

Bilingual children learning to differentiate two languages as two
systems: the case of bilingual children acquiring Finnish and
Russian simultaneously

Anna Mankonen 284984
Master's Thesis
Philosophical Faculty
MDP in Linguistic Sciences
Sociolinguistics
University of Eastern Finland
August 2018

Acknowledgements

I would like to express gratitude to my thesis supervisor, Prof. Mikko Laitinen of the Philosophical Faculty at University of Eastern Finland for supporting my ideas, providing useful comments and enthusiasm to guide my research.

Besides my supervisor, I would like to thank Prof. Stefan Werner and Prof. Jukka Mäkisalo and all the fellow students for providing useful comments on MA seminars.

I thank all the families that agreed to participate in my research and share stories about their wonderful children.

Finally, I thank my parents, my brother, my husband and my son Aleksei for continuous encouragement throughout the process of writing my research.

ITÄ-SUOMEN YLIOPISTO – UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND

Tiedekunta – Faculty Philosophical Faculty		Osasto – School School of Humanities		
Tekijät – Author Anna Mankonen				
Työn nimi – Title Bilingual children learning to differentiate two languages as two systems: the case of bilingual children acquiring Finnish and Russian simultaneously				
Pääaine – Main subject	Työn laji – Level	Päivämäärä – Date	Sivumäärä – Number of pages	
Sociolinguistics: Language Contacts and Language Policy	Pro gradu - tutkielma	x	23.08.2018	71
	Sivuainetutkielma			
	Kandidaatin tutkielma			
	Aineopintojen tutkielma			
Tiivistelmä – Abstract				
<p>The aim of this study is to investigate the ways the young bilingual children learn to separate Finnish and Russian languages alongside acquiring them simultaneously. Conscious language separation largely depends on language strategies chosen by parents. Therefore, the study explores possible factors that contribute to the bilingual two-year-old children's ability to differentiate languages.</p> <p>The research relies on the data gained from the interviewed parents (six families including both a mother and a father) of bilingual children acquiring Finnish and Russian and on observations of the researcher's bilingual son. The responses were analyzed through the topics that were extracted from the interviews, which were: parents' background; language distribution at home; children's responses to parents' language strategies; parents evaluating children's fluency in Russian and Finnish; children showing preferences for a particular language; parents reporting on the children's ability to differentiate languages.</p> <p>The results showed that the strategy "one person-one language" (one parent speaks Finnish, another speaks Russian) is used by the mixed-lingual Finnish-Russian families and the strategy "home-outside language switch" (speaking Russian at home and Finnish in daycare) is used by monolingual Russian-speaking families. Children's linguistic behavior is determined by the consistency to chosen strategies that indicate to the boundaries between the languages.</p> <p>Since most interviewees shared positive attitudes towards bilingualism, motivation to nurture a bilingual child is discussed in the thesis. The study will deepen the understanding of a process of languages' acquisition and separation and provide new insights on what supports the development of languages the child is exposed to.</p>				
Avainsanat – Keywords				
early bilingualism, simultaneous acquisition, differentiation of languages, contributing factors, language mixing, dominating language				

ITÄ-SUOMEN YLIOPISTO – UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND

Tiedekunta – Faculty Filosofinen tiedekunta		Osasto – School Humanistinen osasto		
Tekijät – Author Anna Mankonen				
Työn nimi – Title Bilingual children learning to differentiate two languages as two systems: the case of bilingual children acquiring Finnish and Russian simultaneously				
Pääaine – Main subject	Työn laji – Level	Päivämäärä – Date	Sivumäärä – Number of pages	
Yleinen kielitiede	Pro gradu - tutkielma	x	23.08.2018	71
	Sivuainetutkielma			
	Kandidaatin tutkielma			
	Aineopintojen tutkielma			
Tiivistelmä – Abstract				
<p>Tutkielmassa perehdytään siihen, miten kaksikieliset lapset oppivat erottamaan suomen ja venäjän kielet niiden oppimisen alkuvaiheessa. Tietoinen kielten erilaisuuden ymmärtäminen riippuu vanhempien kielistrategiasta, eli siitä missä tilanteissa vanhemmat puhuvat mitäkin kieltä lapselleen. Tutkielmassa käydään läpi kielistrategian tekijöitä, jotka vaikuttavat lasten kykyyn erottaa kielet toisistaan.</p> <p>Tutkimusaineisto perustuu kuuden kaksikielisen perheen vanhempien haastatteluihin ja tutkijan havaintoihin omasta kaksikielisestä pojastaan. Aineiston analyysissä keskityttiin kuuteen päätekijään: vanhempien tausta, vanhempien kielet, lasten reaktiot vanhempien kommunikaatitapaan, vanhempien arviot lasten suomen ja venäjän kielten osaamisesta, lapsen valikoivuus kielen suhteen ja vanhempien näkemykset lapsen kyvystä erottaa kielet toisistaan.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen mukaan strategia, jossa vanhemmat puhuvat vain omaa äidinkieltään lapsille on yleinen sellaisissa perheissä, joissa vanhemmat ovat erikielisiä. Sellaisissa perheissä, joissa molemmat vanhemmat ovat venäjänkielisiä, vanhemmat puhuvat venäjää kotona, ja lapsi kommunikoi suomeksi päivähoidossa. Lasten kaksikielisyyden kehitys riippuu siitä, kuinka johdonmukaisesti vanhemmat noudattavat kielistrategiaansa.</p> <p>Suurin osa haastateltavista suhtautui myönteisesti kaksikielisyyteen. Sen takia tutkielmassa pohditaan syitä, miksi kaksikielisyyttä halutaan edistää. Tutkielma syventää lasten kielten oppimisen ja niiden erottamisen ymmärrystä. Lisäksi siinä esitetään tekijöitä, jotka auttavat lasta oppimaan kieliä, joiden kanssa hän on tekemisissä.</p>				
Avainsanat – Keywords				
kaksikielisyyys varhaislapsuudessa, kahden kielen oppiminen yhtäaikaan, kielten erottaminen toisistaan, vaikuttavat tekijät, kielten sekoittuminen, dominoiva kieli				

Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Conditions for Finnish-Russian bilingualism	4
2	Bilingualism and sociolinguistics	7
2.1	Distinction between simultaneous and successive bilingualism.....	7
2.2	Dominance in one language.....	11
2.3	Interference between languages.....	12
3	Bilingual acquisition	14
3.1	Language mixing at the initial stage of bilingual development.....	14
3.2	Code-switching	15
3.3	Learning to separate two languages.....	16
3.4	Languages strategies	21
4	Data and methodology	25
4.1	Data.....	25
4.2	The structure of the interview	27
4.3	Participants of the study.....	30
4.4	Organizing the data	34
5	Results and observations	36
5.1	Families' language use.....	36
5.2	Children's fluency in Finnish and Russian	40
5.3	Language preferences and language differentiation by children	48
5.4	Observations of Aleksei's bilingual development	55
6	Discussion and conclusions.....	61
7	Conclusion.....	67
	References	70

1 Introduction

When it comes to children growing in a bilingual environment, the question whether a bilingual child is adept at differentiating between the languages from early on is inevitably important. Even though bilingual children vary considerably from one another with regards to how they are immersed in a bilingual setting, they have an inborn capacity to acquire the languages of their environment, and thus sooner or later they will learn to discriminate two languages as two separate linguistic systems (Leopold 1954; Volterra and Taeschner 1978; Arnberg 1987; McLaughlin 1987; Hoffmann 1991). Children who grow up in a bilingual setting will gain the ability to speak two languages with a fluency, similar to the linguistic competences of monolingual children, as long as parents consistently speak with their children without mixing languages.

The phenomenon of children acquiring two languages from an early age on has long been fascinating for linguists, sociologists, psychologists and pedagogues. The research conducted so far demonstrates that infants, even as neonates, are remarkably sensitive to the rhythmic differences between the languages, and by the age of four months can discriminate sentences of their native languages (Byers-Heinlein 2013: 34). Each case of bilingual development with its own background and individual features represents a fascinating example that contributes into understanding of such a phenomenon as childhood bilingualism.

Childhood bilingualism is a wide-spread phenomenon in Finland due to the joint borders with Russia, immigration of Russians to Finland and the long common history. In relation to this area I chose the topic to find out how a child acquires two languages in a bilingual setting and which factors facilitate the process. Many mixed-lingual and immigrant families, whom I personally know, put great effort in stimulating the child's second language learning and aspire to create a balance for learning both languages. They wished to share their

experience of contributing into their children's bilingual development. Their stories of nurturing bilingual children and combined with my observations of my son seemed to be a valuable source for investigation, which motivated me to bring in new findings to the research. My research mostly explores the parental point of view of their children's bilingualism and their everyday interactions with their children.

As a mother of a bilingual child I keep admiring my son's and his peers' ability to employ two languages – Finnish and Russian – since the time the conscious language production appeared. Being inspired by the example of my two and a half-year-old son, I found it exciting to keep tracing his perceiving and producing languages that surround him from the birth onwards. Thus, I ventured to conduct my own research, which concerns the ability of bilingual children to differentiate two languages as separate linguistic systems with regards to the bilingual setting they develop and grow in. What is more, the research of early bilingualism with an emphasis on simultaneous acquisition of languages may shed light on the process of bilingual acquisition and provide new suggestions concerning maintenance of two languages within the family context and within the society.

The differentiation of languages or codes presupposes child's being aware of two distinct languages in his/her immediate environment and coherent use of two languages, for instance, one language is spoken at home and the other outside of it, or both languages are spoken at home. Independent development of two languages and establishing fluency including lexically, grammatically and sociolinguistically correct speech in both languages are the criteria that go along with the awareness of languages differentiation.

Relying on the issues focused in the research by Arnberg (1981:11), I target the following questions in the study:

- To what extent bilingual children at the age of two and above are proficient in two languages with respect to the bilingual setting they grow in?

- How does the bilingual environment contribute to the child's ability to interchangeably use two languages?
- How do bilingual children gradually learn to differentiate Finnish and Russian?

The goal of the current research is twofold. First, it seeks to explore the possible relationship between the bilingual strategies followed by parents and external factors such as attending day-care and being exposed to one language more time than to the other one, and the linguistic development of bilingual children. The second and primary goal is to find out how the two-year old bilingual children become aware of separation of the two languages. The way the children perceive and process the languages involved in the study, Finnish and Russian, will indicate on the patterns they follow while being exposed to the languages simultaneously. That is:

(a) bilingual children use the languages recognizing the languages as two distinct systems because they interchangeably switch them with respect to certain people or situations. In such case the child's speech is devoid of lexical mixing from each language due to conscious differentiation of two languages. For example, (Arnberg 1981: 74) an English-speaking mother asks her son who is talking to himself: "What was it called in English?" A boy responds: "A tractor".

(b) bilingual children perceive the languages as a single unit and unconsciously keep mixing them, therefore, their vocabulary reminds of a composition of one system of words from each language. This pattern of bilingual development is explained by the "limited contact with the second language and the children's lack of motivation to use it" (Arnberg 1981:7). For example, the child raising in a Swedish-English family saying: "Jag vill ha en spoon" (I want a spoon) (Arnberg 1981: 75).

According to Arnberg (1981), the pattern of bilingual development a bilingual child picks up depends on a number of factors, such as: parental language strategies, time of exposure

to two languages, favorable bilingual environment and motivation to use languages from both parties who are involved in a bilingual process, parents and their children. In this research I will illustrate these factors through the points of view of my respondents, who nurture bilingual children.

1.1 Conditions for Finnish-Russian bilingualism

While Russian has no official status of the minority population in Finland, the Russian-speaking people alongside with other language minority groups have equal rights to maintain their language and culture. According to Protassova (2008: 127), Russian is regarded to be a heritage language in Finland mainly because it is a minority language spoken by its speakers at home. Still, the children who acquire Russian at home tend to become more fluent in a language of the majority, Finnish, which is a dominant one, rather than the language spoken within their home. In such case, Russian is inherited by the children from their parents and maintained within their families. However, as Protassova (2008: 132) puts it, the comfortable integration to the Finnish society presupposes not only maintenance of the Russian language and culture, but also competence in Finnish or both official languages Finnish and Swedish in order “to minimize the risk of social exclusion”. Moreover, the supportive integration programs, cultural and educational contacts between the two countries are supportive in terms of keeping Russian as a heritage language in Finland.

According to Statistics Finland (Tilastokeskus), at the end of the 2016 Russian was the first largest foreign language group (75 000 speakers), followed by Estonian (nearly 50 000 speakers), Arabic (over 20 000 speakers). According to Moin et al., (2013: 5) the Russian-speaking population being the largest nonindigenous language group in Finland started to establish at the beginning of the 18th century, in an immigration wave that consisted of peasants, merchants and missionaries. The number of immigrants greatly increased after Finland was ceded to the Russian Empire. The older wave of Russians comprises

descendants of Russian immigrants, who travelled and assimilated in Finland after World War I and October Revolution in 1917 in Russia (Moin et al. 2013: 5).

Newer immigrant groups consisted of the Russian spouses of Finns from the former Soviet Union, Ingrian-Finn repatriates and other people of Finnish origin from the Soviet Union. Mixed marriages between Finns and Russians, the repatriate policy in Finland in 1990s for repatriates whose relatives (at least one parent or two grandparents) were of Finnish origin, and the practice of employment professional workers and experts has led to an increase in the number of Russian-speaking population in Finland. The Finnish government provides support for the social activity of the Russian immigrants. For instance, there are hobby clubs for children, Finnish language courses, job hunting assistance organized in Russian (Protassova 2008: 127-128).

