Foreign language learning at pre-primary level
parental aspirations and educational practice
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Joanna Rokita-Jaśkow

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Contents

Introduction 9

1. European language education policy 16
   1.1. Globalization, social change, and foreign language learning 17
   1.2. European language policy – context and directions 29
   1.3. European language education policy 45
   Summary 57

2. An 'early start' in a foreign language as an expression of parental educational aspirations 58
   2.1. Conceptualisation of the term ‘aspiration’ 59
   2.2. Determinants of aspirations 63
   2.3. An outline of psychological research on aspirations 69
   2.4. A sociological perspective on the role of educational aspirations 73
   2.5. The place of educational aspirations in foreign language learning theory 81
   2.6. The impact of the family environment on a child’s educational achievements and development of educational aspirations 85
   2.7. Educational aspirations of Poles at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries 107
   Summary 116

3. An 'early start' in foreign language learning: possible outcomes and limitations 117
   3.1. Defining goals of very early FLL and research directions 117
   3.2. The psycholinguistic aspects of very early L2 acquisition 119
   3.3. Psycho-pedagogical principles of early foreign language learning 144
   Summary 156

4. Rationale for the research project and research design 158
   4.1. Background to the study 158
4.2. Research methods used in the study of aspirations 162
4.3. The research design 165
4.4. Data analyses 175

5. Data presentation of the research project 177
5.1. A study of parental educational aspirations in reference to very young FL learners – quantitative data 177
5.2. Parental educational aspirations in reference to very early FL learning – qualitative data 204
5.3. Institutional provision for very young FL learners – a study of kindergarten head teachers 221
5.4. Institutional provision for very young FL learners – a study of FL teachers of very young learners 233
Summary 257

6. Data interpretation and discussion 258
6.1. A study of parental educational aspirations in reference to very young FL learners – data interpretation 258
6.2. Institutional provision for very young FL learners – a study of kindergarten head teachers 267
6.3. Institutional provision for very young FL learners – a study of FL teachers of young learners 271
6.4. Limitations of the research project 277

7. Final conclusions 279
7.1. A proposal for the model of development of child educational aspirations 279
7.2. Pedagogical implications 281
7.3. Suggestions for future research 285
7.4. Final remarks 286

References 287
Appendices 311
Streszczenie 339
Glossary of Abbreviations

BICS – Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (Cummins, 1978)
CALP – Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (Cummins, 1978)
CLIL – Content and Language Integrated Learning
EIL – English as an International Language
ELF – English as a *lingua franca*
ELP – European Language Policy
EPOSTL – the European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages
EU – European Union
FL – Foreign language
FLL – Foreign language learning
ICT – Information Communication Technology
L1, L2, L3… – first, second, third language
LAD – Language Acquisition Device
RQ – Research question
SDT – Self-Determination Theory
SES – Socio-economic status
SLA – Second Language Acquisition
TEYL – Teaching English to Young Learners
UG – Universal Grammar
VYL – Very young learner
YL – Young learner
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Introduction

The last two decades of research in applied linguistics, and in second language acquisition, have been influenced by two concepts: globalization and the social turn. The former has been prompted by movements of individuals, migrations, which has led to increased contact between people of various cultures and languages resulting in hybrids of language use, which has aroused the interest of sociolinguists. The social turn, on the other hand, denotes increasing attention to and interest in the social aspects of language use, such as language and identity, style and styling, language and gender. The social factors resulting from globalization have also had an impact on second language pedagogy, and such issues as equal access to language learning opportunities, ‘othering’ in English pedagogy and standards in English language learning and teaching (Ryan, 2006). In consequence a shift can be observed from a structuralist, individualistic idea of language acquisition to one which is more collective and driven by social forces (cf. Pavlenko, 2002).

The major focus of this book is the very young (i.e. pre-school, aged 3–6) learner of a foreign language, who learns it in an instructed setting, with limited language exposure, yet often with high expectations from his/her parents. It is clear that in the case of such a young child any educational decisions are made by his parents, and yet these may be affected by other external factors such as the family’s socio-economic position, which may facilitate or impede access to educational resources, the standard of education offered in the institutions the child attends (here: kindergartens) as well as in a wider socio-political context, the language education policy of a country. These are the social forces that impact upon the young child’s development.

