

Family Language Policy and Multilingualism

Mixed-language Families in Finland

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University of Helsinki
May 2021

Abstract

Faculty: Faculty of Arts

Degree programme: Master's Programme in Linguistic Diversity and Digital Humanities

Study track: General Linguistics

Author: Romina Nyberg

Title: Family Language Policy and Multilingualism

Level: Master's thesis

Month and year: May 2021

Number of pages: 52 + 9 (appendices)

Keywords: Family language policy, bilingualism, multilingualism, multilingual families, language attitudes

Supervisor: Matti Miestamo

Where deposited: Helda (Digital Repository of the University of Helsinki)

Additional information:

Abstract:

This thesis explores the family language policy (FLP) of mixed-language families living in Finland. More and more children are born in multicultural families, where parents have different first languages, and many of them wonder what language strategy to use in the home environment to be beneficial for the language development of their children. Sharing circumstances with other parents in multicultural families, and having a personal interest in multilingualism drove my interest in investigating the family language policy of mixed-language families who reside in Finland; how the daily use of more than one language is established, implemented and managed at the family level. With three main objectives - 1) identifying parental language practices, 2) examining parental views on multilingualism, 3) identifying influencing factors of language choice – this thesis intends to offer an overview of the family language policies employed by parents, and to reveal possible insightful information about attitudes towards language use. It also aims to highlight areas where parents who raise multilingual children in Finland might need practical guidance and support.

A survey was conducted through an online questionnaire across Finland among parents of children up to 17 years old and whose spouses have different first languages. The questionnaire was both quantitative and qualitative in nature. The quantitative data was analysed by means of descriptive statistics, and for analysing the qualitative data, an inductive approach was used based on a thematic analysis performed at a semantic level.

The main results identified one parent - one language (OPOL) as the most preferred language practice and showed that parents' determination and plan to employ a language separation strategy does not fully materialize into practice. The type of parental language practice differs among parents of children from different age groups. Despite the myriad of factors that influence parents' language choice, their family language policies seem to be oriented around a similar language ideology, one that places value on first language transmission and on equal early multilingual acquisition. The transmission of first language appears to be intrinsic to the nature of parenthood. In addition to the main findings, the timing of introducing a new language and the limited availability of language resources for minority languages were identified as the areas where parents who raise multilingual children in Finland need guidance and support.

The results and findings of this study deepen our knowledge and understanding of relevant aspects and challenges related to the family language policies of mixed-language families.

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1. Introduction

There are many multilingual parents with small children, who are not sure what linguistic setting to use at home, to be beneficial for the language development of their children. A particular post on Facebook caught my attention: a mother of a 15-month-old child, whose family moved to Finland from Central Europe, is asking opinions regarding language use. She is wondering if it would be good to continue using their mother tongue to address each other (she and her husband) and their child, or to start using English. Would it be better to use one parent - one language, or one language at home – one language outside strategy? In addition to my personal interest in multilingualism and early multilingual acquisition, this kind of scenario stimulated my interest in investigating the family language policy of mixed-language families who live in Finland, how it is established, implemented, and managed at the family level.

More and more children around the world are born in multilingual families and are exposed from birth to more than one language. For many years, researchers have been interested in children's early exposure to more than one language, and there is a vast literature on bilingualism and child language acquisition, with extensive studies that have investigated the simultaneous acquisition of more than one language (Cenoz & Genesee, 2001), most of them studying children's language acquisition in bilingual environments (Deuchar & Suzanne, 2000). Among others, the above-mentioned studies focus on language comprehension and production by analysing children's language development in relation to language exposure and emphasize the importance of the extent to which a child is exposed to each language. In these studies, little or no attention is attributed to parents' linguistic intentions and attitudes towards language(s). Regarding the increasing number of multilingual and multicultural families raising multilingual children, researchers have become interested in the strategies used by parents to enable and foster the development of their children's early multilingualism (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004; Braun & Cline, 2014; De Houwer, 2009, as cited in Wilson, 2020), and this fact has led to the emergence of the Family Language Policy (FLP) research field.

Studied from the perspectives of linguistics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics, applied linguistics, language policy, and education, multilingualism is an interdisciplinary research field, that received a lot of attention from researchers, and it has been defined in different terms. Cenoz (2013) looks at the scope and definitions of multilingualism

from various angles used in related literature. The well-known and most cited definitions are the one issued by the European Commission (2007), which defines multilingualism as “the ability of societies, institutions, groups and individuals to engage, on a regular basis, with more than one language in their day-to-day lives”, and the one given by Li (2008), that defines a multilingual individual as “anyone who can communicate in more than one language, be it active (through speaking and writing) or passive through (listening and reading)”. Very common around the world, multilingualism is a complex phenomenon that can be approached on both individual and society levels. Individual multilingualism, also referred to as plurilingualism, refers to one’s ability to use different languages, that can be acquired either in a simultaneous – being exposed to two or more languages from birth – or a successive manner – being exposed to additional language(s) later in life. Societal multilingualism addresses the use of languages in society. In a similar fashion, the use of languages used at the family level, can be regarded as family multilingualism. Based on the number of languages involved, researchers have used different terms: “bilingual” and “bilingualism” used in general for two languages, but it can involve more languages as well (Cook & Bassetti, 2011, as cited in Cenoz, 2013), “trilingual” and “trilingualism” are common especially in studies on trilingual acquisition, and more recently, the term “multilingualism” is often used as a generic term referring to two or more languages (Aronin & Singleton, 2008 as cited in Cenoz, 2013), covering both bilingualism and trilingualism (J. Cenoz 2013).

In this paper, “multilingual” and “multilingualism” are used as generic terms to refer to two or more languages spoken by an individual.

In the view of standard definitions, the terms “first language”, “mother tongue” and “native language” are equivalent. The language that one has initially learned, is considered his/her first language, which is “the language used by those with whom, or by whom they are brought up from infancy” (Robins and Crystal 2018). This is normally referred to as “L1” in language acquisition, language learning, and educational studies. Consequently, the term “L1” is used to refer to the first language, the mother tongue or the native language of one individual and sometimes it is also used to refer to the home language or the community language. Therefore, the L1 is the language that one individual has learned first and identifies oneself as a native speaker of the specific language. In general, the L1 language is the language that one individual knows best and uses the most and refers to someone’s first language acquired after birth. As a

rule, the term “L1” is used in opposition to the term “L2”, the latter one referring to the language that one individual has learned after he or she acquired the L1 language.

Skuttnab-Kangas (1984), gives different definitions to the term “mother tongue” in relation to four criteria: 1) origin – the language learned first, 2) identification – the language one identifies with, or the language one is identified as a native speaker of by others, 3) competence – the language one masters best, 4) function – the language one uses most, and argues that a combination of some or of all, can be used according to the linguistic context. For linguistic majorities, all definitions usually converge, and in the case of linguistic minorities, to use a mother tongue definition by function will not be accurate.

Even though the two terms “mother tongue” and “first language” are, in general, used interchangeably, in the opinion of some philosophers and linguists, there is a difference between the mother tongue and the first language. The mother tongue is the “in-born language”, thus a language that a child is already familiarized with when he or she is born, whereas the first language can be regarded as “the language which a child acquires either through schooling or socialization, such as family” (Chan 2015). Since the term “mother tongue” can be highly ideological and misleading, in many contexts, it is substituted with the term “first language”, which can be perceived as a more neutral one.

Multicultural families are families whose spouses have different cultural backgrounds and different first languages. According to official statistics, there are around 35 000 multicultural families/couples with children permanently residing in Finland. In Finland, most multicultural families are formed from a Finnish spouse and a spouse born and raised abroad, and also families whose both spouses are born in two other countries and live permanently in Finland, as well as families whose both spouses of foreign background are born in Finland. In many of these multicultural families at least one of the spouses is multilingual, and they use another language than their mother tongue as lingua franca. Multilingual individuals can be speakers of a minority indigenous language who need to learn the dominant language, immigrants who speak their first language(s) as well as the language(s) of their host countries, individuals who learned languages as they spread internationally, as well as some citizens of officially bilingual states, such as Finland. It is believed that languages open doors to economic and social opportunity (Romanowski 2020).

This study explores the parental language practices, in terms of strictness and flexibility towards the use of more than one language by one parent, parents' views on multilingualism, and the influencing factors of their language(s) chosen for addressing the child(ren) in the home environment. It aims to investigate the parental language management among mixed-language families (whose spouses have different first languages) with children up to 17 years old, who reside in Finland, the types of language practices they employ at home, and if and how their language planning addresses children's multilingualism in terms of parental language ideologies.

There are three main objectives. The first objective is to identify the linguistic practices used by parents in mixed-language families; the second objective is to examine what parents believe about multilingualism; and the third objective is to find out parents' motivations for using certain language(s) for communication with their child(ren) within the home context.

Each objective can be formulated into a research question, as follows:

- 1) What language practices are employed by parents when addressing the child(ren)?
- 2) What are parents' personal views on multilingualism?
- 3) What factors influence parents' language choice?

Within the framework of family language policy, this study intends to provide an overview of the family language policies employed by mixed-language families living in Finland and explore the motivations behind the languages used in one of the key spaces for language interaction – the home environment. The findings can yield insightful information about attitudes towards languages, especially, first languages and their transmission, and reveal areas where parents raising multilingual children in Finland might need practical guidance and support.

This thesis is structured as follows. In chapter 2, the definition, the framework of the family language policy research field, types of FLP, and relevant studies are presented. Chapter 3 describes the methods and tools used for collecting and analysing the data. Chapter 4 presents the results and findings, followed by a summative discussion in chapter 5 and conclusion in chapter 6.

2. Background

This chapter presents the theoretical considerations of the FLP research field as follows: the first section presents the definition of the family language policy, the second section details the FLP framework, and it is followed by the types of FLP in section three. The fourth section is dedicated to the related studies.

2.1. Definition of Family Language Policy

The relatively new research field of FLP emerged from the increasing number of multilingual families that have been confronted with the question of which language strategies and policies they should apply in the family to promote their child(ren)'s multilingualism and foster their multilingual acquisition (Gil, et al. 2020).

Kendall A. King et al. (2008) defines it as “explicit (Shohamy 2006) and overt (Schiffman 1996) planning in relation to language use within the home among family members”, and emphasizes the importance of the investigation of child-parent interactions, that lead and influence the child language development (De Houwer 1999). FLP is an interdisciplinary field of research that combines the fields of language policy and language acquisition (King, Fogle, & Logan-Terry, 2008).

2.2. Family Language Policy Framework

Research on FLP comprises studies on language ideology, language practice and language management. According to Spolsky (2004), the field of Language Policy integrates three elements of a speech community:

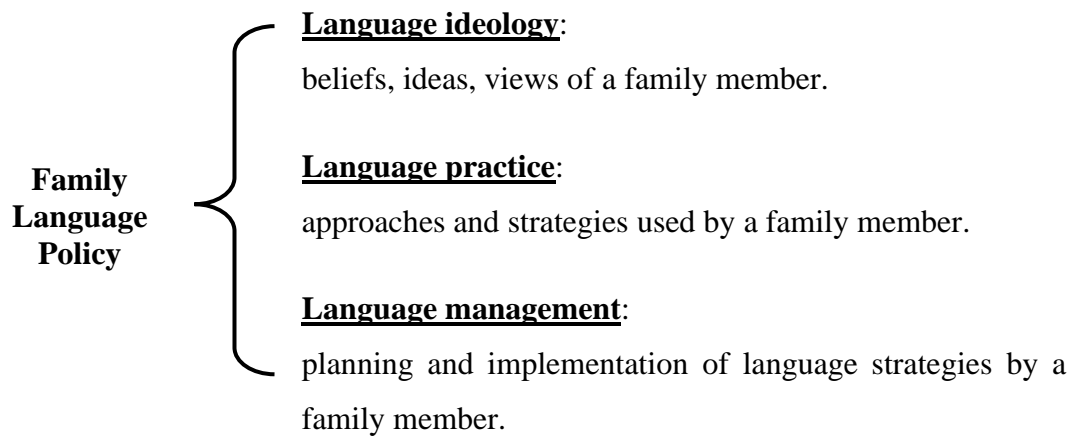
- 1) language ideology, which includes beliefs, ideas and views on language and its use.
- 2) language practice, which refers to strategies and manners of language use.
- 3) language management, which relates to ways that affect the language situation; what an individual does to modify or influence the language use.

