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Welcome to the Smallside!

A triangular approach to immersion at the English Kindergarten of  
Kokkola

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**ABSTRACT**

Research on bilingualism and immersion has shown that there are advantages involved in learning languages through immersion. However, these are findings from studies focusing on the outcomes of immersion. This thesis aims at determining how the participants in immersion, the teachers, the children and the parents, view the immersion experience as a whole and the benefits of such immersion.

Immersion schools have spread from Canada, where they were first founded, till Europe and Asia. This thesis focuses on the Smallside of the English Kindergarten of Kokkola (EKK), which is providing English language education to young children aged from 5 to 7. This study uses qualitative data. Such data are collected through interviews, surveys and ethnographic research from the teachers, children and parents involved in the EKK. The data is analysed with grounded theory.

The analysis shows how participants experience and value immersion, and where they perceive advantages of immersion, such as the children developing higher self-esteem and better intercultural skills.

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**KEYWORDS:** immersion school, kindergarten, triangular, experience, expectations, ethnographic, cognitive



## INTRODUCTION

Globalisation is making every day relations worldwide. Teenagers play computer games with other teenagers in other countries. Students travel to other countries in order to pursue their studies at a foreign university. Companies trade with companies on the other side of the frontier. These situations all have one issue in common: language. Do these individuals speak the same language? The need to speak more than one language is increasing as daily exchanges reach further than they used to.

Some parents do make the decision of teaching language to their children from their youngest age. Immersion schools have become a popular mode of language education, which has a half-century old history. Immersion schools have the reputation of being one of the best ways of learning a foreign language. There have been many studies led on the outcomes of immersion schools, focusing on the proficiency of the target language, on the type of special cognitive skills developed by the children. (Cummins, 1998; Peal and Lambert, 1962). There are many reasons to immersion schools being created; the main reasons are the will to teach the country's other language and to protect the cultural heritage of the country. In previous researches, little attention has been given to the expectations that reside in the immersion school, especially from the point of view of the children placed in the system. Research has rather focused on the outcomes of immersion school. This study will offer a new outlook on immersion, collecting the data from the main actors in the immersion school and triangulating the information collected. This type of study at kindergarten level has not yet been carried-out in Finland.

This study will deal with the immersion experience as a whole; offering a triangular analysis of the point of view of the teachers involved, the pupils at the kindergarten and the parents that chose to place them there. We will also examine what are the advantages and what are the drawbacks of an immersion school as an educational system.

Language acquisition is a process that starts already before birth and continues throughout life. Whereas the first language is acquired, the next language will be learnt. The extent to which these languages are learnt will define the level of bilingualism of an individual.



Immersion school is a popular method of foreign language education, which was founded in Canada in the mid 1950's. Immersion schools have spread throughout the world and have reached Finland in the late 1980's.

In this study, we will consider the case of a kindergarten in Finland. Finland is a bilingual country, where both Finnish and Swedish languages are taught and spoken. This is even more so on the Bothian coast, where Kokkola is situated. Swedish immersion schools are common in Finland, but other languages such as English and French are also taught through immersion. This research will focus on the Smallside English Kindergarten of Kokkola, which means it will deal with young pupils entering the immersion system, aged around five to six years.

This study will use qualitative research methods to answer the research questions. The data collection methods have been interviews, observation and surveys. Data will be analysed through grounded theory.

Firstly, we will study how language is acquired before focusing on immersion as a language learning method. We will then review the methodology and analyse the findings. And last, we will discuss the findings and answer the research questions.

## 1 LANGUAGE LEARNING

### 1.1 First language learning

#### 1.1.1 Defining the first language

The main difference between this first language and additional languages that will be learnt later on is that the first language, often also referred to as “mother tongue” will tend to be fully acquired, on the contrary to an additional language. (Loewen & Reinders, 2011, p. 66). However, this claim and the concept of “native speaker” is being criticised as a so called-native may not necessarily acquire a language to its fullest and an emigrant may learn the language and become a native-like speaker, even though it is considered extremely difficult. (Davies, 2003)

Harding and Riley (1986, p. 6) suggest that the capabilities to learn a language would be genetically programmed into human beings, as humans are the only species able to achieve such a level of communication. All children, except if they are badly handicapped, would therefore be genetically programmed to learn a language. The language however is not set in the child’s genes; it is dependent on the child’s environment. The language has to be taught by another person. Usually, the child’s parents and close family will be teaching the child their own language, in other words, the child’s first language.

The first language or L1 is the language that one considers as being one’s own language. The first language is not learned, it is simple acquired. Learning something implies there is something that has been already acquired to base the new learning upon. Children should therefore have the possibility of acquiring two or more languages as their own, at the same level as the mother tongue. (Hassinen, 2005, pp. 21-21, p.37)

The dominant psychological theory in the 1950s and 1960 is called the behaviorist learning theory: language learning is comparable to the any kind of learning. This means that it needs habit to be learnt. By creating habits, the learner will react to a stimulus provoking a reaction connected to what she remembers. Over time, the habit will reinforce itself. However, according to Ellis (1997, p.35), this theory only considers the input and output of the learner but does not take in account the mind – or “black box” of the learner. Ellis points out that learning cannot be described as a simple response to external stimuli.

Harding and Riley (1986, pp.18-21) maintain that there are two other theories about the language acquisition. They first mention the structuralists, which consider that the child creates his rules based on what he hears around him. For them, language is a code that the child has to learn in order to create her own messages and share them. Functionalists on the other hand, consider that the meanings are given by the society surrounding the child, who in turn connects the meaning with the language. They view the child as being interested only in the effects of the language, not in the process of learning it. They also discuss that the process of a child learning a language is very different from an adult learning an additional language. When a child is learning how to speak, she is learning “about the world” that is surrounding her. She is trying to explain it and understand it. An adult on the contrary, knows her own world and tries to use the additional language to express it.

Tomasello (2008:7) offers a different point of view, which is less genetically focused. He suggests that children acquire language by learning how sentences are formed and ordered through practicing. He considers that language learning is enabled by cognitive skills and intentions.

### 1.1.2 Acquiring the first language

Harding and Riley (1986, pp. 6-7) follow the behaviorist theory and discuss that children start communicating as early as a few months of age. They start reacting to people smiling by smiling back to them; it is the first step in learning to take turns in conversations. Children also practice what sounds they can produce by babbling, screaming or crying. Around the age of 8 to 10 months, they start producing sounds that seem like words, at least in the ears of their parents. The children’s sound repertoire will evolve according to the reaction the “word” the children produce, has on their parents. Over time, children and parents will associate certain words with specific situations and hence, create a routine around the words, such as “*bye-bye*” when somebody is leaving or “*thank you*” when the child gives something.

By the age of two, a child will be able to formulate short phrases, mainly talking about herself. At the beginning, the child is using the language to express what she is planning to do or how she feels. Language is not yet a mode of communication but a mode of

expression that is produced as a monologue. Over time, the monologue will evolve into thoughts. (Hassinen, 2005, pp.69 – 73)

The child is starting to communicate by naming the objects and people around him. He will start by using single words, which are not necessarily understandable. The parents or people communicating with the child will try to guess what the child is saying suggesting words or phrases. The child is taking in what she is told, this allows him to develop her own vocabulary and communication capacities. (Harding & Riley, 1986, pp. 9-10).

Harding and Riley (1986) point out that when a child is able to associate two words together, his capacity to communicate increases. For instance, she is able to express negation. The short phrases are not grammatically correct at this stage but they make some sense. The child's communication skills develop slowly over the first years: she will learn how to build phrases, ask questions, order words in the phrases. The child will eventually start addressing her parents (using the third person, *you*) which points out the child has expanded her communication "field" and is no longer only expressing herself. This expansion is a mile stone for the child, which realises the importance of others.

Around the age of five, the child is able to talk properly in her L1, without making any major grammatical mistakes. All children are, however, different. This means that the pace at which language skills and communication abilities develop depends on each individual. Harding and Riley (1986, p.10) share the example of Einstein, who did not start speaking until the age of three but still became famous for his intellectual capabilities.

## 1.2 Additional language(s)

### 1.2.1 Defining bilingualism and multilingualism

Bilingualism is difficult to define. May, Hill and Tiakiwai (2004, p.10) discuss that one cannot just either be monolingual or bilingual. Bilingualism varies according to individuals but also according to the languages involved. May at al. (2004, pp. 10-12) definitions of bilingualism, such as Haugen (1953), whom describ bilingualism as being able to say something meaningful in another language or such as Macnamara (1966).

Macanamara (1966) asserts an individual is bilingual if he can at least read, write, listen or speak in another language. On the opposite, for Bloomfield (1935), a bilingual individual should be as fluent as a native in both languages. Therefore the visions on the definition of bilingualism vary from weaker skills to fluency in the other language. (May et al, 2004). The main issue with these definitions is that they have either no limitations and can include nearly anyone, or too many limitations, and cannot really include many people.

Bilingualism is difficult to define as it is impossible to compare two languages. One is proficient in one's own mother tongue but will only use part of it. Learning an additional language will concern only a part of that language also.

May et al, (2004, pp. 10-12) and Harding and Riley (1986, p.31) discuss that there are four main types of bilingualism. Firstly, elective bilingualism refers to the bilingualism to be voluntary, a situation in which one decided to learn an additional language. This type of bilingualism is also known as additional bilingualism, as both languages may exist side by side. This type of bilingualism might sometimes be referred to as elite bilingualism, as it concerns only individuals that belong to a more privileged class that has the possibility of choosing to learn an additional language. Secondly, circumstantial bilingualism refers to the situation in which bilingualism is forced upon a population that would be using, for instance, a minority language and should learn a more dominant language such as English or French. The additional language is being learnt at the expense of the minority language. Thirdly, subtractive bilingualism may be a consequence of circumstantial bilingualism. The minority language is replaced by the dominant language. Bilingualism is not seen as positive in this situation. Folk bilingualism is related to subtractive and circumstantial bilingualism, when individuals from an ethnic group need to learn an additional language to "survive". And lastly, balanced bilingualism describes the capacity to use two languages equally as well. This theory is criticized as the proficiency in two languages is difficult to compare. (cf. Bloomfield's definition).

Duncan and De Avila (1979, quoted by May et al, 2004) prepared a test to measure the proficiency in two languages. The test enables to compare and measure the level in each language:

1. Unable to speak the language, may be the first exposure to the language or ability to produce some words making sense
2. Ability to speak a few words and very simple phrases and sentences.
3. Limited ability to speak, make mistakes when speaking: syntax errors or code switching errors (when changing from one language to another).
4. Good ability to speak, only few errors when speaking.
5. Very good ability, totally fluent speaker; close to native speaker's level.  
(after Duncan & De Avila, 1979:53, Language Assessment Scales)

The tests can result into twenty-five different outcomes. Duncan and De Avila have divided the results into five sections:

1/1 1/2 2/1 2/2	Late Language Learner
1/4 4/1 1/5 5/1	Monolingual
1/3 3/1 3/2 2/3 3/3	Limited Bilingual
2/4 4/2 3/4 4/3	Partial Bilingual
4/4 5/4 4/5 5/5	Proficient Bilingual

**Table 3.** Duncan and De Avila's levels of bilingualism;

Adapted from Duncan & De Avila, 1979:53 (quoted by May et al, 2004, p. 13)

The last category would fit with Bloomfield's definition of bilingualism. These categories do however have their limits, as languages and language skills cannot be compared. These results however point out the complexity and variability of proficiency in language.

### 1.2.2 Theories on learning additional languages

Krashen's hypotheses are some of the most known hypotheses on language learning.

Krashen (1982, pp.10-40) sets five hypothesis in the process of learning a second language. The first hypothesis is "acquisition – learning". Krashen asserts that one can learn a language in two different ways; the first method is acquiring the language in the same one way one learns his mother tongue. The other method is learning the language, by learning its grammar and spelling, the purpose of learning is to become skillful in the language. Krashen points out that acquiring a language is more important than learning it.

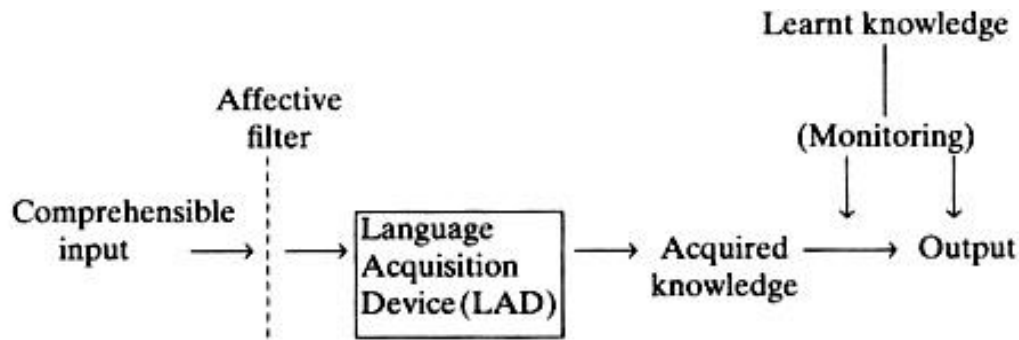
The second hypothesis is related to the previous hypothesis, as it concerns the grammatical skills in the target language; it is called the "natural-order hypothesis". The language skills are dependent on the grammar skills in that language. Grammar skills are acquired gradually in time and are dependent on the input.

The third hypothesis is called "monitor hypothesis". Krashen considers that acquiring a language subconsciously will tend to develop fluency in that language. On the contrary, learning a language consciously will tend to take time when speaking or writing to think about the accuracy of what he is saying or writing and may therefore not become fluent. The monitor, or editing device, will affect how the language learner will produce utterances; the bigger the monitor will be, the more the language learner will focus on the grammar and on the accuracy, therefore the result will be less spontaneous.

The fourth hypothesis is called "input hypothesis", according to which, acquiring a language takes place by hearing and understanding a language rather than by speaking it. Krashen asserts that the input level for the target language when learning should be a little higher than the learner's actual level. This makes the language learning process more interesting and relevant.

The fifth and last hypothesis is the affective filter hypothesis. Alongside the input, the internal factors such as motivation, anxiety and self-assurance will have an effect on the language learning process. They may either slow the process down or give it a boost.

These hypotheses of L2 (or second language) in action can be seen in the figure below:



*The Input Hypothesis Model of L2 learning and production (adapted from Krashen, 1982, pp. 16 and 32; and Gregg, 1984)*

### Figure 1

Cummins also offers theories on language learning.

Cummins (1998) encourages teachers to use code switching, jokes, riddles to force pupils to switch languages, compare and confront them. The ultimate goal is to make the pupils more aware of the language itself and make them comfortable using it.

Cummins (1998) quotes what could be referred to as an equation he wrote himself in 1981:

To the extent that instruction in L<sub>x</sub> is effective in promoting proficiency in L<sub>x</sub>, transfer of this proficiency to L<sub>y</sub> will occur provided there is adequate exposure to L<sub>y</sub> (either in school or environment) and adequate motivation to learn L<sub>y</sub>.

