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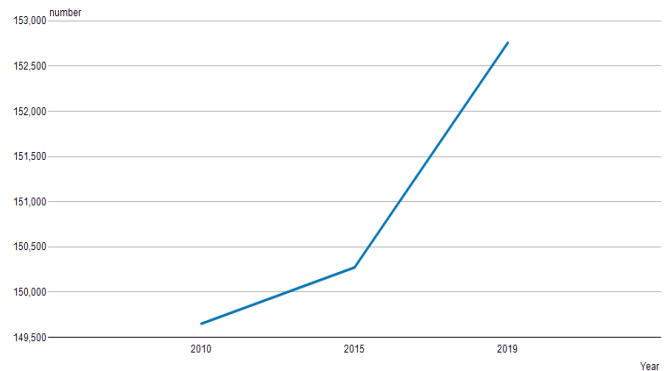
LANGUAGE POLICY NEGOTIATION WITHIN SINGLE-PARENT RUSSIAN-SPEAKING FAMILIES

ABSTRACT

Due to globalisation, transnationalism, and post structural societal processes, kinship, and family configurations have become diverse and recent development within the field of family language policy (FLP) points at the importance of examining language policy negotiation within non-normative families in more detail (Fogle & King, 2017). While previous research have mostly focused on normative or more traditional families where different patterns of FLP have been observed and distinguished (e.g., One Parent-One language; One Language - One Environment, etc.; see e.g. Lanza 2007) little is known about language policies and practices in one-parent families.

The current study focuses on examining family language policies within Russian-speaking single-parent families in Finland. The number of Russian-speaking single-parent families has experienced considerable growth in the last years in Finland. Furthermore, Russian-speaking families that live in Finland often have transnational and cross-cultural experiences which are likely to shape the language policies within the families. In order to examine the processes which shape LP within families I apply nexus analysis as analytical and theoretical framework (Scollon & Scollon, 2004). It allows to look at how interactional order, discourse in place and historical body shape social action taking place within families and sheds light on how and what kind of FLP comes into being in one-parent family configuration.

Families 31.12. by Year. Mother and children, Families.



Source: Families, Statistics Finland
Number of single-parent families in Finland from 2010 to 2019

CONTEXT

In Finland, single-parent families headed by women comprise over 10% of all families. However, within the Russian-speaking community, the share of one-parent families is even larger -- it comprises 15% of all Russian-speaking families and reaches 4,574 (Official Statistics of Finland, 2019). Research on single-parent families in Finland has addressed the issues of financial struggles, stress level, and family policy in relation to single mothers (e.g. Forssén, 2005, Joutsenniemi et. al., 2006, Hakovirta, 2011). While focusing on vital aspects of single parents' lived experiences, the existing body of research within the Finnish context lacks research where single-parenting intersects with language issues.

GOALS

- to unpack the layers of discourses, which shape language policy negotiation
- explore language ideologies, practices and management within single-parent families.

METHODOLOGY

Ethnographic approach, which includes:

- Interviews with Russian-speaking mothers who have experience raising their children bilingually as single mothers in Finland
- Video-recordings of naturally occurring interaction between mothers and children
- Photo ethnography with the following photo elicitation

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Oscar's calendar at home made by his mother.

CURRENT STAGE

- Seven interviews with mothers were conducted
- Two families agreed to participate in the follow-up. It resulted in about 5 hours of video-recorded interactional data.
- One child participated in photo ethnography and photo elicitation interview.
- At the moment interviews are being coded and analysed in Atlas.ti according to the nexus analysis framework.
- Preliminary results show that in some cases dominant ideologies concerning family language practices become internalized or appropriated by mothers and thus have a direct impact on family language policy formation. Furthermore, language practices at meso-level (i.e. with extended and non-residential family members and friends) become crucial within lone-parent families.