In this model, language ideology is defined as a set of “beliefs about language and language use”, language practice as “the habitual pattern of selecting among the varieties that make up its linguistic repertoire”, and language management as “specific efforts to modify or influence that practice” (Spolsky 2004, 5).

Using this model at a family level, language ideology translates to what a family member thinks about language and what should be done with language, language practice displays what a family member actually does with language, such as parental discourse strategies and children's linguistic choices, and language management covers plans and actions related to the linguistic environment (Kostoulas and Eleni 2020).

In conformity with Spolky's language policy model, family language policy addresses all the language beliefs, ideas and views, language approaches and strategies, together with language planning and implementation decisions of family members. Figure 1 below illustrates the general view of the family language policy.

Figure 1. Overview of the FLP model



The three established components of the family language policy model, provide the generic theoretical framework of the current study. The first component (language ideology) corresponds to the second research question that inquires the parental views on multilingualism, and the other two components tie in with the first research question, that looks into parental language practices and language planning.

2.3. Types of Family Language Policies

Own views and attitudes towards child language and language development play a significant role in mixed-language families, and on the basis of these beliefs, parents may employ certain language practices which they think will lead to a certain result (Palviainen and Bergroth 2018).

Most parents with different first languages wish for their children to learn both languages, and to facilitate this, they to use certain languages for communication in the home environment,

and try to create and implement various practices or strategies that aim at the multilingual development of their children.

Gil et al. (2020) observe four possible linguistic strategies in the context of possible outcomes of the family language policy. The examples accompanying the following strategies are made up for the purposes of this study:

1) One Person – One Language (OPOL) with majority language¹ support:

- Parents: different first languages.
- Community: The language of one parent is the language of the community.
- Strategy: each parent uses his/her respective first language (L1) when addressing the child(ren).
- Example:
 - Parent 1: Finnish
 - Parent 2: Polish
 - Majority language: Finnish

2) OPOL + extra majority language. In this case the child is most likely to be raised trilingually:

- Parents: different first languages.
- Community: None of the parents' languages is the majority language.
- Strategy: each parent uses his/her respective first language with the child(ren).
- Example:
 - Parent 1: French
 - Parent 2: Italian
 - Majority language in the community: Finnish

3) Bilingual Parent – Mixed Languages. The child is raised either bilingually or trilingually:

- Parents: One or both parents are bilingual.
- Community: All, or part of it, bilingual with the same languages.

¹ Majority language – the language spoken in the community.

- Strategy: Bilingual parent(s) uses both languages interchangeably when addressing the child(ren).
- Example 1:
 - Parent 1: Finnish-Swedish
 - Parent 2: Romanian
 - Majority language: Finnish and Swedish
- Example 2:
 - Parent 1: Finnish-Swedish
 - Parent 2: Swedish-Finnish
 - Majority language: Finnish and Swedish

4) Multilingual Home – minority language in the educational institution. The child is raised either bilingually or trilingually receiving additional support with one minority language² through formal education.

- Parents: Different first languages.
- Community: Majority language is different than the parents' languages.
- Strategy: Each parent uses his/her own language to address the child(ren).
- Example:
 - Parent 1: English
 - Parent 2: German
 - Majority language: English-Finnish formal education.

In the first strategy, OPOL with majority language support, parents have different languages and one of them speaks the language of the community as his/her first language. In this case, the child is exposed to the majority language since birth. In the second strategy, OPOL + majority language, neither of the parents speaks the community language as his/her first language, therefore, theoretically, the child will be exposed to the majority language later on, most probably through formal education. In this scenario, the child will be raised bilingually at home, and will acquire a third language outside the home. This scenario requires that one of the parents speaks the first language of the other, or each parent knows the first language of the other. The third strategy, Bilingual Parent – Mixed Languages, is characteristic to bilingual parents, with the characteristic that one or both parents will use, alternatively, two languages

² Minority language – one of the languages spoken at home; other than the one spoken in the local community.

when addressing the child. In Example 1, under this strategy, the child will be exposed to three languages at home, and therefore raised trilingually, while in Example 2, the child will be raised bilingually. At least one of the languages spoken at home will be supported by the community. In strategy 4, parents have different first languages, and another language is spoken in the community. Theoretically, the child is exposed to two languages at home, and acquires a third one outside the home.

In these scenarios, the existence of a lingua franca in the family is not considered, and child(ren)'s trilingualism is very likely to depend on it. When parents have different first languages, the levels of multilingual competence of their child(ren) might be conditioned by the language(s) parents use to communicate with each other, and they may use a language other than either of their first languages.

2.4. Related Studies

The primary focus of FLP studies is to investigate parental language beliefs, language practices and language management, and targets mixed-language and/or multilingual families. Families can have different linguistic setups, for example, families where parents have different first languages, migrant families that have a different language than the one of the host country, families whose members have different language preferences, families in which parents want to promote and maintain a certain language (King, Fogle and Logan-Terry 2008).

In a corpus based exploratory study, Kostoulas and Motsiou (2020) analyze online discourses of multilingual children's parents, exploring their attitudes, beliefs and practices towards language, family and education in relation to multilingual development. To better suit the aims of their study, they use a language policy model of two components: i) language ideology and ii) language transmission and management practices, and investigate the family language policy in families living inside and outside of Greece and Cyprus, where one of the family languages is Modern Greek. They found strong parental positive views on supporting multilingualism and discussions concerning the need for preserving or reinforcing a specific language. In terms of language transmission and management practices, the following strategies were employed: one parent – one language, reinforcement of the non-majority language, situational selection of languages and ad hoc use of multiple languages. The use of more flexible language approaches might indicate an adaptation to the current multilingual norms. Their findings show that parental discourses suggest an adjustment to “an increasingly complex linguistic environment”, and

pinpoint the need for developing conceptual models of family language policy that will offer insights into the challenges of the “fluid, complex linguistic reality” faced by mixed-language families (Kostoulas and Eleni 2020).

Analyzing parental attitudes towards the practice of using more than one language in the context of a single conversation, and choices of language management of French-English bilingual families living in the UK, Wilson (2020) reports a positive attitude towards language mixing, even though it does not automatically lead to the use of flexible language practices in the home environment. The majority of their participants stated that using exclusively their mother tongue to their children would be “the best language management strategy for their family”. *Although* the participants in their study were speaking fluently at least one language in addition to their mother tongue, they identified themselves as not “real” multilinguals; ideology that influenced their language management choices (Wilson 2020).

A similar language ideology is reported by Palviainen and Bergroth (2018), whose respondents, speakers of two or three languages, were likely to linguistically identify themselves as monolinguals. The parents of three Finnish-Swedish families living in Finland considered an individual to be bi-/multilingual based on the linguistic status of their family. According to their views, if a child is born in a family of two languages, then he/she is bilingual, regardless of his/her linguistic skills. In this case, linguistic identity is regarded as “something you have (i.e. are born into) rather than something you do (i.e. using or acquiring new languages)” (Palviainen and Bergroth 2018). Same phenomenon is experienced by a Finnish woman, active speaker of Finnish and Swedish, regarded as monolingual because her both parents are Finnish speakers, who struggles to gain her multilingual status and to be acknowledged as a multilingual by family, friends and community (Smith-Christmas, Bergroth and Bezcioglu-Göktolga 2019). Ironically, monolingual identities are given by bilingual states. It is interesting the fact that Finnish citizens describe their language identities in terms of the national language policy, and regard themselves as speakers of the language(s) choice made at birth.

In a longitudinal study, Haque (2011) analyses the language practices and policies of an Indian family of four living in Finland, and shows how parents’ language attitudes come into conflict. Having different views toward the languages used in their both, home and societal environments, lead to a direct “impact” on the children’s language practices. Patterns of language shift manifested only by the mother, resulted in children having and employing different language preferences in the same linguistic context/environment (Haque 2011).

Protassova (2018) overviews the family language policy in relation to the transmission of Russian language in Russian-speaking families in Finland, Germany and France, and the multilingual education in support of the family language policy. The study reports positive parental attitudes towards bringing up multilingual children, and the fact that the language practices are influenced by traditions, own history and personal experiences, as well as the world politics. Even though parents are aware of the advantages of multilingualism, support is needed with language practices in the home environment (Protassova 2018).

Family language policy involves looking at personal language ideologies and practices in different contexts. The family language policy in a Finnish context has been focussed on specific language settings, as it can be noticed in the several research studies made in this respect. This current study complements the above-mentioned studies that investigated pair-languages or diaspora families, by looking at the general phenomenon of FLP, at the dynamics of language ideologies and language practices in the home environment of mixed-language families.

3. Methods and Materials

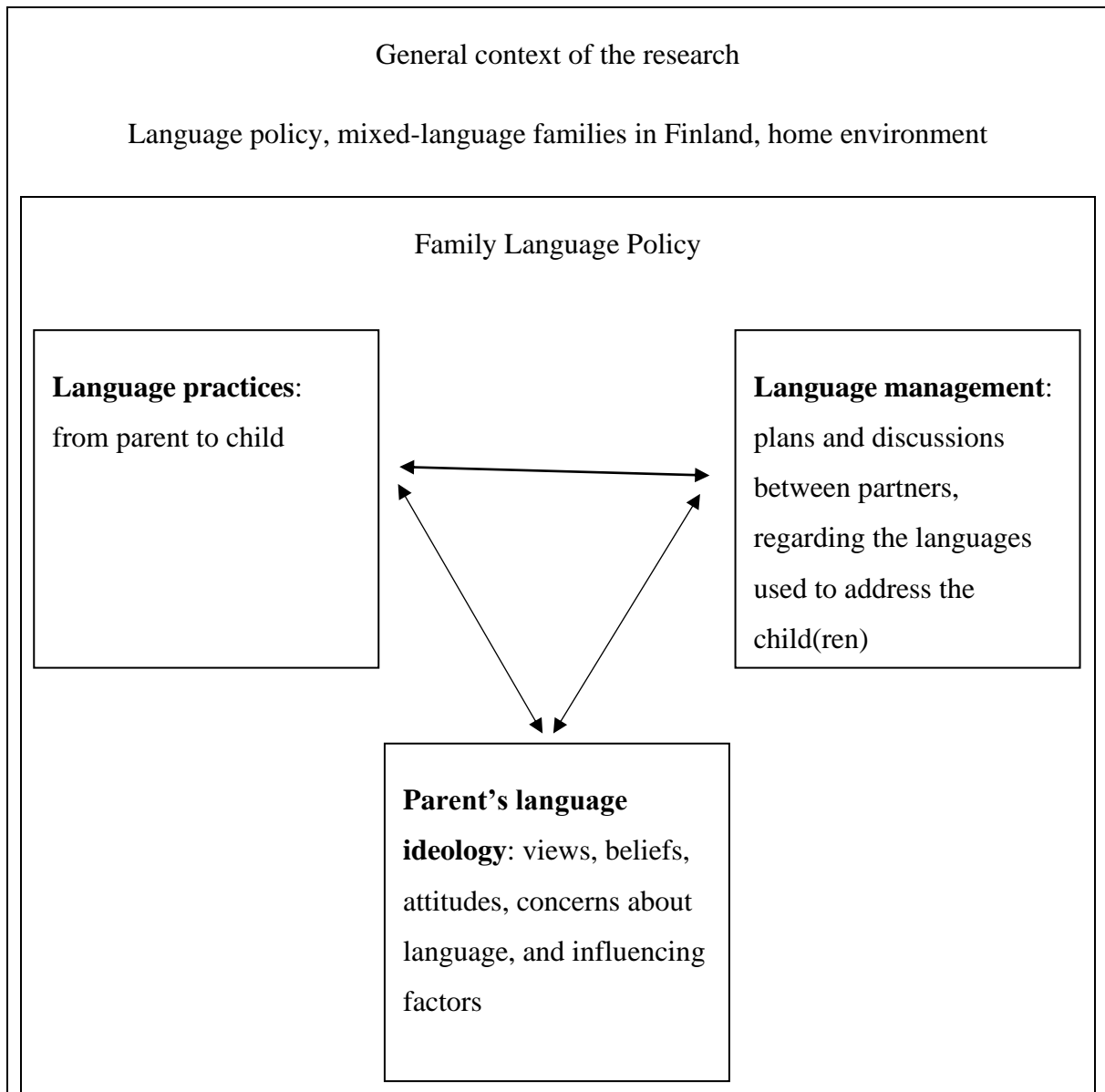
3.1. Research Method

This study uses a survey method, and it is conducted through a questionnaire via the Internet. The questionnaire is both quantitative and qualitative in nature. The quantitative component is defined by closed-ended questions with a pre-defined set of options used to elicit participants' general views towards language(s) and language use in the home environment, while the qualitative component is outlined by open-ended questions for free form answers, which detail individual language beliefs, attitudes and practices, as well as factors and reasons that influence language behaviour. The common research method employed in studies that investigate family language policy is a mixed-method consisting of online surveys for collecting quantitative data, and interviews or observations for obtaining qualitative data. It was not feasible to carry out interviews or organizing observation sessions for this study, therefore, open-ended questions were included in the questionnaire.