This means that both languages – first and second language - can be learnt side-by-side. This is important especially in the case of early immersion, where the pupil is still learning his mother tongue. By learning an additional language, the pupil will develop her cognitive and academic skills, which are not dependent to the language itself. Therefore, the learning skills in the first language would be improved by these cognitive and academic skills. He (1998, p .4) also states that the learning processes of both languages are interdependent as they help in developing the pupil ‘skills’ by sharing the learning skills during the language learning process. Cummins asserts that these skill transfers are possible however different the languages in question are. A direct



implication of this transfer possibility, can be for instance if a pupil is having difficulties learning how to read; he could be encouraged to learn in his first (and stronger) language in a first time in order to encourage him to learn and then only, teach him how to read in the target language (Cummins, 1998, p.5).

Cummins (2000, pp.58-59) differentiates two types of language proficiency. The first kind of skills is “Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills” (BICS) which refers to surface communication skills and conversational skills an individual may have. The second type of skills belongs to the “Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency” (CAPS) which refers to the academic language skills. CAPS is what language education strives to achieve. Cummins shares the example that two children aged 6 and 12 years may have the same fluency (BICS) but not the same CAPS because the younger child is not yet able to understand and make out sense as much as the older child is capable of.

### 1.2.3 Theories on bilingualism

Baker (2011, pp. 117 -122) considers there are two types of reasons explaining why an individual would learn additional languages. The first type of reasons belongs to the category of societal reasons. Learning additional languages may be stimulated by economic and trade reasons; one might wish to be able to be involved in international business and trade where the knowledge of local or global languages is needed. One may also learn additional languages in order to improve one’s intercultural understanding of the surrounding community. Peace and stability between cultures may be attained by improving intercultural understanding. Baker also points out that acquiring additional languages will allow more access to information, available in various languages and ultimately give access to power.

Baker (2011, pp. 117 -122) provides a second type of reasons for learning additional languages; these are individual reasons. One may wish to learn additional languages in order to raise one’s cultural awareness and develop one’s intercultural sensitivity. Learning additional languages is also said to increase the cognitive skills and intellectual sharpness of individuals. Learning additional languages may also increase one’s self-confidence by increasing communicative capabilities and offers the possibility of improving deepening relationships with others, as one is able to

communicate more effectively in other languages. Baker adds that one may also chose to learn additional languages in order to increase her career and employments chances, as mastering additional languages will offer additional opportunities for trade and business.

#### 1.2.4. Becoming bilingual

Saer (1924:53) argues that rural bilingual children were less intelligent than urban monolingual children. His studies in rural and urban areas in Wales pointed out that that the bilingual rural children obtained the worst results in the 1916 Stanford-Binet IQ Scale test that was led; the urban monolingual children obtained the best results. However, this study was criticised as not being trustful, as the rural children may not have the same possibilities as in the urban areas. May et al (2004, p.20) confirmed later that social class variables influence these types of intelligence tests.

Peal and Lambert (1962) led the first research that pointed out the positive aspects of bilingualism on cognitive skills. Their study had a political conclusion to it: bilingual countries are in no means inferior to other countries. They focused on studying the cognitive skills of both bilingual and monolingual children and compared them. They discovered that bilingual children have better developed IQs than monolingual children, possibility resulting from their bicultural and bilingual environment. However, their studies raised the question of order: are the bilingual children having a high IQ because of their language skills or vice versa?

Baker (2011, pp. 117-121) dissociates individual bilingualism and societal bilingualism. Bilingualism may be a specific characteristic of an individual belonging to a monolingual community. Studies on this characteristic will focus on the effect(s) of being a bilingual or multilingual. Research on societal bilingual concentrates more on the evolution of the bilingual groups, on how the language within the group is evolving. Our study aims at studying the individual situation of the children studying at the EKK (English Kindergarten of Kokkola).

Grosjean (2010, p.4), as quoted by Baker (2011, p. 4), considers the actual use of the language rather than on its fluency: "*bilinguals are those who use two or more languages (or dialects) in their everyday lives*". The use of a language is also related to

the context; communication is always an exchange of information and will have consequences. The capacity to speak the language does not necessarily affect one's capacity to communicate: one might have poor language skills but have proficient social interaction skills which will enable the message to be transmitted. However, one might know the language but be a poor communicator and the message will be not be transmitted to the receiver.

Baker argues that bilingual children are inclined to being able to read earlier than monolingual children, due to the skills previously mentioned. These children may also have better mathematical skills as they have better capacities of focusing their attention; on numbers for instance.

According to Bhela (1999, p. 23), adult individuals striving to learn an additional language will base the meanings in the additional language on their previously acquired language(s). The L1 (or L2 ...) is therefore interfering with learning the additional language. The learner might have difficulties with the grammar and the phonology of the target language as she will consider everything through the specter of her L1. She will use the structures and the modes she is used to in her L1 but that do not fit the target language.

Bhela (1999, p.23) points out that if the native language and the target language are structurally very different, the learner will experience the most difficulties in learning the target language. Bhela (1999) asserts that the learner will be able to overcome the difficulties due to the differences between the languages by being motivated to learn and by receiving enough target language input.

However, research has shown that children learning an additional language do not experience the same difficulties as adults. Baker (2011, pp. 95-06) points out that children are born ready to learn additional languages. Examples of bilingual families prove that children can even learn two or more language in their early years without any problem. This does not mean that only children can become fully proficient in an additional language. The 'motivation' and 'exposure to the target language' factors are far more influential than the age at which the target language is being learnt.

As previously mentioned, children have the capacity of acquiring two languages simultaneously. Children born in bilingual families for instance develop both languages

if their parents decide to teach them both languages. Children have the capacity of differentiating languages from a very early age. Baker (2011, p.95) goes as far as suggesting that this capacity is already functioning at the fetal age, the new born baby is also favoring her own mother's voice and will react on how she speaks. The fact that the new born can react to different types of speech points out that she can also differentiate languages.

Language proficiency can be tested through norm-referenced tests or criterion-referenced tests. A norm-referenced test focuses on skills such as reading and the results obtained by each child are compared or ranked. A criterion-referenced test is focusing on the level of the child as a specific skill and provides a profile of the child's proficiency. The child's proficiency is not compared to others; simply her level is assessed. (Baker, 2011, pp. 21-22) Therefore in immersion school, the children's skills would not be compared. The children's skills are individually assessed instead of being viewed or being rated and ranked.

### 1.3 More than language?

When attending an immersion school, children do not simply develop language skills. Language is a vehicle for culture an asset in the working place. The choice of immersion school may be explained by other factors than hoping one's children would learn a new language. Language learning acquisition is therefore related to culture, to the social context and to cognition.

#### 1.3.1 Language and culture

Language can be seen as a channel for culture: it carries it on and allows it to evolve. A language may be the most apparent symbol of group, such as regional or national identity. It is an important factor of a culture but it is not what makes the culture. Identity creation in general is modeled by the interactions and connections that take place in everyday lives. Language plays an important part in developing this identity as the interactions take place by the medium of language, helping understand meanings. The language that is spoken often carries its own cultural and historical identity but it

also lives along the social encounters that take place. Nevertheless, language is only a symbol of culture. Individuals rarely own only one identity; they actually have multiple identities, as a result of the various languages they speak. The environments surrounding individuals also affect their identities as they belong to many smaller groups, such as regional, national, professional groups which all have their own specific dialect and own local culture. (Baker, 2011, pp. 4-5)

Jones (2009, pp.42-43) points out that the language – culture relationship is not necessarily a one-way relationship. According to Hamers and Blanc (2000, quoted by Jones), language affects the constructions of ideas and reciprocally, cultural codes can have an effect on language. They also consider that language is a method for “internalising” culture. Language also allows for culture to be passed on from one generation to the following generation. Jones (2009, p.42) also describes language being a form of expressing our experiences and symbolizing them both to ourselves and to others.

According to Neil Leveridge, (2008) a child is brought up in a particular culture, the language she is taught and the opinions he forms come from the environment she is in contact with. Brooks (1986, pp. 123-128) argues that all people are the same but that the situations and the environments in which they are placed are different. These situations give birth to “behaviors” which are seen as acceptable or not. The accepted behaviors also vary in each environment. These differences give birth to cultures. Neil Leveridge (2008) defines a culture as being “*the beliefs and practices governing the life of a society for which a particular language is the vehicle of expression*”.

Neil Leveridge (2008) also discusses that two individuals that would be brought in similar cultural environments but raised in different languages might have very different world views. Therefore language has an effect on building one’s world perspective.

### 1.3.2 Language and the social event

Boroditsky (2010) points out that language is a tool made by humans – and by humans only. She discusses that the way an individual talks corresponds to the way an individual thinks. Bilingual people should have the possibility of thinking in two ways.

Languages may have different ways of expressing, amongst others, time, genders, amounts and locations. Hence, speaking in two separate ways will mean expressing oneself into different ways. For instance, if an individual is still an emergent language learner, she will be unable to think as well as she would think in her L1 and might appear less good at thinking.

Otto (2006) asserts also that the way an individual talks corresponds to the world view she has. Certain languages have specific vocabulary to describe the world and concepts, which represent the culture associated with the language. Otto points out that not only words are different but also non-verbal communication may differ between languages. Non-verbal cues, such as facial expression may even mean opposite ideas. She also describes how the family context of the child will influence how she will develop his language skills; both the economic situation and the social interactions within the family will have either a positive or a negative effect on the child's skills. Therefore, both the language itself and the surrounding environment will influence the development of language skills and world view.

Second language acquisition is related to identity formation. As individuals acquire a second language, they take part in a social event which builds their social identities. The social identity is formed by the interactions and negotiations that take place with representatives of other groups and the various surrounding environments. Using a language, and more specifically a second language, is part of a social event. It takes place between individuals. This social event refers also to joining the social group, which is speaking this second language. Individuals learn how to interact in the group and follow the rules that are set within the group. (Baker, 2011, p.45,129 )

Cummins (2000, p. 60) defends the Vygotskian theory according to which the social context is highly important; indeed language learners will benefit most from the "*more expert and knowledgeable members of their social groups*". Interaction with these specific members will enable children to develop not only language skills but also academic and cognitive skills. The Vygotskian theory argues that the social context helps make meaning of a language, raising the importance of the context in which a language is being learnt.

### 1.3.3 Language and cognitive development

Research has shown that in addition to language skills, immersion schools and bilingualism in general will influence the development of other skills, such as cognitive skills. Cognitive skills are the skills of remembering, reasoning, learning words. Peal and Lambert (1962, quoted by Hakuta, 1985, pp.64-65) pointed out that balanced bilingual children received better results in different types of intelligence tests than monolingual children. Their findings were a turning point comparing to the previous research that discussed the negative effects of bilingualism. According to them, the minds of these children had twice as much experience “in solving problems” as the minds of monolingual children as they have had to work only in one language. For the first time, this dual capability was considered as a benefit.

Studies led after Peal and Lambert, such as Cummins (1984) and Mc Lauglins (1984), discuss that bilingualism does not overload the “mental capacity of children” and that being bilingual actually provides more advantages to the child than simply knowing two languages or more. The skills in each language improved over time and supported each other, conforming Cummins’ theory about interdependence between languages. (Hakata, 1985)

Meriläinen (2008, p.41) quotes a number of researches carried-out in Finland about immersion schools. For instance, Jäppinen (2002, 2003 and 2005) led three researches on thinking and content learning in a foreign language in immersion schools in Helsinki, Turku and Tampere. She studied in parallel Finnish language schools and immersion schools. During her research, she noticed that pupils being taught with the CLIC-method had a similar or higher cognitive level than pupils studying in their mother tongue. She did however note that young boys had some issues with the CLIL-method; they seemed to have some slower cognitive activity.

Research has shown that bilingual individuals tend to have increased capacities in certain areas, comparing to monolingual individuals. For instance, they tend to have a better capacities at divergent thinking, that is thinking of optional answers to questions; creative thinking, that is being at the same original, elaborate and being able to do wider range of associations. The results are however only valid for proficient bilinguals. Children below a certain level of proficiency will not yet have developed the extensive cognitive skills mentioned above. (Baker, 2011, pp. 149-150).

Baker (2011, pp. 153 -158) points out that not all bilingual individuals, but what he refers to as balanced bilinguals, tend to have better metalinguistic abilities when it comes to selecting the important information and the less important information. He discusses that bilingual children develop a more “*analytical orientation to language*” (p. 153) than monolingual children. This means bilingual children organise their language system into a logical system. Baker also points out that bilingual children have a different relation to words than monolingual children, they actually have a certain control on the “*internal language processing*” (p. 154) which means they tend to have better grammatical skills than monolingual children and are able to analyse their speech in a deeper manner than monolingual children.

Cummins argues in favor of bilingualism:

It seems clear that the child who has mastered two languages has a linguistic advantage over the monolingual child. Bilingual children become aware that there are two ways of saying the same thing. But does this sensitivity to the lexical and formal aspects of language generalize to cognitive functioning? There is no conclusive answer to this question - mainly because it has proven so difficult to apply the necessary controls in research. (1984, p. 44).

According to him, children would linguistically benefit from mastering two languages. Bialystok (2009, p.4) disagrees with Cummins, as she discusses that bilinguals have less “vocabulary in each language than monolinguals”. She suggests that the difference may result from the fact that bilingual individual use both language less, comparing to a monolingual individual that uses the same language all the time. She add that the lack of usage of the languages leads to bilinguals tending to make slow connections between both languages, thus decreasing fluency.

One negative aspect that a young bilingual child might experience is feeling different and being observed. She might feel uncomfortable if people are too curious or are jealous of her language skills. The child will realize that she is different from the culture of the community of her L1 because her own culture has been affected by learning an additional language and getting to know the culture associated to it. (Hassinen, 2005, p.68)

Translanguaging is therefore an act of expanding their communication capacities. (García, 2009, p. 140). It is also considered as the “building block of all bilingualism” (García, 2009, p. 151). According to García, translanguaging enables bilingual



individuals to make sense out of each other: understanding not only each other's words but also other communicative cues, such as visual cues and sounds.

In order to increase the communicative capabilities of their students, immersion school teachers tend to encourage their pupils to produce both “verbal and non-verbal means of communication” (Lyster, 2003, p. 238). In doing so, teachers foster the idea that getting the message through (= communication) is the main goal. In an immersion school, the focus is on learning the target language and being able to convey a message in that language.

## 2 IMMERSION SCHOOLS

The first immersion school was founded in Canada over a half-century ago. From then on, immersion schools have not only spread in Canada but also throughout the world. In this part, we shall focus on such schools.

### 2.1 History of immersion schools

#### 2.1.1 Canada: the starting point, the French immersion

The first country to establish immersion schools was Canada in 1965. In the sixties, Canada became officially a bilingual country (with Québec, being French speaking and the rest, English speaking) this meant people working in the administration had to be proficient in both languages hence the importance of language – a quite comparable situation to Finland, where services are expected to be provided in both languages. However, the history leading to the presence of the languages and their powers are quite different in Canada and Finland.

