reliant learners, the adults of this study were individually labelled primarily as a combination of self-reliant and teacher-reliant learners, therefore depending on both themselves and the teacher equally when it came to their overall language learning.

Prior to completing the first interview, the researcher believed that the adults due to their different age, familial situations, life experiences and overall expectations of the course would without a doubt all be self-reliant learners. It was interesting to find that the only participants of this study to self-label themselves as self-reliant learners were the native English speakers (although, the second participant switched their choice to a combination of both self and teacher-

reliant during the second interview). Upon completing this study, it is easy to determine that adults definitively do learn differently than children but in counterintuitive ways. Some participants had to put the needs of their children or spouses first, above their language studies, therefore only finding adequate study time either late at night or only during the class session. Furthermore, to take notice of the need to learn the language in order to adapt within the culture or the guilt that one participant felt due to having lived in Finland for such a long time and not knowing the language, definitely coincides with Knowles' theory regarding adults questioning both internal and external motivators as reasons to learn or acquire a new skill, unlike children who typically learn what they are told and when they are told.

7 DISCUSSION

7.1 RELEVANCE OF STUDY

The overall objective of this study was to examine adults learning Finnish as a foreign language while indicating the differences between adult and child education (andragogy and pedagogy). It was necessary to understand the reasons behind the adult learners' decisions to learn the language, the support that was offered to them, how they felt during the learning process, and whether or not they found themselves to be self-reliant learners. What should be understood and valued from this study is the overall aspect of who adult learners are, rather than just the 'how', 'why' or 'when' they may choose to learn a new skill. Although the aims of this study were centered on answering these questions with an interest on support, emotions, motivation and reasons to learn Finnish, it should be primarily accepted that adults learn differently in comparison to children based on needs and past experiences. Furthermore, andragogy should be viewed as a different method of teaching than pedagogy due to the reality that adults do learn differently than children as a result of being self-reliant, coinciding with Knowles' and additional researchers' results over the years. Moreover, this study showed the adults' ability to monitor their own learning in relation to Krashen's monitor hypothesis and especially in terms of those who believed themselves to be self-reliant learners. When needed, especially when there was some uncertainty in terms of grammar rules, the adult learners were able to modify their learning strategies in order to comprehend.

This study presented a few differences in comparison to previous studies in regards to adult learners. To begin with, the support offered to learners did not have any major impact on the adults' overall learning, except in terms of personal support and the need for more time to be dedicated towards independent studies. In the introduction of this study it was mentioned that

home support is the fourth most important feature supporting learning success (Wang et al. 1997), however, the only participants that desired more home support were those with family to care for such as young children. This finding correlates with Home's 1998 study regarding the need for additional home support for adult learners and the need for instructors to respect and honour this. Furthermore, although Knowles, Merriam and other researchers have indicated that self-directed learning is solely applicable to adult learning and that primarily, adults are self-directed learners due to being able to understand their own learning needs, personal wants and goals, this study indicated that the participants preferred to be self-labelled as a combination of both self-reliant and teacher-directed learners; meaning that not only did they regularly seek out and welcome their language instructor's guidance and instruction, they also relied on themselves to learn the material in their free time, slightly contradicting previous research done on the subject of andragogy and self-reliant learning. As opposed to the belief that adult learners do not welcome or even resent instructor's support, the participants in this study welcomed teacher oriented learning willingly and happily, although, it should be noted that all of the participants indicated the necessity to continue independent study at home, otherwise the fear of falling behind or not entirely understanding the material became problems. Next, adults regularly scrutinize how acquiring a new skill will impact their life, whether negatively or positively, while deciding if the skill is actually necessary at this point in their life. Typically, adults learn a new skill due to a major change in their life such as marriage, moving or career-change. The participants in this study presented many different reasons for learning Finnish however they largely based their decisions on the fact that they are foreigners trying to assimilate into a new culture. They were all well aware of their own personal requirements when it came to support, some seeking out additional language assistance from co-workers or friends and others seeking

out additional childcare. In addition, although all of the participants completed their courses successfully, it was not without some negativity towards the course or language itself. At different points during the learning process, feelings of anger, frustration or even feeling overwhelm were expressed, leading them to look at their studies and own learning progress critically.

7.2 LIMITATIONS

Prior to the first interview, it was determined that asking the adult learners to share direct opinions regarding both institutional and personal home support was unnecessary and that the focus should be solely on home support. Despite the first interview originally having a question written concerning the importance of institutional support, this was deemed unnecessary and therefore participants were only asked directly about what type of support was offered to them at home or out of the classroom, and whether they felt it to be important to their individual learning. As the researcher, it was deemed unnecessary to ask directly about the importance of institutional support during the first phase of interview questions as institutional support was already determined to be appropriate and needed for learning Finnish because of the knowledge that the adults were partaking in a coordinated and institutionally ran program. However by eliminating the question regarding institutional support and its influence on language learning, this may have potentially impacted the ability to effectively answer the research question surrounding the learner's support. Rather than focusing on the support as a whole, the participants were guided to reflect principally on their individual personal home support.