Conducting the study online made it possible to attain a more diverse and larger sample, the questionnaire being easily accessible across the country and being easier for parents to participate, as well as making it possible to reach out to participants during the same time frame.

Within the family language policy framework, the 3-element model (see Fig. 1 above) is adapted to the scope and design of this study, as follows: the first element - language practices - refers to the language practices used by the respondent parent when addressing the child(ren); the second element - language management - concerns possible plans and discussions between the respondent parent and his/her spouse, regarding the languages they will use to address the child(ren); the third element - language ideology – regards views, ideas, beliefs, concerns, attitudes towards languages, together with the influencing factors for the language choices of the respondent parent. The order of the elements is consistent with the order of the research questions, with each element corresponding to one of the objectives of the study. All three elements are interconnected, and the directionality of the arrows is based on the outcomes of this study. Although the parental language ideology represents the ground basis of the FLP, influencing either one or both other two elements, it can also be affected in turn, by the language practices and the language management. The starting point differs from family to family, with some parents first discussing and planning towards the language practices which will be employed between parents and child(ren), and for other parents the language management was addressed subsequently to the language practices already in use. Often, parents' initial personal views and attitudes towards language use and multilingualism, change along the way due to various factors. The research model (design inspired by Moin, et al. 2013, 58) is illustrated in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. The research model



3.2. Data Collection

This explorative study inquires into the language perspectives of parents in mixed-language families living in Finland. The data was collected through an online survey which was carried out across the country. The survey was built with the E-lomake (E-form) tool provided by the University of Helsinki. This digital tool can be used with a web browser, and surveys can be designed, created, published, edited, and maintained for research purposes. The answers collected with E-lomake are stored securely on the University's own servers and can be processed and analysed on the application platform or saved in own computer in different

formats for further processing and analysis. In accordance with the requirements of the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the E-lomake is not recommended for collecting sensitive personal data (E-lomake 2020). Using this type of survey for data collection is practical and convenient, giving the possibility of reaching many prospective participants in an efficient and fast manner. To ensure that respondents will have enough time to answer the questions and complete the questionnaire, the survey link was available for six consecutive weeks, between 1st of December 2020 and 12th of January 2021. The participation was voluntary and anonymous. No identifying information was collected, such as names and emails.

The tool used to conduct this survey was a questionnaire through which parents were asked to report on their own beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour towards language use. Online administered questionnaires are common tools that represent an indirect method for collecting data and give the opportunity to survey a large number of individuals in a practical and economical way. The choice of response categories depends on the nature of required information. Closed-ended and open-ended questions have different roles and complement each other. In order to obtain valid answers and reliable results, a questionnaire should be clear and “the wording, the question content, the structure and the sequence must all work together” (Pauwels, Tsokalidou and Wong 1995).

As this study involves parental language practices and personal views on language use and multilingualism, I decided to use as basis and inspiration three questionnaires successfully used in similar research. The first one is designed and currently used by Curdt-Christiansen et. al (2020) for their ongoing national survey for the project: “Family Language Policy: A Multi-level Investigation of Multilingual Practices in Transnational Families”. They investigate how different types of families with children in the UK deal with languages, what parents think about and how they handle language(s) in their everyday life (Curdt-Christiansen, Wei, et al. n.d.). The second questionnaire was created by Wilson (2020) and used in her study about language use at home and approaches to bilingualism of French speaking parents residing in the UK. The third one was developed by De Houwer (2017) and includes attitude questions for parents in bilingual settings.

The above-mentioned questionnaires allow for investigating the language use and attitudes towards multilingualism of parents of mixed-language families. The questions are clear, carefully worded, and well-structured for assessing the same linguistic areas and targeting the population with the same characteristics as this current study. Using already designed questions

increases the chances of obtaining valid and reliable answers and provides a better confidence in data analysis and interpretation. Additionally, the time and effort needed for creating a set of new questions were reduced.

The questionnaire has two parts and consists of 32 questions. The first part, modelled after Curdt-Christiansen et al. (2020), collects background information and contains 12 unnumbered factual questions that build the sociolinguistic profile of respondents, plus one question that regards the languages used between parents, from parents to children, and between siblings. The second part comprises 19 questions, of which 16 closed-ended and 3 open-ended items, and collects data on parents' language use, personal views on multilingualism, and possible factors that influence the linguistic behaviour in the home environment. Some questions are used as such, others are slightly modified in order to be able to collect more specific answers, and 5 questions (15-19) are designed for this study. The questionnaire is attached in Appendix 1. Table 1 below shows the structure of the questionnaire, which is consistent with the research model (see Fig. 2 above).

Within a period of six weeks, 609 responses were collected through the online survey. All submissions were individually assessed and checked for the suitability to the requirements of this study, out of which 56 were found ineligible, and therefore, excluded from the study. Ultimately, 553 valid responses are included in the study.

Table 1. The structure of the questionnaire

Parts	Items	Data
I Participant's profile	13 unnumbered items	Personal details about participants: parent role, age, education level, area of residence, family type, child(ren)'s age, own and partner's first language(s), country of birth and other languages Language used among family members: participant to partner, participant to child(ren), partner to child(ren), between siblings (if applied)
II Family Language Policy	1-5	Language practices: participant to child(ren) Language management: possible language planning
	6-14	Personal views, beliefs, attitudes, concerns regarding multilingualism
	15-19	Factors and motives that influence participant's language choice

3.2.1. Closed-ended Questions

The closed-ended questions sum 16 items in the form of Likert scale statements and 1 item with a multiple-choice format. They are organized thematically and divided into three different sections. The multiple-choice question is included in the first part of the questionnaire and collects data related to the languages used between parents, from parents to children, and between siblings. The Likert items belong to the second part of the questionnaire and are divided in three categories; each question category has a corresponding section.

The first section (questions 1-4) concerns language practices and language management at home. The answers will reveal what language practices are employed when addressing the

child(ren), and whether the birth of the child(ren) influenced parent's own language practice. The second question category (questions 6-13) elicits parents' views, beliefs, and expectations on multilingualism, and reveals if it is important for them to promote and foster the multilingualism of their children. The third section (questions 15-18) regards other factors that influence parents' linguistic behaviour in the home environment.

3.2.2. Open-ended Questions

The open-ended questions offer the possibility of answering freely and explain without restrain personal views and beliefs in a detailed manner, providing more particulars and insights to the study. They can be needed at different stages of an investigation and complement the close-ended questions (Pauwels, Tsokolidou and Wong 1995). There are three open-ended questions that supplement the answers of the closed-ended ones by prompting free answers and collecting qualitative data that complements the quantitative component of the study. They are as follows:

- 1) In the first section of part II, question 5, "Did you and the other parent discuss and agree on which language(s) each of you should speak to your child(ren)? If so, please describe and justify your decision.". This question is used as such from Wilson (2020) and allows for a detailed answer on parents' language plan and management, and possible reasons for their choices.
- 2) Question 14, "Have your views on multilingualism or ideas on how to raise your child(ren) multilingually changed over time? If so, please describe how." (Wilson 2020), was modified to better fit the objectives of my study and allows the respondents to specify their personal beliefs about multilingualism.
- 3) Question 19, "Are there any other factors or reasons that influence your choice of language use at home? If so, please describe them.", is designed for this study and supplements the previous four close-ended questions about factors that might contribute to the decision about language practices in the home environment.

3.3. Participants

The survey link, accompanied by a short description of the study, was posted on multiple Facebook groups and pages (a copy of the post is attached in Appendix 2), and sent via email to four NGOs (Familia ry, Moniheli ry, Ninho ry, Think Afrika ry). The email briefly presents the aim of the study, the target population, survey anonymity and confidentiality, and requests

the possibility of sharing the survey link with their members, as my topic is closely related to their scope (a copy of the email is attached in Appendix 3).

The population of interest consists of parents who have different first language(s) than their spouses, and whose children are between 0 and 17 years old. The population sample can include parents in the family scenarios presented below. The examples under each scenario are made up for the purposes of this study:

- 1) Finnish background³ – Finnish background; both spouses are born in Finland.
 - Example:
 - Parent 1: L1: Finnish, country of birth: Finland
 - Parent 2: L1: Swedish, country of birth: Finland
- 2) Finnish background – foreign background⁴; one spouse is born and raised in Finland and the other one is born and raised abroad.
 - Example:
 - Parent 1: L1: Finnish, country of birth: Finland
 - Parent 2: L1: German, country of birth: Germany
- 3) Foreign background – foreign background born abroad; both spouses are born and raised in different countries outside Finland, but currently live in Finland.
 - Example:
 - Parent 1: L1: Russian, country of birth: Russia
 - Parent 2: L1: English, country of birth: USA
- 4) Foreign background – foreign background born in Finland; both spouses are born in Finland but have foreign backgrounds and different first languages.
 - Example:
 - Parent 1: L1: Romanian-born, country of birth: Finland
 - Parent 2: L1: Albanian-born, country of birth: Finland
- 5) Foreign background born in Finland – foreign background born abroad.
 - Example:
 - Parent 1: L1: French, country of birth: Finland
 - Parent 2: L1: Yoruba, country of birth: Nigeria

³ Persons with at least one parent born in Finland.

⁴ Persons whose both parents or at least the only known parent were born abroad. (OSF n.d.)

The aim is to gain an insight into the family language policy practices and to reach parents in mixed-language families throughout the whole country. The participants were reached through different social media channels and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) which support multicultural families and/or foreign parents.

3.4. Risks and Limitations

The method of collecting data by using an online survey is very practical in terms of costs, time, and potential to target the desired population. A risk of contacting prospective participants via social media platforms and emails is the possibility of postponing the answering for a later time and forgetting altogether or failing to answer within the availability period of the survey link. Although relatively easy and fast to collect answers, there is the chance that some responses might not be truthful since it cannot be known for sure that the person who completed the questionnaire meets the study requirements. One important undesired factor is the possibility of multiple submissions from the same respondent which can skew the data. To eliminate the possibility of the results to be affected by these issues, the submitted responses were assessed individually for checking their validity.

This study is limited by not assessing participants' multilingualism and their regular use of other languages besides their first language in the home environment. It did not touch on the level of proficiency of the other languages spoken by participants, nor addressed the aspect and degree of language-mixing used with other family members. Therefore, children's language exposure in situations when they are not directly addressed was not considered.

The options for family type available for selection in the questionnaire were limited to just parent(s) with children, without option for living settings that include other relatives as well.

The above-mentioned aspects were left out of the questionnaire, as they were not considered to be relevant to the focus of this study.

3.5. Data Analysis

The collected data was both quantitatively and qualitatively analysed according to its type. Descriptive statistics were used for showing, summarizing, and describing the quantitative data obtained from the responses to the closed-ended questions. This method is used to calculate the collected data in a logical, efficient, and meaningful manner, and it can be reported numerically

and graphically. An inductive approach based on a thematic analysis performed at a semantic level was used for analysing the qualitative data obtained from the participants' free answers to the open-ended questions.