Education has always been a means of advancement in a social stratum. In the past in the conservative traditions of Westphalian-type sovereign nation-states, when the economic market was regulated by the government, education was a mark of superior social status and to a large extent was inherited, just like other attributes (status, money, occupation etc.). Obtaining a qualifica-
tion from a prestigious university almost certainly guaranteed a well-paid occupation, which consequently allowed a high standard of living. Thus, as identified by Bourdieu (1986), people of higher education clearly had an economic and social advantage over those who did not possess such an education. In other words, educational and cultural capitals were easily converted into economic capital, which in turn enabled well-educated parents to make financial investments in the education of their children.

In the present day, referred to as the postmodern era, the traditional stratification into social classes seems to be less clear-cut and deterministic. Many postmodern societies appear to be more egalitarian, and financial social success does not depend merely on the family’s position in the social stratum, but also on individual effort and ambition, which enables the less privileged to participate in the success of the global economy as well. In the global, and usually consumerist society, success is perceived in financial terms. Good education, measured not by the number of diplomas, but by transferable skills desirable in the job market, is of high value. Creativity and good education are the basic components of human capital, which are of great necessity in today’s economy. These social changes imply that foreign language knowledge is likely to be regarded as a desired attribute in the global job market, and henceforth foreign language education can be regarded as a substantial requirement of good i.e. high quality education. Plurilingual competence (i.e. knowledge of several languages) can bring an educational and occupational advantage over others and therefore in Bourdieu’s (1991) terms can be regarded as a form of symbolic capital, convertible to other forms of capital (i.e. social and economic). Therefore foreign language education can be seen as a valuable investment, making many parents opt for a very early FL instruction for their offspring. The parental decision to start FLL early is often an expression of their own, often unfulfilled, aspirations. These may indicate a longing for higher standards of living as well as participation in the success of the global economy and a desire to belong to international society.

Such aspirations among Poles, to belong to an international community, are evident in e.g. giving children international names in preference to those which indicate their ethnolinguistic background. Many parents opt for names which have similar equivalents in other European languages, rather than for traditional Slavonic ones. The most popular names according to various reports in Poland in 2010 were Julia, Maja, Lena, Zuzanna, Natalia, Wiktoria, Weronika and Karolina for girls, and Szymon, Jakub, Kacper, Filip for boys (www.msw.gov.pl). Parents often claim that in case their children live abroad or function in a multilingual environment, their names should be easily recognizable and pronounceable. This
may indicate a desire to bring up their children in such a way that they will find their place easily and successfully in a global community, thus trying to develop within them an international outlook, and international identity.

Bringing up a child nowadays is perceived as a special project, a goal to fulfill. Many parents invest in the child’s education, and foreign language education in particular, as they hope this will bring fruitful results in the child’s future educational achievement, and consequently occupational success and high material status. Indeed, a popular daily newspaper in Poland Gazeta Wyborcza in spring 2012 initiated a global discussion of the issue by organizing the Child Project (Projekt Dziecko) platform for the exchange of ideas and different viewpoints on child rearing. Even from the views presented there, it is apparent that Poles do invest significant means and effort in their children’s education, and in foreign language education in particular. This is evident from the enrolment of children in private school/kindergarten education and organized forms of sport instruction etc. As regards foreign language education, this manifests itself in a very early start in foreign language learning. Starting early is assumed to result in (often native-like) competence in a foreign language, either due to the beneficial impact of learning at an early age or the overall length of instruction in that language.

By enrolling their children in early L2 instruction, many parents wish to secure the best educational and career opportunities for them, which reflects their educational aspirations for their offspring. In response to those parental wishes and aspirations, many educational institutions where FLL is not obligatory, decide to introduce it as an additional, usually fee-paying, part of instruction, as is the case in pre-primary instruction in kindergartens and even in nurseries, both public and private. Needless to say, there are numerous courses for young and very young children provided by language schools, sometimes as early as 1-year or even 3 months old, as offered by Helen Doron schools.

An early start in a foreign language is also one of the major directions of the European language policy, which has already resulted in the lowering of the starting age of learning L2 from ca. 10–11 years to the first year of schooling, i.e. 6–7 years of age in most European countries. Poland introduced compulsory foreign language learning from the first year of primary teaching in the educational reform of 2009. Prior to the reform, foreign language was often taught as an extracurricular subject, often introduced in schools under the pressure of parental demands. It can thus be seen that parental aspirations may have been one of the reasons for lowering the starting age of early L2 instruction, i.e. influencing the reform of language education policy.