According to Moin et al. (2013: 6), since Russian is taught in two Finnish-Russian schools (the Finnish-Russian school in Helsinki and the Finnish-Russian school of Eastern Finland operating in three cities – Lappeenranta, Imatra, Joensuu) and in more than 10 kindergartens, a lot of families choose bilingual education to introduce their children to the culture and ensure fluency in Russian. The school is organized in the form of bilingual classrooms and provides classes in either Finnish or Russian by the native speakers, keeping in mind that the main language of instruction is Finnish (Protassova 2008: 131).

Relying on the old Finnish National Curriculum (POPS 2004: 96), Protassova (2004: 93) mentions “functional bilingualism”, which presupposes an ability to use both languages in everyday life, at school and at work. It is supposed that the pupil’s language skills in Finnish are being improved to the level of a native language. The newer version of the Finnish National Curriculum (POPS 2014: 87) specifies that multilingual children are provided by the lessons in their native language. Moreover, such children having the right to develop skills in their native languages, learn to explain study materials in their native languages.

Alongside learning Finnish or Swedish as a second language, teaching a native language (which is hereinafter expected to be Russian in this thesis) establishes a base for multiculturalism and functional bilingualism. It is emphasized, that school should support a lingual and cultural identity and development of a native language of each pupil (ibid. 14). Protassova (2004: 96) writes that teaching native language is aimed at facilitating intellectual abilities and speech development, involvement into native culture, support of self-identity and self-esteem.

According to Protassova (2008: 132), Russian is taught at nine university faculties, which include the University of Helsinki, the Finnish Graduate School for Russian and East European Studies and University of Eastern Finland. The curriculum provides specific programs for Finnish-speaking students and for students whose heritage language is Russian.

From the sociolinguistic perspective (Moin et al. 2013: 9; Protassova 2008: 133), the linguistic situation for the Russian immigrant families presupposes the interaction of two languages and cultures. Being bilingual also means belonging to two different cultures. The government, therefore, plays a significant role in establishing the language policy that supports its official language(s) as well as the languages of minority groups and cases of bilingualism.

2 Bilingualism and sociolinguistics

The latest decades have seen a remarkable growth in the number of studies looking at bilingual children's early development. The question of whether the children growing in a bilingual environment at the beginning of the speech production differentiate between languages or perceive them as a single unity has caused a number of opinions and attitudes towards the issue. It is commonly accepted that the child's ability to differentiate between languages originates from the strategies chosen by the families for raising the child bilingually, family members' attitudes toward the two languages as well as the child's motivation to communicate in two languages. Arnberg (1987: 94) considers that consistent exposure to the minority language either through the "one person-one language" strategy or "home-outside language switch" brings positive results together with acquisition of the majority language.

2.1 Distinction between simultaneous and successive bilingualism

To better understand the nature of becoming a bilingual, the distinction of simultaneous and successive bilingualism should be made. According to Baker (2006: 97), simultaneous childhood bilingualism refers to a child who starts to acquire two languages from birth by constantly being exposed to both languages from parents. To successfully acquire two languages from birth, infants need to be able to "(a) differentiate between the two languages and (b) effectively store the two languages for both understanding (input) and production (output). Research suggests infants have these capacities and thus infant bilingualism is very viable" (Baker 2006: 98).

Applying the term "simultaneous acquisition of languages" McLaughlin (1978: 73) emphasizes the age of acquisition to mean child's being introduced to two languages before his or her third birthday and using the term "successive acquisition of languages" to situations when this characteristic is not the case. It is worthwhile to mention that both types, i.e. children – who acquire two languages simultaneously and who acquire them

successively, can become competent bilinguals, and thus simultaneous acquisition of languages is not necessarily superior to successive acquisition (McLaughlin, 1978: 73).

Nevertheless, according to Padilla and Lindholm (1984), the “third birthday” criterion may be regarded as an arbitrary one since the empirical evidence showing acquisition patterns to children growing up with two languages from birth may display similar acquisition patterns to, say, children who have been exposed to a second language at the age of one. Padilla and Lindholm (1984: 376-377) propose the term “simultaneous acquisition of two languages” referring to children who have been exposed to two languages from birth. Any other cases are regarded as examples of “consecutive” or “successive” acquisition. McLaughlin (1978: 99) shares this viewpoint and considers the introduction of a second language before the age of three to be simultaneous, whereas after that age to be successive.

Successive bilingualism refers to the cases when a child learns a second language after their first language is established. For instance, children become bilingual because their parents move to another country and find themselves speaking one language at home and the other outside it (Grosjean 1982: 191).

By contrast, Arnberg (1987: 66) finds the practice of defining the age of three as a cutoff point for simultaneous and successive bilingualism to be quite vague and suggests paying more attention to external factors such as how the environment favors acquiring and maintaining two languages rather than looking closely when a second language is introduced. Still, she admits that there is a difference between introducing a language, say, at the age of four and at the age of ten. She reinforces her argument by providing the classic example in the field of early childhood bilingualism (*ibid.* 67) This study was carried out by Professor Werner Leopold, who described the language development of his German-English-speaking daughter Hildegard. Hildegard’s bilingual development demonstrates the common pattern most children undergo: during the first two years of her life her speech production could be characterized as a combination of two languages in a single system, but

as soon as she turned three, she started to differentiate between the languages. Arnberg (1987: 67), however, considers the environment the child grows in to be the main criterion for describing the process of simultaneous bilingual development; the case of Hildegard shows how strongly her bilingual development was brought about changes in the bilingual input she was exposed to.

De Houwer (1990: 3) avoids using the term “simultaneous” acquisition in the view of putting some clarity to the phenomenon, proposing to use Meisel’s (1994) term Bilingual First Language Acquisition (BFLA), emphasizing the regularity of language use the child is exposed to, in other words, the child being addressed in both languages mostly every day, and the simultaneity of initial exposure to two languages.

Considering the issue of the pattern of development in bilingual and monolingual children, most scholars (Arnberg 1987; Padilla and Lindholm 1984; Grosjean 2010; McLaughlin 1978; Nenonen 2012) agree that the development of both child’s languages follows the pattern of monolingual children’s development.

Arnberg (1987: 67-68) suggests that although the pattern of bilingual development in the child’s two languages is similar to that of the monolingual child, the rate of development is not necessarily the case. That happens because the environment of the bilingual child may favor one language over another. In such a case, one of the languages develops slower than the same language acquired as a first language by monolingual children. As a consequence, the stronger language may influence the weaker one. Alongside these challenges, simultaneously bilingual children have to learn to separate the two languages and “to assign various words to each of the two language systems” (ibid. 68).

Such scholars as Padilla and Lindholm (1984: 385) and Grosjean (2010: 180) consider that despite possible variability in the rate of language acquisition among simultaneous bilingual children, they show no difference with monolingual children, and state that the development of two vocabularies in bilingual children seems to follow the rate and pattern found in

monolingual children. Grosjean (ibid. 180) provides an example of children who were exposed 60 to 65 per cent of time in one language and 35 to 45 per cent in the other. This difference was related to the unequal development of vocabularies in the two languages. However, the children experienced a “lexical spurt”, a sudden growth of vocabulary that occurs either interchangeably, or when both languages are developing simultaneously. What is more, Padilla and Lindholm (1984: 381) show in the research illustrating the comparisons of English monolinguals with English-preferring bilinguals that the bilinguals even performed better than the English monolinguals, although the difference was not significant.

McLaughlin (1978: 91-92) notes that the process of bilingual acquisition is basically the same for the bilingual child and the monolingual child, suggesting that “the bilingual child has the additional task of distinguishing the two language systems, but there is no evidence that this requires special language processing devices”.

When analyzing the consecutive and simultaneous kinds of bilingualism Chirsheva (2012: 54-55) applies the terms receptive passive and productive active bilingualism. When the child is exposed to two languages consecutively, the child at the beginning shows signs of receptive passive bilingualism, which may turn to active productive form of bilingualism. In case simultaneous bilingual exposure takes place, a one-year-old child starts to understand both languages but does not react on them verbally, thus shows receptive competence of the languages. Reaching the age of two, the child starts to behave as a productive bilingual since he/she is able to reproduce speech in both languages as well as create own phrases.

According to MacLeod et. al (2012: 132), even though simultaneous bilingual children are exposed to a more diverse set of linguistic structures than monolingual children, research conducted so far shows that many bilingual children meet the challenge and can develop linguistic systems that are similar to monolingual peers at least in one language or in both languages. Nenonen (2012: 42) suggests that despite inevitable insufficient quality and

quantity of the input, the bilingual child develops linguistic competences, which as a whole are greater than those of a monolingual child.

In this thesis I use the term “simultaneous childhood bilingualism” applying it to the case of childhood bilingualism which started to develop from early infancy. I consider that simultaneous bilingualism is characterized by the introduction of a second language before the child is able to produce words in a first language. Consequently, bilingualism may be considered to be simultaneous if exposure to a second language starts not later the child turns one year old.

2.2 Dominance in one language

One of the important factors that determine language separation is the child’s linguistic knowledge, that is compiled through the development of each language. From early on, children who acquire two languages simultaneously have to be exposed to a range of variation in the two language systems. Interference between languages is a common phenomenon occurring during the simultaneous bilingual acquisition of languages, that is before the child becomes aware of the presence of two languages s(he) is exposed to.

As suggested by Grosjean (1982: 188-189; 2010:191), dominance in one of the languages takes place because of the complexity of certain linguistic constructs that are harder to produce in one of the languages and therefore are more successfully acquired in the “easier” language. Another reason for the dominance of a language may be due to the imbalance of time of exposure to one of the languages that provides more opportunities for one language to be practiced with the surrounding people. This is often a case when a child favors one language over another for the reason s(he) does not feel any need to use to the same extent as the other language. Dominance entails not only a more profound development of a stronger language, but it is considered to prevent the recognition of languages differentiation because of the imposing behavior of the dominant language on the weaker one (1982: 190).

In this respect Lanza (2000: 229) suggests that if the child's bilingualism shows no signs of any language dominance, it is regarded as a balanced one, opposite to the case of dominance in a language. The more frequently used language in the bilingual environment is also considered to be one of the factors that contribute to a bilingual child's dominance (Lanza 2000: 233). So, unequal rates of learning may lead to unequal mastery of languages and consequently to dominance.

According to De Houwer (2006: 784), before producing an utterance a bilingual child has to make a choice: "either the utterance will be unilingual in language A, unilingual in language Alpha, or mixed, combining elements from languages A and Alpha". Being highly sensitive to the language choice of the interlocutors helps the children learn to attune to the language choice. Likewise, as long as the children see that language mixing is acceptable in their environment, children will easily pick up the habit to use mixed utterances similar to the way the adults do. For example, parents Niko and Marina reported that their daughter Liisa may address her mother first in Russian (citation 24) "Я хочу кушать" [Ya hochu kushat'] (I am hungry in Russian) and immediately say the same in Finnish to her father "Minulla on nälkä".

2.3 Interference between languages

Interference between languages is closely connected to dominance in one of the languages. When the balance between languages shifts in favor of one language, the child's speech obtains features of interference. It has been pointed out by Müller (1998: 153) that despite convincing arguments that a child's bilingual development proceeds along two "language-specific paths", the two languages remain in contact and may therefore influence each other. McLaughlin (1978: 95) argues that as soon as bilingual children show signs of dominance in one language and the other gains a subordinate status, interference between languages takes place. Interference in children's speech is also a case when adults produce language mixing in the children's presence. Defining domains of language use is a factor that

contributes to keeping the language use in balance and reduces to a minimum the cases of interference.

Weinreich (1979: 1) defines the phenomenon of interference as “the instances of deviation from the norms of either language which occur in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language, i.e. as a result of language contact”. Müller (1998: 153) interchangeably uses the term transfer (it appears the term interference has gained more negative connotations) to define interference emphasizing the role of the “relief strategy” that occurs when the child’s attempts to solve the linguistic ambiguous properties in the recipient language by using elements from the source language.

In the study exploring the language development in four bilingual children exposed to English and Swedish, Arnberg (1981: 56-57) presents different types of interference occurring in the speech of young bilingual children, among which are: structural, semantic, phonetic and lexical interference. For example, structural interference occurs when bilingual children use the word order, which corresponds to the word order in the other language. When the bilingual child used the English word “take” to mean putting animals into a barn, for which the Swedish word “ta” (take) can be used, semantic interference takes place: “Adult: What are you going to do with your animals? Child: Take them in here. (instead of “put”)” (ibid. 58).

Volterra and Taeshner (1978: 325) suggest that the case of interference occurs when the child faces a conflicting situation; that is, the child has to switch rapidly from one language to another because the child simultaneously communicates with the people speaking different languages, or the child is asked to express something in one language s(he) is “accustomed to express in the other”. Keeping two languages as far as possible by means of labelling a person with one of the two languages minimizes the risk of interference and aids the process of language choice.

3 Bilingual acquisition

This chapter describes features of bilingual children's speech, namely language mixing and code-switching. Parental language choices being important components of a family language policy are reflected in children's language use. Interactions with children through the particular bilingual strategies are viewed to be important factors contributing into the children's bilingual development and ability to use languages in a separate manner. Therefore, in this thesis I take into account possible peculiarities of the bilingual speech production that go along with simultaneous language acquisition.

3.1 Language mixing at the initial stage of bilingual development

Even though the concept of language mixing is rather vague, Grosjean (2010: 197) considers it to be a consequence of childhood bilingualism. Language mixing may have to do with interferences in the child's dominant language that may lead to filling the gaps in the weaker language by means of using the elements from the stronger language.