An inductive analysis is a “bottom up” method through which the structure of the analysis is derived from the actual data itself (Burnard, et al. 2008) and the identified themes are strongly connected to the data in question. Through this process, the data is coded without trying to fit it in an already set coding frame. Thematic analysis is a data driven method widely used to identify, analyse, and report themes from data. It “minimally organises and describes” the data. A theme is a pattern or an instance that “captures something important about the data in relation to the research question” and it does not depend on the frequency of its occurrence (Braun and Clarke 2006). Analysing the data at a semantic level involves analysing the content explicitly, considering the “surface meaning of the data” (Friese, Soratto and Pires 2018).

Thematic analysis is a flexible method, and this flexibility can be both advantageous and disadvantageous. The advantage is that it can be modified and adapted to meet the requirements of the study in question (Braun and Clarke 2006), while the disadvantage lies in the possibility of producing incoherency and inconsistency when identifying different themes. According to Holloway and Todres (2003), the coherence and consistency can be promoted and supported by empirical evidence.

I chose this method for analysing the qualitative data collected from the respondents because although each open-ended question has a distinct and defined topic, I had no pre-existing expectations and coding frame. The intention is to report the actual experiences and realities of the participants of this study and to provide a detailed account of the themes identified within the data. With no previous experience of qualitative research, the thematic analysis was relatively easy and fast to learn and conduct.

3.5.1. Form of Analysis for Closed-ended Questions

The questionnaire contained a set of closed-ended statements to which participants indicated their level of agreement or disagreement on a 5-point Likert scale by selecting their chosen option. They were asked to express the extent to which they either agree or disagree on a symmetric scale with the following selection: *Strongly agree*, *Somewhat agree*, *Neutral*, *Somewhat disagree*, *Strongly disagree*. Whenever selected, the option *Strongly agree* was interpreted as participant's strongest opinion and assumed that it perfectly (best) matches the

reality of their real-life practices or their personal views according to the statement type. The *Somewhat agree* option was interpreted as a statement that can hold true occasionally, or partially matches personal views. In the same fashion, the selections to the opposite ranks on the scale were accounted. For some questions, where the agree/disagree state was considered to be more relevant than a certain extent, both *Strongly* and *Somewhat* degrees were combined and analysed together. The *Neutral* option was regarded as not applicable or not considered, based on the context or situation.

For the analysis of the responses to the closed-ended questions, descriptive statistics were used to reveal the trends or patterns based on the collected responses. The data was processed with the E-lomake tool, which was used for creating the questionnaire and collecting the responses, and it was shown in a report. In order to handle the report easier and to facilitate the analysis, a numerical value was added to each response option as follows: *Strongly agree: 1, Somewhat agree: 2, Neutral: 3, Somewhat disagree: 4, Strongly disagree: 5*. In addition to automatically generating certain statistical information, the survey tool provides the option to use mathematical functions in specific search fields, for obtaining summaries of the values of individual statements. The relative frequency distribution and the number of participants that chose the same response option to each question will be shown in tables, and the essential points will be illustrated in figures in chapter 4.

3.5.2. Form of Analysis for Open-ended Questions

In addition to the closed-ended statements, the questionnaire included three open-ended questions that gave participants the opportunity to respond in a free form. Because the questions were mandatory, they were formulated in a yes/no manner in order to facilitate the answering option for the participants who were not willing to elaborate on the subject or for those who were not affected by the specific instance. There was no word/character limit and the answers varied in type and length. The plan is to analyse them separately as each question had a different theme and accompanied its corresponding set of closed-ended statements.

The participants' answers yielded by the open-ended questions were grouped in three text documents that were individually analysed using an inductive approach that follows the six phases proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) for conducting thematic content analysis (Friese, Soratto and Pires 2018):

- 1) Becoming familiar with the data

- 2) Generating initial codes
- 3) Searching for themes
- 4) Reviewing themes
- 5) Defining and naming themes
- 6) Producing the report

To minimize the manual duties, the implementation of the thematic content analysis was done using ATLAS.ti⁵, a software for qualitative analysis that provides a flexible yet powerful set of features for coding, connecting and visualizing findings of qualitative data (ATLAS.ti 2021).

As previously mentioned, the three documents were analysed individually as follows: in phase 1, the document was explored using word clouds and then read through while paying attention to the words and data segments with identical or similar meaning. The off-topic answers were ignored. During phase 2, quotations were created by assigning different labels/initial codes to relevant words and data segments related to the topic. In phase 3, the initial codes were either grouped or split, renamed, or replaced in order to build categories that will potentially match a certain theme. Phase 4 involved further exploration of the themes by grouping codes in a systematically meaningful pattern. In phase 5, the identified themes were either defined or renamed as needed. In phase 6, the identified themes together with their corresponding code groups were reported in a table format. The other two documents were analysed in the same fashion.

Document 1 contains the participants' answers to question 5, which was related to parental language practices: "Did you and the other parent discuss and agree on which language(s) each of you should speak to your child(ren)? If so, please describe and justify your decision." Document 2 contains the answers to question 14, which concern personal views on multilingualism: "Have your views on multilingualism or ideas on how to raise your child(ren) multilingually changed over time? If so, please describe how." Document 3 contains the responses to question 19, related to possible factors that influence parents' language choice: "Are there any other factors or reasons that influence your choice of language use at home? If so, please describe them."

The process of initial coding for document 1 resulted in a list with 455 coded quotations, which were grouped into forming 12 categories, which subsequently were assigned to 5 matching

⁵ Software for qualitative analysis: <https://atlasti.com/product/what-is-atlas-ti/>.

themes. For document 2, initial codes were assigned to 114 quotations, then 9 code groups were formed, and 3 themes were identified. For document 3, the process of generating initial codes yielded 139 quotations to be coded, 18 code groups, and 8 themes.

The tables with the themes together with the corresponding code groups that emerged from each document are presented in chapter 4.

The initial codes for document 1 can be seen in a Sankey diagram generated by ATLAS.ti in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3. Initial codes for document 1

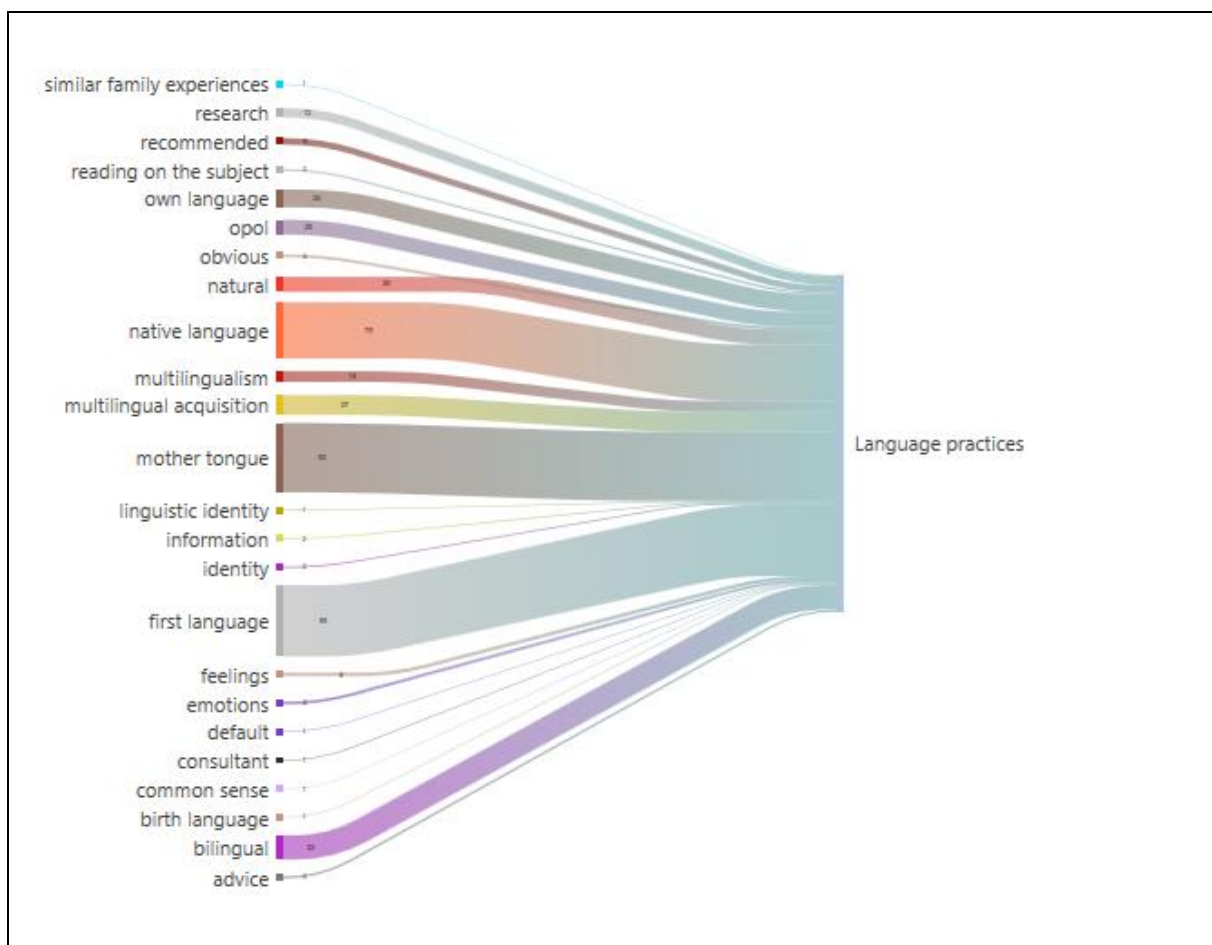
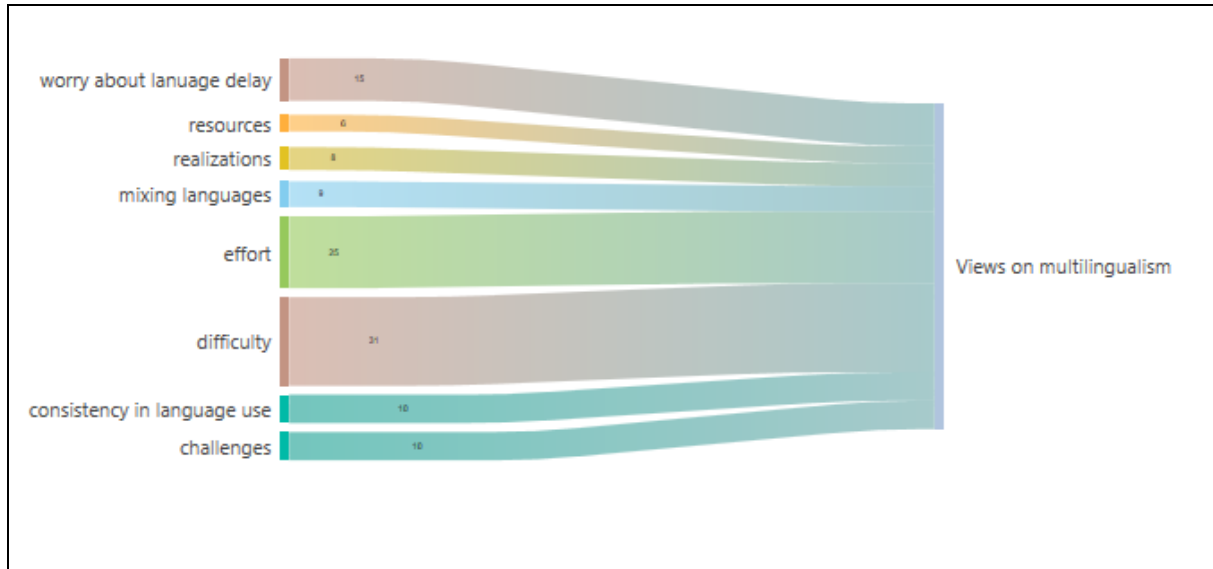