The trigger to the creation of the first immersion school was the important amount of English speaking families, which took their children into French schools in the Ontario region in the hope of them learning French. The French speaking schools saw the rise of English speaking pupils and wanted to limit their enrollment. The English speaking families raised the issue of language education in the country. At that time, French education was seen as poor, with one hour of French language courses per day (Potowski, 2007). At the same time, Canadian Francophone speakers demanded for more “linguistic and cultural equality” (Potowski, 2007). These tensions eventually led to the creation of the immersion school at Saint-Lambert in 1965.

The curriculum followed in the immersion is the same as the curriculum in a regular school. The amount of French language education offered may vary. The immersion may be total, with 100% of the education being led in French; or partial, when the amount of French language immersion covers less than 50% of the time. (Hämäläinen, 2006, p.15). The goal of the French immersion is to enable the children to become bilingual in French and English (their L1). Students enrolled in immersion schools are given a diploma certifying they have attended the programme, which includes a set

amount of courses in French languages and subjects which are taught in French. (Buss & Mård, 1999, p.11)

The most common type of immersion is “early immersion”; when the immersion is started at kindergarten level. The language immersion starts at 100% of the time during the three first years and slowly decreases over the years, reaching 30% of the child’s school time around grade 10-12. “Late immersion” is another option offered to parents for their children. In this case, immersion is started in grade 7, and the immersion covers “only” 75% of the child’s school time and decreases over time to reach 30% in grade 12. (Doyle, 2009) Generally, “early immersion” is experienced as more natural than “late immersion”, which requires more work from the children. (Obadia, 1996)

Buss and Mård (1999, pp. 11-12) discuss that the L1 of the children taking part in the French language immersion are not at risk of seeing their L1 skills decrease whilst they attend French immersion. Indeed, the majority language in Canada is English and the environment therefore provides sufficient support to the children to develop their L1 skills.

Meriläinen (2008, p.14) claims that in addition to the main goals of language learning, the Canadian immersion schools aimed at sharing the culture and habits of the Francophone speaking population with the Anglophone speaking population. The ultimate goal was to allow their Francophone culture to be recognised by the rest of the Canadian population.

Unfortunately, a survey from 2000 by the Canadian Council for Education shows that less than 20% of the population can actually speak both languages. According to the same survey, about half of the Canadian Francophone speakers are able speak English, whereas only 10% of the Canadian Anglophones can speak French. It appears that even though the French immersion system is popular in Canada, the goal of the French community has not necessarily been achieved.

A poll from 2004 by the institute “Environics” indicates that 86% of the population considers it is important for children to learn a foreign language. A separate poll led for the Department for Canadian Heritage, 66% of the answers states that high-school graduates should be able to work in both French and English. Despite these results and

the availability of immersion schools throughout the country, bilingualism is yet not a reality in Canada.

Cummins (1998, pp.2-3) states two problems in the Canadian immersion schools. Firstly, there is no real contact between Francophone students and Anglophone students in the French immersion schools, which explains why the latter cannot develop their “*receptive and communicative skills*”. This results from the environment in which the child is brought up: she may use French at school but might use only English outside of the immersion. This means that she cannot truly practice her skills in “real life”.

Furthermore, the Anglophone students tend to have academic and behavioral problems which lead to them dropping out of the immersion schools and joining the regular English language education system. Children enrolled in the immersion school should benefit from contact with French speakers in order to develop their speaking skills, even outside of the immersion school.

#### 2.1.2 Canada: the extension of immersion to an indigenous language

The indigenous language of the Mohawks is also being taught in immersion schools in Canada. The goal of this type of immersion programme is to protect the language which is at risk of disappearing as the indigenous population is learning the more dominant language. Mohawk –language immersion programmes are offered in early immersion, in addition to language courses that are destined to the teacher and the parents. (Heimbecker, 1997, p.60)

The Mohawk community wishes to protect their language, culture and traditions. The starting point of this type of immersion is therefore different than for the French immersion. The immersion programme was launched by the Mohawk community itself in order to protect its heritage and avoid its extinction, rather than aiming at learning a “bonus” additional language. The role of the immersion is different, as the status of the language in question is different.

### 2.1.3 Elsewhere in the world

Immersion programmes were introduced in the United States of America in 1971. Both the institutions and parents saw immersion schools as a proficient way to teaching foreign languages to children.

The American Center for Applied Languages (CAL) listed in 2012 that there are 310 immersion programmes running in the country. These programmes are situated in 33 states. The states where there are the most immersion programmes are:

- Louisiana, with nearly 30 programmes. Immersion schools are mainly in French; this results from the will to promote the French heritage and culture in the state.
- Hawaii, with about 25 programmes. Immersion schools allow the Hawaiian language and culture to be preserved, in spite of the globalisation of the islands.
- Oregon and Minnesota, with nearly 20 programmes each. Both states are interested in innovation language education and receive support from in-state universities.

Language	Percentage taught in immersion schools
Spanish	42,6
French	29
Hawaiian	8,4
Japanese	7,1
Mandarin	3,9

**Table 2.** The main languages to be taught in immersion schools in the USA.

According to the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), there are three types of immersion programmes carried-out in the USA. In a “total immersion” programme, all the courses are offered in the target language. English language instruction increases over the years. In the “partial immersion”, up to 50% of the courses are taught in the target language. These two programmes are similarly organised as in the Canadian immersion system. The USA however offers an additional type of immersion, namely “two way immersion”, which is attended by children whose L1 is English and other children whose L1 is non-English. The programme gives equal emphasis to both languages. The curriculum offered in these programmes is the same as the curriculum offered in regular schools.

There are also immersion schools founded in Europe and in other countries around the world. These immersion schools exist for a variety of reasons. The reasons may be historical, political or cultural.

In Estonia for instance, the immersion schools are teaching Estonian to the population that has a multitude of L1s, such as Russian. This is a consequence of the history of Estonia that has been ruled by Danes, Swedes, Germans and last in turn, Russians. Therefore there is a melting pot of languages in Estonia and the immersion schools are teaching the official language to the individuals of the different language groups. (Genesee, 2001).

Immersion schools in Slovakia provide immersion schools in Hungarian. The goal of these immersion schools is to preserve their heritage. The country was administrated by Hungarians before being invaded by Poles and Germans.

## 2.2 Immersion schools in Finland and in Kokkola

### 2.2.1 Languages in Finland

During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Finland belonged to the Swedish empire. Therefore the official language of Finland was Swedish. Only peasants from the countryside spoke Finnish. Education was provided in Swedish only. The Russian Empire won over Finland after the Finnish War in 1809. The Swedish language remained the official language of the administration. Finland became independent in 1917. By then, the Finnish nation had begun to develop the need to have a language of its own. Every member of the Swedish upper-society supported the Finnish language by translating their names into Finnish. (Meinender, 2008, pp. 12-19)

The first Language Act in Finland came into force at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and was updated in 2004. This Language Act confirms Finnish and Swedish as being the official languages, it states the right to each citizen to use his or her own language, either Finnish or Swedish, receive services and education in that language. (Lahti & Sundström, 1989, p.138) The Finnish law also allows Sami people in Lapland to use the Sami language as an official language, for instance in court and administration. This law only concerns the localities where Sami people live.

### 2.2.2 Language immersion in Finland

The first immersion school in Finland was founded in Vaasa in 1987. It was based on the Canadian model. Most research on immersion schools in Finland were done in Vaasa. The first immersion programme was destined to teach Swedish to Finnish language speakers. The goal of this immersion was aiming at Finnish-Swedish bilingualism, with equal skills in both languages. The Canadian immersion model was slightly modified throughout the years. For instance, the L1 education was started already at beginning of the immersion programme, instead of starting only after a few years, in order to support the development of the L1 and allow the child to be able to share and understand the culture of the environment surrounding her. This is a major difference with the Canadian system, as the share of the L1 in the immersion programme is bigger in Finland than in Canada. (Buss & Mård, 1999, pp. 14-16)

Buss & Mård quote the studies led by the Finnish immersion pioneer Björklund (1999, p. 16) pointing out another important difference with the Canadian, as the Finnish immersion system includes additional languages in its curriculum. Therefore, children not only learn a L2, but also a L3 and maybe even a L4. The Finnish immersion aims at multilingualism rather than “only” bilingualism as in Canada.

### 2.2.3 Focus on Kokkola

Information on education in Kokkola dates back to 1634 (Hämäläinen, 2006, p.20). The oldest school in Kokkola was built in 1634 and is still to this day the eldest in Finland. In some classes, education was given in Latin. Education was therefore already close to immersion, as the education was in a different language than the L1 of the pupils. In the other classes, education was provided in Swedish. (Lahti & Sundström, 1989, p.136)

However, in the 1770's, as Finland was still under Swedish rule, Kokkola was given the right to do trade with foreign countries (in Finnish, *tapulioikeus*). In order to be able to do trade, the merchants had to be able to speak foreign languages, such as English or German. Jaakko Tengström founded then the first language learning institution in Kokkola. (Hämäläinen, 2006, p.20). In 1842, alongside the regular school system, a so-called civil class was founded, where pupils could focus on learning the languages they needed for their future careers in trade. (ibid, p.20).

In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, education was supposed to be provided in both Finnish and Swedish, though it was mainly always only in Swedish. In 1865, the Russian emperor had ruled that a part of the education had to be provided in Finnish. Therefore, education was provided in two languages but Swedish was the main one. The first Finnish school was founded in 1885 (Hämäläinen, 2006, p.21).

Foreign language education was introduced to kindergartens in Kokkola in 1972, the first preschool teaching English to Finnish and Swedish speakers. English language education was then extended to the primary school in 1994. (Hämäläinen, 2006, p.21) Nowadays, pupils are able to follow their whole basic education up until high school in English by attending the immersion school.

The English Kindergarten of Kokkola applies early immersion, as it is a preschool provided immersion school to young children (about four to five years old). Immersion school can still be organized later on, for instance when children are nine or ten years old; namely delayed immersion. If immersion school is organised later on, such as during the teenage years or adulthood, it will be called late immersion. (Meriläinen, 2008, p.25). According to her, the pupils not only learn the language but also the culture surrounding the language. As pupils are provided some Finnish language courses (one hour/week at kindergarten, the immersion is nearly perfect. In order to use the term “perfect immersion”, there should no other language used at the immersion school.

The town of Kokkola has prepared an immersion school curriculum (in Finnish, *Kielikyöpy-opetussuunnitelma*) which is fulfilling alongside the regular curriculum. The immersion school curriculum gathers the goals set for the immersion school programme at Kokkola, the main goal being fluent bilingualism for the children leaving the immersion school programme.



Their level in English is tested according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages Grid below:

Level	Description
A1	I can understand familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.
A2	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.
B1	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.
B2	I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.
C1	I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signaled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.
C2	I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent.

**Table 3.** Common European Framework of Reference for Languages Grid

## 2.3 Immersion school language education

### 2.3.1 Context

During the 1980's, the issues of teaching language was being debated within the European Union and how language should be integrated into the education, for instance by teaching a subject in a different language than the official language of the school. A new teaching method was introduced, it is known as "Content and Language Integrated Learning" (or CLIL).

The European commission encouraged the CLIL method to be used in language education. The CLIC method enables the learning to assimilate the course material in the target language. The CLIL method aims at replacing the traditional language education, where the foreign language education is seen as a subject at the same level as mathematics or history. (García, 2009, p. 148)

### 2.3.2 Methods used in immersion schools in Finland

Hämäläinen (2006, p.13) lists that the goal of the first immersion school in Finland was to increase the proficiency in the foreign language in question, develop a positive state of mind towards foreign languages and the cultures associated to them, allow the normal development of the child's skill in his mother tongue and follow the curriculum as in other schools.

Baker (1996, quoted by Hämäläinen) mentioned that immersion schools should follow these guidelines:

- taking part in the immersion schools should be voluntary, not forced upon the pupil
- the home language and culture of the pupil should be taken into account and respected; she is also allowed to use it if she needs to
- The teacher should be proficient in both the mother tongue of pupils and in the language to be taught.
- pupils entering the immersion school should be monolingual
- Immersion schools should follow the same curriculum as any other general school.

Meriläinen (2008, p.25) also underlines that the pupils' should be following the same curriculum as in regular classes. According to her, the pupils entering an immersion school in Finland should be either monolingual (speaking one L1: Finnish or Swedish) or bilingual (speaking both Swedish and Finnish).

Laurèn (2000, pp.38-39) and Meriläinen (2008, p.25) both mention similar guidelines for immersion schools:

- The staff and teachers should use the foreign language straight from the start, so that the language would be linked to the place (for instance, the language to be used at school is Swedish or English),
- The staff and teachers should be proficient in the child's own language and allow him/her to speak in certain situations,
- The development of the mother tongue skills are supported both at the immersion and at home,

Cummins (1998, p.2-3) describes a “content-based model for an L2 education process”.

This model contains three focus points:

- The focus on *message*, during which the focus is put on making the pupil produce comprehensible phrases and they actually understand what is being said and what they are saying.
- the focus on the *language*, during which pupils would work on the structural aspect of the language, such as grammar and spelling, but also learn cultural aspects of the language, such as politeness features, how to organise words in speeches or in written form. During this phase, pupils would also learn more about different genres in the language in question, such as poetry, singing, etc.
- The focus on *use* requires the pupils to be proficient in the language and that they can actually use the target language. The ideal situation for the focus on use to take place would be that the pupils would be in contact with native speakers to encourage them to use the target language.

Meriläinen, (2008, pp.49.50) points out the importance of the teacher’s language skills in the target language, as the teacher will act as a role model for the pupil. The pupils tend to not be able to use the target language at the beginning of the immersion but the teachers should constantly encourage the pupils to use the language. She raises the major issue of interaction in immersion schools. She describes working in small groups as being the most natural and common working method in immersion schools. Södergård stresses the role of teachers when it comes to using a vocabulary that is fit to suit the level of pupils. The vocabulary may be simple at first, but should get more abundant over time when the pupils’ skills increase (cf. Part 2: Krashen’s Input Hypothesis). Cummins (1998, p.4) underlines that the best way to make immersion schools efficient is to encourage the pupils to use the language as much as they can. Teachers in immersion schools should bear this issue in mind when creating their programmes.

However, Cummins (2008, quoted by Blackledge & Creese, 2008) is not in favour of using the mother tongue and the target language at the same time or in the same place, as there could be a risk of “contamination” of one language to the other. Blackledge & Creese (2008, p. 112) see the use of the L1 as a “pedagogic tool” which does not alter the learning of L2, rather benefits it.

Meriläinen (2008, 5) argues that one main difficulty in immersion school education is linking the vocabulary from the target language to the curriculum that has to be taught in class. They point out the problems some teachers may encounter when teaching their classes, as the pupils might not understand everything and some aspects may not be assimilated properly.

### 2.3.3 Interactions within the immersion school

A classroom is comparable to a “microsystem” and it has its own specific “language ecology”. (Creese and Blackledge, 2010 ,p.104). According to the Britannica encyclopedia, ecology is the study of the ways how individuals adapt to their environment, taking into account the resources offered to them and other factors influencing them within their environment. More specifically, language ecology studies how languages influences relations between people and affects hierarchies. (ibid, p.104)

Language ecology is interesting to study within an immersion school where learning the target language is the main goal. According to Creese and Blackledge, (2010, pp. 110 - 111), teachers and students will create their own speaking patterns: one language might be used for some activities or for some topics, and another language – such as the target language – will be used in other situations.