According to Byers-Heinlein (2013: 32), language mixing is a common behavior among bilingual adults who may include elements from two languages in the same sentence while interacting with their children. This type of behavior leads to more challenges for early vocabulary acquisition, because bilingual children have to decide which part of the utterance comes from which language. Thus, learning a word from a mixed-language utterance is more difficult than from a single-language utterance. (ibid. 44-45).

As suggested by Arnberg (1987: 71), as the child gradually becomes aware of his/her ability to use two languages, language mixing subsides due to several reasons. Learning more from a language that is enriching one's linguistic knowledge with time facilitates the process of recognizing one's bilingualism. A child gets more attentive to the way the adults use the language and the sensitivity to adult language use helps the child in separating languages.

Exposing the child to the variety of social experiences in using languages and establishing contacts with native speakers favor the awareness of the presence of two languages in the

child's environment and therefore encourage to actively use both languages. When a child pays attention to the situation in which a word or utterance were used, s(he) learns about the appropriate context.

The instances of bilingual language mixing that mean the child's producing utterances containing elements of both languages the child simultaneously acquires may also be regarded as the instances of code-switching. Code-switching means the "bilingual speaker's ability to switch languages within a single utterance or within discourse" (Müller 1998: 152). Thus, the transfer of elements from one language to another occurs as a result of a close correlation and interdependence of two language systems by the speaker.

Tracy (2000: 14) implies that there is enough evidence showing that bilingual children tacitly realize that they acquire two languages by the time they are two years old. She explains that the linguistic mixings occur in children's utterances for pragmatic reasons that are left yet undiscovered. Children have to resort to language mixing in order to "fill gaps by syntactic and lexical borrowing" (ibid. 14).

3.2 Code-switching

According to Grosjean (1982: 145-146; 2010:51), code-switching presupposes "the alternate use of two or more languages in the same utterance or conversation". Moreover, while code-switching a bilingual person does not integrate the switched element into the utterance, rather consciously produces total shift to the other language. The most common reason for code-switching is a bilingual's lack of resources in one language when communicating on a particular topic. When a child is not able to access a word or an expression in one of the languages immediately, s(he) may code-switch to fill the gap in the conversation.

As pointed out by Döpke (1992:10-11), code-switching is close to the process of borrowing during the speech production when a bilingual person lacks or does not remember a particular word or expression in a language. Code-switching is different from code-mixing

considering that a bilingual person/child is conscious of a switch. Moreover, a habit to code-switch becomes a necessity for a bilingual child who is exposed to mixed-lingual interactions. Conversely, if the child receives monolingual interaction in both languages, the chances that the two linguistic systems will be differentiated are more likely.

3.3 Learning to separate two languages

Although the role of bilingual awareness in the development of the bilingual child's two languages is not fully investigated, Arnberg (1987: 73) suggests that in case a child has failed to learn language separation, progress in each language may be inhibited. Being important for one's language development, bilingual awareness is tightly related to the cognitive development and has an effect on process of thinking. Parents who involve their children in discussions about the difference between the languages help them to gain the ability of language separation.

Researchers in the field of bilingualism have long tried to determine how bilingual children develop their two languages. Do children start their acquisition with one 'unitary' system, with elements of both languages and eventually separate their single system into two systems? Or do they from the very beginning have two languages, building both 'from scratch'?

Early researchers (Leopold, 1954; Volterra and Taeschner, 1978) propose that the bilingual child start with a single, fused system and gradually recognize two different languages, other observers like (Ronjat, 1913; Bergman, 1976, Padilla and Lindholm, 1984, Müller, 1998) suppose that the bilingual child is able to differentiate his two languages from an early age.

Arnberg (1987: 69) shares the point of view of the former group and suggests that in the beginning of exposure to two languages children do not differentiate between the vocabularies of two languages but rather compose one system of words from each language. During this stage of development, language use seems to be a combination of languages into

a single system due to little or some overlap in the words from each language, namely "... activities, objects, etc. are either named in one language or the other, but rarely in both". Gradually children learn to differentiate two vocabulary and grammatical systems.

Hoffmann (1991: 113) suggests that during the period when children do not differentiate languages, they mix them, and start to switch between languages only when children get aware of their bilingual nature. The ability to separate languages also presupposes competence in both languages, which may be attained at different ages, and motivation to switch between languages. Therefore, switching between languages or code-switching is a conscious process and bilinguals can control the quantity of inclusions from other languages in their speech. McLaughlin (1978: 96) notes that when conscious dealing with languages sets in, active separation of languages begins. Therefore, as soon as the child recognizes and starts to differentiate two linguistic codes, language changing or code switching becomes habitual, and each language is used with respect to certain people or situations.

Bergman (1976: 88), who proposes an independent development hypothesis, considers that a child's each language can develop independently of the other likewise the pattern of acquisition in monolingual children learning one language. "In cases of simultaneous language acquisition, each language will develop independently of the other, reflecting the acquisition of that language by monolingual children". Thus, the cause of a bilingual child mixing languages can be explained by the mixed language input and not the child's disability to separate languages. Bergman specifies that the lines between the two should be "clearly drawn in the linguistic environment of the child" (Bergman, 1976: 94).

According to Padilla and Lindholm (1984: 388), bilingual children are able to separate two linguistic systems from an early age onwards. They reject the point of view that a bilingual child grows up to speak "a hybrid mixture of two languages". Thus, they strongly support the idea that bilingual children on the earliest stages of bilingual acquisition can differentiate the languages into two linguistic systems.

Müller (1998: 153) argues that a bilingual child is able to separate the two languages from early on and a “stage of fusion in their linguistic development” is not necessarily passed through, despite the fact the languages are acquired in contact with each other, and the bilingual child has to cope with proceeding along the “two language-specific paths”.

In contrast, Volterra and Taeschner (1978: 312) propose a three-stage model of language development in a bilingual child: in the first stage, a bilingual child has one lexical system that consists of words from both languages, and words from both languages may occur in two- to three-word constructions; in the second stage, a child distinguishes two different lexical systems but applies the same syntactic rules to both languages; and in the third stage a child speaks two languages differentiated both in lexicon and syntax, and in addition, a child associates each language with the person speaking that language. However, according to Matras (2009:64), the “one-system hypothesis” has been a subject for criticism and nowadays it is even denied by a number of specialists (Padilla and Lindholm, 1984; Deuchar and Quay, 1998) on the methodological and theoretical grounds. Deuchar and Quay (1998: 236) argue that language mixing occurs as a result of the “lack of a contextually appropriate lexical item in the child’s vocabulary” rather than as an inability to separate languages.

It is interesting that associating the languages with different speakers seems to help children separate the two languages. According to Grosjean (2010: 183), the language spoken by a given person is a cue that helps a bilingual child to differentiate each language. While interacting with people, a bilingual child tends to establish a bond between a person and his/her language – “the person-language bond”. From a bilingual child’s point of view, a person is related to one specific language, and if that person uses the other language when addressing a child, a child is likely to ignore the request and may be confused. Grosjean exemplifies: a boy Luca, bilingual in French and Croatian, communicated with his grandmother (father’s mother) in French. While staying in Croatia, his grandmother attempted to ask a boy something in Croatian. Luca refused to answer in Croatian by saying:

“It’s mummy who asks that”. Therefore, we can assume that determining which language is spoken with whom helps bilingual children to keep languages separate.

Volterra and Taeschner (1978: 325) point out that: “the act of labelling a person with one of the languages makes the choice of the words and rules a kind of automatic process...”, thus they consider this stage of development to be helpful for perceiving two languages as different systems and getting to know how they function accordingly. An Italian father while talking to his daughter Lisa, asked something briefly in German (mother’s language), and the situation led to a girl’s protests to continue the dialogue and irritation.

Indeed, small children tend to insist on a rigid classification of speakers according to what language they speak. This may happen because children find it hard understanding that a person speaks more than one language or is a competent bilingual. Perceiving the world from the absolute perspective, children may get frustrated when their view of the world is challenged. Indeed, many children do become disappointed when a parent speaks to them in the “wrong” language. Nevertheless, as soon as the bilingual child becomes more familiar with the syntactic differences in two languages, the habit of labelling people with definite languages gradually subsides. Bilingual children may start to interact in either of the two languages with the same person. When the child ceases to associate speakers according to their language a child can be regarded a true bilingual (Volterra and Taeschner 1978: 326).

Döpke (1992: 11) suggests that bilingual children gain the ability to separate languages the same way monolingual children acquire the difference between registers. That is, children learn how to modify their speech in order to get what they want, as well as address their parents in a different fashion. Similar to using more than one register, bilingual children “perform the same interactional function” by switching from one language to the other.

Having overviewed most common ideas on the ways how bilingual children perceive the two languages, we can resume that some researchers (McLaughlin, 1978; Padilla and Lindholm, 1984) consider that simultaneous bilingualism can be gained due to simultaneous

exposure to two languages from births onwards, essentially before the age of three; whereas other researchers (Arnberg, 1987; De Houwer, 1990; De Houwer, 2007) put more emphasis on the criterion of the language environment a bilingual child grows in and the regularity of exposure to two languages.

As for the child's ability to separate two languages, a group of researchers (Leopold, 1954; Volterra and Taeschner, 1978; McLaughlin, 1978; Arnberg, 1987; Hoffmann, 1991) argue that a bilingual child at the beginning perceives his/her two languages as a single system, and as soon as the bilingual acquisition turns into a conscious habitual process, a bilingual child recognizes them as two differentiated linguistic systems. Another group (Müller, 1998; Bergman, 1976; Padilla and Lindholm, 1984) consider that children who grow up in a bilingual setting are able to differentiate the two languages, thus developing two independent linguistic systems from the very birth. Volterra and Taeschner (1978) occupy an intermediate position, by proposing a model consisting of three stages, each illustrating the peculiarities a bilingual child possesses at the beginning of the bilingual acquisition. The model suggests that a bilingual child undergoes three stages that start with having a single lexical system, goes on with two different lexical systems but one grammar system, and ends up with two differentiated lexicons and grammar.

The child's ability to keep languages separate is tightly connected to possible strategies that might be employed in bilingual families. Therefore, in the next section I will present the most common strategies followed by parents in bilingual Finnish-Russian families in raising the child, and in that respect, I will try to find out whether different strategies contribute to the child's ability to differentiate two languages. The other factors, intertwined with strategies employed by parents, were also taken into consideration. Previous research (Arnberg 1981; Arnberg 1987; Döpke 1992; Grosjean 2010; De Houwer 2015) shows that the most salient factors that are relevant to the early simultaneous bilingual development are:

the degree of exposure to two languages, parents' attitudes towards the child's bilingualism and the child's motivation to follow and respond to the parents' linguistic strategies.

3.4 Languages strategies

Once bilingualism has been established in a family, the family aims to keep track of the environment to ensure enough exposure to two languages. As Grosjean puts it (2010: 205), a great number of parents are concerned about the approach they should adopt and support, so that their bilingual children's development with two languages could be facilitated. The more responsibly and persistently parents follow certain principles and acknowledge the peculiarities of speech development within the bilingual environment, the more successfully flows the process and more positive features are seen in the child's bilingual development. The concept of a "family" includes parents and grandparents, relatives and caregivers, so all these members may decide on a strategy to follow in order to make their child bilingual.

Arnberg (1981:16) proposes four main strategies that are most commonly used by the families who raise their children bilingually, which appear to be appropriate to the case of Finnish-Russian families. These strategies are the following:

1. A mixed strategy (in which the languages are used interchangeably by one or both parents) may consist of such specified factors as place, situation, time, topic and person, which determine which language is supposed to be used.

Grosjean defines it as a (2010:207) "free-alternation" strategy, which lets such factors as topic, person, situation, and so on dictate the language to be used. Even though it appears to be the most natural, following this strategy may entail the dominance of a majority language by the time the child starts to attend school and spend time outside the home.

2. A "one person-one language" strategy (in which each parent consistently uses his/her native language)

It has been argued that in order for the child to differentiate two languages, he/she should be exposed to them in strictly separate way, that presupposes addressing the child in one language by each person (Ronjat 1913; Arnberg 1987; De Houwer 1990; Döpke 1992). According to Grosjean (2010: 206) this strategy was first in detail explained by Ronjat (1913) and enforced by himself and his wife in relation to their bilingual son Louis. Ronjat and his wife were following advice concerning bilingual language acquisition from his colleague, linguist Morris Grammon:

“It is sufficient simply to speak to him (to the child) ...each language must be embodied in a different person... never switch roles...he (the child) will begin to speak two languages without having to put forth any special effort in learning them” (Ronjat, 1913: 3). In this early research, Ronjat (1913) attributed his son’s balanced development of two languages to following the principle “one person-one language” and stated that fitting each language distinctively in a specific person facilitates bilingual acquisition.

Grosjean (2010: 208), however, writes that the “one person-one language” approach may lead to less input in the minority language as soon as the child reaches the outside world where the dominates the majority language. What is more, children tend to follow the other children, so as not to be singled out. Thus, the majority language may gradually push out the minority language leading to frustration of a parent who speaks this language.

De Houwer’s study (2007: 420) shows that the “one person-one language” approach sometimes appears to be neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition, thus, leaving a minority language at risk of not being used. De Houwer (2007: 421) notes that lack of frequency of input, inconsistent discourse strategies and insufficient “engagement” may explain failure of this approach.

