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Polish Language Maintenance and Transmission in Finnish Diaspora: A Study of Family Dynamics and Cultural Influences

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Abstract: The Polish diaspora is represented worldwide. Yet, little is known about Polish language and culture maintenance in Finland. However, the language practices of Polish families living there are worth being investigated, particularly in relation to language maintenance and transmission. This research aims to explore how families engage with the Polish language and what factors contribute to its preservation. The study focuses on the role of family dynamics, including interactions, communication patterns, and language choices within the family unit. The research is built on a survey of representatives of the Polish diaspora in Finland and a qualitative case study of a Polish family living in Finland. It uses content and descriptive analyses. The results identify effective strategies and interventions that can enhance the long-term vitality of the Polish language in diaspora communities. Cultural influences, such as traditions, values, and identities, are considered in relation to the sustainability of language development.

Keywords: Polish language abroad; Polish diaspora; language choices; family language policy; children’s literature; book reading with children; home language



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1. Introduction

The term “Polish-speaking diaspora” refers to the dispersed communities of people who speak Polish and share a common Polish cultural identity but live outside Poland. These communities can be found in various countries around the world, and they maintain connections to their Polish heritage through language, traditions, cultural practices, communication with Polish speakers, homeland visits, etc. The Polish-speaking diaspora plays a significant role in preserving and promoting Polish culture and language beyond the borders of Poland (Bhattacharjee 2012; Gula 1994; Kałczewiak 2020; Krawczuk and Wosik 2019; Machowska-Kosciak 2020; Nedopekina 2017; Romanowski 2021b to name a few).

Studying linguistic practices in Polish as a home language focuses on the complex aspects of language maintenance within migrant communities (cf. Brehmer et al. 2021; De Houwer 2023; Pułaczewska 2021; Romanowski 2021a; Ślusarczyk et al. 2018; Wolski-Moskoff 2018). This study aims to comprehensively explore how families in diasporic settings engage with the Polish language and what factors contribute to its preservation. This entails a detailed examination of the complex interactions and strategies employed to sustain the Polish language in these settings. Such research is essential for understanding nuances of language maintenance and transmission in diverse and dynamic cultural contexts (cf. Hornsby and McLeod 2022).

One focal point is the role of family dynamics under the pressure of surrounding policies (Nandi and Zabrodskaja 2024). This encompasses the interactions, communication patterns, and language choices within the family unit. Understanding how linguistic practices are negotiated and maintained within this context provides valuable insights into the broader language ecosystem of the diaspora community (Bayley et al. 2022; Brehmer 2018; Jaumont 2017; Sopata et al. 2022; Wolski-Moskoff 2019). Moreover, cultural influences play a crucial role in language sustainability, which involves examining the impact of

traditions, values, and identity on the use and transmission of the Polish language across generations. It also encompasses factors such as community support, cultural events, and access to resources that contribute to the maintenance of the language. By scrutinizing these interrelated aspects, the research endeavours to shed light on effective strategies and interventions that can be employed to bolster the long-term vitality of the Polish language in diaspora homes. Additionally, it contributes to the broader discourse on language maintenance and revitalization within global diaspora communities.

Placing the results within the general Polish studies, the project aims to learn how often and in what contexts Polish immigrant families in Finland use the Polish language, what are parents' perceptions of their children's proficiency in Polish, and how willing are the children to speak Polish. It explores the strategies and practices that families use to develop and maintain language skills in their children, the educational resources and programmes available to support language learning, and how families utilize these resources.

The research questions were the following:

- How do bilingual and multilingual environments affect the use and development of the Polish language in immigrant families?
- What are the subjective experiences and attitudes of parents regarding the preservation and development of the Polish language in their children?
- What are specific features of heritage language development in Finland?
- What role do reading and storytelling play in Polish-speaking families?

2. Background of the Study

A key concept for this project is 'heritage language' (HL). It was coined by North American language professionals to address the growing interest among grandchildren of immigrants in their ancestral languages. It helps educators distinguish 'HL learners' from traditional foreign language students. An HL learner is someone raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken, who speaks or understands that language, and is somewhat bilingual (Wiley 2001). In the USA, less-commonly taught languages refer to both foreign languages and HLs (Kondo-Brown 2012). The number and variety of language terms highlight the significance of a language to various groups. Language learning is influenced by neuropsychological factors, like language acquisition capability, and external factors, such as the learning environment and cultural heritage (Aronin 2022).

According to Polinsky (2018), HLs, learned in bilingual or multilingual environments, include those of diasporas, marginalized indigenous languages, and historical minority languages, and have only recently gained attention in bilingualism research. This approach suggests that a language is considered an HL if it is spoken at home or easily accessible to young children and is not the dominant language of the larger society. Individuals qualify as heritage speakers if they have some naturally acquired proficiency in that language. Ennser-Kananen and King (2018) claim that HLs refer to non-dominant languages with personal relevance, not necessarily tied to proficiency or home use. In sum, the term is complex and varies by context, reflecting broader cultural and identity-related significance. Despite challenges like limited institutional support and dominant language ideologies, HL education is crucial for preserving linguistic diversity and cultural identity. Recent policy changes and increasing recognition of HLs underscore their value as significant social and cultural resources.

For the Polish diaspora, the concept of HL gains an increasing interest among the children of Polish migrants and expats in learning Polish. On the one hand, this concept assists educators in distinguishing 'HL learners,' who grow up in homes where Polish is spoken, from traditional foreign language students. On the other hand, it underscores the fact that HL learners typically have some natural native-like proficiency in Polish and are, to some extent, bilingual. Recognized as a 'less commonly taught language' yet one of the frequently studied Slavic languages, Polish holds a significant cultural value for the diaspora community. Language learning for heritage speakers is influenced by psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic factors, and family language policies. While the study

of bilingualism is longstanding, HL research, including studies on languages like Polish, has only gained prominence recently (Romanowski and Seretny 2024).