The interactions between pupils and teachers in an immersion school do differ from the interactions within a regular school. The difference results from the aim of the immersion school, language teaching. The goal of the immersion school, learning the target language, influences all the social relationship between the actors in the immersion school. If it were not for the language education the social practices within the immersion school would be the same as within a regular school.

According to Hornberger (2004, pp.73-75), a bilingual individual will adapt her use of language to the context she is in. She will switch the language she is using depending on the situation; a monolingual would be adapting the style to the situation. About thirty years ago, this code-switching used to be wrongly perceived as a lack of knowledge in one or both language(s), but it actually shows the capacity of adaptability and reaction to the situation. She asserts that a bilingual or multilingual individual would actually

develop her skills in the target language(s) if she is granted the right to use her known language(s) to learn the new one(s).

One of the educational approaches of the immersion school is to focus on the learner using the target language and being motivated in doing so. In some cases, it might mean that the pupil does not speak the “right way”. It refers to how bilingual individuals use linguistic features from their known languages and adapt them in order to be able to express themselves. Translanguaging is therefore an act of expanding their communication capacities. (García, 2009, p. 140). It is also considered as the “building block of all bilingualism” (García, 2009, p. 151). According to García, translanguaging enables bilingual individuals to make sense out of each other’s: understanding not only each other’s words but also other communicative cues, such as visual cues and sounds.

In order to increase the communicative capabilities of their students, immersion school teachers tend to encourage their pupils to produce both “verbal and non-verbal means of communication” (Lyster, 2003, p. 238). In doing so, teachers foster the idea that getting the message through (= communication) is the main goal. In an immersion school, the focus is on learning the target language and being able to convey a message in that language.

#### 2.4 English as a target language in immersion

The choice of the target language is highly important. If one is growing up in a bilingual community, the target language is most likely to be one of the languages spoken in the community and which is not yet mastered. The goal of learning this community language is to communicate with the local community. One can also decide to learn a “world-wide language”, such as English. When learning a “world-wide language”, the aim is to be able to communicate with much larger communities than just locally. (Baker, 2011, pp... 117-118; Jou, 2012, p.50)

The official languages in Finland, Finnish and Swedish, are considered as quite small language languages, which have little importance at the international level. Leppänen *et al.* (2011) point out that Finns need to learn additional languages in order to be active on the international level. Their study actually pointed out that 82% of the population they interviewed considered English to be more important than Swedish, the participants

being mainly Finnish speaking (93%). Their study also shows that English is considered as a very important tool, especially in working life.

The language taught at the English Kindergarten of Kokkola is English. English is not an official language in Finland. However, it has grown into the most known and most common foreign language in Finland, especially after the First World War. (Leppänen *et al.*, 2011). Finns actually face a constant exposure to the English language, especially through television programmes which are generally not dubbed into Finnish.

English is often referred to as a “global language” (Baker, 2011, p. 83) or as a “universal language” (Baker, 2011, p. 86) rather than the language of England. Baker argues that English is more than “one language”, as it has both “local and international dimensions”. English, spoken and taught as a foreign language, is connected to the local culture and what this culture comprises; in the community the language is taught. This means each type of English will differ, depending on where it has been taught.

English has an international status as it is considered the main language for news, aviation, trade, tourism, science, technology, and in many more fields. The vast majority of information spread on the Internet is in English. The spreading of the Anglo culture and Anglo way of thinking and communicating, through the spread of English, is not necessarily seen as positive as it has an effect on the local culture and local way of thinking and communication. (Baker, 2011, p. 85).

According to Meriläinen (2008, p.23), the term “foreign language” comes along with a similar term “other language”. Both terms have a different meaning. The foreign language is a language, which is not spoken in the close environment of the person learning the language, such as English in Finland. The other language is more likely to be another national language, which can be heard and spoken in the same environment as the learner, such as Swedish in Finland.

The choice of language is interesting in a bilingual area such as Kokkola, Swedish is not a foreign language as it is recognized as an official language. However, it is not spoken by everyone. English, on the other hand is a foreign language in Finland. The

parents choosing the option of English immersion therefore somehow assess the need of learning English over Swedish and/or the possibilities of learning Swedish through some other medium than immersion at school.

The following chapter will focus on the methods used to collect data for this study.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Planning

As the research theme was set as being immersion schools, the research questions quite naturally rose for studying the concept of immersion schools and the context of the bilingual city of Kokkola. The principle research question of this thesis is to define the expectations and the experience surrounding the immersion school, in the eyes of the teachers, of the pupils and of the parents. Secondly, the study will aim at defining the advantages and the drawbacks of the immersion school from the perspective of the teachers, the children and the parents.

The types of research methods needed to set to suit the research questions and the particular subject of the study. Qualitative research methods, ethnographic research methods and interviews are used to and carried-out in order to answer these research questions.

Before being able to plan interviews with the pupils or with the parents, it was important to contact the English Kindergarten in Kokkola to ask if they agreed to take part in the study. The headmistress of the kindergarten was contacted by email and she confirmed that the kindergarten would be willing to answer questions. However, she asked the researcher to come to meet the parents and ask their agreement to interview the children.

A first preliminary meeting was set with the kindergarten staff in October 2012. The goal of the meeting was on the one hand, to collect answers for the research but also to receive information that could serve as a framework for the interviews with the children and with the parents. The headmistress pointed out that it would be wiser to discuss the issue of the research in the first place with the parents, in order to obtain their approval to proceed with the children's interview and observation. The care takers and teachers were interviewed throughout December 2012 to February 2013. Observation at the EKK was led throughout the same period. The children were interviewed in February 2013.

Most of the parents of the young children announced being too busy to take part in a group interview. The most convenient way to access them was by sending them an



online questionnaire that they could fill at their ease and at their pace. The parents took part in the internet survey between January and February 2013.

### 3.2. Case study

The research is focusing on a particular unit, the Small Side of the EKK: it is a case study. The goal of this case study is to provide evidence and data answering the research questions concerning this particular educational unit. (Gillham, 2010, pp-1-2). Material collected from this case study will need to be studied and analyzed in order to provide “*new knowledge*” (Gillham, 2010, p.2).

This research follows the naturalistic method, focusing on the real-life study of a group. (Gillham, 2010, p.7). The researcher does not focus so much on the objective of the actions, rather on the “*qualitative element*” (ibid.); in other words on the subjective aspects of the results. This type of research strives at studying the latent reasons to the actual feelings of the group being studied or their experiences taking place at the EKK. The researcher plays an active role in the case study; she is observing the everyday life at the EKK but also interfering in the activities by asking questions. (Gillham, 2010, p.8).

An anticipated goal of the case study is to have a revealing effect. The researcher hopes that the “*new knowledge*” provided by the study will have a “*illuminating*” effect on the group concerned by the case study, in the case of the EKK: the staff, the parents and maybe even on the children, in the future. (Gillham, 2010, p.102).

### 3.3 Collecting data

The main data collection methods employed were interviews and observations. The interview questions were in order to provide data useful for the research questions. The interview questions were tested on people (respectively adults and children) not involved in the research at the EKK. The questions were modified in some cases, to improve understandability and eventual response by the interviewees.

### 3.3.1 Qualitative data collection

The methods used in this study belong to the group of qualitative research methods. These types of research methods are most widely used in the fields of social sciences and education. (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p.2). Marshall and Rossman (1995, pp.2-3) also discuss that qualitative research methods comprise seven approaches: symbolic interactionism, anthropology, sociolinguistics, ethnomethodology, democratic evaluation, critical ethnography and feminism. The approach depends on how the researcher is taking part in the data-collection process, whether it is possible to question the participants on their world vision and how the collected data can be most fruitfully analysed.

Marshall & Rossman (1995, p.23) present the six subgroups into which qualitative research methods can be divided into. The first group, “*human ethology*” refers to study of individuals’ behaviors and understanding why these behaviors take place. Results are obtained after observing and analysing the footage quantitatively. The second group is called “*ecological psychology*” which focuses on the relation between the individual and the surrounding environment and how this shapes his behavior. This type of study also requires observation in addition to sample records. The third group is “*holistic ethnography*”, which brings into line, the importance of human culture. As in the previous groups, the data is gathered through observation. The goal of the research is to study the subjects’ visions. The fourth group called “*cognitive anthropology*” deals with the subjects’ perspectives. Data is collected through in-depth interviews and then qualitatively analysed; the participants’ points of view are collected and classified. The fifth group is “*ethnography of communication*” which stresses verbal and non-verbal communication. Data is collected through observation of the interactions. The sixth and last group is “*symbolic interactionism*”, it focuses on the how individuals understand each other and how they deal with meaning in interacting with others. This study actually belongs to four subgroups belonging to qualitative research human ethology, ecological ethnography, ethnography of communication and symbolic interactionism.

Marshall and Rossman (1995, p.78) discuss that data collection methods can be divided into primary and secondary methods. The primary or “*fundamental*” method includes participation or participant observation. It involves immersion in the setting being observed, in order to enable to take part in all ways to the action taking place: see what

is happening, hear what is happening but more importantly also share the experience. Participation is an inherent method in qualitative research studies. The researcher is not a simple observer but also an actor in the process sharing the experience.

Another primary method is observation, which involves registering the events and taking detailed notes of the environment and people. The researcher does not take part in the action, only observes it. The researcher can either work by checking that set events are taking place (as in a “*checklist*”) or she can be more thorough by writing down every single behavior taking place. Observation is an elementary method in qualitative research methods. Observation also takes place within other methods, such as interviews when observing reactions to questions.

In-depth interviews are also primary methods in qualitative research methods. These methods involve researchers having “*a conversation with a purpose*” (Kahn & Cannell, 1957, p. 149) with the participant or the object of the research. The goal is to obtain the outlook of the participant on the issue(s) being researched. It is important for the researcher to show a positive attitude to the answers being provided in order to encourage the participant to elaborate her answers. The conversation begins with some general aspects and continues into fixed answer-categories.

The data collection methods should be chosen in order to fit the research questions. According to Marshall and Rossman (1995, pp. 22-23), the purpose of research questions can be divided into four categories. The research question can be exploratory and aims at examining phenomena which has not been studied in depth and provide hypothesis for more future research. The research question may be explanatory, it focuses on explaining why a certain phenomenon is taking place and determinate the sources behind the phenomenon in question. The research question may also be descriptive and aim at describing the phenomenon in question. The research question might be predictive; the goal would be to anticipate the results of a phenomenon.

The research questions set for this study are both explanatory and descriptive. We aim at explaining why these children have been placed at an immersion school – rather than a regular institution – and study what are the motivations behind the immersion school phenomenon. We also aim at documenting the positive and negative aspects of the phenomenon.

Marshall & Rossman (1995, pp.100.101) argue that the best research strategies for these research questions are ethnography, field study and historical study (for the explanatory aspect). To fulfill these strategies, the most suitable primary data collection methods are participant observation or ethnographic research, in-depth interviewing and document analysis. In addition to these methods, a historical analysis is applied to describe the past events in the area of immersion school and to describe and understand the current situation.

### 3.3.2. Ethnographic research

Ethnographic research methods are used to study “*the cultural characteristics*” and “*sociocultural aspects of behavior in the natural settings in which these behaviors occur*” (Nunan, 1992, p.230). In this type of research, the focus is on the cultural habits of the population being researched (Meriläinen, 2008, pp.67-68). Field work is the main activity in ethnographic studies. By being present in the field, the researcher can get into the world of the population being researched and follow the changes taking place. (Meriläinen, 2008, pp.67-68).

In ethnographic research, the relation between the researcher and the object of the research is much more intimate than a simple interview. This has actually been criticised, as the researcher takes a very active role in the research process (Syrjäläinen 1991, p.39). Therefore, the researcher’s role should be taken in account whilst studying the collected data.

Being part in the daily activities at the EKK offered the possibility to observe how the children and the staff interact: what languages they use and in which situation. Language switching is not necessarily noticed by the user herself, but an outsider will notice more clearly when the language switches and which language is used.

Unfortunately, it was not possible for the researcher to spend very lengthy periods of time at the EKK; the more time spent observing, the more information may be collected.

### 3.3.3 In-depth interview

There are different types of interviews, structured, semi-structured and unstructured. In depth- interviews are an extensive data gathering method in a short amount of time. They resemble more conversations than questionnaires. They are of three types: information conversational interview, general guide approach and standardised open-ended interview. (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, pp.86-87)

After the interview, the researcher should triangulate the answers obtained during the interview by going through the participant's answers with him to check that the information collected is correct and to see if he has anything to add. The information can also be triangulated with secondary data research methods. (Adams & Cox, 2008, pp.18, 25)

The teachers are interviewed first, as they have information on how a school day is organized at the EKK. The information they will provide will serve as a basis when organising the ethnographic research concerning the children and their activities.

The main benefit these in-depth interviews supply is the raw data that was collected: true facts collected in the middle of the actions. Teachers and care-takers spoke quite frankly about their experience. Plus, they reacted to each and others' answers, which raised additional aspects, which had not been previously considered.

The pitfalls of these interviews were mainly organisational. Teacher and care-takers were busy with the children, thus nearly all the interviews took place in the middle of the classroom, this for practical reasons. The teachers and care-takers often had to interrupt the interview to deal with the children, which is perfectly understandable, but required more time to refocus on the questions. However, the interview with the headmistress was led separately.

### 3.3.4 Interviewing children

Referring to Kyronlampi-Kylmanen & Määttä (2011, p.87), interviewing the children in the immersion school will provide a whole different point of view that is rarely taken in account in studies about immersion schools. Such point of view is also shared by Darbyshire, MacDougall and Schiller (2005, p.419), whom demonstrate that interviewing children is not in vain. They point out that the research methods need to be

adapted to the children, by using elements and words that the children understand, use and can relate to. The children's perspective is often left out as they are not able to express themselves as well as adults, which is why the researcher needs to adapt his researcher methods to a whole new participative public in order to collect data that is not biased.

Einarsdottir (2005, p.524) underlines the fact that children have the right to express themselves, at the same status as adults. Children are the sole actors of childhood and, therefore, should be allowed to share their perspective and knowledge.

Kyronlampi-Kylmanen and Määttä (2011, p.88) discuss the importance of the relationship between the researcher and the children. The researcher should spend time with the children in order to allow them to let the researcher into "their world". Kyronlampi-Kylmanen & Määttä (ibid.) discuss that:

By going to the places where the children enjoy spending time, an adult has the chance to peer into the children's culture.

Therefore, the first step in interviewing children is being accepted in their world. This is made possible by spending time with them and taking part in their activities.

The main difficulty when interviewing children is analysing the results from the correct point of view. Firstly, the questions that the researcher may be asking might not make sense in the child's world and he or she might not find it important to answer such a question. The researcher must be able to consider the collected data from a child-centered level. Kyronlampi-Kylmanen and Määttä (2011, p.89) point out, that interviewing children will require humility, as it will depend on the children themselves, how much they are ready to share with the researcher. They also discuss that another difficulty when interviewing children might be their way of talking, as they might not yet be able to formulate "proper" phrases and they might also be eager at telling stories in no particular order. Therefore, this non-organised data will have to be analysed differently than data collected from adults.