3. An initial one-language strategy (in which the child is exposed to one language until it is well established, then parents introduce the other language to be acquired)

This “one-language-first” strategy (Grosjean, 2010:207) presupposes the acquisition of a minority language as the first language, which is followed by the second language, once the parents make sure that their child has gained enough competence with the first language. According to Arnberg (1987: 91), this strategy is may be used conversely: parents may choose to speak the majority language until the child has well acquired it (between the ages of three and five) and then introduce the minority language. No matter which order of introducing a second language is chosen, emotional bonds that have been established between parents and a child through the first language may get baffled because of the new language used by the parents.

Grosjean (1982: 174; 2010: 209) finds this strategy to be viable only in case if the family is surrounded by a well-organized and broad ethnic community, so that the child is exposed to the minority language in and outside the home. As Arnberg (1987: 92) puts it, support for the minority language outside of the home environment is a motivating force for maintaining a minority language.

4. A home-outside language switch strategy (an illustrative case could be for instance using Russian at home and Finnish outside, e.g. in day-care)

According to Grosjean (1982: 174; 2010: 206), this strategy can be found to be employed among numerous minorities throughout the world, where the minority language is used at home and in rarer cases in the neighborhood, and the majority language is used at school, at work and in larger communities. This approach is often adopted to ensure enough exposure to the minority language and maintain tight contact with speakers of that language.

McLaughlin (1978:154), however, believes that if one language is acquired at home and the second is acquired through friends and acquaintances, one of the languages may start to predominate and the other may gain a subordinate status. This does not mean that a child will not achieve bilingual fluency, but the imbalance leads to favoring one language over the other.

As suggested by De Houwer (2015: 177), parental language choice patterns are considered to be important factors explaining why children may speak only a single language in spite of bilingual language input. Therefore, the distribution of minority and majority languages among parents in mixed-lingual families plays a big role in establishing harmonious bilingual development. It is believed that if both parents speak the minority language and one of the parents in addition speaks the majority language there are more chances that the children will speak two languages. However, both parents who speak the majority language at home and one parent in addition also speaks the minority language, are most likely to have children who just speak one language.

Grosjean (2010: 211; Arnberg 1987: 72) argue that whichever strategy is adopted in a family, children should keep a regular contact with monolingual speaker of each language or “find themselves...in a monolingual mode in each of their languages” (Grosjean, 2010:210). By doing so they will input devoid of any code-switches or borrowings, and more importantly, children will learn to feel confident when adapting their speech to the situation or interlocutor.

In relation to language separation, Arnberg (1987: 72) suggests that the bilingual child should have access to both languages in order to gain experience in using them. Letting the bilingual child communicate with native speakers from both language groups and exposing him/her to language diversity are important constituents for children’s awareness of the difference between the languages.

During the process of data collection, it was noticed that only two types of parental language strategies are relevant to my study. Relying on the information provided by my informants, the strategy “one person-one language” is employed in mixed-lingual families (father speaks Finnish, mother speaks Russian), and “home-outside language switch” strategy is used in Russian-speaking families (both parents speak Russian). Therefore, henceforward I will present these two strategies more closely through their employment by my informants.

4 Data and methodology

This chapter presents the process of collecting and analyzing the data. In accordance to the topic, the goals and questions set, the approach will be qualitative in nature with the data being analyzed through a descriptive analysis that presupposes the researcher's interpretation of the data extracted from the interviewed subjects. Since I have six informants including my personal experience of being a bilingual child's parent, the qualitative approach seems to be most appropriate for an in-depth analysis of a small group because, relying on the method used by Arnberg (1981), becoming highly familiar with each individual parent and a child and finding out which routines and language practices influence the course of development in the two languages may be of great value for studying the phenomenon of language differentiation by bilingual children.

4.1 Data

For conducting the research, I recruited five families with children who are growing up as simultaneous bilinguals acquiring Finnish and Russian languages. The study of a small number of informants enables the researcher to get familiar with each individual family and detailed information of the routines in the child's life that influence the development of two languages. Moreover, such an approach provides with a broader overview of the language's development because each family is studied more closely. By means of interviewing, I was immersed in each family's setting and could find out about each parents' interactions with the children directly from the family's context.

The definition of "simultaneous" will mean exposure to both Finnish and Russian from birth. The participants of the study were interviewed, and the answers extracted from the interview served as data for the research. Relying on the observations from all transcribed interviews, I have noticed regularities and similarities that emerge in the examples provided by the interviewees. Data bearing meaningful parts were categorized into the themes that represent parental observations that reoccur in the interviews. The themes represent the ideas,

observations and parental points of views regarding their children's bilingual development. For example, nearly all families shared their thoughts concerning children's fluency in Finnish and Russian, so the topic "Parents evaluating children's fluency in Russian and Finnish" (see Section 5) was yielded from the data in order to specify the reoccurring information from all interviews. The small sampling allowed me to carry out an in-depth explanatory analysis that describes the process of bilingual development. I expected to find out as much material as possible that could enable me to gain an insight concerning the bilingual child's gaining an ability to employ languages as separate linguistic systems. The research has features of comparison with the elements of generalization, and for this reason, the criteria for the choice of the informants were considered.

The interviews were conducted in November – December 2017. All the informants were asked the same questions (see Subsection 4.2), however interviewing a small sample of informants entails an individual approach to each family because the researcher should make sure the informants fully grasps the meaning of a question. In case of the subject's lack of understanding of a question, the researcher clarified and specified some vague issues in the course of the interview to let the informants speak out on the important points concerning the main topic. Moreover, the informants were free to suggest related topics they find interesting to discuss. For example, Elena was interested in the phonological features of Daria's speech, especially in the sounds [zh], [sh] that children have troubles pronouncing possibly because of the absence of these sounds in Finnish. So, various initiatives directed from the interviewees enabled me to elicit even more data than expected.

The method of interviewing parents and transcribing the entire speech material provided me with a broad variety of data for interpretation. Parents' observations proved to be an objective source of information mainly because they provided me with illustrative examples of their children's bilingual use and explicitly described the way their children employ both languages. Moreover, as shows the method of observation of bilingual children conducted

by Arnberg (1981: 90), the child's speech was influenced by the investigator's presence: the child believed the investigator was monolingual and communicated with her in English, and at the same time continued to address the English-speaking mother in Swedish. Therefore, it is assumed that in case of the researcher's presence a small child may feel timid and discouraged to participate in interactions with him/her. Thus, I decided that children aged approximately two and above feel most comfortable and trustful in interactions with their parents. However, in future studies, when the children get older, the reliability of the results could be improved by including direct observations of bilingual Finnish-Russian children.

The interviews were conducted in an informal and easy-going manner. The recordings of the interviews were transcribed immediately following each session in a verbatim way keeping the lexis of the informants and paying most attention to the real-life examples. On the average, each interview lasted about 30 minutes and each transcript consisted of approximately 1700-2000 words.

4.2 The structure of the interview

The list of interview questions was based on previous studies concerning childhood bilingualism and bilingual development. There were altogether three studies. First, the study by Moin et al. (2013), which was aimed at describing the backgrounds of the bilingual families and their attitudes towards the bilingual education their children receive in Finnish-Russian schools and kindergartens. Even though the study used the questionnaire method, the questions and statements are applicable to my study because they deal with the family members' language practices, parent-child communication strategies, child's language competence as well as importance of maintaining both languages at the equal level. The statements mentioned in the questionnaire were modified and adjusted for my topic. This study presented examples of different language policies observed in Finnish-Russian families, which include the distribution of languages among parents and code-switching among family members in various situations (Moin et al. 2013: 25-26). The illustrations

presented in the study helped me to adequately interpret the answers of my respondents due to repetitions that occur in the answers in the questionnaire and the interview.

Second, in the study by McLeod et al. (2012: 135) the questions presented in the interview aim at evaluating the child's bilingual language use and exposure, for example:

“In which language does the child prefer to address mother, father, siblings, childcare providers, others?”

“In which language is the child exposed to television, movies or the radio?” I have adapted these questions for my study so that they suit the goals of my research. Therefore, I included questions about the languages distribution among the household and the questions concerning the child's language preferences. Since the study by McLeod et al. (2012) aimed at measuring the receptive vocabulary development, the rest of the questions seemed not relevant for my study, dealing with the child's ability to separate languages.

Third, the questions in my study were also based on the ideas presented in the longitudinal study by Arnberg (1981), who conducted an observation study. The issues that I utilize deal with the degree of bilingualism achieved by young bilinguals, as well as the way the languages are used in the home. The results of the observations correlate with the data that I had extracted from the interviews. The most common deal with the instances of language mixing, semantic interferences in the languages, as well as “spontaneous” lexical mixing, which is used by children when the word is known only in one language or is easier to pronounce in one of the languages.

The interview questions for the current study are the following: questions from (1) – (4) seek to find out the parents' considerations about their own language competences, their language backgrounds that might influence their current linguistic behavior with their own children.

1. What languages you were raised in?
2. What languages you speak now?

3. What do you think about your own competence in Finnish/Russian?
4. How do you feel about the use of languages in your family?

Questions (5) – (7) bring to light if there are language strategies that might be followed by the parents in order to establish a favorable environment for their children as well as how they feel about the languages distribution at home.

5. How do you encourage your child to speak languages?
6. What is your opinion about the languages distribution at home?
7. How would you describe your own experience of languages usage at home?

The set of questions (8) – (17) are mainly devoted to eliciting children's preferences of language use which are determined by different speakers and varying environment, that inevitably stipulate and shape the child's bilingual behavior. In the interview I also tried to encourage parents to provide me with examples of speeches expressed by children which contain curious representations of language mixings, switches and interferences of one language on another.

8. In what language will your child most likely respond to you when you address them in Russian/Finnish?
9. Can you remember a case when your child was most talkative? What did he/she say?
What was s(he) willing to say?
10. In which situations your child gets most talkative? What encourages your child to speak?

The questions (9) and (10) were aimed at clarifying what stimulates the children to speak both languages, which is important to know since children may receive less input in one of the languages, notwithstanding that fact the children keep using both languages in their everyday practices.

11. Imagine a situation: you child receives a teddy bear as a present, you ask him/her to describe it in detail. Is he/she likely to speak about the toy in Russian or in Finnish? Will he/she prefer to talk about the toy in Russian or in Finnish?
12. What do you think about your child's fluency in Finnish and Russian?
13. Can you provide an example when your child responded in Finnish to a Finnish-speaking person and in Russian to a Russian-speaking person?
14. How can you tell if your child associates languages with the speakers?
15. In which situations your child responds in Finnish to a Russian-speaking person and in Russian to a Finnish-speaking person? What your child is most likely to say?
16. Can you provide an example of your child expressing the same wish or asking for something in Finnish and Russian? What was he/she trying to say?
17. In which language your child feels more confident? How can you tell that?

I also tried to encourage parents to evaluate their children's progress in languages as in questions (12) and (17) in order to find it out if there is any dominance of any language. In addition, it was important to highlight the parents' perspective on maintaining the languages by means of increasing the child's opportunities to speak the languages both at home and outside of it. Reports on children's perceptions of languages may help to find out what stages of development they undergo while learning to perceive languages as separate ones.

4.3 Participants of the study

The interview questions presented were used to elicit data from the respondents, i.e. parents of bilingual children who have settled and continue living in Finland. Five families agreed to participate in the study, and they comprised of both mothers and fathers of bilingual children. The observations of fathers were equally important to mothers' for the reason that they actively participate in nurturing children.

The socio-cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the families involved in the study is the following: two families are Russian-speaking and the members live and work in Finland.

This family type most commonly follows the “home-outside language switch” strategy that presupposes sticking to Russian language at home and using it with relatives and friends who keep in touch with the family. The home language being a native language for the household is therefore used as a linguistic base for acquiring a second language. Since children from such families started to attend Finnish daycares from the age of one, they are regarded as simultaneous bilinguals, who are exposed to the majority language, Finnish, outside home. The other three families in which one spouse is native Finnish and another is native Russian, typically observe the “one person-one language” strategy in which each parent necessarily uses his/her native language. The approach presupposes the immediate dual language environment created by the parents of a child.

According to Arnberg (1981: 24), socioeconomic factors may influence the child’s learning of a second language. The parents’ educational background may be related to their awareness of the need for supporting the child’s language development as well as raise their positive attitudes towards both languages and both cultures. The educational level of the parents involved in the study is higher than average – in four out of five families the spouses have either obtained the Master’s or Doctorate degrees. Nevertheless, none of them was a linguist, pedagogue, psychologist, or had a professional interest in childhood bilingualism.

The children, whose bilingual development is being investigated are considered to grow bilingually according to two basic reasons: a child was born in a mixed-lingual family in which a father speaks Finnish and a mother speaks Russian, or a child was born in a family where both parents speak Russian, but they are immersed in a Finnish-speaking environment from early infancy, approximately since the age of one, when he/she started to attend a Finnish kindergarten. The brief characteristics representing background of the interviewed parents, their children and language distribution within/outside family are given in the Table 1. The real names of the subjects were changed for fictive ones for the sake of anonymity of

the respondents and in accordance to the research ethics. Each family gave consent to participate after I requested them explaining the objectives of the interview.

Since this research was initiated from my own experience as a parent of a bilingual child, I decided to include my own observations of the bilingual development of my son in the end of analysis section, which will serve as an additional illustration to the bulk of data gained from my subjects. This is a fairly common practice among the scholars who study childhood bilingualism. For example, Leopold (1939) analyzes bilingual speech of his two daughters paying attention to vocabulary, morphology and syntax. Nenonen (2000) presents a sociolinguistic overview of the bilingual situation in her family and describes bilingual development of her daughters.

Table 1.