Family language policy (FLP) encompasses strategies and practices that families in multilingual societies adopt to manage and promote language use within the household. For the Polish diaspora, FLP is crucial in maintaining Polish as an HL across generations (Głuszkowski 2023; Kędra et al. 2021; Kozminska and Zhu 2021; Lubinska 2021; Obojska 2019). Effective FLP involves deliberate decisions by parents and grandparents to use Polish in everyday communication, storytelling, and cultural rituals. It also includes encouraging children to speak, read, and write in Polish, and exposing them to Polish media and literature. Many families prioritize speaking Polish at home, especially with young children. This helps establish Polish as a natural part of daily life, facilitating its acquisition and use. Others opt for bilingual or trilingual homes, and some delegate teaching Polish to external institutions. Enrolling children in Polish language schools or extracurricular programmes provides formal instruction and enhances the youngsters' proficiency in reading and writing. Engaging in cultural traditions, such as celebrating Polish holidays, cooking traditional foods, and participating in community events, reinforces the use of Polish and strengthens cultural identity. Encouraging interactions between children and their Polish-speaking grandparents or older relatives fosters a deeper connection to the language and cultural heritage. Access to Polish books, music, films, and television programmes enriches the linguistic environment and makes learning enjoyable and meaningful.

To illustrate the global existence of the Polish diaspora, the study used document analysis of the published materials and presented their content. Additionally, it explored the perspectives of Polish authorities regarding maintenance of the Polish language abroad. Subsequently, it investigated the Finnish context.

2.1. Polish Diaspora in the World

The term *Polish-speaking diaspora* refers to the dispersed communities of people who speak Polish and share a common Polish cultural identity but live outside of Poland. Estimating the number of Polish diasporans is a complex task due to the application of various criteria, such as birth in Poland, multi-ethnic origin, knowledge of the Polish language, and declared awareness of origin. Population censuses are conducted in some countries, while in others only general numbers are available, which reduces the comparability of data. It is estimated that between 18 and 20 million individuals of Polish origin reside outside of Poland. One third of this group consists of Poles born and raised in Poland, while the remaining individuals have varying degrees of connection to Polish heritage. The Polish diaspora and Poles living abroad rank as one of the largest diasporas in the world in terms of population size relative to their home country.

The largest number of representatives of the Polish community live in the United States, where 9,660,000 people declared Polish ancestry in a survey conducted in 2012. There are approximately 1 million Poles living in Canada, 1,500,000 in Brazil (higher estimates have been found), 120,000 in Argentina, 170,000 in Australia and 30,000 in South Africa. In Western Europe the number of Poles and people of Polish origin or descent is estimated at approximately 4,200,000. Of this number, approximately 1,500,000 live in Germany, 800,000 in France, 200,000 in the Netherlands, 100,000 in Belgium and 85,000 in Austria. The Polish diaspora in Italy is estimated at 150,000, in Spain at 85,000, in Greece at 10,000, in Iceland at 11,000, in Sweden at 110,000, in Norway at 110,000, in Denmark at 60,000 and in the Czech Republic at 120,000; these are Poles and people of Polish origin. There are also enclaves numbering several thousand in Romania, Hungary, and Slovakia. In France, the "old" Polish community dominates, while in Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian countries there are migrants from the last decade. Approximately one million people of Polish origin live in the post-Soviet space, although higher estimates are found there, as well. According to censuses carried out in recent years, the number of Poles in Lithuania is 200,000 and in Belarus 295,000. The latter figure may be an underestimate, as some people may not have revealed their Polish ethnicity. In Ukraine, according to the last census, there are

144,000 people of Polish nationality; this figure may also be significantly underestimated. There are 34,000 Poles in Kazakhstan, 46,000 in Latvia, and 47,000 in Russia (statistics from [Polonia Historia 2024](#), retrieved 2024).

According to the information on the size and directions of temporary emigration from Poland, in the years 2017–2022, published by the Central Statistical Office ([GUS 2023](#)), in 2022 over 1.5 million Poles stayed temporarily (meaning more than 12 months) outside the country. The report states that the number of Poles residing in other countries in that year decreased by 24,000 compared to the year 2021.

At the end of 2022, approximately 1,523,000 permanent residents of Poland were temporarily outside Poland, i.e., 24,000 fewer than in 2021. Approximately 1436 thousand Polish emigrants were staying in Europe (23,000 fewer than in 2021). In the case of the Polish emigrants (23,000 fewer than in 2021), most of them—approximately 867,000—resided in the Member States of the European Union. Among European countries, the largest number of Polish emigrants resided in the United Kingdom (446,000), Germany (411,000), the Netherlands (116,000), Ireland (87,000), the United Kingdom (544,000), Ireland (87,000) and Norway (77,000).

The Polish-speaking diaspora in Finland, part of the broader Polish diaspora, shares a common Polish cultural identity and maintains ties with Polish traditions, language, and culture. Finland, like other countries, has seen an increase in Polish immigrants, contributing to the cultural diversity and multicultural landscape of the country. The presence of the Polish diaspora in Finland enhances cultural exchanges, promotes multiculturalism, and enriches the local society with Polish traditions, language, and heritage.

2.2. Polish Schools Abroad

There are multiple opportunities for educating children of the Polish diaspora. Parents have to study the options carefully, selecting the optimal educational model for their child. It is not easy to balance schoolwork in their host country with additional activities aimed at maintaining the children's Polish language skills. This challenge is often due to time constraints, distance from Polish schools or language schools, and a lack of support from extended family members. Decisions regarding children's participation in organized learning are made based on a strong belief in the importance of knowledge of the mother tongue and Polish culture. This belief influences language management in the family, making it more conscious of the benefits of bilingualism ([Panek 2022](#)).

The Polish Ministry of Education and Science has a special unit, the Centre for the Development of Polish Education Abroad (in Polish: Ośrodek Rozwoju Polskiej Edukacji za Granicą, known as ORPEG, [orpeg.pl](#)), which has been operating for over 50 years. The Centre also includes the Polish Teachers' Centre, which has been operating since 1991 and is based in Lublin. It was established by the Minister of National Education as an educational institution to support Polish teachers working abroad. According to the Centre's website, its mission is to shape and sustain a sense of national identity among Poles living abroad by teaching the Polish language and culture to children and young people. The ORPEG Statute outlines the tasks of promoting Polish language, history, and culture, facilitating émigrés' eventual return to the Polish educational system, and propagating Polish culture. Additionally, it provides substantial support to instructors teaching Polish.

Paragraph 6 of the ORPEG Statute specifies that its tasks include coordinating the education of children of Polish citizens temporarily living abroad and exercising financial and administrative supervision over their activities. Pedagogical supervision is provided for educational institutions at diplomatic missions, consular offices, and military representations of the Republic of Poland. It also covers teachers delegated to work in Polish sections operating in the educational systems of other countries. Additionally, distance learning is organized in schools in Poland.

In October 2022 the Institute for the Development of the Polish Language was established. Its responsibility is related to supporting Polish education abroad. It has the task of promoting the Polish language as a mother tongue among the Polish diasporas. This

includes supporting educational and scientific initiatives and projects that aim to deepen knowledge of the Polish language and promote it as a foreign language. To develop the Polish language abroad, they aim to collaborate with schools, universities, public institutions, associations, foundations, organizations, and other entities both in Poland and abroad.