Kyronlampi-Kylmanen & Määttä (2011, pp.89-90) demonstrate that if the researcher is interviewing a child, she should pay attention to the child's state of mind. Children tend to get tired faster than adults. If the interview is not stopped in time, the data collected

may not be as reliable as if it had been collected, as when the child would have been more awoken.

Kyronlampi-Kylmanen & Määttä (2011, p.88) describe the data collection method that was used in a study done in 2007 by Kyronlampi-Kylmänen, in which drawings were used as a medium to enable to children to express themselves. The children had to draw themselves and picture their environment according to the theme the researcher was asking about. In a study led by Kyronlampi-Kylmänen in 2010, the children were asked to draw themselves in the following situations: *“Me, My Family, What I Do at Home, My Day at the Daycare Centre, Dad’s Work, and Mom’s Work”*.

Einarsdottir (2005, p.525) discusses that interviewing children demands a lot of creativity as regular data collection methods may not work. The methods that will work the best are based on the children’s favorite modes of communication, for instance drawing. The children will feel more at ease with the research if the methods used are close to them.

According to Darbyshire, MacDougall and Schiller (2005, p.422), children as young as four years old; have the abilities of mapping. Children can therefore *“portray graphically”* how they perceive certain activities or social encounters; they can also place these activities in specific environments. In their study, Darbyshire, MacDougall and Schiller (2005, pp.420-423) describe their work with children, which were asked to map their situations concerning physical activity but also encouraged the children to create slogans to encouraging physical activities. In their study, the maps made by the children provided mainly contextual and spatial information. They however regretted not letting the children speak about their pictures and maps. Children should be given time to discuss and tell about their productions in their own words. The researcher may analyse the data with her adult vision but should also take into account the children’s descriptions.

Darbyshire, MacDougall and Schiller (2005, p.428) point out the question of responsibility when working with children, for instance fieldwork and other activities with children should always be done under the supervision of a teacher from the school.

The researcher should also bear in mind that she is responsible for the child’s privacy; she should not share any private information concerning the child, especially no names.

The researcher should not do anything that would affect the child's development. (Kyronlampi-Kylmanen & Määttä, 2011, pp.91-92)

In this research, children are approached through observation and by taking part in their activities at the EKK. The main data collection method (or interviewing method) tool is an activity they enjoy doing: drawing. The interview is not designed to look like an interview for the children but as a pleasurable activity in order for the children to have a positive attitude towards the questions. Furthermore, the questions are planned not to last too long, in order not to bore the children.

At the EKK, the children are given as instruction to draw an element of their choice, themselves or something else, using only two colors. The children are given paper and pens, one red and one blue. The red color symbolises the English language and the blue color, the Finnish language. After this first task, the children are shown pictures symbolising "home", the EKK and social life outside the EKK. The children are asked to place a red cross (or more if they want to) if they use Finnish in the place in question, similarly, they should put a red cross (or more) if they use English.

The children's interviews were challenging, as differing from an interview with adults, as it was important to keep them interested in the tasks. The interviewer has a more important role in keeping control of the interview. The data collected provided an important insight in the process, which is rarely considered in immersion school studies.

### 3.3.5 Survey

When deciding to send out an online questionnaire, the researcher assumes that the person is able and willing to provide honest answers by her/himself. As Marshall and Rossman (1995, p. 96) stated, the researcher will not be able to retrieve as "deep" information as he could have retrieved in an in-depth interview. The researcher cannot ask for more details simultaneously after the first answer is provided. Furthermore, the answerers might feel the questionnaire is intruding into their private life. If the group receiving the survey is particularly small, it may be difficult to generalise the data obtained to the rest of the population in question. It is therefore advisable to have a fair amount of participants. (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p.96)



Hunter debates the use of online questionnaires, pointing out that some participants may not have easy access to computers nor have good internet connections. This argument is not valid in a country where computers and internet connections are owned by nearly each family. Hunter also argues that online questionnaires have the disadvantage of not having any direct contact between the interviewee and the researcher. The feeling of trust is important in any research and collecting data, therefore it is important to create a feeling of trust between the interviewee and the researcher.

The issue of response rate has been tackled by asking the interviewees that actually are interested in taking part in the survey to provide their contact information. Therefore, the only people to whom the questionnaire is being sent is to people that are, believed to be active in the data collection and should reply to the questionnaire. A low response rate would be a setback in collecting a sufficient amount of information.

The main advantages of an online questionnaire, is that it is convenient: the interviewee can answer the questions when he/she wants and can take as much as time as he/she wants to, to answer. According to Hunter (2012, p. 13) an additional advantage is that interviewees tend to be more honest as the Internet provides a sense of distance between the interviewee and the researcher. Hunter (ibid, p. 20) points out that one of the best ways to encourage responses and creating a feeling of trust between the interviewee and the researcher is by having the researcher introduced to the interviewed group by a person of trust, for instance a teacher at the kindergarten, where the children's parents are being interviewed. Trust may also be encouraged by pointing out to the group to be interviewed that they have specifically be chosen for the field of research (Hunter, 2012, p. 13).

Collecting data through a survey or questionnaire will provide information on features appearing in the group. Various types of questions may be used in the questionnaires. The *open ended question* allows the interviewee to provide an answer in his own words. Basic information such as background information can be asked through open-ended questions. Questions asking for more detailed answers can also be open-ended to not force a specific answer upon the interviewee. A *closed ended question* offers a list of answers from which the interviewee must choose from, he/she can chose one or more, depending on how the question is set. Interviewees might also be asked to *rate* the

importance or their appreciation of a certain issue. Through the rating, the interviewee may also point out an order of priority.

The survey was the most convenient method of data collection when considering the target group, the children's parents. During the first meeting with the parents, it came clear that they were busy people that would not have time to take part in an interview.

The parents willing to take part in the survey shared their contact information. They received the link to the Internet survey at the end of January 2013. They were given two weeks' time to answer the questionnaire. Answering the survey was expected to take around ten to fifteen minutes, depending on how lengthy answers parents' wished to offer on the open-ended questions.

The survey offered the advantages of collecting data directly from the parents, reducing additional interpretation by an interviewer. Furthermore, the parents answered the questionnaire when it suited them, which allowed more suitable conditions for them.

Unfortunately, the survey did not allow real interaction with the parents. Some answers tended to raise additional issues and questions, which would have been interesting to investigate more. However, it was not possible to send any clarifying questions, as the answers were anonymous. For this reason, we can state that the survey provided important and interesting data, but it is clear that there would have been much more data to collect if it would have been possible to organize a face-to-face interview with the parents, either instead of this survey or to complement the data collected by the survey.

#### 3.4. Analyzing the data: the grounded theory method

In order to analyse the qualitative data collected throughout the research, the grounded theory applies best. The word "grounded" refers to the fact that it is based on experiences. This method is qualified as inductive, as the starting point is the data from which the hypotheses are built upon. The theory focuses on meanings, which are expressed by individuals in a group. Grounded theorists try to explain a specific social situation by finding the reasons in what the actors in the situation express. (Byrne, 2001).

The collected data should be analysed by coding it: the researcher categorises the collected data and indicates what kinds of implications these categories have. After this, the researcher does a more thorough coding of the categories, this step is known as “*selective coding*” (Zarif, 2012). This leads to the creating of a concept the research can then start forming hypothesis and building concepts as a result these categories.

The basis of the grounded theory methodology is symbolic interactionism. It takes into account what kind of relationships people form, which roles and identities are created, what meanings are given. By comparing similarities and differences between people’s meanings, concepts and hypotheses are born. (Nolas, 2011, p.28).

### 3.5. The participants

#### 3.5.1. The teachers’ and care takers’ background information

There are two care takers working full time at EKK: Sanna and Riina. Along with them, two teachers are working at the small side of the EKK: Mari is a fulltime worker at the Small Side and Lucia, who works as the headmistress of the whole EKK but is a teacher for the pupils at the Small Side, especially if Mari is away.

Mari is originally from Canada, her parents are from Finland. When living in Canada, her own daughter attended a French immersion school. Mari considered it was the best way for her daughter to learn the other language of Canada. Mari’s L1 is English but also speaks quite good Finnish. Mari has accomplished a teacher’s degree in Canada before moving to Finland. She has been teaching for 16 years in the English immersion school system in Kokkola, a total of 12 years at the EKK.

Sanna is a Finnish-speaking. She has been working at the EKK for thirteen years. Sanna has herself been herself a pupil at the EKK and has very fond memories of her own time within the EKK. Before deciding to work as a kindergarten teacher, she had studied in an English – language degree programme, taught at the Vaasa University of Applied Sciences, in the field of Business Administration. After sometime in the degree programme in the Business Administration, she noticed she was not in the right field of study and decided to switch to practical nurse school in Kokkola. Her final training took place in the EKK and she was offered a position as a care taker when she graduated.

Sanna has not been studying nor living abroad, but she has undergone most of her education in English, she has a close relationship to the English language, especially because she has very good memories of her time at EKK when she was a child. Sanna has placed her own children at the EKK and she believes in the EKK system.

Riina is also a Finnish speaking care taker at the EKK: She has lived in Finland for most of her life, but she has also spent about four years in Great Britain living with her former husband, whom is British, and their child. They moved back to Finland because they considered the Finnish educational system to be better than the British one. The father of her child speaks English to their son whereas Riina speaks only Finnish to him. They have decided to place the child in a strictly Finnish-speaking school. Riina explains that she prefers her son to be fluent in one language first and be able to express himself properly. She adds that her decision concerning her son does not mean that she does not believe in the immersion schools system but she considers that due to their specific family situation; where placing their child in a monolingual school is the most beneficial. Riina (2013, p.2) points out that she did not choose to work at the EKK because of the English language, she happened to be looking for work and there was a place open at the EKK

Lucia is the headmistress of the EKK: She comes from a bilingual family, where her father is Swedish-speaking and mother is Finnish speaking. She has learnt English by herself at school. Lucia has been working at the EKK for 16 years.

Lucia has placed her own children in a Swedish speaking school and their home language is usually Swedish. However, Lucia is introduced the immersion principle also in her home “bathing” her children in the Finnish when they were aged four. She currently uses both Finnish and Swedish with her children and considers that they now speak both languages well even though their L1 is Swedish.

Lucia spends nearly half of her working hours dealing with administrative issues, planning the budget, discussing and planning with the Ministry of Education and the city of Kokkola.

Lucia has the longest history within the EKK. As a headmistress, she has founded the EKK as it is known now. It first started as a sort of daycare where care takers spoke English. This daycare did not receive any funding from the city of Kokkola and could

not offer any lunch to the pupils. Lucia worked on developing funding for the EKK and the way it functioned, becoming a full-day kindergarten. She had to develop everything: the pedagogical aspect was alright but the finances were not in shape. Lucia started by fixing the basic aspects in order to make the EKK a proper place to accept children: have food, the same children had to present be all day or only half the day, instead of spending a few hours a day or a week.

Over the years, the English immersion line was founded in Kokkola. Currently, the teachers within the immersion system in Kokkola work together and form a sort of chain.

### 3.5.2. The children's background information

All in all, there are 23 children enrolled at the Small Side of the EKK. The research is being carried with one third of the pupils. The parents of eight children gave their permission for the children to be interviewed in the framework of this research. The children taking part in the study are all in their first year at the EKK. At the time the interviews were held, they have been learning English for six months. The interviewees' ages range from 4 to 6 years. Two of them are girls and the six others, boys.

### 3.5.3 The parents' background information

The parents that took part in the survey were mostly mothers (75%). The participants were nearly all Finnish speaking, except, who is one was bilingual, Swedish – Finnish speaking. Half of the respondents work in higher positions, such as in executive positions, experts or higher official positions. One third of the respondents declared being either a student or a stay-at-home parent. Concerning their study level, more than a half of the respondents declared having a university degree (5 respondents out of 8). The other respondents have followed vocational or polytechnic studies.

Concerning their own language skills, the respondents nearly all declared Finnish as their L1. Nearly all the parents declared they could speak English, with skills ranging from weak to very good. Similarly, nearly all the parents stated they could speak Swedish, with skills ranging from bad to very good. One respondent affirms he or she could only speak Finnish. In addition to these languages, three respondents added they

had some basics in other languages such as French, Japanese and Italian. In addition, one respondent declared being fluent in Finnish sign language. When asked whether the respondents needed the use any foreign language in their everyday life, half answered positively, whereas the other half denied having to use any foreign languages. The foreign languages that described as being used in the everyday life were English and Swedish.

Over half of the parents taking part in this survey declared having lived abroad, either for working or studying purposes. The respondents have mostly lived in the United States of America, but they have also lived in Europe, mentioning the United-Kingdom and Poland.

## 4 FINDINGS

### 4.1 The teachers' and care takers' experience

#### 4.1.1 The EKK as a place of smiles

Concerning the children coming to EKK, Mari believes the parents that decide to place their children to the EKK are more aware and more committed to their children's education. Some of the families are bilingual Swedish and Finnish but most of the families are monolingual families that speak only Finnish. One of the guidelines in immersion schools; that the children entering the immersion school should be all monolingual, yet Mari (2012, p.3) points out that one of their best pupils was a Finnish-Swedish bilingual child that picked up English much faster than the other children.

Riina (2013, p.4) considers that the general feeling between the staff and the parents is much friendlier than in regular kindergartens, comparing with previous working experiences and her private experience as a parent. Both Riina and Sanna (2013, p.4) claim that the atmosphere is much more relaxed and the parents smile more than elsewhere. Lucia (2013, p.3) shares the same opinion as her co-workers; she considers that the staff at the EKK form a sort of family that cares for the children, together. All the staff agrees on the fact that parents seem much more "*involved*" than parents of children enrolled in a regular kindergarten. Lucia (2013, p.3) points out that the children and their parents undergo an application process, which includes an interview of the parents. The parents should commit to the immersion process; the concept of the English immersion programme in Kokkola is that the children starting the immersion at the EKK should continue to go through with the immersion school throughout the children's basic education in Kokkola. The parents' commitment and their desire for their child to be attending the EKK may explain why the staff experiences a good relationship with the parents. A place at the EKK is therefore something that is acquired and cherished, which may explain why the parents maintain a more agreeable and close relationship with the staff. Sanna (2013, p.4) is not sure why the relationship with the parents at the EKK differs from the relation in a regular kindergarten but suspects it might be because of the "*warm and relaxed atmosphere*" at the EKK, plus that the parents have actually chosen the EKK; according to her the parents "*have gone through the whole process and have to trust*" the immersion school.

The relation is all the more personal as parents learn to trust the staff at the EKK. As Riina (2013, p.4) states; the idea of leaving one's young child to a kindergarten where the care takers speak in a foreign language requires trust on behalf of the parents. Riina (2013, p.4) gives the example of a mother that "*was reassured to know her daughter could speak in Finnish to the care takers if need be*". The trust issue is an interesting issue, which is mentioned by the teachers but not directly by the parents. The parents that seem to take time to trust the staff may still be unsure about their decision to place their children in immersion.