For the time being pre-primary language education in Poland is beyond policy regulations. Yet, this may be subject to change under the influence of paren-
tual demands and aspirations. This is where parental aspirations and educational practice meet. Therefore the goal of this book is to describe current parental aspirations in reference to an early start in a FL, i.e. at kindergarten, and the educational reality that is offered to them. It is believed that voicing the aspirations may help to impact future language education policy planning.

Chapter One of the book starts with a brief description of the globalization process as a context for social and educational change. The key social phenomena described are the diminished role of the nation state, the rise of multilingual societies due to increased social mobility, and therefore problems with defining one’s social identity. Educational change pinpoints the rise of the knowledge economy and ‘creative class’, and hence the high value of education as a gateway to professional success. Globalization has also led to the dominance of English as the world’s lingua franca, seen by some as a threat to linguistic variety.

In this context, Europe is seen as a special instance of globalization, a site of struggle for preserving the heritage of ethnolinguistic diversity on the one hand, and striving for homogeneity in legislation, educational systems, standardization etc. on the other. European policy places high importance on life-long language education, which should not be restricted only to learning the official languages of the EU member states or English as a lingua franca (ELF). Europe is also home to a rich array of other languages, at times used only by ethnolinguistic minority groups. Yet, this richness should also be appreciated and measures taken to prevent many of the endangered languages from extinction. The main objective of European Language Policy is to aid the education of future pluri-lingual citizens of Europe. An ‘early start’ in a foreign language is one of the means of realizing this policy, which is presented on the basis of key documents, educational activities and tools.

Chapter Two deals with the topic of human aspirations and how they can be a motor of human activity, both from a psychological and sociological standpoint. Firstly, educational and parental aspirations are defined and classified and then their personal, environmental and pedagogical determinants are presented. Secondly, there follows a historical review of the evolution of the study of aspirations in psychological theory, such as its origin in achievement motivation theory, and then in attribution theory, self-determination theory, and in the current SLA model of L2 motivation, an Ideal L2 Self. Thirdly, educational aspirations are depicted from a sociological perspective as an incentive for social advancement and status attainment in the light of Wisconsin’s model of status attainment (Sewell et al., 1979), and Bourdieu’s social reproduction theory (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).
The following sections describe theory and research on the role of the family environment (both distal and proximal factors) and the educational achievement of the child as well as the rise of his/her own educational aspirations. It is shown that in many studies adolescent educational achievement is highly correlated with parental aspirations held for their children whereas high achievement in early schooling is dependent on cognitive and emotional stimulation provided by the home environment. No study on parental aspirations in reference to pre-school children has previously been conducted. These two observations have led to the proposal of a model of the rise of educational aspirations, which is an adaptation of Bronfennbrenner’s (1979) ecological model of human development. Finally, educational aspirations are also related to the current poststructuralist SLA theory, where language can be seen as an investment, a form of subject positioning, and a symbolic capital transferred intergenerationally.

The chapter concludes with a discussion of characteristics specific to Polish society, with a note on the re-birth of the Polish middle classes post-communism. The historical legacy of Poles (WWII and communism) makes the current (and rising) middle class different from that of Western Europe, which may impact the object and level of educational aspirations of the Polish middle class, as these are usually people with high educational aspirations.

Chapter Three gives a linguistic account of the plausible results of an early start in a foreign language. It presents key empirical studies on the impact of age of onset on L2 learning and ultimate attainment, both in naturalistic and instructional settings. Next it presents the benefits of bilingualism on the cognitive and affective development of a child. The concluding argument of this presentation is that learning a second/foreign language in a classroom, i.e. a minimal input situation can never achieve the same results as learning in a naturalistic setting. According to the Threshold theory (Cummins, 1976) the beneficial impact of early bilingual exposure should correspond to the level of exposure to the language. As a result the expectations of early L2 instruction should be modified. The eventual outcome of early L2 learning depends not so much on the age of onset but on the amount of exposure (frequency of classes, out-of-class contact, parental involvement etc.) as well as on the quality of instruction (teacher competences, techniques and tools used). Therefore the chapter concludes with an overview of recent pedagogical research focusing on raising the effectiveness of early L2 instruction.

Chapter Four presents the research design of the project, the major purpose of which is to investigate foreign language learning at a pre-primary level from a sociolinguistic and pedagogical standpoint. On the one hand, parental aspirations and expectations in reference to early FLL are investigated. On the other,
educational practice in this respect is scrutinized. Therefore the data on the issue is received from three sources: the parents of very young learners, their language teachers and kindergarten head teachers who are the major decision makers as to the form of early L2 instruction. Parental aspirations are investigated by means of questionnaires and qualitative interviews. On the basis of both qualitative and quantitative data the case studies of several very young learners of L2 are presented.