There are several possibilities for Poles living abroad to educate their children in Polish. The first one is Polish schools abroad. In paragraph 1 clause 1 of the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 9 August 2019, on the organization of education of children of Polish citizens temporarily residing abroad, the legislator lists primary schools and general secondary schools, as well as school complexes at diplomatic representations, consular offices and military representations of the Republic of Poland. Their task is primarily to implement the same core curriculum for primary schools and general secondary schools that applies to schools in Poland. This means that education at such institutions is to take place five days a week, instruction is primarily in Polish, and the curricula are the same as in Poland. Despite the guaranteed legislative framework, no such facility was run in the 2021/22 school year.

The second option is Polish schools. The concept of a Polish school is defined in paragraph 1 of the above-mentioned Regulation. According to this document, Polish schools, just like schools abroad, are established at a diplomatic representation, consular office or military representation of the Republic of Poland. They enable students who attend primary schools or general secondary schools operating in the education system of the country of residence (and who are therefore educated primarily in the language of this “host country”) to supplement their education and attend classes taught in Polish. The content of these classes is determined by the curriculum framework for supplementary education and by curricula for Polish schools. The Polish schools can be established when at least 50 students are registered, but the legislator reserves the right to establish a Polish school also when there is a smaller number of applicants. The schools are under the supervision of The Centre for the Development of Polish Education Abroad (known in Poland as ORPEG).

According to ORPEG data in the 2023/2024 school year, approximately 16,000 students have enrolled in 76 schools, which are staffed by 600 teachers. In 2023 there were 76 schools in 37 countries on four continents. In addition to the list of schools in 26 European countries, the list includes schools in 3 North American countries, 4 in Asia and 4 in Africa. These institutions provide supplementary education, focusing on language teaching and providing knowledge about Polish history, geography and culture at all education stages.

Another option, which is not explicitly discussed in the Regulation, but which is very similar to the concept of Polish schools, is the one known as Saturday schools. These institutions are run by social organisations, parishes, and other foreign entities. Students follow the same curriculum as the students enrolled in the Polish schools. As of today, there are 1224 registered Saturday schools. Estimating the number of students attending them is problematic, because the currently functioning database of the Centre for the Development of Polish Education Abroad is not regularly updated, and the schools do not report student numbers accurately.

Finally, the Regulation mentions a third learning option, distance learning, intended for students living abroad and, for various justifiable reasons, unable to fulfil their educational obligations. In these special cases, the students have the opportunity to study online. Distance-learning programmes cover the entire core curriculum. The student works independently, and his/her duties include sending five written assignments in all subjects covered by the curriculum and participating in at least half of the online tutorials conducted on the “Open School” educational platform. The student is transferred to the next grade based on the average of the assignment grades. Distance education is provided by two institutions run by ORPEG—a primary school and Liceum Ogólnokształcące (a type of a high school).

In addition, Polish students living abroad may learn Polish in schools belonging to the education system of the country where they live. This is possible in two cases. The first one is the Polish school sections in France. In some French schools there are international

sections where some subjects are taught in the language of the partner country. This works at three levels—primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary school. The curriculum implemented in these bilingual classes has to be approved by the French authorities. The studies end with the final exam. As the French Ministry of National Education informs the readers on its website, in addition to the tests provided for all students, the final exam in the international classes tests the HL proficiency, as well as the knowledge of the history and geography of the heritage country. The content of the final exam is developed by French educators collaborating with the relevant authorities of the partner countries. For students of Polish descent, this exam consists of two written papers—one from Polish history and one from Polish geography, as well as two oral exams in these subjects. The results are included in the final average of the international matura exam. There are four Polish sections in France—one in Strasbourg, one in Lyon, and two in Paris. In the 2021/2022 school year, 476 students attended Polish sections in France.

The second option to learn Polish in schools of the host country is offered by European schools and accredited European schools. These are primarily educational institutions intended for children of employees of the European Union administration, but they can also be attended by other students—children of the people employed in international institutions and embassies, as well as children residing permanently in the city or region where the school is located. Education is free for children of the employees of the European Union, while others have to pay fees. The European schools offer a two-year kindergarten for children aged 4–5, a five-year primary school for students aged 6–10 and a seven-year secondary school for students aged 11–17. Currently, there are 13 European schools and 23 accredited European schools. In the 2021/2022 school year, 783 students of Polish descent attended European schools.

Additionally, it should be noted that homeschooling is one more possibility. The option of fulfilling school obligations through online learning has given Polish parents the opportunity to provide their children with access to the same knowledge as their peers in the country. This has also enabled school principals to authorize homeschooling at the request of a parent. If parents choose to homeschool their child, they must provide a statement committing themselves to providing suitable learning conditions and ensuring that the child takes annual classification exams. The headmaster determines the scope of the exams, and grades are awarded annually. Pass grades in all subjects are required to continue to the next grade. Subjects such as music, art, technology, and sports are not assessed; neither is a child's conduct. To enable children in the diaspora to study in Polish schools through homeschooling, they must first enrol in the school. This option is widely used. In the 2022/2023 school year, a total of 1730 students in 84 countries around the world participated in distance learning.

The Libratus Polish Internet Schools project was established in 2009 to provide free online education, in accordance with the Polish core curriculum, to Polish children living abroad. Participation is open to children who hold Polish citizenship or the Pole's Card. (The Pole's Card is a document that attests to the bearer's affiliation with the Polish nation. It does not imply Polish citizenship, nor does it confer the right to cross the border or settle in the territory of the Republic of Poland.) Libratus facilitates collaboration between Polish schools and diasporic parents. Students involved in the project can access the educational platform which includes all curriculum content for individual subjects divided into 36 weeks of studies, weekly subject webinars, and various activities that integrate students from different countries. The authors of the Libratus project prioritize motivating students by gamification, various competitions and contests and, if necessary, offering psychological or speech therapy support. Polonijka is a Polish Internet School that offers similar learning opportunities to Libratus, but, unlike Libratus, it is a paid service. In the 2022/23 school year, the largest number of Libratus students lived in Great Britain, but there were also Polish children from over 130 other countries in the world. Approximately 16,000 youngsters are estimated to have participated in the project since its beginning.