Father, mother	Children	Language strategies followed by parents	Exposure to languages outside home
1. Ilya, Alina	Timur (2.2)	Home-outside language switch strategy (both parents use Russian at home)	Finnish in the daycare
2. Pekka, Tamara	Leo (2.4)	One person-one language strategy (father speaks Finnish, mother speaks Russian or both Russian and Finnish depending on the presence of Finnish-speaking people around)	Finnish in the daycare, using Finnish with Finnish-speaking relatives, Russian – with the Russian-speaking relatives
3. Bakhtiar, Elena	Daria (2.8)	Home-outside language switch strategy (both parents use Russian at home)	Finnish in the daycare
4. Timo, Ekaterina	Kari (2.8)	One person-one language strategy (father speaks Finnish, mother speaks Russian)	Using Finnish with Finnish-speaking relatives, Russian – with the Russian-speaking relatives
5. Niko, Marina	Liisa (2.8)	One person-one language strategy (father speaks Finnish, mother speaks Russian except the cases when the family is together, the mother speaks Finnish)	Using Finnish with Finnish-speaking relatives, Russian – with the Russian-speaking relatives
6. Aleksii, Anna	Aleksei (2.7)	One person-one language strategy (father speaks Finnish, mother speaks Russian)	Using Finnish with Finnish-speaking relatives, Russian – with the Russian-speaking relatives

4.4 Organizing the data

Basing on the parents' answers, I distinguished the themes that emerge in the data. In this section, I will briefly present examples extracted from the interviews in order to illustrate each topic.

- Parents' background: for example, a Russian mother is a fluent speaker of Finnish, a Finnish father has a fair command of Russian; one respondent Bakhtiar had bilingual background in his childhood.
- Language distribution at home: Ekaterina, a Russian-speaking mother, who is equally fluent in Finnish and a Finnish-speaking father has a fair command of Russian, they employ a "one person-one language" strategy to communicate with their child; both Russian-speaking parents Ilya and Alina employ a "home-outside language switch" strategy, i.e. they speak Russian as a home language and encourage their child to use Finnish with peers and the daycare staff.
- Children's responses to parents' language strategies: Kari from the mixed-lingual family (Timo and Ekaterina) interchangeably switches from Russian to Finnish and vice versa when speaking to their parents. Sometimes children's speech in Russian may contain lexical mixings and features of interference from Finnish (the child may ask for meatballs in Russian but use the word "lihapullia" instead of using a Russian word for it). Daria from Russian family (Bakhtiar and Elena) consistently speaks Russian with her parents occasionally switching to Finnish if father asks her for amusement.
- Parents evaluating children's fluency in Russian and Finnish: Russian-speaking mother Elena stated that by the time Daria started to attend daycare, her Finnish was more developed than Russian, attributing it to the longer time of exposure to Finnish, however with time the fluency in Russian became more visible. Tamara-Russian-speaking mother admitted that the development in Russian seemed to be progressing comparably to Finnish.

- Children showing preferences for a particular language: despite the fact that Finnish is a predominant language for Liisa (her father's language and the language of the daycare), Russian is still very important for her and she gladly communicates in Russian with her relatives and friends.
- Parents reporting on the children's ability to differentiate languages: most of the parents provided examples of their children switching from Finnish to Russian when leaving daycare or musical school. When parents come to pick Timur from the daycare, he says goodbye to his friends in Finnish and automatically switches to Russian to address his parents.

5 Results and observations

The content in this section illustrates the data extracted from the interviews. As mentioned in Section 4.4, for the convenience sake, the data will be subdivided into topics that carry most meaningful information relevant for the research.

5.1 Families' language use

Table 2: "Parents' background" briefly describes linguistic competences of my respondents

Parents	Native language	Self-described command of Finnish/Russian	Knowledge of other languages
Ilya	Russian	Fluent	English
Alina	Russian	Fluent (working language)	Ukrainian, English
Pekka	Finnish	Fair (speaks Russian rarely)	English
Tamara	Russian	Fluent (working language)	English
Bakhtiar	Russian	Fluent (even though English is a working language)	Kazakh (second native language), English
Elena	Russian	Good	English
Timo	Finnish	Good	English
Ekaterina	Russian	Fluent (working language, language of studies)	English
Niko	Finnish	Fair	English
Marina	Russian	Fluent (language of studies)	English
Aleksi	Finnish	Fluent (used to study in Russian)	English
Anna	Russian	Good	English, German

The examples that are represented in the main topics are rather versatile and comprise more specific issues that are of interest for the research. They are worth paying attention to because they highlight key points from the broad observations done by parents. Therefore, the main topics will consist of the subtopics that were elicited to elaborate the data. For example, the topic “language distribution at home” contain not only the plain observations concerning the way the two languages are spread within each family, but also exceptional cases like no adherence to some strategy, rather “natural” employment of native languages by both parents, i.e. the Finnish father speaks Finnish, the Russian mother speaks Russian without any intention to establish a pattern of language distribution, because they state that they “naturally” speak to their child. That is why, alongside with other subtopics, I subdivided the broader theme into the subtopic “naturalness”.

Table 3. “Language distribution at home”

Language distribution at home		
correctnes	chaos	naturalness

According to the observations, two households Ilya and Alina, Bakhtiar and Elena, care about pure development of two languages, and therefore, tend to speak their native language, Russian, in order not to confuse their children by speaking Finnish with accent and teaching them “incorrect” language. In comparison, the family of Timo and Ekaterina, find their family language distribution pattern to be “chaotic” because the parents use Finnish, English and Russian when communicating with each other. Despite inconsistent language use with each other, parents still stick to employing a “one language-one parent” approach to ensure a consistent use of languages when communicating with their child.

As far as natural language use is considered, Pekka and Tamara expressed that they feel comfortable and easy to use Finnish when the family spends time together. Without paying

much attention to the pattern of language use, the family Niko and Marina, “naturally” speak Finnish with each other. Even though Finnish is a prevailing language of the family’s communication and the mother fluency in Finnish, she tries to speak Russian with her child when there no Finnish people involved in their conversation.

One couple Ilya and Alina reported using only Russian at home with their child, emphasizing the importance of maintaining their common native language. Both parents reply in Russian even if the child says something in Finnish, thus showing their son, which language is preferred in the family circle. Nevertheless, both parents agreed on the importance of Timur’s development in Finnish as they let the son communicate with his Finnish-speaking peers as well as speak Finnish themselves in their son’s presence with Finnish friends. The father says:

(1) we encourage him to speak Finnish with other people. But we do not encourage him to speak any other language at home with us....

In another family the father Pekka speaks Finnish and the mother Tamara speaks both Russian and Finnish with the son even though the mother’s native language is Russian. The family expressed absolute satisfaction with the current linguistic distribution and the mother reported that she considers this model to be a good decision and transition in their family, even though, she finds the model of sticking to one language to more favorable in terms of providing their son with equal exposure to Finnish and Russian. Tamara feels more comfortable speaking in Finnish with the child in the husband’s presence, so as to establish mutual understanding in the family:

(2) I speak Finnish in those cases when I want Pekka to understand what I want to say or in some cases Leo responses very funnily in Finnish and it is different from Russian, and I want to hear exactly something in Finnish from him, I use Finnish and he responds in Finnish.

Bakhtiar and Elena – the parents of Daria reported using Russian at home for two reasons: Bakhtiar who is a bilingual himself (he speaks Khazakh and Russian)

(3) As I was born in a bilingual setting, I know that the native language should be spoken at home. Up till some certain age she (Daria) should learn and establish a solid basis in Russian.

Thus, the family comes up with the idea that their daughter should first learn the native language, which is Russian, because the girl, according to the parents' opinion will definitely learn Finnish at school, when she meets friends and starts to socialize in Finnish. Elena suggests that there is no sense talking to Daria in Finnish:

(4) We do not want to talk to her in Finnish with accent and mistakes and thus teach her incorrect Finnish.

Timo and Ekaterina find the language distribution in their family to be a little bit chaotic, they say:

(5) It is some kind of a mess, but it is funny!

The parents use Finnish, English and some Russian among each other, but still stick to using their native languages when addressing Kari. Ekaterina and Timo encourage their son to use both languages:

(6) teaching both Russian and Finnish is a priority.

Since the mother acknowledges that the input in the Russian is fewer, she engages the child into conversations after reading a book:

(7) We do a kind of routine: at first a book, then a story so that he (Kari) remembers more words.

Niko and Marina revealed that the language distribution in their family established in a natural way:

(8) *We have not agreed on anything, we just naturally speak to her: I speak only Russian and Niko speaks Finnish, sometimes he may say something to her in Russian.*

The father while playing may ask Liisa what the name of some toy in Finnish and in Russian is:

(9) *I tell her: Sano se suomeksi, sano se venäjäksi. Sometimes I check that she knows to express this or that in both languages.*

When Liisa was smaller she used to think her father knew Russian equally well as Finnish and could occasionally ask him for something in Russian. The mother being equally fluent in both languages, addresses her daughter in Finnish when they are surrounded by the Finnish-speaking people. Nevertheless, the family's care for supporting both languages is mutual among the parents.

Having considered the types of languages distribution in the families under study, the observations show that all parents fully acknowledge the importance of supporting both languages in their families as well as establishing favorable grounds for their development.

5.2 Children's fluency in Finnish and Russian

Table 4. "Children's responses to parents' language strategies"

Children's responses to parents' language strategies		
lexical mixing	switching languages	playing with languages

As reported by the parents, Timur (Russian-speaking parents) and Kari (Finnish father and Russian mother) occasionally produce lexically mixed utterances, which occur either because some words are "easier to pronounce" in Finnish, or because the child hears some words or phrases more often in Finnish. According to Arnberg (1981: 23), that is actually a very frequent case among bilingual children, when they may use a "simplicity" principle in

selecting words, when corresponding terms in the two languages vary in complexity. It may happen that a certain word is more salient and accessible in Finnish, so the child uses it rather than the Russian equivalent. The child may also lack a vocabulary item in one of the languages (because of the more intensive exposure to another language) and clarify what (s)he means through expressions, that have been recently used in certain activities experienced in one of the languages.

The ability to switch languages was mentioned by Baktiar (father), who himself practices switching from Finnish to Russian with his daughter Daria to ensure the child's ability to react in Finnish. Liisa was reported to switch languages in order to ask for the same thing from her mother and father in order to make sure her parents understand what she wants.

Timur and Liisa were observed to play in Finnish and play with languages when communicating with parents. As reported by Timur's mother, he may spend time playing with his toys in Finnish. Similarly, Liisa may humorously speak Russian with her Finnish-speaking father in order to involve him in a game. According to Grosjean (2010: 203), playing with languages and jokingly speaking to a person in a wrong language is a common practice by bilingual children, similar to the way monolingual children invent new words and rhymes.

Ilya and Alina reported their child's speaking Russian within home and Finnish outside it, as in (10) by Alina:

(10) sometimes Timur is playing with his toys, sitting in front of them and talking to them in Finnish. But if we interrupt him, he replies in Russian.

The child responds in Russian, thus making an immediate switch from one language to the other. The parents shared their thoughts concerning the child's habit to speak some Finnish on his own after the kindergarten. They seem to believe that Timur needs some time to switch from the kindergarten language to the home language.

The mother Alina also mentioned the cases when the child used some Finnish words when talking with the parents, he named the ones that, according to the mother, are easier to pronounce in Finnish than in Russian, for example, words like:

(11) *maito, auto, etc.*

Alina shared her opinion on this issue:

(12) *he may favour the words that are shorter, easier to pronounce in Finnish than in Russian. The words that he used when he started to speak.*

However, when Timur is exposed more time to Russian at home, he prefers the use of Russian mostly:

(13) *it happens more often during the weekdays, on the weekends when we spend time together, he speaks Russian all the time.*

Pekka and Tamara described their child's responses in a following way: the child switches from languages very easily in accordance with the speakers around him. The child may prefer some vocabulary in Finnish and use certain words also when speaking to the mother - these are the words that he hears most often from the kindergarten:

(14) *leikkimään, keinumaan, istumaan etc.*

With some topics Leo is more familiar in Russian and prefers to use Russian when talking to his mother. With father Leo always speaks Finnish, and he encourages the child to speak by involving him into telling stories:

(15) *Leo gets very talkative when I ask him to tell a story, and he tells about walking in a forest and seeing mushrooms, and teddybears, things he can see in a forest...*

Bakhtiar and Elena point out that Daria consistently speaks Russian without including Finnish words. While interacting with the Finnish staff and children in the daycare Daria

uses Finnish; however, according to her mother, the sentences and phrases uttered by the child in Finnish are shorter:

(16) *minun lelu, älä koske, katso, ulos, sisällä.*

Sometimes Bakhtiar practices switching to Finnish when playing with the daughter, and the child may follow the conversation by replying in Finnish

(17) *Sometimes she immediately switches to Finnish if I ask her. Once I asked her: Missä on lunta? She answered: täällä on lunta. When she has associations with the kindergarten, she replies in Finnish to us.*

However, Elena points out that such an experiment works only Bakhtiar speaks Finnish, since the child does not answer if the mother prompts to address the daughter in Finnish.