#### 4.1.2 What and how languages are used?

As an observer, one can notice that the teachers and care takers switch languages depending on the situation: they use English if they are talking about something delicate, for instance a child being sick or some family issues concerning the children, when they do not want the children to understand. Riina and Sanna do tend to speak Finnish together as it is their L1 and Mari tends to speak mostly English to Riina, Sanna and the children as it is her L1. Mari does however use Finnish if she takes part in a conversation already taking place in Finnish. In one case, Sanna and Riina are discussing together some organisational issues in Finnish; Mari joins the conversation without switching the language to English. The trio continues the conversation in Finnish. In another case, whilst Sanna and Riina are discussing a specific issue, Mari first comments in English and repeats her comment in Finnish, as in to make sure she is understood. The staff might assume that children may not understand them when they use English. The staff actually speaks English in a fluent and conversational style, which differs from the slow pace and simple language they use to address the children. In this respect, the children probably do not understand much of what the staff is talking about between themselves.

The starting point is that the children hardly understand any English at the beginning of their "journey" within the EKK; they do not understand a word of English when they start. Therefore, the way English is presented to the children is very important and should be introduced in a way to motivate to them to try to understand and learn. The English language is being spoken throughout the day; there is a specific focus on the language itself during the "Calendar Time" during which the teachers work at



reinforcing the language skills of the children and are focusing on the language itself. Besides from the Calendar Time, which is organised every day, the staff does not teach the children English but dialogues with them in English. On Fridays, the Calendar Time is reserved to Finnish language. (Mari, 2012, p.2) By spending one hour each week focusing on Finnish, the EKK may follow and take care that the children also develop their L1 skills.

Mari (2012, p.2) considers that Finnish is appropriate to use when the child is crying and needs some comforting because “*they are small*”, she adds. Finnish is also often used when children need to be given orders, to be sure that they obey. Lucia also considers that Finnish can be used within the EKK even though the main rule of the immersion school is to use only the target language. Lucia (2013, p.2) explains, that “*we are supposed to use English (...) but slips may happen! And there are situations where the child’s right goes ahead of the immersion*”. She considers that using Finnish is appropriate in dangerous or difficult situations, when the teacher or care-taker needs to use the “emotion language” (in Finnish “*tunnekieli*”). Lucia (2013, p.2) does assert that, the child’s wellbeing goes ahead of the immersion, in some specific situations. The emotion language that Lucia refers to is the child’s so-called “mother tongue” or L1. Lucia points out that the staff has to “*assess the situation*”. Mari (2012, p.2) also points out that Finnish can be used when children need to be “*given orders*”, pointing out that the children may understand better.

When observing the children play, one can notice that they tend to speak only Finnish together. If a care giver or teacher is involved, the adult speaks English; the children react sometimes in Finnish and sometimes in English. Referring to Hornberger (2004, pp.73 -75), the bilingual teachers switch language when they assess the need for it. They will react to a specific situation when they know the child needs to be addressed in Finnish, to be sure they understand.

#### 4.1.3 Singing, dancing, learning: teaching methods at the EKK

Lucia (2013, p.3) explains that the method used at the immersion school is “*to make the language as easy as possible so it is understandable*”. At the EKK, children are attending early immersion, which means the immersion is close to 100%. The teachers

and care takers need to use simple phrases and words to make sure the children understand them.

Teachers and care-takers strive at making children consider English as enjoyable. Mari (2012, p.2) explains that example, children are taught the days of the week or months of the year during the “Calendar Time”. The teachers create songs that use the words to be learnt such as a remake of the famous “Macarena” song using the months of the years. The song is associated with the famous Macarena-dance, which makes the learning all the more fun in the eyes of the children. Mari (2012, p.2) points out that the children might not even yet know the days of the week in Finnish; therefore the teachers cannot teach an English word as being a translation of the Finnish word, they need to let the children make out the meaning of the word themselves.

A typical day at the EKK would have a similar schedule:

- 7.30 – 8.30 Arrival at the EKK
- 8.00 – 8:30 Breakfast
- 8.30 – 10:45 Playing, in small or in big groups
- 10:40 – 11:30 Calendar time / activities
- 11.30 – 12.30 Lunch
- 12.30 – 13.30 Free play time
- 13.30 - 14:00 Snack time
- 14:00 – 14:30 Calendar time / activities
- 14:30 – 16:00 Activities

Another example, Sanna (2013, p.2) points out that “*children may speak about yesterday*”, but mean “*any day in the past*”, as they have a different notion of time. She discusses that the most motivating situation is when the student needs something, for instance to “*go to the toilet*”. She also reminds that once the child is introduced to a routine (such as asking to go to the toilets in English), the routine should be kept up. She explains:

The child asks in English whether he can go or not, the teacher then answers to him “yes, you can go”. The routine is create straight from the start and the child learns that he has to say those words in order to get what he wants.

Mari (2012, p.3) considers that her work at the EKK can be summarised in three words “*Talk talk talk*”. Mari is a native English speaker, which makes her an important source of English language input for the children.

Asides from talking, the teachers use English language books and English language songs to teach English to the children. At first, the children do not understand neither the books nor the songs, but learn to associate the words with the story and “*make out the sense of the words themselves*”, according to Mari.

Teachers at the EKK consider that they need to use what the children know, familiar words and ideas, and work when them. They consider that learning English at the EKK is actually a by-product, which comes along when following the same curriculum as in regular school. Lucia (2013, p.3) hopes that the children learn a “*usage-language*”, which means a language that the children can use to communicate. According to her, the best method to teach the language is to focus on encouraging the children to speak and not so much on fixing the mistakes they might make when speaking English.

Sanna (2013, p. 3) discusses that things need to be mimicked for the children to understand. This mimicking is an important aspect of language learning: representational gestures are quite universal; the children will easily understand the gestures and relate it to what is being said in English. She also considers that the more work is done during the first year at the EKK, the easier the child’s progress will be in the English immersion system.

#### 4.1.4 Merits and pitfalls of the EKK

As Lucia (2013, p.3) points out, the children are taught the same points as children in a regular school, but the method used in immersion and the fact that the education is led in English, means they benefit from a specific atmosphere which enables them to develop different skills than children in regular schools. According to her, “*immersion school leaves a stamp*” as it makes children more open-minded and outgoing, because of the methods used in the immersion school. When teaching a subject, it is not only about the subject itself but also about the language being understood. Lucia explains that “*We take the block, we consider the colors, and we integrate a lot in one block. We go so much deeper, we investigate things more*”. According to Lucia, this teaching

methods leads to having children learn to “work” twice as much as in a regular school because they first need to understand what is being said before understanding the subject. They learn how to seek for more information and to “dig deeper” in order to understand.

Sanna (2013, p.4) states that she is still amazed on the major progress the children accomplish in such a short time; she comments that it is “*amazing to notice that they learn!*” She is also amazed by her own children, especially that since they have started to learn English at the EKK, they interact well with foreigners visited their home. She does not speak English with her children but she can see that they can understand and answer back to foreigners speaking English to them. She is also astonished by the fact that her own children, who have been in the immersion system for about 4 years, they actually listen to the television programmes in English without reading the Finnish subtitles.

Miia (2013, p.4) is bewildered as she notices that “*when you are saying something and that the children understand, twig the issue is*”. It seems that the staff knows not to expect the children to understand everything at first, but feels delighted once they noticed that the children are starting to understand something. Lucia (2013, p.3) enjoys “*that there is always something going on, children are learning something new all the time*”. She adds that the children should know they are doing well and they should be told so.

Mari (2012, p.3) does not consider that there is anything particularly hard with working with language immersion, as the children do not know anything different from the kindergarten they are at. She however argues that making sure the children’s L1 develops well, is a challenge. It is one of the reasons a child with dyslexia would usually be taken out of the English immersion in order to allow him to focus fully on the Finnish language in the regular system.

In Sanna’s opinion (2013), one of the hardest parts at the EKK is an organisational problem: they do not have a proper nap time, when the children take a nap and the teachers would have time to plan activities. Concerning the immersion school itself, she points out that it feels very repetitive at the beginning, saying the same things and trying to show them with their hands.

Immersion has an interesting pitfall, which is pointed out by Lucia (2013, p.3). Being a good immersion teacher is not only about the teaching diploma and the language skills but also about the personality. Lucia (2013, p.4) considers that one of the main issues with immersion may be “*how can one make a Finnish person get to the level that he/she has his/her own body*”. She considers that it can be difficult for a Finn, who can be quite shy and not so outgoing, to have all the necessary skills to be an immersion school teacher. A teacher should be able to be outgoing and be able to show and not only explain. Lucia (2013, p.4) adds that the process “*might take years to learn*” how to become an immersion teacher. It appears that the immersion school teacher should be an outgoing and expressive person, which is not only able to express oneself in English but also with his/her own body. Lucia may have in mind the typical stereotype of Finnish people: shy and not so outgoing. A person that is too shy and not outgoing enough may not be the best candidate to become an immersion school teacher.

#### 4.2 The children’s experience on the use of language

The children’s points of view on the language use are interesting to study, as they are actually most concerned by the immersion.

All the children’s drawings can be viewed in the appendix.

##### 4.2.1 Language appropriation

The children are asked to draw; they are free to draw either themselves or anything they like. They are given two colors to use, red and blue. The blue color is representing the Finnish language and the red color is representing the English language. The goal of this exercise is to define how the children represent their use of language; especially how important they view English language versus Finnish language.

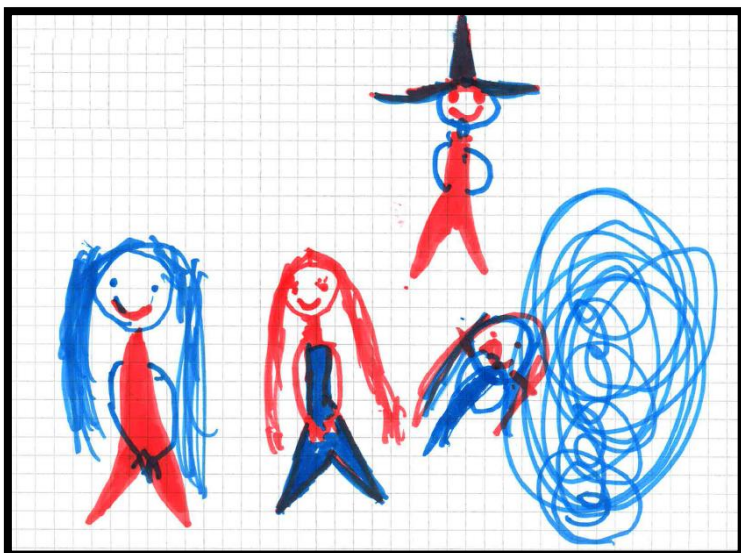
All the children used both colors in their drawings. However, the divide between the use of each colors and how the colors are used varies amongst the children’s drawings. In two of the eight drawings, for children G and H, red and blue are completely mixed up. The drawings actually have the same pattern: the child has drawn something, using both red and blue, he/she has then scribbled the whole drawing with both red and blue. One

of the children also drew on the other side of the sheet of paper. When interpreting the drawings, one must keep in mind that the colors might not always be associated with the languages but also with what they represent, such as red mouth, blue eyes.

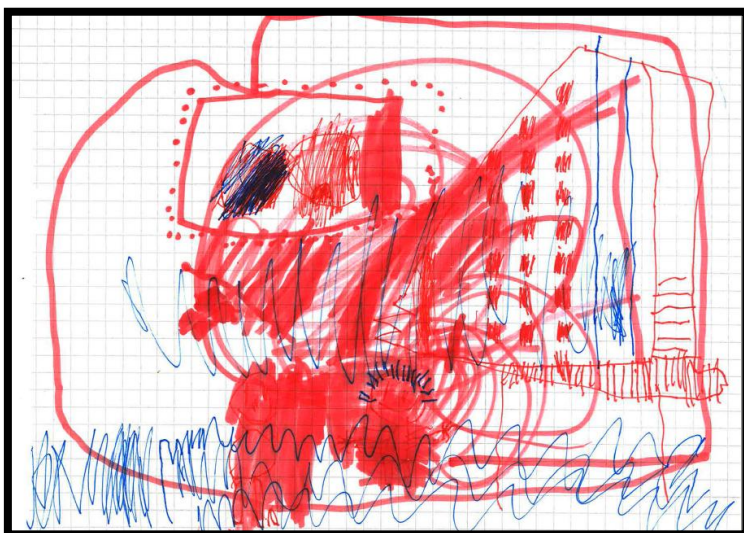
The children A, B, C, D, E and F used both the blue and red colors complementarily: one color is the lining and the other color is the filling. In these drawings, the use of colors is more balanced: each color seems to have its own use or function. When drawing, child C actually used both hands and drew simultaneously using both the red and blue pens. These children have the most defined drawings. They have either used blue and red in relatively equal amounts or more blue, with red being used to add details. Interestingly, amongst these drawings, the children nearly all drew characters, except children B and C. The difference may result from the children (B & C) being slightly younger.

The child A for example used both blue and red in quite equal amounts. Furthermore, it seems blue and red are used together and they complement each other. The child first used one color and then the other one to add details to the drawings. The colors are used side by side, in collaboration. There are four quite similar characters; the colors used in all of them are very balanced. Interestingly, the child A has drawn the mouth red for all the characters; the choice of color may be discussed: does it represent English or is it because the mouth is usually red? The child has drawn all the character's eyes red instead of one character, which has blue eyes.

The situation is quite different for child G: he/she uses firstly one color to draw something and then the other color to cover up the initial drawing. The colors do not seem to be complementary to each other. The blue and red drawings are quite disconnected, as they seem like two separate drawings. The child seems to have drawn grass or waves at the bottom of the page. The child used red to draw a "red entity", which is difficult to define. The entity seems to have a blue eye in the middle. It is much harder to make any sense of this drawing it is difficult to differentiate what is drawn, as nearly everything is the same color.



**Picture 1.** Child A: drawing using blue and red. February 2013.



**Picture 2.** Child G: drawing using blue and red. February 2013.

When comparing these drawings, it appears that the children using more red than blue have quite unclear drawings, which one could describe as a disorganised. However the children with more organised drawings used either more blue or then blue and red in quite similar proportions.

These drawings may help to analyse how the children have appropriated themselves the two languages. For a majority of the children taking part in the study (Children A, B, C, D, E and F) seem to view English and Finnish as complementary entities. Whereas the other children (G and H) have a different vision of both languages, Finnish and English seem to be disconnected from each other.

Whilst drawing, the children are asked some questions about how they felt when starting at the EKK. One child says that “*he was a bit excited*” but the others deny being afraid, one adding that “*we had a good time here*”. It appears that no child remembers the first days at the EKK, and the first contact with English, negatively.

#### 4.2.2 Locating language use

The children are shown one picture at a time; they are doing the exercise as a group. The children might therefore imitate the answers given by their friends, which might influence the results. The goal of this exercise is to define where the children consider they use their languages.