2.3. Poles in Finland

The Polish community in Finland is relatively small, with around 5400 people of Polish nationality registered as living there (Statistics Finland 2024). This number may not include children born to Polish–Finnish parents, who can be registered as Finnish nationals. In the past few years, the flow of Polish immigrants to Finland has been at the rate of around 300–500 per year, slightly higher among men than women. After Poland entered the EU in 2004, migration to Finland increased, but not as significantly as to other European countries, where Poles are one of the main migrant groups; e.g., in the United Kingdom or Germany.

The Finnish education system provides the opportunity to learn the native language in a certain number of hours/weeks in child’s “host school”. Mother-tongue or home-language studies support multilingual pupils in maintaining and developing their language skills. In Helsinki, a total of roughly 50 different languages are taught as a mother tongue. Out of these, pupils can only participate in the teaching of one language. The language studies supplement basic education, and the pupil will receive a separate assessment for these studies. The lessons are held once a week in the morning or afternoon, when the pupil has no other classes. The largest language groups may be taught at the pupil’s own school, but pupils must often travel to another school. If necessary, one can apply for a student travel card for these journeys (Helsinki 2024).

3. Materials and Methods

The survey questionnaire, which was distributed anonymously through social media channels, included nine open-ended questions aimed at collecting information on family language routines and practices. Participants were informed about the use of their responses and provided consent before completing the form. The responses were categorized and analysed using descriptive analysis, following the methodologies outlined by Drager (2018) and Holmes and Hazen (2013). This method is well-suited for exploring how bilingual and multilingual environments affect the use and development of the Polish language in immigrant families, and allowed us to identify patterns and trends in language use and development. The open-ended questions permitted participants to express their personal experiences and attitudes, which could be studied to understand parents’ perspectives on preserving and developing the Polish language in their children. Descriptive analysis helps in systematically summarizing these subjective responses. This approach emphasized unique aspects of the Polish language’s maintenance and evolution among immigrant families in Finland.

4. Results

4.1. Answers to the Questionnaire

Data collection for this study was carried out in 2024 with Polish migrant parents, all living in Finland, using Polish and Finnish, and/or other languages. The participants were recruited via two closed Facebook groups for Polish families living in Finland and personal connections. The participants were informed that the data were collected for a research project, that they would all remain anonymous, and any information that could make them identifiable would not be used or publicized. They were also told that they could withdraw their participation at any stage of the project. The data collection was carried out in Polish (see Appendix A). Our main focus was on Polish literacy, including reading and storytelling.

Altogether, 39 respondents participated in the survey. According to the sociodemographic section of the questionnaire, most of them came to Finland in the last fifteen years, and 70 per cent do not plan to return to Poland. Nearly all respondents visit Poland at least once per year, some twice, and just a few three or more times. Almost half of the respondents use only Polish at home, while 30 per cent use three languages. The largest group is made up of those who speak Polish, Finnish and English; the rest of the combinations, besides Polish and Finnish, include Vietnamese and Arabic. Twenty-five per cent of the respondents use both Polish and Finnish at home.

The following presents the responses to the survey questions.

1. Does your child/Do your children speak Polish willingly? According to 84.6% of the parents, their children are willing to speak Polish; 10.3% responded negatively, and 5.1% answered 'I do not know.'

2. Where does your child speak Polish? In 92.3% of the cases, children speak Polish only at home, and in 41% they also use it outside their home. Participants listed the contexts in which their children would use Polish in public places: Polish schools, religious services in the Polish church, online contacts with family, meetings with Polish friends in Finland, and with family and friends during visits to Poland. Significantly, 10.35% indicated that children only spoke Polish visiting Poland. There were also three answers of "everywhere" (including a Finnish kindergarten and communication with Finnish staff in the daycare centre there). One parent remarked, "where it suits the child or when someone else speaks Polish"—indicating a willingness to communicate in Polish in a natural and spontaneous manner.

3. What is the purpose of using Polish outside Poland? Twenty-five respondents indicate that they use Polish for everyday communication, and six participants emphasise that they speak Polish only at home. Eleven people claim the universal role of the Polish language: "It can be used anywhere" (6), "It can be used for anything" (2) and "It can be used in all life situations" (3). Fourteen families use Polish to play, and eight to communicate with family in Poland and from Poland. Some emphasise that Polish is the only common language used to communicate with the elderly, e.g., grandparents. Apparently, speaking Polish enables immigrants to relax and feel at ease, so it is used for such leisure time activities as watching movies and cartoons, reading, playing games, listening to songs and singing and media use.

4. How do you evaluate your children's proficiency in Polish? A total of 63% of the respondents used the following terms: very good (10), excellent (1), wonderful (1), fluent (5), not at all different from their peers in Poland (1), as expected for their age (2), and good (5). The second group consisted of the answers fairly well (5), moderately (2), not bad (1), enough to communicate at home (1), and have no problem to communicate, but their Finnish is more developed (1). Three parents were critical: quite poor (1), poor (1), and poor, but will get along with grandma (1). Despite the negative evaluation, the latter statement underlines successful communication. This is the parents' assessment (the question intentionally emphasised *according to you/your opinion*), and further research would be needed to evaluate the children's language skills. It is important to note that these evaluations are subjective, and should be taken as such. The surveyed families value Polish language skills highly, as indicated by the predominance of positive statements. One statement stands out as more elaborate and detailed:

...they are able to communicate without difficulty. The individual is proficient in speaking, although they occasionally use incorrect grammatical forms, such as when conjugating nouns and adjectives, or when they lack words and replace them with Finnish equivalents. However, their writing skills are weaker, as they make numerous errors.

Reading is not well developed in many heritage speakers, because they rarely read in Polish, except when using WhatsApp to communicate with relatives in Poland (see also [Kędra 2021](#), who came to analogical conclusions). When discussing the development of the Polish language in youngsters, the speakers emphasised the importance of consistently using Polish in their communication with the children, both orally and in writing, despite the children's initial reluctance. It is worth noting the significance of this consistency, which is crucial in preserving an inherited language. Additionally, respondents mentioned the value of taking children to Poland at least once a year.

5. Can your child write in Polish? A total of 20.5% of respondents evaluated their children's writing skills as good without mistakes, while over 50% answered 'yes, but with mistakes.' Around 14% of respondents' children have not yet reached the age to learn to write, but their parents express a desire to teach them writing or mention that they are at

the beginning of this process. Two respondents answered ‘no, they cannot write in Polish.’ No one selected the answer ‘we do not plan to teach writing.’