Secondly, participants were not directly asked what actual type of feelings or emotions they felt during the interviews, beyond being asked if they felt overwhelmed or stressed at any point during their language learning process. Rather, opinions and thoughts on personal feelings

that may have emerged during their individual learning process were shared during other interview question answers. As the researcher, to have asked the participant directly how they felt during the learning process may have caused them to hold back their true feelings by putting too much thought into an answer or have potentially been viewed as prompting by the researcher for a specific answer. Indirectly bringing up thoughts of emotions or feelings that may have been felt during the learning process very likely did not impact the ability to obtain adequate data to answer the research question relating to emotions, as it was simply better to allow the participants to share when openly discussing another question when they felt it necessary.

It was previously discussed in the methodology chapter that there were some issues in regards to arranging for the second interview with one of the participants, difficulties understanding answers during the interview and transcribing phases because of language barriers or accents, however, the researcher would not change the way the data collection process was carried out. In saying so, the data analysis and therefore the ability to effectively answer the research questions, may have been slightly influenced by the more difficult to understand answers due to the researcher's need to assume or potentially guess what was shared by the adult learners. By performing the interviews one-on-one in a neutral, relaxed setting within Jyväskylä after briefly meeting the adult learners within their learning contexts, the participants were able to feel comfortable with being open to answering the questions that were delivered. Furthermore, although it was originally planned to take field notes during the interview phases, it was deemed detrimental and for the success of the data analysis the voice recorder was used, especially for those interview participants that were slightly more difficult to understand during the face to face encounter. The voice recorder made it possible to re-listen and re-assess the interview questions and answers. Although some brief field notes were written throughout seven

of the interviews (of each interview stage), the eighth interview was conducted without a voice recorder making the researcher completely reliant on written field notes. Due to a lack of prior experience and the inability to utilise a voice recorder, this may have impacted the understanding of the participant's answers when conducting the data analysis. As a result of the notes being hand written, it was perceived inappropriate to directly quote the participant at any point during the data analysis and writing of this thesis. The fact that a voice recorder was going to be used should have been addressed when the researcher first met the potential participants in their Suomi 2 or Palapeli2 project courses and should this research continue, it will be addressed prior to a participant's commitment during that first stage of meetings.

7.3 FURTHER STEPS FOR THIS STUDY

Future steps of this study would be to start by better understanding the institutional support offered to adult language learners. For example, understanding what in-class services are offered in different institutional settings that aid in students' learning, the teacher's own language background and how much the teachers do in the classroom to encourage the use of oral, written and listening skills. Furthermore, understanding the teacher's perspective of teaching Finnish as a foreign language would assist in their view points on whether or not andragogy is different than pedagogy and that adults generally learn differently than children. Additionally, by addressing possible scenarios where emotions may have arisen during the language learning process would be beneficial as well, in order to obtain concrete results in terms of emotions felt throughout the learning process. It is evident that results from previous andragogy studies have been transferred and applied into different adult learning contexts and it is without a doubt that the results found in this study could be applied into other adult learning contexts, especially those that are established in an educational or workplace setting.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: CONSENT FORM

Consent to Participate in Research *Adults learning Finnish as a Foreign Language*

Introduction and Purpose

My name is Ashley MacKenzie. I am a Masters of Education student at Jyväskylä University, working with my faculty advisor, Professor Matti Kuorelahti in the Department of Education. I would like to invite you to take part in my research study, which concerns adult education and learning Finnish as a foreign language.

Procedures

If you agree to participate in my research, I will conduct a two-part interview (one at the beginning of the course and one at the conclusion) with you at a time and location of your choice. The interview will involve questions about adult education, foreign language learning, course expectations and learning strategies. It should last about 30 minutes. With your permission, I will audiotape and take notes during the interview. The recording is to accurately record the information you provide, and will be used for transcription purposes and as data in my thesis. If you choose not to be audio-taped, I will take notes instead. If you agree to being audio-taped but feel uncomfortable at any time during the interview, I can turn off the recorder at your request. Or if you don't wish to continue, you can stop the interview at any time.

I expect to conduct two interviews, one at the beginning of the course and one at the conclusion of the course. It may be necessary that follow-ups may be needed for added clarification. If so, I will contact you by e-mail/phone to request this. Follow-up interviews would take place after each interview, if needed.

Benefits

There is no direct benefit to you from taking part in this study. However, it is hoped that the research will help both individual language learners and help teaching institutions better understand how to best support their language learners.