At “home”; children appear to use Finnish, with 19 blue crosses out of 23. Children apparently do use some English at home but in a vast majority, Finnish. The remaining 4 are red, which represent about one fifth of the total. One child actually comments that “*I speak both*”, whereas another child points out that “*I speak really a lot Finnish*” and another “*I speak sometimes Finnish, sometimes English*”.

When shown the picture of the EKK, the children placed 46 blue crosses and 10 red crosses, which is a bit more than one sixth of the crosses, are red. One child explains that he “*speak(s) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 English!*”, as he counts the crosses he draws. Another child does admit that he speaks “*quite a lot of Finnish though*”, noticing himself that he maybe should not be speaking so much Finnish.

When asked about the playground and their friends outside the EKK, the children draw three red crossed and 7 blue crosses, which is nearly half of red crosses comparing to the blue ones. The children draw first blue crosses only. The researcher then asks them, what language the teachers speak to them and what language they use to answer them. The children add a few red crosses as they notice they do use some English after all.





**Picture 3.** Children's interview: "What languages do you speak at home?" February 2013.

Comparing the amounts of red crossed between the drawings, quantitatively most red crosses are drawn on the picture representing the EKK, but only represent one sixth of the total amount. This could be explained by the fact that a lot of speaking takes place inside the school. However, less speaking might take place in the playground but part of it will be in English, especially if it is in presence of the teachers or of the care-takers.

During the drawing exercises, the children were asked a few questions. When asked where they taught English is spoken, the children named Australia and England. One child was in fact born in Australia and he then pointed out that English is spoken there.

The children are also asked if they have any non-English speaking friends. The children spontaneously mention the children that share the same playground as they do. When asked more details about these other children and how come they do not speak English, one child explains that it is because "*they are small*". As the care-taker explains, the children in question belong to the neighboring Finnish day-care, where the children are slightly younger. It seems that the children associate the age with the acquisition of English, as if the children in the neighboring day-care would move to the EKK when they grow older.

The results of this exercise differs from the results of the previous exercise. When asked to locate their language use, the color blue dominates the drawings: pointing out that Finnish is more important than English. When the children are given free hands to draw, they use tend to use equal amounts of both colors.

The age of the children and the fact that they are still at the beginning of their immersion process influences the findings. It would make more sense to do these types of exercises throughout their education to follow their development and understand how their visions on English and Finnish languages evolve. Similarly, it would be expected that their use of English would become more important over the years as their English language skills evolve. These results are therefore a good starting point to analyze the children's experience but they are quite limited.

The children provide an interesting point of view of the immersion school. Their parents also offer their own view of the EKK and immersion in general.

#### 4.3 The parents' experience

When studying the context and the expectations related to the immersion school, it is important to investigate the intentions of those that decide to place their children within the immersion system. Indeed, the decision of entering the immersion school is dependent on their parents, as their children are still so young, they are not yet able to make such important decisions.

In this study, eight parents voluntarily took part in the study and answered an online survey. The survey collected information on the parents' background, explanations on why they chose the immersion school and their expectations.

##### 4.3.1 The choice of immersion school

None of the parents taking part in the survey has been in immersion school themselves. Nevertheless, six respondents out of eight considered immersion school to the only possible option when considering whether to place their children in a regular school or

in an immersion school. Two respondents out of eight considered immersion to be an option amongst others.

Two respondents pointed out their bad experience in the regular language teaching system, which did not seem meaningful. Respondents mentioned that the regular teaching methods focus too much on the grammar and not on encouraging students to speak. One parent comments that *“Language instruction at school was too much focused on grammar, in my opinion. We could have spoken more and learn the language that way”*.

However, one parent did take part in an English language club. Another parent declared having worked as a substitute teacher in the immersion school and noticed there how easily the language was acquired by practicing it.

The parents provided various reasons to choosing immersion school over regular education. Immersion school is mentioned by many parents as a possibility offered to their children. The respondents consider language immersion to be the nicest and easiest way to acquire a language, making the language itself *“more alive and taken straightaway into use”*. One respondent considers that the immersion school encouraged children to get over the threshold of speaking a foreign language. One parent also pointed out a positive aspect of the immersion school-class remaining the same throughout the years: the same small group will stay together from kindergarten until high school, which is a comforting idea for some parents. In an ordinary class, the group might change over the years depending on what options the pupils choose.

The choice of English immersion is a particularly interesting topic as Kokkola is situated in a Swedish speaking region. The parents mostly pointed out that English language skills will turn out to be assets in the child’s future, both at a professional and social level. One parent points out that *“here is a lot of contact with Swedish anyway and English offers much more opportunities. Swedish is quite a “limited language”; you cannot cope with it in the world”*. As this parent points out, it is possible to be in contact with Swedish in everyday life anyway, which offers possibilities to learning Swedish. The respondents consider English to be a more global and useful language in the world compared to Swedish that is only spoken in Northern European countries.

#### 4.3.2 The parents' views on the immersion school

Half of the respondents mentioned that they discussed the choice of immersion school with their child. They explained to their children that the “*ladies at the kindergarten would be speaking English*”, that “*he/she might not understand everything at the beginning*” but that if need be, “*it is allowed to speak in Finnish*”. Some parents directly describe the EKK as being a place where English is spoken and learnt. Most respondents mention that their child does understand what the concept of immersion school is about and one respondent points out that his/her child actually awaited to start learning English. On the other hand, some parents did not discuss the concept of immersion school with their child.

Parents ticked out their expectations concerning immersions. The option “to develop language skills” was chosen by all parents. The second expectation that was most popular among the respondents is “a better understanding of differences between cultures”, which is chosen by half of the respondents. The parents are also concerned that their children develop similarly in the immersion school as in a regular school, especially concerning the development of the children’s L1 skills. They also expect their children to develop better social skills and become more self-assured, in particular in using foreign languages. In the open answers section, a parent added that she expects this specific teaching method to affect both the language skills and the expression skills of her child: “*the integration of the language into the everyday life of the children provides a much better basis to language integration and bolder spoken expression*”.

#### 4.3.3 How the parents experience their children’s language use

Half of the respondents tell that their children also speak some English outside the immersion. When the children share the daily happenings, they might let slip a few words in English because the term or the song in question has been taught in English. The parents’ point of view corroborates the data collected from the children. The children considered that they use English most at the EKK but also at the playground and at home, yet to a lesser extent.

One parent writes that her child “*sings in English and uses English words daily, screams mum, asks for milks, thanks, etc.*” One respondent also shares that her child

speaks English “*to her little brother to whom she sometimes tries to teach new English words*”. English is clearly present for some children also on the outside of the EKK. Some routines acquired at the EKK persist outside of the school. Whereas another respondent points out that his child barely speaks any English at home or outside of the immersion school, only saying “*yes/no*” or singing one particular song, “*Jingle Bells*”.

One respondent tells that her child tends to ask after school what certain English language words that he heard during the day, mean. The same respondent also describes how her child tries new words and “tests” how they sound. Her child will try to catch words from English language radio or TV programmes, the parent explains also that her child “*might understand what the discussion is about according to a few single words*”. Another parent points out that the use of English extends also to the even less familiar circle, than the home and the school, explaining that they “*travel quite a bit and we receive visitors from time to time, with whom he speaks English*”.

## 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The children starting immersion at the EKK are just about becoming fluent in their L1. It is the most suitable time for them to start learning an additional language, as they can use their skills in Finnish to support the creating of skills in English. They have the possibility of using their first language to support their learning of English. Referring to Cummins, learning this additional language should also improve his/her cognitive and academic skills.

The results collected from the three groups of participants support each other. The teachers provide information on the methods and the practical issues within the EKK. The children's point of view offers an interesting insight on how the English language is being learnt. The parents' testimonies explain the choice of immersion and support the results collected from the children.

It is clear that the children truly benefit from the teaching methods offered by the immersion school: the creative way of transmitting the language onwards to the children and the contact interactions in English produce results, even after a short period of time.

Even though, their knowledge in English is still quite limited, English is present in their everyday lives, even outside of the kindergarten. The children do not complain about it being confusing or difficult, as they are only used to this type of kindergarten. According to Baker's definition of bilingualism (2011, p.4) these children can already, after half a year of immersion, be described as bilingual as they use both languages in their everyday lives. They have organised their languages in their own systems, which is logical and makes sense to them.

Considering Krashen's input hypothesis, the children benefit from excellent conditions to acquire an additional language; the children hear and learn to understand English thanks to the English language input offered by the teacher and care takers. Simultaneously, the staff at the EKK provides them with the right affective support to make the process painless.

The parents choosing immersion school as an option for their children do not form a homogenous category: they do not share the same background nor the same experience with languages. The parents only share one issue in common: the expectations related to the immersion schools. Therefore, choosing immersion as a method of education is

more about the ultimate outcome for the children, whom will grow up to work in a world where English is (even more) needed in working life, rather than the parents making a decision based on their past experience with a language and professional situation.

The three groups interviewed within this research all experience having their own point of view concerning immersion school. The teachers and care-takers of the children enrolled in immersion have an overall outlook on the immersion education; they not only expect the children to learn a language but also to grow up as confident individuals with a higher self-esteem with specific studying habits. These hopes are shared by the parents of the children enrolled at the immersion school; they have made the decision to provide tools, such as language and others skills, like intercultural skills and higher self-esteem. The parents consider immersion school to provide the same level of education as in the regular system.

This study points out that immersion school is clearly not simply a language school replacing regular education. The road to become bilingual may seem rough, as it includes a phase where the borders between Finnish and English are not very clear, however, it seems to be a risk everyone accepts. The advantages of immersion education definitely overpower any drawback related to the immersion school.

The results of this study limit naturally themselves to Kokkola, due to the status of Finnish language in the world and to the bilingual aspect of Kokkola. The situation would be different in a country with a national language that is more global than Finnish. This study could be continued over time by following the development of the children that took part in this first study. A follow-up research could focus on how the children in the immersion programme deal with metalanguage and how they build their identity throughout the years; this identity will most likely be multilingual, not only bilingual.

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## APPENDIXES

## Appendix 1.

The questionnaire handed out to the parents at the Christmas party, in December 2012. This questionnaire provides some information on the study, parents may indicate whether they want to take part in the study and whether they give Helena Eijsberg the right to interview their children.

Page 1:

## Kysely: kielikylypy: miksi, minkä takia?

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Hei!

Olen Helena Eijsberg ja opiskelen maisteriksi Vaasan yliopiston koulutusohjelmassa *"Intercultural studies in Communication and Administration"*. Lopputyössäni haluaisin tutkia kielikylypyä, sen oppilaita sekä mitkä odotukset liittyvät kielikylyvyn käytiin.

Toiveena olisi seurata miten kielen opetus sujuu ja tapahtuu kielikylyvyssä, olemalla läsnä koulussa. Tarkoituksena on myös haastatella lapsia, pyytämällä heitä, esimerkiksi piirtämällä tai selittämällä omin sanoin heidän kokemuksiaan kielestä.

Haluaisin tallentaa äänimateriaalia ja/tai kuvamateriaalia haastatteluista omaan käyttöön, jotta voisin saada mahdollisimman paljon materiaalia. Tämä materiaali tulee ainoastaan minun käyttööni.

En tule nimeämään ketään työssäni, vaan käytän muutettuja nimiä jokaisen henkilön kohdalla.

Mikäli haluat saada lisää tietoa tutkimuksestani, ole yhteydessä minuun:

Ystävällisin terveisin,

Helena Eijsberg  
[Helena.Eijsberg@gmail.com](mailto:Helena.Eijsberg@gmail.com)  
045-278 0086

*Palauttakaa tämä osio minulle:*

**Olisitteko te, vanhempana , kiinnostuneita osallistumaan minun tutkimukseen?**

Kyllä

Ei

**Millä tavalla haluaisitte osallistua?**

Ryhmähaastattelu (järjestetään tammikuussa 2013)

Sähköinen kysely (lähetetään tammikuussa 2013)

**Voinko ottaa yhteyttä teihin kyselyä varten?**

Nimi: \_\_\_\_\_

Sähköposti osoite: \_\_\_\_\_

Puhelin numero: \_\_\_\_\_

Minulla on  lasta, joista  ovat English Kindergartenissa.

**Pyydän teiltä luvan haastatella lapsianne.**

Annan luvan Helena Eijsbergin haastatella lastani/lapsiani gradu tutkimusta varten

En anna lupaa Helena Eijsbergin haastatella lastani/lapsiani.

Lapseni nimi/nimet on/ovat:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Päiväys ja allekirjoitus

\_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix 2.

## The teachers and care-takers' interview questions

## INTERVIEW, ENGLISH KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS

## A/ TEACHERS BACKGROUND

- 1) Please tell me more about your background, are you from a monolingual background (F or S) or bilingual?
- 2) Please tell me about your background: how long have you been teaching at the EK?
- 3) Have you taught in a regular kindergarten before?  
(what made you come here then?)
- 4) What about your education, any time abroad?
- 5) Why did you choose to teach English (not Swedish for instance)

## B/ ABOUT THE PUPILS

- 1) What kind of groups do you have?
- 2) What would be a typical day?
- 3) Motivation is important, how do you motivate the children in your group?
- 4) what do you hope for the children?
- 5) any news about what some former pupils have become?
- 6) In what situation do you use what language?

## C / IMMERSION SCHOOL

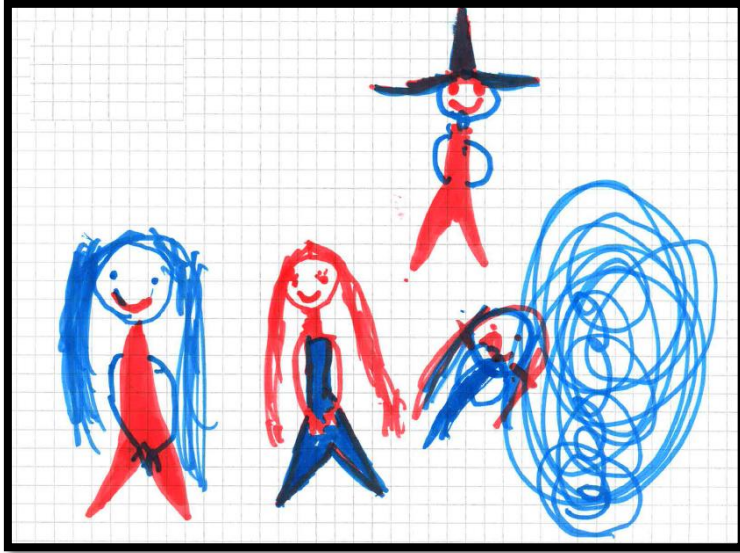
- 1) Why is immersion different?
- 2) What is difficult?
- 3) What is rewarding?