According to Timo and Ekaterina, their son Kari follows his parents' language strategies and sticks to speaking Finnish with father and Russian with mother. Ekaterina admits that the child commonly expresses his excitement in Finnish, sometimes refusing to share his emotions in Russian, but she nevertheless is being persistent:

(18) *Anyway, my principle is to stick to Russian.*

Ekaterina also mentioned that Kari quiet often uses Finnish words while talking with her:

(19) *he was eating meatballs, he asked: "mum, how many meatballs you are you putting to my plate? Only two? When I eat them, I'll take more from your plate. He asked everything in Russian, except for the Finnish word "lihapullia" (meatballs).*

(20) *Kari prefers to say easier alternatives in Finnish, like: kakku (cake), tippa (droplet).*

The father expressed determination concerning the encouragement of Russian since he himself supports discussions in Russian with his wife and the child:

(21) *We both agree that he needs Russian, that is for sure.*

Even though consistently talking in Russian with mother and in Finnish with father, Liisa may occasionally ask for something from her Finnish-speaking father, since he sometimes practices speaking with daughter in Russian just for the sake of amusement. The parents believe the girl perceives this type of communication as a part of a game. It also occurs that when the mother picks up Liisa from the daycare and asks her in Russian how the day was, the girl may spontaneously answer:

(22) *“Ihan hyvin”*.

Marina explains:

(23) *It happens because she was talking in Finnish all day before I picked her. In 5 minutes, she switches to Russian. She needs some time to understand that now I speak to my mum in Russian.*

Niko shared his opinion concerning Liisa’s operating two languages as a tool to get what she longs for:

(24) *she may say in Russian: I am hungry. And then she may say: Minulla on nälkä. If she wants to get anything she would most likely to ask for it in both languages. If she does not succeed to get anything in one language she would try in another.*

Table 5. “Parents evaluating children’s fluency in Russian and Finnish”

Parents evaluating children's fluency in Russian and Finnish		
predominant fluency in Russian/Finnish	emotional comfort	equal fluency in languages

Dominance of one language over, according to Grosjean (1982: 188-189), shows up because of the two basic reasons: language constructions in one of the languages are harder to produce in one of the languages (in this thesis Russian); children receive greater input in

one of the languages. I consider, that the children who are more time exposed to Finnish, choose to express themselves in Finnish

Timur and Daria reported being more fluent in Russian for the reason that both parents use Russian as a home language. However, the development in Finnish is progressing because the children actively participate in the events happening in their kindergartens and communicate with their peers in Finnish.

In comparison, Kari's parents noticed that he is more fluent in Finnish because he can express himself more explicitly and share his excitement with his parents. At the same time, he speaks Russian when showing affection to his mother, thus maintaining a special emotional bond between them.

Like in De Houwer (2015: 171) "harmonious" bilingual development, emotional contact and comfort were mentioned by other parents. For instance, Alina and Ilya suggested that their son's ability to speak Russian at home and Finnish in the daycare is connected to the child's satisfaction and emotional balance. Similarly, Pekka and Tamara related to Leo's good mood and willingness to speak both Russian and Finnish with his peers and relatives. Moreover, parents appreciate both languages in their family, therefore, the child feels psychologically safe and is positive towards both languages.

Leo and Liisa were reported to develop equally in Russian and in Finnish because the children can express themselves fluently and comprehensibly with the help of two languages and be easily understandable to other people who communicate with them.

Alina expressed certainty concerning the child's fluency predominant in Russian:

(25) his Russian prevails, he can express what he wants, describe actions, name objects in Russian...

Nevertheless, she points out that the child is fairly well developing in Finnish:

(26) in the kindergarten the nurses say that his Finnish has improved...

Ilya added that Timur can follow and participate in the puppet theatre performance played out in the daycare:

(27) he can follow the show, because he reacts on it...

The parents also evaluated Timur's competence in languages relying on the structures of the sentences the child pronounces. According to them, the child would ask for something in Russian using a full sentence, whereas the request in Finnish will most likely consist of two-three words.

The parents shared their thoughts regarding the child's emotional comfort being tied up with the development in two languages:

(28) There is conversation between us... if he does not know how to say something, he would be trying to express it in a different way... most probably he can express himself in the kindergarten.

Since the child enjoys staying in the daycare and sometimes even does not want to leave from there, the parents consider it a good sign:

(29) He likes to go to the kindergarten, he definitely feels comfortable speaking Finnish there.

Pekka shared his opinion concerning Leo's development:

(30) Leo speaks Finnish very clearly and uses words very coherently in a line... I have noticed that in Russian he speaks quite well...

In addition, the father noticed the language contribution the child gets in the daycare:

(31) From the kindergarten he learns different things and gets different behavior habits. He says "katso minua" to draw attention to what he is doing...

Pekka mentioned trying to read to Leo in Russian but the child seemed not to take it seriously:

(32) *...my accent seemed so funny to him, he was laughing and even corrected me.*

Tamara's viewpoint is that Leo is developing almost equally well in both languages:

(33) *there are no very remarkable differences in vocabulary, with time they become more or less equal...*

The child freely communicates to his Russian-speaking peers, and the father finds it to be a good sign, which shows the child's confidence in using Russian. Both parents noted the child's positive attitude and good mood even when he may not fully understand what the parents imply while talking:

(34) *Even if he does not understand something, he behaves the same way-he keeps on smiling. He knows that he is involved into the conversation, he is payed attention to.*

So, the child's psychological comfort is maintained in the family also due to the parents' equal tolerant attitude to both languages.

According to Bakhtiar, Daria is more fluent in Russian than in Finnish, however, the girl used to say more words and short phrases in Finnish at the time she started to attend daycare (at 1.5 years old).

(35) *she stayed most of the time there (in the daycare) – consequently was exposed more time to Finnish. When she was about 1.8, she could say something in Finnish to her Russian-speaking grandfather, like: Auta minua!*

The parents, therefore, consider the time of exposure to Finnish to be an important factor contributing into the daughter's development in Finnish.

Timo and Ekaterina both agree that Kari is acquiring Finnish better than Russian, relying on the evidence that the child more eagerly speaks Finnish when excited. Timo says:

(36) *when he is very excited about some certain thing, he speaks Finnish without a stop. He is not doing it so much in Russian.*

Ekaterina light-heartedly confesses that:

(37) *In Finnish he is very fluent, and I am a little jealous about it (laughing).*

At the same time the parents noticed that some with some topics Kari is more familiar in Russian and thus the vocabulary is more developed in Russian.

(38) *In some topics he is more effective in Russian...he says: "mummy, I love you so much" in Russian.*

Kari always speaks Russian with mother when it comes to emotions, very close interaction:

(39) *It is an emotional contact with mum, and he feels it this way.*

Liisa's father Niko believes there is no sense comparing the development in languages:

(40) *Some children with one language at the same age do not speak that much as she does...if she knew only Finnish, she would speak it better, but since she is bilingual she learns to speak two languages at the same time. I think she speaks both languages quite well.*

Marina thinks the child has a good memory since she is able to retrieve very rarely used words and phrases from her memory.

(41) *She may unexpectedly say to me (in Russian): do not forget to take an umbrella!*

However, both parents agree that Liisa's vocabulary development in Finnish is better, because she attends the daycare and thus has more opportunities to use Finnish.

5.3 Language preferences and language differentiation by children

Table 6. "Children showing preference for a particular language"

Children showing preference for a particular language		
time of exposure to Finnish	associating languages with other speakers	yielding to children's self-expression

Time of exposure to Finnish turned out to be a crucial factor predetermining the language fluency and preference for a particular language of children from mixed-lingual families. Liisa is more inclined to speak Finnish because of the intensive immersion into Finnish within the daycare environment. Leo was also noticed to be influenced by the varying time of exposure to Finnish and Russian, that tends to be balanced due to the visits of Russian relatives who communicate with the child.

As in Volterra and Taeschner (1978:325), “labelling” people with languages helps children to perceive languages as different ones. Associating languages with languages gives Daria a cue to decide which language is spoken by each person she is familiar with. The girl has become accustomed to a varying surrounding around her and has no troubles defining that the daycare staff and children speak Finnish, some other acquaintances speak Russian and communicates with them accordingly.

Kari, a boy with a mixed-lingual family background was reported to prefer to speak Finnish also because of the mother’s undemanding attitude which avoids “pushing” the child to speak Russian. Communication in Russian with occasional switches to Finnish are common in the family, however this tendency is accepted by the mother because she wants to provide her son with freedom to express himself in any language.

Two households, Ilya and Alina and Bakhtiar and Elena, shared the opinion that their children do not show any preference towards any language. As suggested by Ilya and Alina, Timur’s Russian slightly prevails over Finnish. Nevertheless, the child is developing skills in Finnish as well and is able to follow the instructions in the daycare and can successfully communicate with his Finnish-speaking peers.

Bakhtiar and Elena consider that Daria even though is more fluent in Russian, since she is most likely to adjust to the language of the immediate environment and people around. Elena says:

(42) *I think she associates the languages with the person, with the situation.* The parents also reported that the child often refers to the characters from Finnish cartoons while playing with other toys:

(43) *Titinalle, Muumi*

Pekka and Tamara suggested that Leo feels equally confident in both languages and has no specific language preference whatsoever. It could be explained by the fact that apart from learning a lot of Russian from his Russian-speaking mother, the child communicates a lot with his Russian grandparents and thus has a need to express himself while playing with them. The mother confirms:

(44) *Maybe there is some difference, but it is not very remarkable.*

The parents paid attention to the time of exposure factor, and Leo does not attend the daycare regularly and spends time with Russian-speaking grandparents quite often. So, the child gets to be exposed to two languages roughly the same amount of time.

Timo and Ekaterina expressed the opinion that Kari is more inclined to speak Finnish, also when he knows the interlocutor is bilingual like him. The mother noticed that it is easier for Kari to start a conversation in Finnish with her since he knows the mother speaks Finnish, and it may take some time to turn their conversation into Russian, Ekaterina explains that she does not want to restrict her child in terms of self-expression:

(45) *Even if my strategies do not work, he may continue to speak Finnish with me, I am not pushing him. I accept it, he is my child.*

According to Niko, Finnish is a predominant language for Liisa because she speaks Finnish in the daycare. Nevertheless, he is sure that:

(46) *Russian is equally important for her because she has many Russian-speaking friends and at home we speak Russian and there are many Russian relatives... she is used to two languages.*

Marina thinks Liisa feels confident and comfortable in both languages, at the same time she hopes the daughter would willingly speak Russian when she grows up

(47) Luckily, now she does not express anyhow that she does not want to speak any of the languages. Hopefully she would speak both. And there would not be any teenage refusals or shameful moments to speak Russian.

Table 7. “Parents reporting on the children’s ability to differentiate languages”

Parents reporting on the children's ability to differentiate languages		
language precedence	interlocutor's initiative	unconscious switch

Apart from associating languages with speakers, language precedence helps children to decide which language to speak with an interlocutor. Children Timur, Leo, Daria, Kari and Liisa were reported to focus on a language which precedes a conversation and join in a conversation in accordance to the language initiated by the interlocutor. Therefore, we may assume that the interlocutor’s initiative helps children to distinguish languages not only within a mixed-lingual family where mother’s and father’s languages are spoken but also keep languages separate in interactions with other speakers.

Although the children were described to be able to differentiate languages coherently, sometimes they unconsciously switch languages (as in the case of Timur who addresses his mother in Finnish) when playing on their own, or when having to suddenly switch to Russian (Leo meeting his Russian-speaking grandparents after some time). Therefore, in order to follow a conversation or answer a request, children need to concentrate first on the language spoken by the interlocutor and then switch to it thoroughly.

Ilya and Alina reported that their son Timur answers in Finnish if asked by a Finnish person.

Once when Timur was leaving the kindergarten, he said to one of his friends:

(48) *Elmeri, sano minulle huomiseen* (Elmeri, say goodbye to me).

After some time, the child started to coherently use Russian with the parents, thus showing complete understanding that parents speak different language. As suggested by Ilya:

(49) *when Timur hears someone speaking Finnish, he turns his mindset into Finnish.*

Ilya also reminded of a case when Timur asked mother in Finnish:

(50) *Onko sinulla nälkä?* (Are you hungry?).

Ilya commented on the case:

(51) *It is probably because he says it so many times in the kindergarten, that he keeps on saying automatically the same to us. He may not even realize that it is in Finnish. when he is in his thoughts, thinking about the kindergarten.*

According to Pekka and Tamara, Leo elaborately differentiates between languages, notwithstanding the fact that he needs some time to switch from Finnish into Russian and more rarely vice versa. Pekka reports:

(52) *when meeting Tamara's parents, he (Leo) may say a sentence in Finnish but then he realizes that speak Russian, so he starts to speak Russian.*

Pekka expressed his surprise at his son's ability to speak Russian even in the kindergarten when playing with other Russian-speaking children, and immediately to switch to Finnish when the staff refers to the child:

(53) *I noticed that the staff was surprised to see them talking Russian and then they immediately switched to Finnish to speak it with other people.*

Tamara also noticed that the preceding language determines the language tactics Leo will follow:

(54) *when I pick Leo up from the kindergarten, and I greet him in Russian, he might also say something like 'My mum came' to the kindergarten group in Russian.*

Leo may take the Russian-speaking person for the Finnish one and thus misuse the language:

(55) *He could have spoken Finnish to a Russian-speaking person when he has not yet recognized the language at the first place.*

Relying on the following examples, we can assume that the bilingual child starts to talk by recognizing which language the interlocutor or the surrounding people speak and afterwards follows the conversation in the corresponding language.

Bakhtiar and Elena reminded of case when Daria was playing with another Finnish-Russian bilingual child:

(56) *...when they play together they switch between languages. When the girl starts speaking Finnish, Daria switches to it as well. They repeat one after another. They may say in Finnish: Tule tänne! Mene lekkimään. Anna minulle. And then they may say the same immediately in Russian...*

The parents also noticed that the daughter easily remembers who speaks which language and when meeting that person, talks to him/her in the appropriate language.