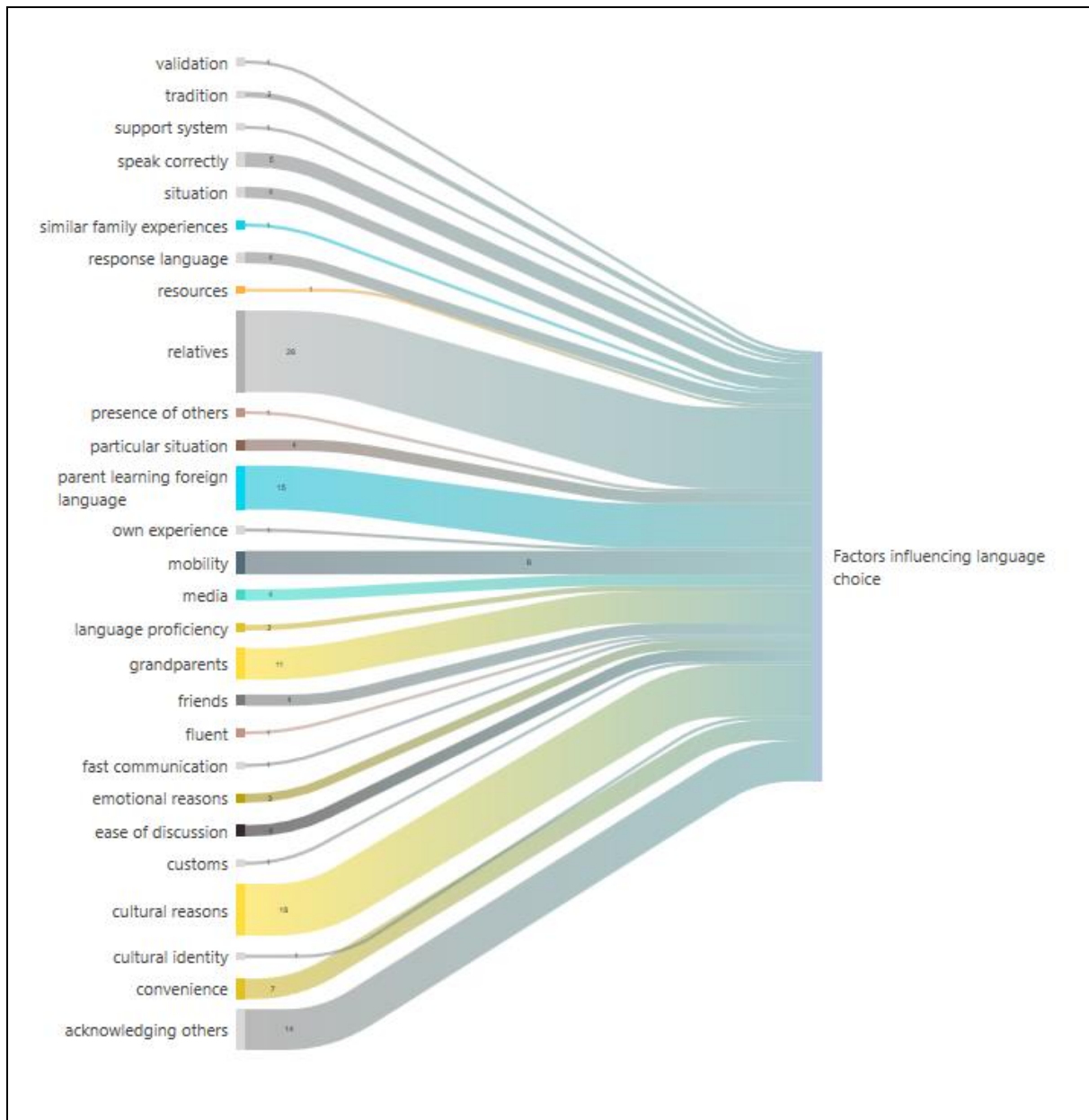
Figure 4 below shows the Sankey diagram with the initial codes generated for document 2.

Figure 4. Initial codes for document 2



The initial codes for document 3 are shown in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5. Initial codes for document 3



4. Results and Findings

This chapter reports the results of the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data obtained from the answers to the research questions of this study. The participants' profile is detailed in the first section of the chapter, followed by the results of the second part of this study which includes parental language use, personal views and attitudes towards multilingualism, and other possible factors and motives that influence the linguistic behaviour at home.

4.1. Participants' Profile

The sample population consists of parents of children up to 17 years old who reside in Finland and whose spouses (the other parent of the child(ren)) have different first languages.

All 553 participants meet the criteria of the study, of 1) being a parent of child(ren) with age between 0 and 17 years, 2) having a different first language than his/her partner, and 3) living in Finland. The sample group comprises responses from residents of all 19 regions of Finland with a significant number of participants residing in the capital area, in the Uusimaa region (68.35%), which is consistent with the high concentration of foreign-language speaking population in this area (OSF 2020). The rest of the sample group is geographically dispersed. A table showing the number of participants from each region with the corresponding percentage based on the total number of responses is attached in Appendix 4. The vast majority of participants are highly educated with more than 80% (see Appendix 5 for the absolute number of participants by education level and the corresponding percentage) possessing a Bachelor's degree or higher (39.96% Master's degree and 8.50% PhD). Half of the respondents are between 35 and 44 years old (see Appendix 6 for the number of participants with corresponding percentage by age group). Out of all participants, 74 are parents of children under 1 year old, and the rest of children between 1-17 years old; the children (1-17)'s average age is 7. (see Appendix 7 for the number of participants and percentage by children's age).

Close to 90% out of all participants are living in a family setup of parents plus child(ren), and the large majority is represented by mother (74.32%). Table 2 and Table 3 below present the number of participants with the corresponding percentage by parent role and by family type, respectively.

Table 2. Number of participants and percentage by parent role

Parent role	Number of participants	Percentage
Father	139	25.14%
Mother	411	74.32%
Prefer not to say	3	0.54%

Table 3. Number of participants and percentage by family type

Family type	Number of participants	Percentage
Parents + child(ren)	496	89.69%
Single parent + child(ren)	43	7.78%
Other	14	2.53%

Out of all respondents, 490 reported only one language as their first language, while 63 respondents reported having two or more languages that function as their first language. Whilst the respondents reported speaking other language(s) in addition to their first one(s), the questionnaire did not inquire responses for determining the level of language proficiency, as it falls outside the scope of this study. A list with the languages reported as first language by the participants with only one first language is attached in Appendix 8. Forty-six languages are represented as first languages in the study, with Finnish and English being predominant, followed by Spanish and Swedish.

Participants' linguistic profile includes 28 monolinguals and 525 multilinguals. As mentioned above, this study does not concern multilinguals' levels of language proficiency. Nearly all respondents selected their first language as the language used for addressing their child(ren), and almost half selected the lingua franca as the language used between the spouses. Table 3 below shows the frequency of the languages used among family members as reported by participants.

Table 4. Languages used among family members

	My L1	My partner's L1	Our lingua franca
Between you and your partner	181 32.70%	135 24.40%	223 40.30%
You to child(ren)	508 91.90%	24 4.30%	19 3.40%
Your partner to child(ren)	28 5%	497 90%	21 4%
Between sibling (if applied)	130 24%	119 22%	37 7%

4.2. Survey Results

This section presents the findings of the study based on the participants' responses, which determined the parental language practices, parents' beliefs about multilingualism, and the factors that influence the language choice in the home environment.

4.2.1. Reported Parental Language Practices

In this section, the participants were asked to report on their family language practices in terms of language separation and language mixing, and namely what language strategy do they use when addressing their child(ren). The statement "*only my first language*" in question 1, was meant as "*only one language*" for addressing their own child(ren). Considering the possibility that participants who reported two or more languages as first languages might find it difficult to respond to statement 1 ("*When I speak to my child(ren), I use only my first language.*") due to the use of the term "only", which implies the exclusive use of one and only one language, their answers from the comment box were assessed individually and checked for possible misinterpretations and confusions. Their responses indicated that the meaning was perceived as intended, such as using one language only in that scenario.

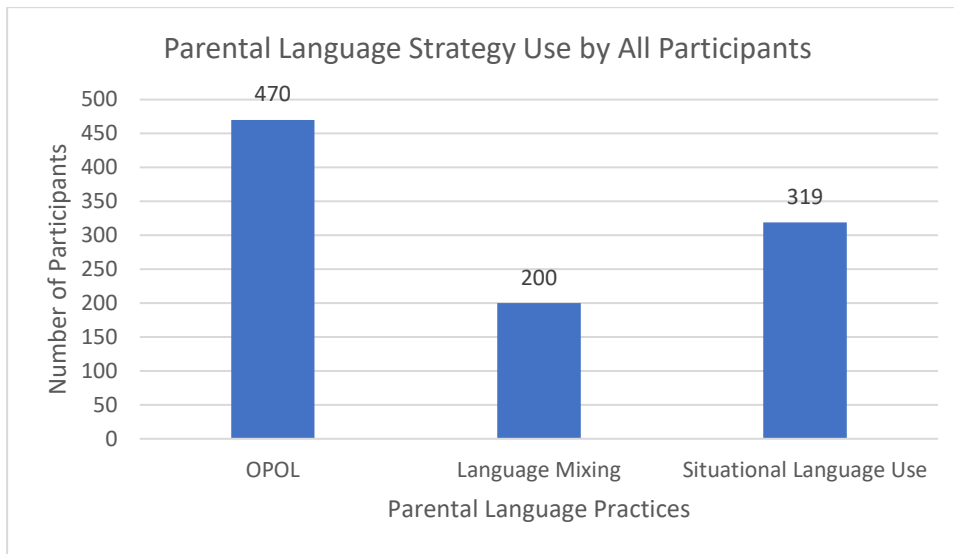
The vast majority of participants (85% *Strongly Agree/Somewhat Agree*) reported that they use only one language when speaking to their child(ren). The responses to question 2 indicate that only 11% of the participating parents strongly agree and 25% agree only to some extent with the practice of mixing languages. Slightly more than half of parents (58% *Strongly*

Agree/Somewhat Agree) stated that they use different languages according to the situation or context. The results of question 4, which addresses a possible change in language practices occurred after the birth of child(ren), shows that the scale is almost evenly balanced with 47% agreeing with the statement and 43% disagreeing. Table 5 below shows the frequency distribution of the parental language practices as reported by participants.

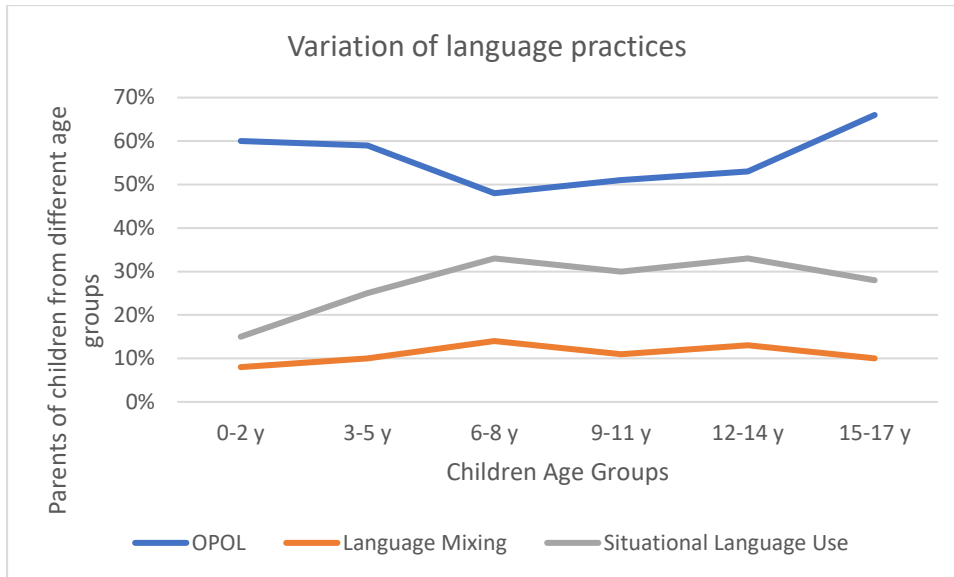
Table 5. Frequency distribution of reported parental language practices

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. When I speak to my child(ren), I use only my first language.	313 56.60%	157 28.39%	19 3.44%	38 6.87%	26 4.70%
2. When I speak to my child(ren), I mix languages.	62 11.21%	138 24.95%	36 6.51%	120 21.70%	197 35.62%
3. When I speak to my child(ren), I use different languages according to the situation. (For example, in presence of speakers of other language than your first language, or when watching TV, listening to radio, reading books, or helping with school assignments.)	140 25.32%	179 32.37%	32 5.79%	68 12.30%	134 24.23%
4. After the birth of my child(ren), I started to use different languages with different people at home.	156 28.21%	102 18.44%	56 10.13%	61 11.03%	178 32.19%

The *Strongly Agree/Somewhat Agree* response selections of statements 1-3 (Figure 6 below), where one agreed to some extent to more than one language practice, show that although the one person – one language (OPOL) practice is the one that parents with different first languages prefer and opt for in order to achieve the multilingual language acquisition of their children, in reality, it is difficult to achieve for multilingual parents and occasional use of other language(s) is common (De Houwer and Bornstein 2016). The results show that situational language use is preponderate and avoiding mixing languages can be hard to attain. These findings are consistent with Palviainen and Sally (2013), whose study on the family language policy of three mixed-language Finnish-Swedish families, showed that OPOL practice is difficult to achieve in everyday life.