One interesting method used in one family is worth mentioning. The interesting approach to learning to write involves using a series of children’s books specifically designed for learner readers—the Polish series *Czytam sobie* (czytamsobie.pl). After reading the book, the parent prepares a set of comprehension questions appropriate to the child’s developmental level, and the child writes the answers in a specially prepared notebook. The answers are then reviewed together, checked for accuracy, and positively reinforced—rewarded and marked with a sticker provided by the publisher at the end of the booklet, as a motivational reward for the young reader.

6. Do your children learn Polish outside of the home? Over half of the respondents answered negatively. This may be due to the age of the children in the surveyed families, which is lower than the compulsory education age. Children under the age of 7 are not subject to compulsory education, according to the Polish system. Additionally, more than 18% of children are attending or attended Polish schools, while over 13% attend Polish classes at a Finnish school. A further 7.7% are online students enrolled in Polish distance learning projects—*Libratus* or *Polonijka*. Over 5% of individuals attend other Polish language classes or activities.

7. Do your children read in Polish? Do you read to children in Polish? The answers were reassuring: 80% read in Polish. The readers primarily focus on age-appropriate children’s and young adults’ literature. In addition, they read world children’s literature, such as books by Astrid Lindgren, Tove Jansson, Anne-Catharina Vestly, Mary Norton, or René Goscinny. The genre of comic books is also frequently mentioned. Some named detective stories, popular science books, culinary recipes, and instructional materials for tasks and games. Many respondents find it challenging to identify a single favourite reading material.

Recommended children’s books: *Mikołajek*, Rene Goscinny, Jean-Jacques Sempe; *W kieszonce*, Iwona Chmielewska; *Koń, który nie chciał się ścigać*, Clare Balding; *Nawet nie wiesz jak bardzo cię kocham*, Sam McBartney; *8+2*, Anne-Catharina Vestly; *Pożyczalscy*, Mary Norton; *Przygody Baltazara Gąbki*, Stanisław Pagaczewski; *Opowieści zamiecione pod dywan*, Agnieszka Zimnowodzka. Series: *Reksio*, Maria Szarf; *Pucio*, Marta Galewska-Kustra i Joanna Kłos; *Kroniki Archeo*, Agnieszka Stelmazyk; *Basia*, Zofia Stanecka; *Kicia Kocia*, Anita Głowińska; books by Grzegorz Kasdepke (a concrete title was not mentioned). Comics: *Kaczogród* Carl Barks, *Asterix* René Goscinny i Albert Uderzo, Jean-Yves Ferri i Didier Conrad, *Tintin* Hergé (Georges Remi). Poems for children: Julian Tuwim, Jan Brzechwa.

An excellent illustration of the development of the Polish language in one Finnish–Polish multilingual family is the practice of reading to children. In this family, the mother reads in Finnish, her native language, and the father reads in Polish, his native language. Reading to children is not limited to evenings, but sometimes takes place during meals, and commuting and is part of other daily routines.

8. Do you tell fairy tales/stories to children? Approximately 70% said that they tell or used to tell fairy tales and stories to their children. The results of many research papers indicate that the daily reading of books to children from an early age on helps to develop proper speech, as well as listening comprehension, and to facilitate the acquisition of reading skills. It also contributes to remembering details of content they have heard, expressing their own judgments and providing arguments for their opinions. Moreover, it affects the ability to calm down when agitated, it increases attention span, and it initiates cause-and-effect thinking (cf. [Madeja-Bień 2017](#)).

Reading is an effective way to build the child’s inner resources. Observant parents notice that their reading aloud to the children develops their language, memory, imagination, thinking, and concentration. In young children, richly illustrated books create connections between concepts and images. When a book inspires an older child, s/he is willing to discuss it with the parent, which strengthens the bond between them and helps develop a value system, thus contributing to the child’s emotional growth (cf. [Kozmińska](#)

and Olszewska 2010, 2014). “Community reading enhances the children’s experience and benefits the readers as well. Sensory reading invites children to participate in reproducing the words and images found in the book,” stated Małgorzata Swędrowska (2020)—creator of sensory reading in Polish pedagogy and methodology. It was rewarding to read that the interviewed parents realized the role of reading and storytelling for the HL development of their children.

9. How can you develop your children’s Polish language skills in other ways? This question sought to find out other ways of developing Polish skills besides reading and storytelling. Fifteen respondents mentioned communicating with family and friends in Polish, primarily through instant messaging. Watching Polish films in Polish or with Polish subtitles, programmes, series, and even cabarets and Youtubers, as well as online educational programmes, was also a popular method for improving language skills, with fifteen respondents mentioning it. Two respondents specifically mentioned watching Polish television, while one mentioned educational programmes on the internet. Twelve people spoke about listening to music, songs, and audiobooks, and four people mentioned singing in Polish as an important activity to develop language skills. Eight people pointed out that nothing works better than keeping on speaking Polish, with two of them proudly stating that they use the language every day and without any special effort: *We don’t do it in any extraordinary way, we just use the language. We answer children’s questions and tell them about the world in Polish, I talk to my child a lot. Speaking and writing to the children in Polish, quite consistently and despite their reluctant attitude is what is needed.* Some respondents also mentioned speaking and writing to the children in Polish, despite their reluctance to reciprocate. Seven individuals reported playing with children, with five of them specifically mentioning board games, e.g., *We play board games and other games by setting the rules in Finnish, we encourage the children to use their resources in both languages (Finnish and Polish), i.e., self-translation, language games and activities and instructions to them.*

Additionally, four individuals reported developing their Polish language skills through meeting other Polish families, while three individuals wrote about using visits to Poland as an opportunity to improve their children’s Polish: *During our time in the country, we make an effort to make the best of the various cultural opportunities available for children, including theatre, film, and museums; whenever possible, during our stay in Poland, we visit museums, open-air museums, go to the cinema, etc.* Two families mentioned teaching their children to read and write in Polish, while one person noted the importance of correcting mistakes and giving book recommendations for the development of the Polish skills. One individual responded with *I don’t know* and another with *I don’t develop*.

In conclusion, the results indicate that Polish migrant families in Finland place a high value on maintaining the Polish language. They use a combination of home-based practices, educational resources, and cultural activities to support their children’s bilingual or multilingual development. While challenges exist, particularly in writing skills and formal language instruction, the overall commitment to preserving Polish within these families is strong. Continued support, both within the home and through external resources, is essential for the sustained development of the Polish language in these communities. Families living abroad often underestimate the daily effort required to develop HL, which is often already integrated into their daily routines and rituals, albeit unconsciously. Some think that daily conversations about mundane things are sufficient, and do not realize that without reading, writing and discussing problems outside household issues, the heritage speaker’s proficiency stagnates. This lack of awareness may be reflected in responses such as ‘I don’t know’ or ‘I don’t develop their language skills’. In fact, in order to help children develop their HL, at least a basic knowledge of methodology is required, so professional help is needed. Reading in Polish is a common practice among these families, with 80% of parents engaging in it. The diverse range of literature mentioned, including both Polish and international works, suggests that reading is a key tool for language development. Storytelling is also prevalent, with about 70% of parents reporting they tell stories in

Polish. These activities are crucial for developing vocabulary, comprehension, and a deeper connection to the language.