(57) *We go to the dance class, where the teacher is Russian but speaks Finnish during the lesson, and Daria once heard her speak Russian and since that time she now she speaks Russian to her.*

In the meantime, Daria speaks Finnish to a teacher in a musical school Muskari, Elena reports:

(58) *she comes up to the teacher and asks for a musical instrument in Finnish: Anna äidille! And then she returns to me and continues to speak Russian.*

Timo and Ekaterina share the opinion that Kari quite elaborately separates languages while talking to them. In addition, they reported that Kari differentiates the languages according to his observations:

(59) *some people speak mother's language, some people speak father's language.* In case the interlocutor speaks both languages, Kari most probably will speak Finnish, in case the conversation does not proceed in Finnish, he attempts speaking Russian. Notwithstanding Kari's occasionally addressing mother in Finnish, he usually switches to Russian, if the mother mildly persuades the child to speak (60) *mother's language.*

Niko and Marina believe that preceding of a language is an important factor that determines Liisa's language choice, Niko specifies:

(61) *it depends on the interlocutor – what language he or she speaks – she would support that language. If I give her a present, she would talk about it in Finnish. If mother does – she would reply in Russian.* Marina also remembered the case when Liisa was offered a candy by an unknown Finnish person:

(62) *She (Liisa) looked at me and asked me in Russian if she could take it, and I let her, she turned back to that person and asked for a candy in Finnish.*

Marina reminded of their favourite family joke:

(63) *Niko asked Liisa what the name for a cow in Russian is and she said – корова (cow), then what it is in Finnish and she said – ammuuu (onomatopoetical word for a cow's voice), and then Nico helped her with example: sänky- кровать (bed in Russian. Корова (cow)-is in Finnish... and she said äiti (laughing).*

Marina thinks the way the daughter joked helped her out learning that "lehmä" is a cow in Finnish and...

(64) *she learns many words this way.*

5.4 Observations of Aleksei's bilingual development

As far as observations of my child's bilingual development and the ability to differentiate two languages are concerned, I could say that I tried to arrive at them from the objective perspective. Relying on the respondents' answers, I have extracted the topics that reoccur in each interview: parents' background; language distribution at home; children's responses to parents' language strategies; parents evaluating children's fluency in Russian and Finnish; children showing preferences for a particular language; parents reporting on the children's ability to differentiate languages. Applying the same topics to my child's case and analyzing them in accordance with the qualitative convention of the research, which is mostly experience-based, is the essential procedure that minimizes the possible degree of subjectivity.

The bilingual setting of my son Aleksei (aged 2.7 by the time the research started) has been shaped by the "one person-one language" strategy, implemented by his parents, me speaking Russian and his father speaking Finnish. Before Aleksei reached the age of two, we used to speak Russian only among each other, but as soon as Aleksei started to produce speech actively, the father started to speak more Finnish to me, so as the son would learn more Finnish indirectly from father's and mother's conversations. It seems to be most natural to speak in the native language with children, so the "one parent-one language" strategy has been adopted in our family mainly because it helps us to express us fully in the communications with the child and to ensure Aleksei's development in both languages at least at this young age.

Even though nowadays Aleksei's father and I interchangeably use both languages in Aleksei's presence, Aleksei consistently uses Russian when talking to me and Finnish to his father. Even in the flow of speech he tends to separate languages when addressing two parents simultaneously. He may say:

(65) *me mennään reitille tänään* (we are going hiking today) – *sinä* (pointing at his father), *minä* (pointing at himself) ...*мы* [ty] (pointing at his mother) (“you” in Russian).

From the time Aleksei’s conscious speech production appeared, he followed the strategy we had implicitly set, and thus a “one parent-one language” routine has formed his ability to differentiate the languages from an early on. It could be easily noticed how he expressed delight at our encouragement to respond to us in Russian and in Finnish: he used to bring his favourite toys and name them in both languages to each parent accordingly. It has not been always easy to support the role of Russian in our everyday life because of the dominance of input in Finnish, but as I see, Aleksei certainly feels affection to the mother’s language and has discovered the joy of being able to communicate to his relatives who speak Russian. Similar behavior was noticed by Ekaterina, who suggested that despite the dominance of Finnish, Kari is emotionally tied to his mother through Russian and prefers to express his feelings in Russian.

As far as Aleksei’s responses to his parents are considered, there are exceptions, when the father asks Aleksei in Russian, Aleksei replies in Russian, but it is most probable that Aleksei replies in Finnish, even if the father asks him something in Russian for amusement. I have also tried to name some toys in Finnish, but Aleksei once told me:

(66) *Don’t say like this, dad says like this.*

It is fascinating, how small children show sensitivity to the language strategies their parents stick to while communicating with them. Even though the number of Finnish-speaking friends and acquaintances is greater than that of Russian ones in this family, Aleksei recognizes those who speak Russian and keeps in his memory associations that refer him to what they said and did. When meeting new people Aleksei seems to wait for the language they start talking with him and as soon as he makes sure the person speaks Russian, he joins in conversing with them in Russian. Similarly, all parents in the interviews reported that their children follow the conversation in a language initiated by the interlocutor.

While talking via phone with his Russian grandparents, he always participates in conversations and retells in Russian what has happened to him in the Finnish-speaking setting. There has not been any significant language mixing, except the cases when Aleksei aged a bit younger than 2-year-old used to call a grandfather as “*ukki*” and grandmother as “*mummi*” even when we talked in Russian, and vice versa when he speaks Finnish, he calls Russian grandparents as “*бабушка*” [babushka] (grandmother) and “*дедушка*” [dedushka] (grandfather). Nowadays Aleksei he uses the words “*ukki*” and “*mummi*” only when speaking Finnish, and names them as “*babushka*” and “*dedushka*” when talking about them in Russian.

Since I observed my son’s bilingual development also from the researcher’s perspective, I find it appropriate to be able to evaluate his fluency in the languages he speaks. As far as I see, Aleksei’s speech in Finnish is developing very intensively, because we currently live in Finland and he is exposed to Finnish language more often than to Russian. Exposure to Finnish within the daycare environment has enriched Aleksei’s vocabulary and grammar constructions, he utters complex sentences, like:

(67) *mina en halua kävellä, haluan mennä autolla, koska on nopeampaa.*

When asked in Finnish, he immediately responds without making pauses to think or retrieve some particular word from his memory. Also, while describing a picture, a story or while playing he would use more complex language structures, than in Russian. His imagination brings out vivid expressions more often in Finnish, he once said to his father:

(68) *Laitetaan minun potkupyörä puristimet.*

Aleksei created his own word for “*polkimet*” for pedals. When he sees a car parked in the street he says:

(69) *Kuljettaja meni kotiin lepäämään/ ostamaan ruokaa.*

At the same time, I read a lot in Russian, and it seems to enrich his vocabulary – he willingly retells stories that we have recently read to me and remembers very rare words and phrases that I am so surprised to hear him quoting, like:

(70) *the yacht moored to the quay.*

Nowadays Aleksei frequently asks “*why*” and expects us to explain thoroughly. He may ask me (71) *Why does the door open automatically/ the light switches on automatically?*

(72) *What for does the excavator dig the ditch?*

(73) *Why does the snowplow take away snow?* As soon as he learns that there should be a base on the place of a ditch, and a house will be built there, he may develop the message in his own way and say that the house will be high and have four windows.

I have also noticed that Aleksei’s morpho-syntactic utterances in Russian are slightly influenced by Finnish. In Finnish he says:

(74) *laita valot päälle.*

Sometimes Aleksei may say in Russian:

(75) *Положи свет* [polozhi svet] (put on the light)*t* and use the verb which only denotes the action of putting something on something, instead of using the verb denoting the action of switching. So, the influence of the Finnish verb “*laita*”, which means both “*to put*” and “*to switch*” is evident in Aleksei’s speech.

Aleksei tends to reply in Finnish more elaborately, without hesitating which word or expression to use in the context. It takes him a bit longer time to ponder in order to react appropriately to the address or request in Russian especially if asked by unfamiliar people. Even though, Aleksei’s vocabulary in Russian is quite rich and versatile, he still seems to favour speaking Finnish when playing on his own. Kari and Liisa, children from mixed-lingual families also tend to be more confident speaking Finnish, at the same time, Timur

from a Russian-speaking family, also has a habit of playing in Finnish after being brought home from the daycare. However, Aleksei sticks to communicating in Russian with me, his relatives and friends, for the reason it has become so habitual for him to keep contact with them and essential to understand each other.

Aleksei's ability to differentiate Russian and Finnish is evidently noticed while he is playing with his Finnish grandparents names some toys, or objects in Russian as they ask him to do so. It gives him great joy to show them that he knows both names for some toy in both languages and see them admire and wonder how he switches between languages so easily. The same works with Russian grandparents and the encouraging reaction is probably motivating him to keep using Russian as willingly as Finnish. Leo was also reported to switch to speaking Russian with his grandparents and respond in Finnish to his father at the same time.

Deliberate language mixings only happen in amusing contexts when Aleksei is fully aware of the wordplay, he may say to his father:

(76) *olin kruzokissa*, i.e. lastenkerhossa ("kruzok" - hobby club) (I was in the hobby club). He knows the word for hobby club in Finnish but prefers using the Russian alternative and adds Finnish affixes to make it sound nativized. Liisa's parents illustrated how the girl enjoys joking in Finnish and Russian, on purpose creating amusing word plays (as in 63) "äiti – lehmä" Daria was also reported to play in Finnish in order to entertain her father who initiated the conversation in Finnish, like (as in 17) Missä on lunta? "Täällä on lunta".

My observer's task was to give meaning to the experience of the children's bilingual development presented by the parents and explore the complexity of the phenomenon, described in the research. The observations and comments by the parents proved to be an essential constituent for establishing the explanatory basis of the process of languages differentiation. Overall, the topic was approached from the viewpoints of the parents who raise bilingual children and my perspective of a researcher and mother of a bilingual child.

Taken together, the data yielded the following conclusions, which are presented in the next chapter.

6 Discussion and conclusions

The degree of exposure to the two languages in a bilingual environment is a factor that stipulates the child's degree of bilingualism. The previous studies (Arnberg 1981; Yamamoto 2001; De Houwer 2007; Grosjean 2010; Moin et al. 2013; De Houwer 2015) show how important parental strategies and language patterns are in forming the children's motivation to speak two languages and in contributing to children's ability to keep languages separate (Arnberg 1987; Arnberg 1981). Results yielded by Arnberg (1981: 75), show that at the age of two and a half the children involved in the study talked about "mommy's" and "daddy's" languages and insisted on the parental "right" language use when addressing them.

Parents involved in this study put a great effort in stimulating the second language acquisition and aspire to create a balance for learning a second language, a minority language in the context, in order to prevent exclusive use of the majority language, which is favored for social and psychological reasons.

The data gained from the parents of bilingual children enable me to suggest that the consistent use of the minority language (Russian) at home, either in the form of a "one person-one language strategy" or as a family language leads to positive results with regards to the children's use of Russian also in the setting of the majority language, which is Finnish.

Relying on the answers of my interviewees, it is considered that the bilingual setting largely stipulates the children's bilingual development. The most commonly adopted language strategy among mixed-language families, in which father speaks Finnish and mother speaks Russian, was "one person-one language" approach. Parents expressed flexibility in terms of language choices among each other. Some mixed-lingual couples reported alternate use of both languages especially if fathers were fluent in Russian. However, the strategy "one person-one language" was consistently observed by them in relation to their children. Some parents specified that this strategy had established out of natural circumstances.

The findings show that at times it is difficult to carry out a strategy consistently, because the Russian mother wanted the father to be involved in the conversation among the family members and at times felt it polite to speak Finnish with the children. Despite occasional inconsistencies of the language use by mothers, the children kept conversing with their mothers in Russian.

In the study about the development of childhood bilingualism in mixed-lingual families Arnberg (1981:17) suggests that it can be challenging to apply the second language to the culture and way of life in the society in which the child is living. Similarly, because Russian in mixed-lingual families is spoken most commonly by one family member (mother), the communication in this language is limited in quantity and in scope.

Mixed-lingual families named Finnish the stronger language, mentioning such factors as time of exposure, number of speakers in their daily surroundings and diversity of activities that are prevalent in Finnish. The degree of understanding in Russian as well as verbal fluency were noted by parents and I noticed that fact when observing the children communicating on different family gatherings.

In the families interviewed, contact with Finnish was quantitatively greater and the contact with Russian was limited. Moreover, the children associated languages with persons and domains that were prestigious: the peers in the daycare, the father, the media, the language associated with the activities outside home. The children sometimes felt lack of motivation to speak Russian when they could express in Finnish everything they want and occasionally failed to speak Russian to their mothers because they recognized that the latter could speak Finnish. The same was noted by Arnberg (1981: 77), children spoke Swedish to the Swedish fathers and English mothers in the situations when Swedish people were around and mothers also spoke Swedish in order not to confuse their children by speaking English when children initiated conversations in Swedish.

The families that consist of native Russian-speaking parents tended to follow the “home-outside language switch” strategy, that means the use of Russian as a home language and the child’s communication in Finnish in the daycare. As suggested by my respondents, it helped them to balance the exposure in the minority language, and consequently, it appears that in such families the children less commonly respond to their parents in Finnish if asked in Russian. The parents shared the opinion that the children’s immersion in the Finnish language environment while staying in the daycare was visible and they became more confident in Finnish, nearly being as fluent in Russian as in Finnish.

Yamamoto (2001: 128) has suggested the “principle of maximal engagement with the minority language” that presupposes not only substantial exposure to the minority language (here Russian), but also an implicit message that the minority language is a favorable means of communication in a family. Children often imitate parents’ habits and attitudes because their parents stand as models to follow. Thus, if the parents show signs of approving bilingualism in a family, the children will most probably develop the idea that it is useful for them to know two languages.