Risks/Discomforts

Some of the research questions may make you uncomfortable or upset. You are free to decline to answer any questions you don't wish to, or to stop the interview at any time. As with all research, there is a chance that confidentiality could be compromised; however, we are taking precautions to minimize this risk.

Confidentiality

Your study data will be handled as confidentially as possible. Results of this study will be published (or presented) in my final thesis, set to be published upon graduation in the summer of 2015. Individual will not be used, though age and gender may be used for the sake of categorizing results.

To minimize the risks to confidentiality, it will only be me who handles the data collected and that proper measures will be taken to ensure proper storage of the data collected through the interviews. Interview participants can be notified upon the thesis' completion and will have the option to view the final thesis on the University of Jyväskylä library database upon graduation.

When the research is completed, I will retain these records for up to 24 months after the study is over. The same measures described above will be taken to protect confidentiality of this study data.

Compensation

You will not be paid for taking part in this study.

Rights

Participation in research is completely voluntary. You are free to decline to take part in the project. You can decline to answer any questions and are free to stop taking part in the project at any time. Whether or not you choose to participate in the research and whether or not you choose to answer a question or continue participating in the project, there will be no penalty to you or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Questions

If you have any questions about this research, please feel free to contact me. I can be reached by email at: *** or by phone at: ***

CONSENT

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your own records.

If you wish to participate in this study, please sign and date below.

Participant's Name (*please print*)

Participant's Signature

Date

Participant's Email Address

Participant's Phone Number

[Optional/If applicable]

If you agree to allow your name or other identifying information to be included in all final reports, publications, and/or presentations resulting from this research, please sign and date below.

Participant's Signature

Date

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS PART 1

- 1) a) When did you come to Finland?
b) For what reasons did you come to Finland?
- 2) For what reason(s) are you learning Finnish? (ex: employment, personal reasons, education, etc).
- 3) **If a native English speaker ask: Have you studied any other languages before?
Which? For what reasons did you learn this/these language(s)?

**If a non-native English speaker: Besides learning English, have you studied any other languages before? Which? For what reasons did you learn these language?
- 4) a) When learning a new language, what strategies do you use the most to better learn the language? (for example: memorisation of grammar rules, repetition, speaking out loud, etc.)

OR (depending on answer to question #3)
b) When learning a new language, what kind of strategies do you plan on using to better learn the language?
- 5) What kind of personal support system do you have at home?
- 6) Adult learners either rely on the instructor when it comes to their own learning or are self-reliant learners. Which do you think you are, and why?
- 7) What are your overall expectations for this course concerning: a) Your own learning outcomes? b) The delivery of the course?
- 8) How do you feel going into this new language course and acquiring Finnish as a new language? Why?

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS PART 2

- 1) Now that you have completed your Finnish course, what is your overall opinion of learning the language and of the language itself?
- 2) The last time we spoke, we talked about the reasons you are learning Finnish (****refer back to personal answers given during Interview #1**). Do you think that these reasons were strong motivators in how you studied in and outside of the classroom? If so, in a positive or negative way?
- 3) What kind of a language learner would you say you were when it came to learning Finnish as a foreign language - strong, weak or average? Why?
- 4) What part (or parts) of learning Finnish did you find to be the most challenging? Why?
- 5) What part (or parts) of learning Finnish did you find to be the easiest for you? Why?
- 6) If at all, when did you find yourself to feel stressed or overwhelmed?
- 7) How could have these situations been done differently in order to have avoided these negative feelings?
- 8) If there could have been more focus or an improvement in a certain area of the course to have better helped your learning, which area do you feel could have been focused on more or improved on?
- 9) The last time we spoke, you mentioned ____ (****refer back to personal answers given during Interview #1**) as personal learning techniques and strategies to assist your learning process. Do you think that you were able to utilize those techniques during the course? If yes, how? If no, what did you do differently?

- 10) How much time a day would you say you dedicated to your studies outside of the classroom? On a daily and weekly basis? Do you feel that that was a sufficient amount of study time or do you wish you had had more?
- 11) During the first interview we talked about personal and institutional support (**if necessary, refer back to Interview #1 and what was said**). Would you say that you had: enough personal support from home and from the institution during the course? OR do you think you could have used more personal and professional support to have achieved better success in the course?
- 12) Would you say that you are still a self-reliant/independent learner now that you have completed this course? (****based on what they said during Interview #1**) Why or why not?
- 13) Do you think that your overall expectations were met as a learner... in regards to the delivery of the course and of the overall course and the expectations that were given at the beginning of the course (for example, with Palapeli2 students are told they will be at a B1 level upon completion)
- 14) During your language course and now upon completion, do you find that you are able to better relate and adapt into the Finnish community? How or how not?
- 15) How do you feel now that you have completed this course? And what are your next steps?