4.2. Case Study of a Polish Family in Finland

The family which I discuss here have lived in Finland since 2010. They are a nuclear family: husband and wife and their three children, Jonatan, 12 years old, and two girls, Helena, 9, and Dobrawa, 6 years old. All three were born in Finland. The reason for the parents' migration to Finland was their careers. Both spouses are Polish, and Polish is the mother tongue of all members of the family and is the home language too. Finnish and English are spoken outside the home. All children attended Finnish-speaking kindergartens and schools.

The interview offers valuable insight into the natural and unforced approach to bilingualism within a Polish migrant family living in Finland. This family illustrates a case of balanced language maintenance, where Polish is naturally passed down within the household, while Finnish, as the language of the broader community, is also integrated into the children's lives. English is studied at school and widely used, as well as other foreign languages. This is how the mother describes the goals of the Polish language transmission:

Actually, we didn't think much about it. Dad believes that it's just the closest language, your language, and you pass it on naturally every day in the family. In a family where both parents are Polish and speak the same language, this is natural, and there are many such families. In the course of everyday life, you don't think about it. Before, the children went to daycare, and we sent them late compared to other families, who also criticized us a little for this. The older J. (now 12) went to a playgroup at three years old, it was his preparation, and to kindergarten at four years old. However, we didn't live in isolation from the Finnish language. Among acquaintances, there were mixed families, and in the catholic church (our family is catholic), there were those who speak Finnish. We didn't associate language so strongly with religion. There were many different languages around, and we participated in the liturgy in different languages, including Finnish, Swedish, English, Polish, German, Russian. It was more convenient for us to attend services organized specifically for families with children. We are the kind of family that observes all traditions, but it doesn't stress, we just live naturally. We are open to the language of the environment, but we also do many things at home in Polish, for example, prayers. For the children, this is absolutely normal. At the same time, all children sing in the Finnish choirs of a Protestant church, we also attend services there. This is also a simple choice because the choir is in close location from home.

The family's approach to language transmission aligns with research on HL maintenance, where the native language is passed on without deliberate planning or conscious effort. The father's belief that language is naturally transmitted within the family is consistent with studies that suggest HLs are often maintained in environments where both parents speak the same language at home (Fishman 1991). This natural transmission is particularly effective in homes where daily communication occurs exclusively or primarily in the HL. The role of religion should also be mentioned. While the family does not strongly associate language with religion, they participate in religious services in multiple languages, indicating an openness to linguistic diversity. This exposure to various languages through religious activities reflects a form of incidental multilingualism, where children are exposed to, and acquire proficiency in, multiple languages, through routine social interactions (King 2016). The use of Polish for prayers at home, coupled with participation in Finnish choirs and services, demonstrates a flexible approach to language use, reinforcing both Polish and Finnish in different contexts. The family's interaction with mixed-language families and their participation in community activities (such as the Finnish choir) indicate a positive integration into the local community, while maintaining their linguistic identity. This mirrors the findings of studies on immigrant families, which show that active participation in community life, including religious and cultural activities, supports the development of both the HL and the majority language (Scheele et al. 2010). The family's

approach suggests that they view language as a practical tool rather than a rigid cultural boundary, which may contribute to the children's balanced bilingualism (Lanza 2021).

Since the father has poor eyesight, the children have grown accustomed to constantly telling him about everything around them, which may have contributed to such a high level of development of their Polish language skills. It's worth noting the difference in the characters of the children. The eldest child is reserved, while the middle daughter (9 years old), on the contrary, talks a lot. When dad took them to karate classes, the journey took a lot of time. The eldest made do with only the essentials, while the middle child paid attention to completely different things, and the journey seemed completely different. Here it turned out that a lot of language had to be used. The eldest son attended a Polish school and completed four grades, while the middle daughter attended for two grades. Both of them participated in Libratus online project. The Polish school is quite far away and inconvenient for us. Similarly, attending another school where classes are organized for two hours a week. All families solve this issue differently for themselves; some attending Polish schools, some choose home schooling. We have one more special thing: dad has been telling a story with sequels for many years, which the children eagerly anticipate before bedtime. When the eldest had to stay overnight at a friend's place, he was about eight years old, he was worried, not because his parents weren't nearby, but because he wouldn't be able to fall asleep without this story, and he wouldn't know what happened next, since both siblings would hear the continuation. It's a story about bear cubs traveling by train in America at the beginning of the 20th century. Technological discoveries gradually appear, everything historically accurate. The characters have many different adventures; they explore the country, live with Native Americans. They mine gold, work on the farm, learn about nature, run a Sunday school, encounter unexpected situations and so on. An Italian named Giuseppe also appears. He is a scientist, who collects information for his research work on the nature and habits of the inhabitants of the United States of America. The story also often takes the form of a dialogue, with children asking questions about the story. The characters also comment on and become involved in the life of our family, remembering birthdays and other important family events. Very interesting stories, it's a pity we don't record them. Reading together with a child often involves shared storytelling.

The details provided offer a rich context for understanding how environmental factors, personal interactions, and creative practices contribute to the development of Polish language skills in immigrant children. The father's poor eyesight has necessitated a unique communicative environment, where children have taken on the role of narrators, describing their surroundings in detail. This constant verbal engagement likely plays a significant role in enhancing the children's language skills, particularly in Polish. This aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social interaction as a fundamental mechanism for cognitive development, where language is developed through active use and meaningful communication. The children's need to describe their environment to their father may have fostered an advanced level of descriptive language and narrative skills. The mother's story reveals a clear distinction between the language use of the two older children, shaped by their different personalities. The reserved nature of the eldest child contrasts with the talkative middle daughter, illustrating how individual differences can influence language practice. This variation is consistent with research suggesting that personality traits can significantly impact language acquisition and use (Dewaele and Furnham 2000). The talkative nature of the middle child likely provides her with more opportunities to practice and refine her language skills, resulting in a richer linguistic experience. The family's approach to education, including participation in the Libratus online project and the Polish school, reflects the diverse strategies immigrant families use to maintain the HL. The challenge of attending a distant Polish school is a common issue for immigrant families, who must balance convenience with the desire to maintain linguistic and cultural ties to their home country. This scenario is echoed in studies on HL maintenance, concentrating on the importance of flexible and accessible educational resources in supporting bilingualism

(Cummins and Swain 2014). The father's long-standing tradition of storytelling, particularly the serialized narrative about bear cubs, represents a unique and powerful method for language development. This practice not only enriches the children's vocabulary and comprehension, but also engages them in critical thinking and imagination. Storytelling, especially when interactive, has been shown to enhance children's narrative skills, cultural knowledge, and emotional intelligence (Isbell et al. 2004). The children's anticipation of these stories and their involvement in the narrative through dialogue further reinforce their engagement with the Polish language, making it a vital part of their everyday lives.