Figure 6. Parental Language Strategy Used by All Participants

The results showed that the use of parental language practices correlates with children's age. It was found that the type of language practice differs among parents of children from different age groups, with OPOL and situational language use being inversely proportional, as shown in Figure 7 below; as the use of situational language use increased, the use of OPOL decreased. It is common that parents of children in the age groups of 6-8 years old and 12-14 years old to employ the situational language use practice over the OPOL by using two or more languages according to the situation when speaking with their children. Based on children's age, this change in parental language practices might be influenced by the formal education language, the introduction of foreign languages in the school curriculum, or children's social network. For parents of children with ages between 6 and 8 years old, the beginning of elementary school in a language other than their first language can entail parents' situational language use for supporting their children with various school assignments. For children with ages between 12 and 14 years old, starting to study a second language at school can prompt their parents to use it at home, in case they are speakers of the specific language. Children having friends visiting is also a reason for parents to use a language that all present understand, and that language is other than the language usually used for parent-child communication.

Figure 7. Variation of language practices among parents of children from different age groups

To the open-ended question under the “parental language practices” section (question 5), where the participant parents were asked to specify whether they have discussed and agreed with their spouses on what language(s) each of them should speak to their child(ren) or not, 459 parents responded affirmatively and 94 negatively. Reading literature on the topic, professional advice, own experience, as well as the experiences of other families are variables considered by parents in language planning.

Table 6 below comprises the main five themes emerged from parents’ free answers to question 5 together with their corresponding code groups. The code groups encompass the initial codes presented in Figure 3 above, generated during the second phase of the analysis. The themes included: (1) OPOL, (2) natural manner, (3) expression and identity, (4) towards multilingualism, and (5) research on multilingualism.

Parents’ preference towards OPOL has “natural” roots, as using first language for addressing the children came naturally for nearly all participants.

“It came naturally that we each spoke our own first language.”

“It is natural to speak my first language to my offspring.”

“We both speak our mother tongues. The decision came naturally.”

“I think it was just kind of natural that we each used our mother tongue languages with the children.”

“We discussed about it, but we didn’t strictly agree on the languages. It felt natural for both of us to speak our first languages.”

“...the language comes naturally and being strategic about it is artificial and distorting.”

“It made me feel closer to him and I think it also gives him a sense of comfort.”

Parents’ motivations to employ the one parent - one language strategy were supported by the strong desire and easiness to express their feelings and emotions in the language that they identify with and master best.

“It was all natural, when my child was in my belly, I naturally started speaking with her in my 1st language and her father in his 1st language.”

“Language I’m most comfortable with and can express myself in best possible way.”

“Using my native language enables me to fully express my feelings towards my son and I believe it is the best heritage I can give to him learning his mother's language.”

“We wanted to make sure our kids could not only understand us but that we could convey our emotions, empathy, humour and so on to our children in the most natural manner.”

“We chose to speak the language we felt most comfortable with and with which we could express our feelings most confidently. We only speak the language we are the most comfortable expressing all our range of emotions.”

“We wanted to offer both languages so that e.g. the vocabulary would be rich. Thus, we both speak the language we know best.”

“it is natural and important for both of us to express ourselves in our native languages and we want our children to also understand the beauties of both cultures.”

When planning towards children’s linguistic outcomes, respondents’ main goal was multilingualism as nearly all respondents wished for their children to speak their first language and to acquire it naturally.

“It was important for us the kids learnt both parents’ languages, so we were persistent in this.”

“...this is the only way to make them bilingual and help them to understand all their relatives and their heritage.”

“...it’s very important that the kids learn both languages and knowing that one parent sticking to one language would support them becoming bilingual.”

“We agreed long before our children were born that they will be raised bilingual.”

“Always been decided that each of us would speak to our daughter in our mother tongue as it is easier to learn languages at a younger age.”

Almost all participant parents who previously discussed and planned a language strategy, acquainted themselves with various accessible research on multilingualism and available resources and services. This shows how the consideration of children’s linguistic repertoire plays an important role in parental language management.

“We both agreed to only speak our own language to her because we had been told/ read that this is the best way for the child to become bilingual.”

“We discussed our decision to use only our native languages when talking to our child. The decision was based mainly on what we found through research on raising bilingual children.”

“Experience from other multilingual families.”

“I come from a multilingual culture and it was important that my child understands what people are saying to her. I also read research while I was pregnant that each parent should speak their own language to the child, and it helps them become multilingual at a very early age.”

“I’ve been reading about it and also received guidance from Moniku language service for multilingual families here in Finland.”

Table 6. Code groups and themes for question 5

Code group	Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using first language • OPOL 	OPOL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naturally • Normal 	Natural manner
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State of mind • Linguistic identity 	Expression & identity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilingual • Multilingualism • Multilingual acquisition 	Towards multilingualism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional advice • Research • Similar experiences 	Research on multilingualism

4.2.2. Reported Parental Language Beliefs

Eight statements concerning own beliefs about multilingualism and child(ren)’s exposure to more than one language were used for determining parental language ideologies. Table 7 below shows the statements and the frequency distribution of selected answers in absolute and relative

values. A significant number of participants (464, 84%) somewhat or strongly disagreed with statement 6, that speaking two or more languages confuses a child, and nearly the same amount (455, 83%) agreed that speaking in two or more languages at home is essential for a multilingual child (statement 10). The vast majority (84%) consider that children will automatically pick up the languages their parents speak (statement 7). Although listening and observing are beneficial factors for young children’s linguistic development, “it would be misleading to say that they automatically acquire any language they hear at home” (Bouko, et al. 2019, 19). Regular exposure, input, and real-life interaction are the key factors for successfully acquiring and learning a language (Bouko, et al. 2019). Nearly all participant parents (507) agreed (*Strongly Agree: 74%, Somewhat Agree: 18%*) that it is good for young children to speak more than one language (statement 11). The large majority was of the opinion that being multilingual is beneficial for academic performance (statement 8, 83%) as well as for career prospects (statement 9, 95%).

A surprisingly high number of participants (368) either strongly (29%) or somewhat (37%) agreed to statement 12, considering that being multilingual means being equally and fully fluent in the languages one speaks. This belief might add pressure on parents who aim at achieving multilingual language acquisition for their child(ren).

Whilst nearly half of the participants (48%) disagreed that multilingual children have a language delay (statement 13), and 21% remained neutral, 31% of parents considered that children’s early exposure to more than one language may cause a language delay.

Table 7. Frequency distribution of parental language beliefs

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
6. Speaking two or more languages confuses a child.	15 2.71%	34 6.15%	40 7.23%	111 20.07%	353 63.83%
7. Children will automatically pick up the languages the parents speak.	310 56.06%	152 27.49%	26 4.70%	49 8.86%	16 2.89%
8. Being multilingual benefits a child’s academic performance.	306 55.33%	152 27.49%	83 15.01%	10 1.81%	2 0.36%
9. Being multilingual is beneficial for the future of a child’s career.	425 76.85%	99 17.90%	28 5.06%	1 0.18%	0

10. Speaking in two or more languages at home is essential for a multilingual child.	301 54.43%	154 27.85%	58 10.49%	28 5.06%	12 2.17%
11. It is good for young children to speak two or more languages.	408 73.78%	99 17.90%	45 8.14%	0	1 0.18%
12. Being multilingual means being fully and equally fluent in two or more languages.	162 29.29%	203 36.71%	52 9.40%	108 19.53%	28 5.06%
13. Multilingual children have a language delay.	26 4.70%	144 26.04%	114 20.61%	127 22.97%	142 25.68%

To the second open-ended question - have your views on multilingualism or ideas on how to raise your child(ren) multilingually changed over time? (Q14) – 238 reported yes, and the remaining 315 no/not really. The thematic content analysis revealed eight group codes that fit with the following three themes: (1) realizations, (2) concerns, and (3) language resources and community support. The group codes emerged from the initial codes shown in Figure 4 above, which have been further split, renamed, and regrouped to best fit the themes. The list of code groups and themes can be seen in Table 8 below.

Nearly half of the respondents reported that their language ideology and views on multilingualism have changed over time and justified their answers. Various aspects related to the use of languages in the new multilingual setting of the home environment were mentioned a lot. Despite the negative aspect of these realizations, they were described in a positive manner. Looking at the entire data set, the effort required for being consistent in language use and the difficulty of avoiding mixing languages, were the prevalent challenges faced by parents.

“It became more complicated in practice than what I had imagined.”

“I realized how hard it is.”

“I notice that it requires a lot of efforts in both (or all) languages to develop equally rich language skills.

“I have realised both languages need support and don’t happen automatically. But it feels more natural than I even thought beforehand.”

“Now that I often address both my partner and child at once I find being consistent more difficult.”

“Multilingualism needs a lot of patience from everyone. It is important to be consistent in language education.”

“I used to be doubtful whether it was really going to work, but I was persistent in speaking my language and saw positive results.”

“Sometimes we don't always manage this [OPOL] as we accidentally use the other language, but not often.”

“It's harder than I thought, because we tend to mix languages easily.”

“It is hard to do strict OPOL when you use a minority language and the other parent and community use a majority language.”

“We cannot be as strict with our language policy as we had planned.”

Some of the parents who have more than one first language, are faced with the challenge of introducing their second language to their children.

“The biggest thing on my mind now is my own personal dilemma with wanting my child to speak both of my mother-tongues - and how to do that.”

In addition to the challenges related to the language practices, some parents experienced feelings of exclusion when children became dominant in the language of their partners and preferred to use it almost exclusively for communication. In addition, conflicts between parents regarding the aspects of language use for addressing the children contributed to the difficulties faced by parents in mixed-language families.

“I'd liked to speak my own language with my child. Feeling as an outsider if I don't tell some things in my partner's first language.”

“Inequality and loneliness in a partnership where one parent only speaks a single language...there are many situations where I've felt left out.”

“The One Language One Parent approach led to a situation where I was the odd one out in his world. With so much support for the community language and so little support for it [own language] my child would refuse to come to me in emotional situations. His language of emotion was exclusively my partner’s language. If we tried to have a family conversation, I would start in my language but as soon as my partner became involved the discussion would switch to other language and never switch back because it was just easier to speak in the community language. Over time I began to feel increasingly isolated, which took a heavy toll on me and my relationship with my family.”

“My partner felt very strongly that we would use the “One Parent One Language” approach. She wanted to be able to use her mother tongue exclusively with our child and it was made very clear that this was NOT negotiable. My feelings and concerns were completely ignored.”

“We both felt very uncomfortable with my partner not understanding [the language] at all.”

“My ex-partner just switched [to another language], from when they were just babies. No discussion about it and it was one major reason for our divorce.”

A big concern related to multilingualism was a possible language delay in children exposed to two or more languages.

“I thought multilingualism would delay my son’s speech development but in reality, not.”

“I used to think that one should expect multilingual children to have delays in speaking and potentially other developmental delays. However, I have come to realize that being in a multilingual environment only has positive impacts on the child.”

“I was worried about language delay but not anymore.”

“I thought there would be a language delay but our first born had no problems speaking.”

A lack of language resources was an issue especially for the parents living outside the capital region. The importance of books, games, songs, animations, as well as a social circle, were highlighted as essential aspects, and much needed for supporting children’s linguistic development and language maintenance.