## D/ STORIES TO TELL?

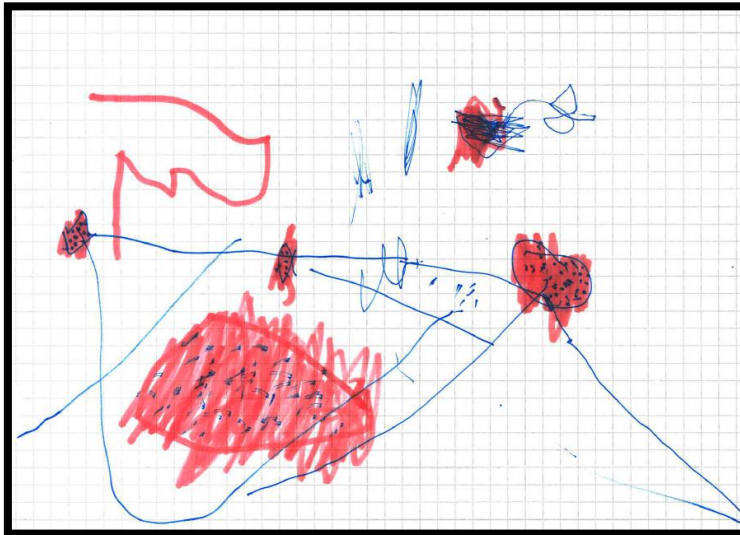
## Appendix 3.

The children's interview (Part 1). Draw yourself (or something else) using blue (= Finnish) and red (= English)

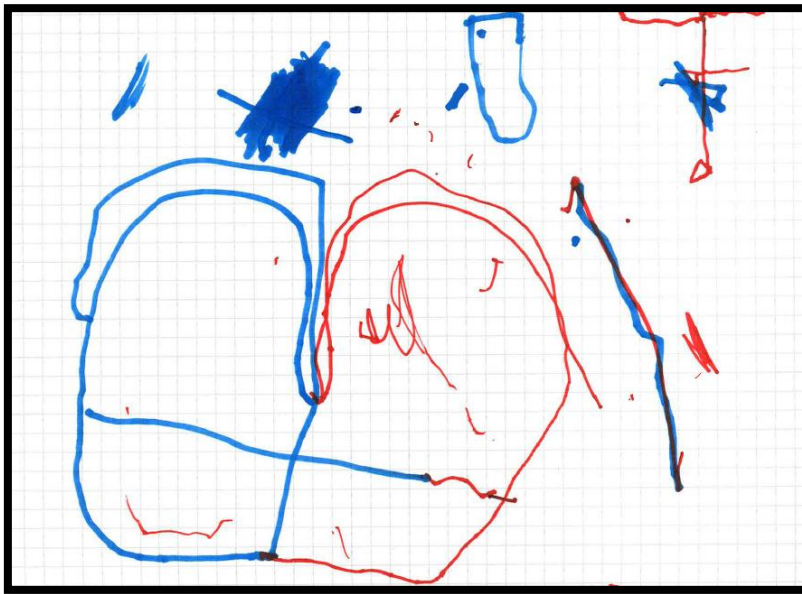
Child A.



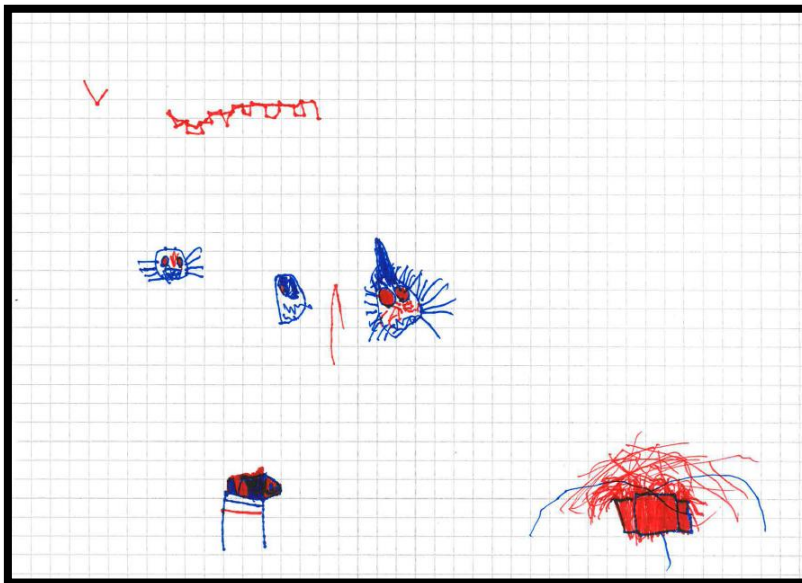
Child B.



Child C.



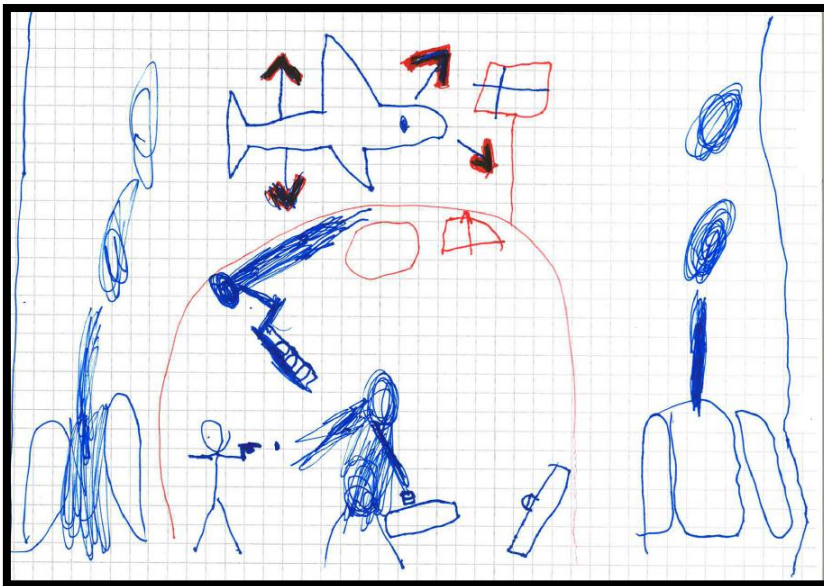
Child D.



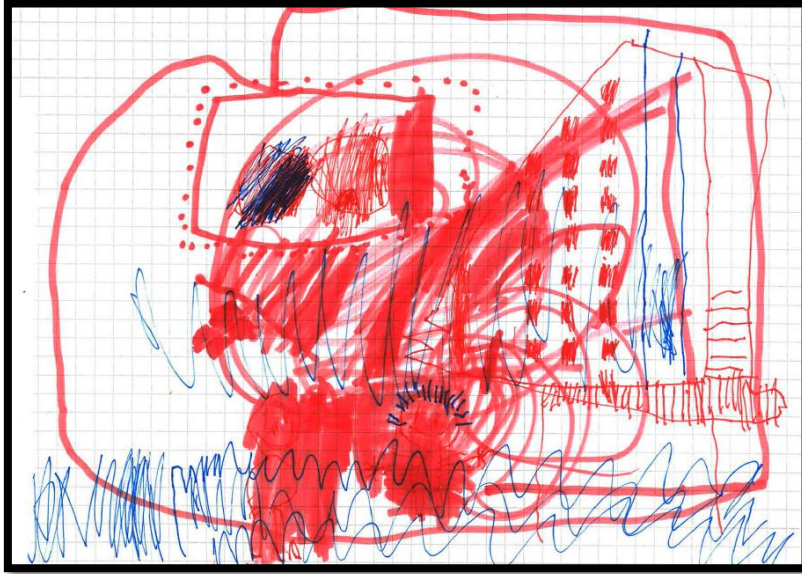
Child E.



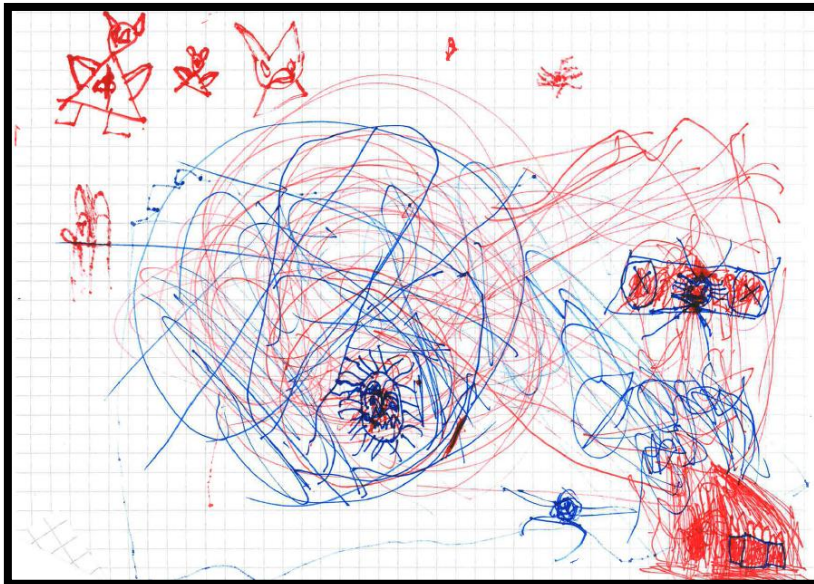
Child F.



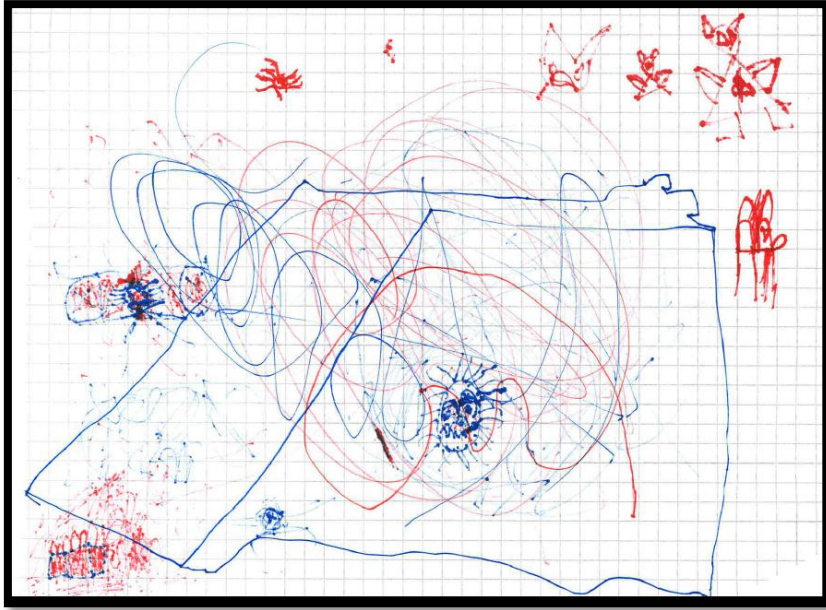
Child G.



Child H. (recto)



Child H (verso)



## Appendix 4.

The children's interview (part 2). What languages do you speak at home?



What languages do you speak at the kindergarten?



What languages do you speak outside the kindergarten?





Appendix 5.  
The parents' survey.

Kielikylpytutkimus

Tammikuu - helmikuu 2013

Graduni aiheena on "Kielikylvyn konteksti ja odotukset", kohteena Kokkolan English Kindergartenia. Tarkoituksena on seurata, miten kielen opetus sujuu kielikyvyssä. Haluasin myös tietää teidän mielipitteenne vanhempina: miksi valitsitte kielikylvyn ja mitkä ovat teidän odotuksenne. Sana on vapaa, tänne voi jakaa kaikkea mitä mieleen tulee. Paras olisi, jos molemmat vanhemmat pystyisivät vastaamaan erikseen (omiilla vastauslomakkeilla). Sillä tavalla saisin enemmän mielipiteitä. Kiitos, että olette mukana tässä kyselyssä! Teidän mielipitteenne on minulle erittäin tärkeä!

I/ Taustatiedot

1. Kuka vastaa tähän kyselyyn?

Äiti

Isä

2. Oletko sinä:

Suomenkielinen

Ruotsinkielinen

Kaksikielinen

3. Mikä on ammattisi tai nykyinen työtilanteesi?

Kotiäiti tai –isä

Opiskelija

Työtön

Työntekijä / alempi toimihenkilö / maanviljelijä

Asiantuntija / ylempi toimihenkilö

Yrittäjä / johtava asema

Eläkeläinen

4. Mikä on koulutustasosi?

Peruskoulu/ keskikoulu / kansakoulu

Lukio / ylioppilas

Ammattikoulutus / opistotaso

Ammattikorkeakoulu

Yliopisto

5. Mitä kieliä puhut?

Voit myös merkitä kuinka, hyvin osaat puhua niitä.

Esim: suomi: äidinkieli

ruotsi erittäin hyvin

ranska melko hyvin

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6. Joudutko käyttämään vieraita kieliä työssäsi?

Kyllä

Ei

7. Jos joudut käyttämään vieraita kieliä työssäsi, mitkä kielet ovat kyseessä?

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8. Oletko opiskellut tai asunut ulkomailla?

Kyllä

Ei

9. Jos olet opiskellut tai asunut ulkomailla, voisitko kertoa siitä tarkemmin? (missä maassa, kuinka kauan asuit siellä, jne ... )

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10. Oletko sinä ollut kielikylvyssä?

Kyllä

Ei

11. Kerro tarkemmin!

Jos olet ollut kielikylvyssä, mitä kieltä opiskelit? Millainen kokemus se oli? Jos et käynyt kielikylvyssä, mitä mieltä olit kieliopetuksesta koulussasi?

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II/ Miksi ja miten kielikylpyyn

12. Miksi valitsit kielikylvyn lapsellesi?

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13. Miten sait kuulla English Kindergartenista?

Etsin kielikylpyopetusta Kokkolassa

Perheen kautta

Ystävältä

Ilmoituksesta (netti, lehti, ..)

Jostakin muualta

14. Miksi valitsit English Kindergartenin?

Tarkoitin sitä, että oliko välttämätöntä päästä tänne vai oliko se enemmän "miksi ei?" -vaihtoehto?

- Välttämätön
- Vaihtoehto muiden joukossa
- Muu

15. Kokkola ja länsirannikko on hyvin ruotsinkielinen alue. Miksi valitsit englannikielisen kielikylvyn? (miksi ei ruotsinkielistä?)

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16. Oletko keskustellut lapsesi kanssa tästä päätöksestä? Toisin sanoen, luuletko, että hän ymmärtää ,mistä on kyse English Kindergartenissa/kielikyvvyssä?

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17. Miten selitit lapsellesi, että hän aloittaa English Kindergartenissa?

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18. Miten hän reagoi siihen?

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19. Mitä odotuksia sinulla on kielikylvystä?

Voit valita useamman vaihtoehdon.

Kielikylpy kasvattaa ja opettaa samalla tavalla kuin yksikielisessä  
opetuksessa

Paremmat kielitaidot

Paremmat sosiaaliset taidot

Parempi ymmärrys kulttuurien välisistä eroista

Lapsesta tulee "maailman kansalainen"

Itsevarmuus

20. Onko sinulla vielä jotain muita odotuksia kielikylvystä, mitä ei mainittu edellisessä kysymyksessä?

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III/ Entä koulun ulkopuolella?

21. Kertooko lapsesi koulupäivästä sinulle? Mitä kieltä hän silloin käyttää?

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22. Puhuuko lapsesi englantia kielikylvyn ulkopuolella? Jos puhuu, missä tilanteissa?

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IV/ Vapaa sana

23. Onko sinulla mitään lisättävää tai kerrottavaa? :)

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Kiitos vastauksistasi!