The effect of motivation of young heritage speakers is vivid. The mother said, *The middle daughter became very eager to teach Polish to her close friend, although her friend has never had any prior exposure to the Polish language.* In this context, the necessity for communication is fulfilled using the Finnish language. *Both girls communicate fluently in Finnish, which is their second language.* From the parents' observations and accounts, it can be concluded that the daughter's motivation was authentic and self-initiated. The parents were initially surprised by the idea, yet ultimately expressed a positive attitude. This resulted in a greater level of interest, excitement, and confidence. In turn, the effect is manifested both as enhanced performance and persistence and creativity.

The aforementioned characteristics were clearly discernible during the process of devising a "course plan" for the friend. This included estimation of time commitment (perhaps the would-be instructor over-optimistically assumed an equally high level of commitment on the part of the learner), a precise timetable of face-to-face sessions, homework assignments, and preparation of the materials—e.g., a workbook. A creative approach was also evident in reflections on the selection of teaching content. The mother continues:

What is particularly interesting is the structure of the children's 'course' and the reflections involved. First, the choice of topic was considered. It was decided that the calendar of traditional events would be appropriate as the basis. As Easter was recently celebrated, it was chosen as the starting point for the Polish 'lessons.' However, there were difficulties in selecting appropriate vocabulary to present Polish Easter traditions. The criterion for selection was phonetics, and so words such as chrzan/'horseradish' and szynka/'ham', kurczek/chicken were excluded [the child observed that they are difficult to pronounce for a non-native speaker]. The word 'babka' was ultimately chosen, as it is easy. It means a sweet pie and has positive associations.

This children's project encompasses two distinct aspects: the child in the role of a teacher, who is intrinsically motivated, and the learner, who is both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated. The child was completely free from any influence from her family in terms of decision-making and ideas in creating the project of teaching Polish to her friend. The daughter's enthusiasm for teaching Polish to her friend highlights the importance of intrinsic motivation in heritage-language development. Her self-initiated project reflects a deep personal connection to her heritage language and a desire to share it with others, which is a strong indicator of internalized cultural identity (Ryan and Deci 2020). The process of devising a course plan, despite being an informal and child-led endeavour, shows a remarkable level of commitment and creativity, underscoring the effectiveness of intrinsically motivated learning. The child's approach to teaching Polish, particularly her thoughtful selection of vocabulary and structuring of lessons, illustrates the potential for creative pedagogy, even at a young age. By choosing words that are phonetically easier for a non-native speaker to pronounce, the child demonstrated an understanding of pedagogical principles, such as scaffolding and tailoring content to the learner's needs (Taber 2018; Wood et al. 1976). This also shows an awareness of the challenges that language learners face and a willingness to adapt her teaching methods accordingly. The decision to focus on Polish Easter traditions as the first lesson highlights the role of cultural context in language teaching (e.g., Karlik 2023). By linking language learning to culturally significant events, the child not only teaches vocabulary, but also imparts cultural knowledge, which is essential for maintaining a heritage language. This approach aligns with research that emphasizes the importance of integrating cultural content into language education to

enhance motivation and cultural identity (e.g., [Kim 2020](#)). The fact that the child undertook this project without any parental influence exemplifies the role of autonomy in enhancing motivation and creativity. Autonomy-supportive environments, where individuals feel they have control over their actions and decisions, are known to foster greater engagement and persistence in tasks ([Ryan et al. 2006](#)). In this case, the child's autonomy in creating and executing the teaching plan likely contributed to the high level of excitement and sustained interest in the project.

The in-depth interview with the parents explains the natural transmission of language, emphasizing the significance of familial linguistic heritage. It reflects the interconnection between language and religion. The family's openness to linguistic diversity and engagement with various religious practices, facilitated by proximity and convenience, demonstrates a balanced approach to cultural integration. The interview explores the organic transmission of language within a Polish family in Finland, emphasizing familial linguistic heritage. It examines the interplay of language and religion. The parents' involvement facilitates the family's balanced engagement with linguistic diversity and various religious practices. Additionally, the father's visual impairment contributes to a communicative environment, benefiting the children's Polish narrative proficiency. The family's educational decisions, such as attending or not attending a Polish school, reflect diverse approaches to language and education. Overall, this case underscores the importance of personal interactions and supportive environments in shaping children's linguistic development and cultural integration. A bilingual person lives in two worlds, as [Wierzbicka \(2005\)](#) observes. It is understandable that the bilingual children would wish to disseminate their cultural identity to their immediate environment. The family plays an important role in this process, but there is a desire in the children to extend this cultural identity to their friends. The family dynamics, influenced by the father's visual impairment, fosters a linguistic environment where the children engage in constant communication, potentially enhancing their proficiency in Polish. The children's exposure to multilingual contexts, coupled with their autonomy in reading and writing, suggests a dynamic linguistic development influenced by familial and educational factors. This account provides a compelling example of how intrinsic motivation in young heritage speakers can drive language teaching and learning, even in informal settings. The daughter's initiative to teach Polish to her Finnish-speaking friend demonstrates the powerful role that motivation plays in language development and cultural transmission among heritage speakers.

Most families choose strategies that either involve using all means to support the home language, including attending schools or heritage-language classes, or prioritize acquiring the surrounding language. However, in this case, all languages are integrated into a multinational environment, with an international approach and multilingualism. For example, during a theatre festival in France, although there was an opportunity to see signs in Polish, the children relied on the support of the Finnish-speaking family, as there were fewer children there, and they needed assistance.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

The present study uses the results of a questionnaire survey circulated among 39 members of the Polish diaspora living in Finland, and of a qualitative case study of a Polish family with three children residing in Finland for 14 years, showing linguistic practices in Polish as a home language with a focus on the intricate dynamics of language maintenance. The paper outlines key characteristics of the Polish diaspora in the world and in Finland within the research context, presenting communication in Polish in expat families in various amounts of detail.