“My language is a low resource language, so I have to read books in other languages for example! Or cartoons and movies are not that much in my own language.”

“Multilingualism can be quite challenging, especially if there's not much resources regarding your native language. For instance, there's a very small [own language] community in Finland and books as well as educational videos and songs are very hard to find.”

“In the beginning we had high hopes to be a multilingual family but in a busy demanding life situation (work, studying...) you have to consider the energy given to all things. Lacking a supporting community is challenging.”

The themes revealed from parents’ answers show how the use of languages in a multilingual home can affect a family’s various aspects at all levels: general, couple, and personal.

Table 8. List of code groups and themes for question 14

Code group	Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effort • Challenges • Difficulties • Mixing languages • Consistency in language use 	Realizations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worry about language delay 	Concerns
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of resources • Social network 	Language resources & community support

4.2.3. Reported External Influencing Factors of Language Choice

The last section of the survey comprised a set of statements regarding other reasons that might contribute to parents' language choice at home, in addition to the personal language beliefs on multilingualism. Four external factors were addressed: community, partner's opinion, language transmission and maintenance, and formal education. The frequency distribution of the selected answers is shown in Table 9 below.

The majority (44%) of participants agreed that the community they live in, influences their language practices at home (statement 15), 22% remained neutral, and 34% reported that community is not an influencing factor for the language(s) they speak at home. The answers to statement 16 show that the partner's opinion affected the choice of language use for 34% of participants, and for 39% it was not an influencing factor. Language transmission and maintenance is the factor that influenced the parents' language choice the most (statement 17). Seventy-eight per cent reported that they chose to speak a certain language at home to promote and maintain it. More than half (58%) of parents disagreed (*Somewhat Disagree: 18%, Strongly Disagree: 40%*) with statement 18, indicating that their language practices were not affected by the formal education of their children.

Table 9. Frequency distribution of suggested influencing factors of language choice

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
15. The community I live in, influences my language practices at home.	105 18.99%	140 25.32%	123 22.24%	88 15.91%	97 17.54%
16. My partner's opinion influences my language practices at home.	70 12.66%	115 20.80%	151 27.31%	80 14.47%	137 24.77%
17. I chose to speak a certain language at home to promote and maintain it.	311 56.24%	120 21.70%	77 13.92%	21 3.80%	24 4.34%
18. After my child started day-care/school, my own language practices changed.	32 5.79%	92 16.64%	106 19.17%	102 18.44%	221 39.96%

The third open-ended question - Are there any other factors or reasons that influence your choice of language use at home? (Q19) – yielded 306 affirmative answers and 246 negative answers.

Eight themes were extracted from the content of the affirmative answers to question 19, and they identify as the prevalent factors that influenced parents' language choice. According to the order of the answers, they included: (1) culture, (2) relatives and friends, (3) language proficiency, (4) mobility, (5) child's language choice, (6) parent's goal of learning a foreign language, (7) convenience, and (8) own upbringing experience. The themes together with their corresponding code groups can be seen in Table 10 below. The code groups are the product of the analysis of the initial codes presented in Figure 5 above.

Culture was mentioned by the most participants as the prevalent factor that influenced their choice of language for communication with their children. This includes various cultural reasons such as transmission of own traditions, customs, and celebration of specific holidays.

"...to understand their culture and traditions."

"I want to transmit my culture through the language..."

"...it's easier to understand the culture in a native language, also help get a deeper understanding."

"I would like my child to be able to connect with my culture."

"Raising a multicultural family, it is not just about the language; it's the food, the music, the narratives, the festivities, they have a mixture of backgrounds, we need help them to embrace that."

As well as culture, being able to communicate with relatives and friends is very important for parents in multilingual and multicultural families.

"I want my kids to know it [language] so that they can communicate with my parents."

"Offering the opportunity to communicate with the rest of the family."

"She will be able to communicate with all her extended family members."

“Communication with grandparents and family...and visits were very important.”

“I just want my children to be fluent in my native language and to be able to converse with family members.”

Language is regarded as the most powerful “link” to culture, and the perfect “tool” for truly understanding customs and connecting with people.

“I want my children to use my first language so the cultural link to my country is stronger.”

“I wished my child understands that she's from two cultures and she is able to speak with all family members from both countries.”

“I would like my child to be able to connect with my culture and family. Language will make a big difference.”

Language proficiency was one of the reasons that motivated parents for using mainly their first language for parent-child communication, which included parents’ linguistic competence in terms of grammar and vocabulary, as well as children’s language acquisition and learning to speak “correctly”.

“We use our strongest language with our daughter, so we are able to emotionally express ourselves and speak correctly.”

“Is the only way to correctly communicate (by using my mother tongue).”

“Well, I think it makes sense to only speak the language you are fluent in with your kids to avoid confusing them and learn wrong things.”

“I don’t want to speak Finnish to my baby at this point because it’s not always correct and I don’t want him to pick it up wrong from me.”

“If I spoke the other language, I am sure my kids’ language ability in the other language would be incorrect.”

Consideration of a possible future relocation was one of the variables that contributed to parents' decision of using a certain language when speaking with their children, as having already knowledge of the language of the new host country was regarded as very beneficial.

"Maybe moving abroad brings me a new opinion about teaching a third language to them."

"My kids all vow to leave Finland as adults & work abroad so it's important they have good English at least."

"...give them the opportunity to study in their second country."

"I want my child to have active and excellent skills in my native language so that when we move to another country she will be able to use and to develop her native language and also appreciate it and use it in creative ways both academically and effectively."

Children's language used either for responding or starting a conversation, is a decisive factor for parents' language choice. All participant parents that mentioned the response language of their children, stated that they will use the specific language throughout the respective conversation.

"If my children start a conversation and you feel the need to contribute or answer the question, it might feel easier to continue it [in that language] than to change the language."

"The language she replies in."

"The children's choices for communicating."

In some cases, when choosing to use a certain language for communicating with their children, parents were motivated by the desire or need of learning the language of the host country, language that their children are fluent in, or know better.

"As I am now learning Finnish myself, I like to speak it sometimes at home so that my family can hear that I am progressing."

"We are learning Finnish, and so we speak some Finnish here as well."

“...in order for me to be confident speaking the language and so that she can correct me since she is already fluent.”

Convenience was an important aspect that affected parents’ language choice, which includes communicating easily by facilitating the conversation flow, and accommodating the situation by considering the language knowledge of other people present.

“If outsiders come at home, I switch to their language even speaking to my children.”

“To enable everyone to understand what is being said.”

“...it's important to communicate easily and integrate with child's friends' parents.”

“Mostly it depends whether there are people visiting who don't speak my native language.”

“The situation sometimes requires change, for example, having foreign language speaking guest, I chose the language of the guest (e.g. Finnish) to talk to my child.”

Parents’ own upbringing experience was a weighing factor in the planning of the family language policy, as parents who grew up in a multilingual home are familiar with the outcomes of multiple language exposure and multilingual acquisition. In these situations, parents had strong feelings towards the language(s) they would use and had clear goals for their children’s linguistic outcomes based on personal insight.

“I grew up in a family that is multilingual...so this multilingualism is nothing new to me...it's a normal way of raising a kid for me.”

“My personal background. My parents were not consistent with languages with us, nor did they speak in their mother tongue...Now I am doing my best to give my daughter language tools.”

“My own mother didn't speak to me in her native tongue which I feel very let down by. We do not have a strong emotional bond and I feel outside of her culture and family because of this.”

Table 10. Code groups and themes of question 19

Code group	Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural reasons • Own traditions 	Culture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grandparents • Family • Friends 	Relatives & friends
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grammar & vocabulary • Speaking correctly • Learning “correctly” 	Language proficiency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential family Relocation • Child(ren)’s potential choice to work abroad • Child(ren)’s potential choice to study abroad 	Mobility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child(ren)’s response language • Child(ren)’s preferred language 	Child’s language choice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language practice • Language learning 	Parent’s goal of learning a foreign language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ease of conversation flow • Accommodating situation 	Convenience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing up in a multilingual environment 	Own upbringing experience

5. Discussion

This study explored parental language practices, personal views on multilingualism, and external influencing factors of language choice in mixed-language families residing in Finland, with the aid of three research questions.

In response to the first research question – what language practices are employed by parents when addressing the child(ren)? – it was found that whilst parents, initially, tend to adhere to the OPOL strategy, they are also receptive to mixing languages and changing to a different language according to situation or context. These findings are in line with the ones reported by Wilson (2020), where “parents believed that language separation was a necessary evil to ensure maximum input in the minority language” (Wilson, 2020, 15), and at the same time, “parental language beliefs may have evolved and that a translingual ideology is making its way into multilingual families” (Wilson, 2020, 15). Generally, parents tend to address their child(ren) in their first language, because it is “natural”, “the obvious way” or “common sense”, as described by participants. For some, it “felt wrong” not to speak their first language to their child(ren). Most parents discussed with their spouses the home linguistic setup of their family members, in particular the language(s) used by each parent when addressing the child(ren). Some parents read literature on multilingualism to help them make the decision about the language use (practice), some relied on professional advice, and some considered the experiences and language practices of other families with similar linguistic setup. As a prevalent practice, they would use only their first language in 1 parent – child(ren) setup, when no one else is present. Few parents managed to use a strict OPOL in the presence of other family members and when in 2 parents – child(ren) setup, although between parents the family’s lingua franca was used, when speaking directly to the child(ren) they would use their first language. Others used mainly their first language, but when the child(ren) responded in another language, they would also respond in the corresponding language. In some cases, parents either have encouraged or have been encouraged by their spouses to use only their first language when addressing the child(ren) and it proved to be difficult to adjust and maintain the OPOL practice, as the other language(s) “accidentally” came into use.

Overall, the language management implemented by participants aimed at achieving early multilingual acquisition. Their language practices are strongly motivated by personal linguistic identity, with most parents expressing strong feelings towards their identification as speakers of certain languages. Although some parents’ decisions in maintaining an initial language plan

were consciously and deliberately made, the strict adherence to a set language practice is almost impossible, because, as described by King and Fogle (2017), the family language policy can be “implicit, covert, unarticulated, fluid, and negotiated moment by moment” (King and Fogle 2017, 9)

As for the second research question – what are parents’ views on multilingualism? – the results showed strong positive views towards multilingualism. As observed in Table 2 above, nearly all participant parents considered that multilingualism is beneficial. Concerns about connections between multilingualism and delays in linguistic development were mentioned only in few instances. Although parents’ views on multilingualism have maintained positively over time, they have noticed the effort required in achieving a balanced early multilingual acquisition. Using a certain language for daily trivial speaking alone, proved insufficient for child(ren)’s linguistic development, and this realization has led to changes in their initial language management plans. The changes considered or implemented, contemplated the increase in language exposure which both timewise and motivation wise, proved to be challenging. Speakers of certain languages realised the lack of linguistic resources needed for supporting language acquisition and enhancing linguistic development, available in Finland, and in few instances, it led to the decision of stopping addressing the child(ren) in the specific language, with the motivation that child(ren) will not have the opportunity to use it in any context other than speaking it with one of their parents. The lack of minority language resources in a host country appears to be a common issue for diaspora, as a similar extent of challenges related to language resources was highlighted also by Curd-Christiansen and LaMorgia in a study that explored the home literacy resources of three migrant families in UK, and found that the availability of linguistic resources varies and depends, among other factors, on the status of the heritage language in the host country (Curd-Christiansen and Lanza 2018).

After an initial OPOL, parents with two first languages or with a high level of proficiency in another language(s), were faced with the challenge of introducing a second language. Their uncertainties regarded “when” and “how” questions. It appears that when – at what age and in which phase of the early linguistic development – would it be optimal, and how – by what means, in terms of linguistic context and exposure time – should one parent successfully start addressing the child(ren) in two languages. These realizations and dilemmas pinpoint the areas of support that parents in mixed-language families need in raising multilingual child(ren).

The third research question – what external factors influence parents' language choice? – revealed a wide variety of factors with significant roles in shaping family language policies. Culture and relatives are strong motivators for parental language choice. Transmitting culture and child(ren)'s ability to communicate with relatives, especially grandparents, as well as with friends, are prevalent among parents in mixed-language families. Language proficiency plays an equally important role, as parents want to ensure the correctness of the language used when addressing the children, and that it will be acquired in its native form, with the corresponding diction and elocution. Mobility is also a major factor considered by parents in mixed-language families. Pondering child(ren)'s prospective studies and career opportunities abroad, as well as the possibility of a future relocation, they want their child(ren) to already possess a strong language base of the new host-country.