The interviewees often expressed positive attitudes towards bilingualism, which contributes to the children’s willingness to keep using two languages. The encouragement includes reading in Russian and involving a child in thematic games, which enhance the child’s curiosity to continue using Russian alongside with Finnish. Playgroups organized in Russian serve as a common ground for meeting other Russian-speaking children and their parents and maintaining the use of the language.

The results of the study show that parents are concerned with their children’s acquisition of two languages and put a great effort to maintain both languages. Parents try to compensate for the lack of Russian by involving the child into playgroups with other Russian-speaking children. Children attend special reading and hobby clubs, which aim at supporting the minority language groups in Finland. Most parents commented on the importance of

maintaining Russian and wished the children to be equally fluent in both languages in order to be able to visit Russia and communicate with Russian-speaking relatives.

Overall, similar to the findings yielded by Bergman (1976), Padilla and Lindholm (1984), Müller (1998), Deuchar and Quay (1998), we assume that the children involved in the study have been able to distinguish Finnish and Russian as separate languages. The findings support the idea that the children, growing in the bilingual setting, acquire the languages independently and differentiate them despite occasional code-mixings that happened at the very beginning of their speech production.

Volterra and Taeschner (1978: 325) and Grosjean (2010: 183) suggest that the language spoken by a person is a clue that helps a bilingual child to differentiate languages. In this thesis, the distinct differentiation is noticed by parents in various situations and with different interlocutors. Most parents agreed that their children need to listen first which language the new person starts to speak and follow his/her language to continue the conversation.

Comments by the parents indicate that their children were aware of the difference between Finnish and Russian. Some parents reported that children recognized “mother’s” and “father’s” languages, as well as the children switched to Russian if asked to do so. Some children showed familiarity with the concepts of “Finnish” and “Russian” and could react in Russian if asked to by a Russian-speaking mother and the same in Finnish by a Finnish-speaking father.

Because the rate of development in two languages may vary (Arnberg 1987: 68), one of the languages may be influenced by the other. Kari, Liisa were reported to occasionally mix languages, Aleksei’s utterances in Russian were noticed to have features of interference however, these were not necessarily evidence of inability to differentiate languages. Lexically-mixed utterances may be related to the saliency of a particular word (more often in Finnish). The children also substituted a word from Finnish when they did not know a

corresponding word in Russian. Interference may occur because of the more intensive input of Finnish, which is the dominant language in my setting.

The mothers also sometimes mixed in Finnish words when they spoke Russian with children. They felt that the child did not know the word in Russian. Therefore, we assume that mothers modified their speech in order to contribute to the child's language acquisition.

Another reason for mixing was the influence of Finnish culture and concepts for which there were no adequate Russian translations. Mainly because the mothers spend their time with children in Finland, they are usually more familiar with the concepts that describe nurturing a child in Finnish.

Parents' sticking to their native languages helps children to address and answer them in the corresponding language. These families that employ Russian at home and mothers from mixed-lingual families sticking to Russian raise the chances that the children will keep the two languages separate. Also, consistent adherence to particular language patterns creates distinct "domains" where the minority and majority languages are spoken, thus enabling the child to adjust to using them separately.

The children involved in this thesis are above 2.5 years old and can communicate distinctly with various people using different languages, and the observations let us assume that switching between languages is their habitual feature with respect to certain people or situations. Different locations may also provide cues for a language switch, for example, Finnish is spoken in the daycare, Russian is spoken in the reading club by the teacher and by other children etc. As soon as a child starts to associate each language with particular persons and situations, the language separation settles in. The results of the research emphasize the importance of finding new ways of increasing the exposure to Russian and providing opportunities to use Russian in order to raise children's motivation to use it.

Positive attitudes towards bilingualism and determination to foster it were also noticed while conducting the interview and analyzing the data. The findings show how important the parents, their language patterns and their attitudes are. Therefore, parents play a significant role in establishing a positive bilingual experience in their families.

7 Conclusion

The study has attempted to provide insights on the ways bilingual children under the age of three acquire and learn to separate two languages Finnish and Russian simultaneously. The research dealt with the Finnish-Russian bilingual children' development, particularly with regards to the development of the minority language. While acquiring two languages and possibly accumulating uneven distribution of linguistic knowledge between the majority and minority languages, bilingual children face the challenge of language differentiation (Volterra and Taeschner 1978; Arnberg 1981; 1987; Deauchar and Quay 1998; De Houwer 2007; Grosjean 2010).

The first research question in this thesis was “To what extent bilingual children at the age of two and above are proficient in two languages with respect to the bilingual setting they grow in?”. The findings show that the simultaneous young bilingual children growing in a Finnish-Russian environment are fluent enough to communicate with the family members, daycare staff and peers. The children whose fathers are Finnish-speaking and mothers are Russian-speaking (Leo, Kari, Liisa, Aleksei) are noticed to be slightly more fluent in Finnish due to a more intensive Finnish input directed from fathers, relatives and daycare. Even though Finnish is more strongly present in the surrounding of children whose parents have adopted a “one person-one language” strategy, the children manage to accommodate to the languages used within a family and outside of it. The fluency in Russian is mostly less developed than in Finnish, due to the dominating number of Finnish speakers, however, this factor may vary according to the varying circumstances. Visiting relatives, meeting friends and attending clubs contribute to the development of the minority language and thus bring balance into the children's bilingual development.

Children from Russian-speaking families (Timur, Daria) where both parents speak Russian and stick to “home-outside language switch” strategy are otherwise more fluent in Russian. Likewise, the children who hear Finnish and Russian roughly equal amount of time,

comprehend both languages and communicate in them accordingly. According to the observations made by the parents, their children communicate successfully with the staff as well as other children in Finnish. Relying on the findings acquired through the parents' observations, children demonstrate the immediate switch to Russian as soon as parents come to pick the children up from the daycare.

The second question was "How does the bilingual environment contribute to the child's ability to interchangeably use two languages?". Bilingual environment contributes to the child's ability to use two languages by providing the language input that is a native one, devoid of language mixes. This finding corresponds to the results of McLaughlin (1987: 95), who has suggested that interference in the speech of bilingual children is a result of language mixing in the children's presence. Moreover, parents in my research stick to speaking their native languages and thus provide their children with a native speaker input, without "teaching mistakes" in another language.

The answer to the third question "How do bilingual children gradually learn to differentiate Finnish and Russian?": bilingual children's ability to keep two languages separate largely depends on the input of languages, provided by the family members, relatives and caregivers. The children learn to distinguish Finnish and Russian as separate languages through the consistent strategies provided by parents. Moreover, children tend to establish "the person-language bond" (Grosjean 2010:183), and thus easily differentiate languages. Indeed, the children in my research tend to relate Finnish to Finnish-speaking people and likewise Russian to Russian-speaking people.

The study carried out was mainly exploratory, as the close attention to the children's linguistic behavior predominantly by the parents may give us clues to the way the children recognize boundaries between the languages. Exploring parents' perspectives of their children simultaneous bilingual acquisition may contribute into shaping the understanding of the phenomenon and help families who raise such children to maintain motivation for

encouraging their children to use the two languages actively paying special attention to the minority language.

Since the analysis of the data was of qualitative nature, the research carries suggestive pieces of information that require further investigations, for example, including observations of monolingual and bilingual children and analyzing possible instance of language interference and mixings. In the future studies children who have grown up and become more confident in interactions with a researcher could be observed for providing more solid and concrete results. Moreover, analysis of morpho-syntactic structures containing instances of language mixes from the children's speech would bring to light more reasons of delay in language differentiation.

At the same time, the study proved to be a useful source of information for the immediate group of parents under study, who have expressed genuine interest in the research, and have reconsidered their daily life language practices with the regard to their children. Overall, the research contributed to the field of childhood bilingualism with regard to Finnish-Russian simultaneous bilingualism that is a common phenomenon in the eastern part of Finland. The method of interviewing parents and extracting examples of children's speech was original because it contained parental interpretation of the children's linguistic development, therefore, mostly parental perception of the phenomenon. The parents' awareness of the issue has raised especially with regards to supporting Russian keeping in mind that it is a minority language in Finland.

References

- Arnberg, L. 1981. *Early Childhood Bilingualism in the Mixed-Lingual Family*. Linköping, Sweden: Linköping University.
- Arnberg, L. 1981. *A Longitudinal Study of Language Development in Four Young Children Exposed to English and Swedish in the Home*. Linköping, Sweden: Linköping University.
- Arnberg, L. 1987. *Raising Children Bilingually: The Preschool Years*. Clevedon, Avon: Multilingual Matters, eBook Collection (EBSCOhost), EBSCOhost, viewed 13 September 2017.
- Baker, C. 2006. *Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* (4th ed). England: Multilingual Matters.
- Bergman, C. 1976. 'Interference vs. independent development in infant bilingualism', in G. Keller, et al. (ed) *Bilingualism in the Bicentennial and Beyond*, New York: Bilingual Press/Editorial Bilingüe, 86-95.
- Byers-Heinlein, K. 2013. 'Parental language mixing: Its measurement and the relation of mixed input to young bilingual children's vocabulary size', *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 16:1: 32-48.
- Chirsheva, G. 2012. *Childhood Bilingualism: Simultaneous Acquisition of Two Languages*. St.Petersburg: Zlatoust.
- Deuchar, M., Quay, S. 1998. 'One vs. two systems in early bilingual syntax: Two versions of the question', *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 1 (3), 231-243.
- De Houwer, A. 2015. 'Harmonious bilingual development: young families' well-being in language contact situations', *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 19 (2), 169-184.
- De Houwer, A. 2007. 'Parental language input patterns and children's bilingual use', *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 28, 411-424.
- De Houwer, A. 1990. *The Acquisition of Two Languages from Birth: A Case Study (Cambridge Studies in Linguistics)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Döpke S. 1992. *One Parent-One Language Approach: An interactional approach*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Hoffmann, C. 1991. *An Introduction to Bilingualism*. New York: Longman.
- Grosjean, F. 2010. *Bilingual: Life and Reality*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

- Grosjean, F. 1982. *Life with Two Languages: An Introduction to Bilingualism*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Lanza, E. 2000. 'Language Contact – A Dilemma for the Bilingual Child or for the Linguist?' in: Döpke S (ed.) *Cross-Linguistic Structures in Simultaneous Bilingualism*, vol 21. John Benjamins Publishing Co.
- Leopold W.F., 1939. *Speech Development of a Bilingual Child*. Evanston, North-western University Studies in the Humanities.
- McLaughlin, B. 1978. *Second-Language Acquisition in Childhood*. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- MacLeod, A., Fabiano-Smith, L., Boegner-Page S., Fontolliet S. 2012. 'Simultaneous bilingual language acquisition: The role of parental input on receptive vocabulary development', *Child Language Teaching and Therapy*, 29:1: 131-142.
- Matras, Y. 2009. *Language Contact*. New York, Cambridge University Press.
- Moin V., Protassova E., Lukkari V., Schwartz M. 2013. 'The Role of Family Background in Early Bilingual Education: The Finnish-Russian Experience' in: Schwartz M., Verschik A. (eds) *Successful Family Language Policy. Multilingual Education*, vol 7. Springer, Dordrecht.
- Müller, N. 1998. 'Transfer in a bilingual first language acquisition', *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 1 (3), 151-171.
- Nenonen, O. 2000. *Dvujazychie v nashei semie* [Bilingualism in our Family]. Helsinki: Yliopistopaino, 115-117.
- Nenonen, O. 2012. 'Linguistic Characteristics of Bilingual Children Phonological Development' in E. E. Jurkov, et. al (eds) *Formirovanie i ocenka kommunikativnoj kompetencii bilingvov v processe dvujazychnogo obrazovanija*, St. Petersburg: MIRS, 42-61.
- Padilla, A.M. and Lindholm, K. 1984. 'Child bilingualism: the same old issues revisited' in Martinez, J. and Mendoza, R. (eds) *Chicano Psychology*, Orlando: Academic Press, 369-408.
- POPS 2004 = *Perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteet*. Helsinki: Opetushallitus.
- POPS 2014 = *Perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteet*. Helsinki: Opetushallitus

- Protassova, E. 2008. 'Teaching Russian as a Heritage Language in Finland', *Heritage Language Journal*, 6 (1), 127-152.
- Protassova, E. 2004. *Fennorossy: žizn' i upotreblenie jazyka* [Fennorosses: life and use of language]. St. Petersburg: Zlatoust.
- Ronjat, J. 1913. *Le Développement du Langage Observé chez un Enfant Bilingue*. Paris: Librairie Ancienne H. Champion.
- Tilastokeskus. *Largest foreign-language groups in Finland at the end of 2016*. Retrieved 01.06.2018, from Statistics Finland https://www.stat.fi/til/vaerak/2016/vaerak_2016_2017-03-29_tie_001_en.html.
- Tracy, R. 2000. 'Language Mixing as a Challenge for Linguistics' in: Döpke S (ed.) *Cross-Linguistic Structures in Simultaneous Bilingualism*, vol 21. John Benjamins Publishing Co.
- Volterra, V., Taeschner, T. 1978. 'The acquisition and development of language by bilingual children', *Journal of Child Language*, 5, 311-326.
- Weinreich, U. 1979. *Languages in Contact: Findings and problems*. 9th ed. - The Hague: Mouton.
- Yamamoto, M. 2001. *Language Use in Interlingual Families: a Japanese-English Sociolinguistic Study*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.