The study of language policy and language practices among Polish families in Finland shows that they have a positive attitude towards preserving the Polish language. They consider it important for communication with family members residing in Poland and in the diaspora, and for passing on cultural heritage. They make use of available opportunities for learning Polish. Parents place great importance on reading. They are familiar with

children's literature and are aware of various options for using educational and children's video and audio content. However, there are also families who simply talk occasionally with their children, without setting goals for comprehensive language development, apparently hoping that if the children move to a Polish-speaking environment, they will be able to compensate for what they did not learn earlier. The data revealed specific features of HL development within the Finnish context.

Maintaining an HL like Polish in a predominantly non-Polish-speaking society presents challenges, including limited access to resources and the dominance of the national language/s of the host country. However, the growing recognition of the importance of HLLs in bilingualism research offers new opportunities. Support from community organizations, advancements in digital learning tools, and increased availability of Polish-language media can all help families in their efforts to maintain Polish. For the Polish diaspora, narrative development and family language policy are pivotal in preserving Polish as an HL. By creating a supportive environment for language learning and cultural engagement, families can ensure that Polish remains a vibrant and integral part of their identity. As interest in HLLs continues to grow, the experiences and strategies of the Polish diaspora can serve as a valuable model for other communities seeking to maintain their linguistic and cultural heritage. Providing the rich context of stories, learners acquire and refine the linguistic tools necessary for fluent and effective language use.

The results of the survey show that Polish is used frequently within homes, with nearly half of the respondents using only Polish at home and 25% using both Polish and Finnish. Children speak Polish mainly at home (92.3%) and in specific situations like Polish school, church, and family interactions. Parents generally perceive their children's proficiency in Polish positively, with 63% rating it as very good to excellent. Children are willing to speak Polish, as claimed by 84.6% of parents. Strategies used to promote Polish include consistent use of Polish at home, reading and storytelling in Polish, engaging in Polish media (films, songs, and educational programmes), and communicating with family and friends in Poland. Bilingual and multilingual environments are common, with 30% of families using three languages at home. These environments foster the use of Polish alongside Finnish and English, among other languages, facilitating multilingual proficiency. Visits to Poland, which nearly all families undertake at least once a year, play a crucial role in maintaining language and cultural connections. These visits reinforce language use and cultural identity. Educational resources include Polish schools in Finland, online learning projects like Libratus or Polonijka, and tailored reading programmes. Over 18% attend Polish schools, and around 13% have Polish lessons at Finnish schools. Parents highly value maintaining Polish language skills, recognizing the importance of consistent use and cultural connections. They emphasize the significance of reading, storytelling, and regular communication in Polish to support language development. By addressing these aspects, the study contributes new knowledge on multifaceted aspects of language maintenance among Polish immigrant families in Finland, offering valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and researchers interested in immigrant language retention and bilingual education. By choosing one of the possible ways to support the Polish language in Finland, parents demonstrate that there are different paths to cultivating HLLs, and that the achieved level can fluctuate, with regard to both improvement and deterioration. The combined efforts of the family, the environment, and the children themselves yield the optimal result.

The experience of the family in this study reflects a pragmatic and organic approach to bilingualism, where the HL (Polish) is maintained naturally within the home, while the majority language (Finnish) is embraced through community involvement. Their story underscores the idea that language maintenance does not necessarily require strict strategies or conscious effort; rather, it can be a seamless part of daily life, especially in environments where multiple languages coexist. The family's openness to both languages and cultures allows for a rich linguistic environment where children can thrive bilingually, benefiting from the cultural and linguistic diversity around them. This case exemplifies

how immigrant families can successfully encounter bilingualism by integrating both the heritage and majority languages into their everyday lives in a balanced and stress-free manner. The contrast between the children's personalities and their respective language use demonstrates the role of individual differences in language acquisition. Moreover, the family's creative storytelling practice serves as a potent tool for maintaining and enriching the Polish language in a bilingual environment. The interview illustrates that language development in immigrant families is multifaceted, influenced by both external factors, such as access to education, and internal dynamics, such as family traditions and individual personalities. This case underscores the importance of adaptability and creativity in fostering bilingualism, showing that HL maintenance can be effectively supported through both structured and organic means. The effects of intrinsic motivation on the language development of young heritage speakers are significant. The daughter's self-directed initiative to teach Polish to her friend not only reflects her strong connection to her heritage, but also illustrates the potential for creative and culturally rich language teaching practices to emerge naturally when children are motivated from within. The children's project demonstrates how motivation, when coupled with autonomy and cultural relevance, can lead to enhanced language learning experiences that are both effective and meaningful. This case showcases the importance of fostering intrinsic motivation and providing opportunities for autonomous, creative engagement in HL development among young learners.

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Informed Consent Statement: Written informed consent for participation in this study was provided by the participants' legal guardians/next of kin. Written informed consent was obtained from the individual(s), and minor(s)' legal guardian/next of kin, for the publication of any potentially identifiable images or data included in this article.

Data Availability Statement: The data and methods in the manuscript are presented with sufficient detail. Other researchers can replicate the procedure. However, the data is not publicly available due to ethical reasons. If the readers have any questions, they can address the author per e-mail.

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Appendix A. Questionnaire in Polish

- Kiedy przyjechaliście do Finlandii? (rok)
- W jakim języku/ językach mówicie w domu?
- Jak Twoim zdaniem Twoje dzieci znają język polski?
- Czy dziecko mówi chętnie po polsku?
- Gdzie dziecko mówi po polsku?
- Do czego służy język polski—czy tylko do komunikacji codziennej, czy do zabawy, czy jest obecny w innych sytuacjach?
- Czy dziecko pisze po polsku?
- Czy dzieci używają jakiegoś komunikatora do kontaktu pisemnego po polsku?
- Czy dzieci jeżdżą do Polski i jak często?
- Czy myślicie o powrocie/wyjeździe na dłuższy czas do Polski?
- Czy dzieci uczą się polskiego poza domem?
- Czy dzieci czytają po polsku? Czy czytacie dzieciom po polsku?

Co czytacie po polsku?
 Ulubiona książka/ulubione książki w języku polskim.
 Czy opowiadacie bajki/opowieści dzieciom?
 Jak jeszcze rozwijasz znajomość języka polskiego Twoich dzieci?

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