When children grow up and develop their linguistic skills in a multilingual environment, one language will become dominant and the children may come to have a language preference that they will use for responding to other languages as well. In this situation, some parents switch the language to match children's language choice. Parents' language shift might be motivated by the need or wish to validate children's linguistic abilities, or to make sure that the child(ren) had understood what was said, or for maintaining an effortless flow of the conversation. A language shift, either in response or initiated is also motivated by parents' goal to learn the language of the host-country, language that is better mastered by their child(ren). Convenience often influences parental language practice, as parents tend to resort to language choices that facilitate one's comfortability in different situations or benefits certain circumstances. For parents upbrought in similar multilingual environments, the weighting factor in parental language practices is their own experience. If considered successful, they will use the same approach, and in a contrary situation, a precisely defined one.

In addition to personal beliefs and views on multilingualism, parents' motivations in using certain language(s) for communication with their child(ren) vary greatly, and they are induced by a multitude of factors with equally important roles in shaping the family language policy.

This study used the generic theoretical framework for family language policy and showed how complex and detailed is the relationship between language users and language involved in language transmission, and the strong interconnectivity between the three established components: language practices, language management and language ideology. Although parental language beliefs lay at the base of the family language policy, the finding of this study

indicated that parents' language ideology can be influenced by the practices of multiple language use, and the outcomes of the children's linguistic development and repertoire.

With more than 80% of the participants reporting on possessing a Bachelor's degree or higher, this study has a significantly high representativeness of a highly educated population. Therefore, the results cannot be generalised beyond this group. It can also be that highly educated people are more likely to participate in surveys. This can also apply to mothers, as the number (411) of "mother" respondents is nearly three times higher than the number (139) of "father" respondents. Considering these aspects, potential sources of bias may be linked to participation rates by education level and gender.

6. Conclusion

This study concerned the FLP practices in terms of parental language use in the home environment by addressing parents' language practice, views on multilingualism, and identifying other influencing factors of parents' language choice.

The main findings identified OPOL as the preferred language practice, positive views on multilingualism, and a myriad of factors that contribute to parents' language choice. It is clearly noticeable that the prevalent strong determination to implement a language separation practice and the adherence to a strict language consistency within the family, it does not fully translate into practice. The OPOL practice is not unidirectional, and the interlocutor plays a decisive role in language switching, which can occur either consciously or unconsciously. Child's language choice appears to be the strongest motivator for a flexible language practice, being the significant factor that prompts parents' language switch. Parents tend to respond either partially (mix-language sentences) or exclusively in the language their children use. They resort to this practice for validation, showing to their children that what they have said has been understood, for convenience, to accommodate a flowing, effortless conversation in different situations, or for language learning, parents being willing or in the process of learning a new language and they use it in real-life interactions with their children, who are fluent or highly proficient in the specific language.

The results of this study demonstrated that parents' beliefs represent the key factor that shapes the family language policy. Despite various external factors that influence parents' language choice within the family, and differences in the patterns of language use at a family level, their

family language policies seem to be oriented around a similar language ideology, one that places value on first language transmission and on equal early multilingual acquisition, and that aims for fluent multilingualism. The transmission of first language appears to be intrinsic to parent nature, as, at first, parents naturally and instinctively address their new-borns in the language, or one of the languages, that they have acquired in their home environment as growing up, language that is closest to their heart and tight to their emotions.

In addition to the findings based on the research questions, this study highlighted two areas where parents need guidance and practical support: language addition and language resources. The timing and method of successfully introducing other language(s) spoken by one parent, and the availability of linguistic resources needed in maintaining the minority language(s) are the main challenges faced by parents in mixed-language families who live in Finland.

The study of the dynamics of family language policies revealed how a wide range of factors play a significant role in shaping parents' policies of language use in multilingual homes.

Further research based on or related to this study, may concern not only the factor of language-mixing, but also the motivators of choosing a language to begin with in addressing their young children, when parents have cultural and emotional tights to more than one language, as parents with two first languages. The successfulness of the FLP, how satisfied parents are with their language practices at home, in relation to their child(ren) linguistic repertoire, and to see why parental language practices and their influencing factors change with children's age and linguistic development, can also be investigated in future studies.

There is more information that can be drawn from the data collected and used in this study that can potentially reveal useful details and insights, such as various correlations between different closed-ended questions, as well as correlations with the background data of the participants' profile. These are ways that data can be used for future work.

With the increasing number of mixed-language families, it is important to understand their experiences and the dynamics of their family language policies, the choices they make for the linguistic repertoire of their children, and their outcomes on a linguistic and emotional level.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Dear Parent,

I study Linguistics at the University of Helsinki and I am writing my Master's thesis on family language policy in multilingual families in Finland. If you are a parent in a mixed-language family, please fill in this short questionnaire.

This is a survey that gathers information about language use and views on multilingualism. It should be completed by one or both (separately) parents in mixed-language families (parents have different first languages) living in Finland, whose child(ren) is/are between 0 and 17 years old.

Participation in this study is voluntary. This survey is anonymous, data is collected for research purposes only, and it will comply with the [research ethical guidelines](#). This survey does not collect identifying information such as name, email, or IP address. All information will be kept completely confidential.

Thank you for spending the time to help me with my study!

Please submit your response only once, and if you have any questions about this study, contact me at romina.paturca@helsinki.fi

Romina Nyberg | MA Student - Linguistic Diversity and Digital Humanities | University of Helsinki

By completing this survey, you consent to the use of the data for research purposes.

Part I. Respondent Profile

What is your role in the family?

- Father Mother Prefer not to say

What is your age group?

- 24 & under 25 – 34 35 – 44 45 – 54 55 – 64 65 & over

What is your highest education level?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No formal education | <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational/training/college |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Primary school | <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary school | <input type="checkbox"/> Master's degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High school | <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral degree/PhD |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |

In which region do you live?

What is the type of family in which you live now?

- Parents + child(ren) Single parent + child(ren) Other

What is your child(ren)'s age?

What is/are your first language(s)?

What is your country of birth?

What other language(s) do you speak?

What is/are your partner's (the other parent of the child(ren)) first language(s)?

What is your partner's (the other parent of the child(ren)) country of birth?

What other language(s) does he/she speak?

What languages are used among your family members?

	My L1	My partner's L1	Our lingua franca
Between you and your partner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You to child(ren)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your partner to child(ren)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Between sibling (if applied)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments about the languages used among your family members, if any.

Part II. Survey Questions

Section 1. Language practices at home

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. When I speak to my child(ren), I use only my first language.	1	2	3	4	5
2. When I speak to my child(ren), I mix languages.	1	2	3	4	5
3. When I speak to my child(ren), I use different languages according to the situation. (For example, in presence of speakers of other language than your first language, or when watching TV, listening to radio, reading books, or helping with school assignments.)	1	2	3	4	5
4. After the birth of my child(ren), I started to use different languages with different people at home.	1	2	3	4	5

5. Did you and the other parent discuss and agree on which language(s) each of you should speak to your child(ren)? If so, please describe and justify your decision.

Section 2. Personal views on multilingualism

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
6. Speaking two or more languages confuses a child.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Children will automatically pick up the languages the parents speak.	1	2	3	4	5

8. Being multilingual benefits a child's academic performance.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Being multilingual is beneficial for the future of a child's career.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Speaking in two or more languages at home is essential for a multilingual child.	1	2	3	4	5
11. It is good for young children to speak two or more languages.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Being multilingual means being fully and equally fluent in two or more languages.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Multilingual children have a language delay.	1	2	3	4	5

14. Have your views on multilingualism or ideas on how to raise your child(ren) multilingually changed over time? If so, please describe how.

Section 3. Other factors that influence linguistic behaviour

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
15. The community I live in, influences my language practices at home.	1	2	3	4	5
16. My partner's opinion influences my language practices at home.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I chose to speak a certain language at home to promote and maintain it.	1	2	3	4	5
18. After my child started daycare/school, my own language practices changed.	1	2	3	4	5

19. Are there any other factors or reasons that influence your choice of language use at home? If so, please describe them.

This is the end of the questionnaire. Thank you very much for your participation! Please leave any additional thoughts, comments, feedback, or notes that you might have regarding these questions.

Appendix 2: Copy of the Facebook post

Hi all,

I study Linguistics at the University of Helsinki and I am writing my master's thesis on family language policy in multilingual families with children between 0 and 17 years old, living in Finland. The study concerns parental language use and views on multilingualism.

If you and your partner have different first (native) languages, please help me with my study by filling in this short (7-8 min.) questionnaire.

This survey is anonymous, and all information will be completely confidential.

Thank you very much for spending the time to help me with my study!

<https://elomake.helsinki.fi/lomakkeet/108440/lomakkeet.html>

Appendix 3: Copy of the sharing request email sent to NGO's

Date: 01.12.2020

Subject: Survey on family language policy

Hello,

My name is Romina Nyberg, I study Linguistics at the University of Helsinki and I am writing my master's thesis on family language policy in multilingual families with children between 0 and 17 years old, living in Finland. The study concerns parental language use and views on multilingualism. It consists in a short (7-8 min.) questionnaire which should be completed by one or both (separately) parents who have different first languages.

Participation in this study is voluntary. This survey is anonymous, data is collected for research purposes only, and it will comply with the [research ethical guidelines](#). This survey does not

collect identifying information such as name, email, or IP address. All information will be kept completely confidential.

Here is the link to the survey: <https://elomake.helsinki.fi/lomakkeet/108440/lomakkeet.html>

I would like to ask if you can help me reaching possible respondents by sharing the survey link with your members and followers via your social media channels, email list or other means of communications. Your help is much needed and highly appreciated.

The results might reveal useful insights about language practices, beneficial to intercultural families. The thesis will be available online, and if agreed upon, I can present the findings in a post/blog/email to your association.

Please, let me know whether my study was shared or not via your network, as it is important to know how respondents were reached.

Thank you very much!

Kind regards,
Romina Nyberg

Appendix 4: Table with the number of participants and percentage by residence area

Residence area	Number of participants	Percentage
Lapland	10	1.81%
North Ostrobothnia	7	1.27%
Kainuu	4	0.72%
North Karelia	3	0.54%
North Savo	4	0.72%
South Savo	4	0.72%
South Karelia	3	0.54%
Central Finland	8	1.45%
South Ostrobothnia	3	0.54%

Ostrobothnia	11	1.99%
Central Ostrobothnia	3	0.54%
Pirkanmaa	62	11.21%
Satakunta	10	1.81%
Päijät-Häme	4	0.72%
Kanta-Häme	4	0.72%
Kymenlaakso	6	1.08%
Uusimaa	378	68.35%
Southwest Finland	28	5.06%
Åland	1	0.18%

Appendix 5: Table with the number of participants and percentage by education level

Education level	Number of participants	Percentage
No formal education	0	0%
Primary school	0	0%
Secondary school	3	0.54%
High school	23	4.16%
Vocational/Training/College	71	12.84%
Bachelor's degree	181	32.73%
Master's degree	221	39.96%
Doctor degree/PhD	47	8.50%
Other	7	1.27%

Appendix 6: Table with the number of participants and percentage by age group

Age groups	Number of participants	Percentage
24 & under	8	1.45%

25 - 34	138	24.95%
35 - 44	286	51.72%
45 - 54	106	19.17%
55 - 64	14	2.53%
65 & over	1	0.18%

Appendix 7: Table with the number of participants and percentage by children's age

Child age (years)	Number of participants	Percentage
under 1	74	13.38%
1	69	12.48%
2	83	15.01%
3	72	13.02%
4	61	11.03%
5	77	13.92%
6	63	11.39%
7	56	10.13%
8	62	11.21%
9	53	9.58%
10	49	8.86%
11	48	8.68%
12	31	5.61%
13	27	4.88%
14	30	5.42%
15	26	4.70%
16	24	4.34%
17	29	5.24%

Appendix 8: Languages represented in the study as first language