Chapter Five contains the quantitative and qualitative data presentation obtained from three studies carried out in reference to an ‘early start’ at a pre-primary level, i.e. parents, teachers and kindergarten head teachers.

Chapter Six presents the discussion of the research results and the implications for foreign language pedagogy.

As regards parental aspirations it is generally found that a high level of educational aspirations in respect of early L2 learning correlates with such variables as parental level of education and socio-economic status. Thus it coincides with findings from previous studies which confirm that high educational aspirations are typical of the middle classes.

From research on kindergarten head teachers, it can be concluded that those heading private institutions are more likely to respond to parental demands and provide better quality instruction. This is manifested in the closer supervision and more scrupulous selection of teachers, a wider choice of languages on offer (although English is always the first foreign language available) and the organization of intercultural/language awareness events etc. In selected kindergartens (those which aspire to be recognized as ‘FL kindergartens’, Przedszkola językowe (Pl.)), English classes are even held every day and English is present in daily kindergarten routines. In the case of public kindergartens the responsibility for language teaching is outsourced to external firms, thus leaving less control over the quality of L2 teaching (e.g. through lesson observation), and no room for educational initiatives enhancing children’s awareness of foreign languages and cultures. Needless to say, in private kindergartens all children usually participate in FL classes (it is included in the overall fee), whereas in public ones, only those whose parents are able/willing to bear the additional costs have access to classes.

The research on language teachers in kindergartens revealed that although the majority of them have satisfactory qualifications, still a lot of teachers are only philology students, or even lay persons with no qualifications. This is particularly the case where teachers are employed by firms supplying educational services to public kindergartens. The teachers seem to have little knowledge of the purpose of teaching FLs at such an early age. It seems that teaching lan-
languages to kindergarten children is only a passing phase in their career and the majority of them do not plan to work with that age group in the longer term.

To summarize, the book falls within the postructuralist framework of SLA research. Among many other things it pinpoints how socio-economic and socio-political factors impede/facilitate access to linguistic and educational resources and how society favours multilingualism and multiculturalism. It should be recognized that in order to promote the latter, educational policies should ensure equal learning opportunities. To fulfill this goal, substantial provision for higher quality training of foreign language teachers for young and very young learners should be made, perhaps at pedagogical departments, whose graduates should combine both linguistic and pedagogical skills. In addition, the purpose and potential benefits of very early L2 instruction should be more widely publicized among parents of very young learners and educators. Therefore it is hoped that the book will be of interest and use to a wide spectrum of readers involving experts and authorities at various levels of the education system, such as future language education policy makers, language and early years pedagogy teacher educators, heads of kindergartens, foreign language teachers of very young learners, as well as other researchers interested in very early teaching of a foreign language.
CHAPTER 1.

European language education policy

No language learning, be it first or second, takes place without context. In the case of first language acquisition it is the family which acts as the major source of input and reference to the child struggling with the meanings of its first words. In the case of bi- or multilingual acquisition it is the socio-cultural, economic and political demand of the wider world outside the family, which orients the learner towards the acquisition of subsequent languages. This recognition of the importance of the social context in which the learning of language(s) takes place, as Block (2003) called it a ‘social turn’, gave rise to a new line of research in applied linguistics in the last decade. Formerly, i.e. under the influence of cognitive and nativist theories, language learning was viewed as primarily individualistic, dependent on the inner characteristics of the learner. While this is not necessarily invalid, expanding the field of linguistic inquiry by reference to the social and cultural context in which language learning takes place, can aid its fuller understanding.

In the beginning of the chapter the phenomenon of globalization is described with emphasis on key aspects influencing changes in foreign/second language use and language behaviour, such as increased social mobility, growth of ‘the knowledge economy’, demand for highly skilled labour, uncertain social identity, less protective role of the nation-state and henceforth the need for individual self-reliance. Secondly, the necessity to protect (or even revitalize) Europe’s cultural and linguistic heritage is emphasized and exemplified by the situations of Basques in Spain and Kashubians in Poland. These facts constitute background for the subsequent presentation of the European language education policy with reliance on key documents. Here key terms for ELP are defined, such as multilingualism, plurilingualism pluriculturalism and intercultural competence. Finally, ‘an early start’ policy is closely discussed as a way of fostering plurilingual development of the future citizens of Europe.
1.1. Globalization, social change, and foreign language learning

Various aspects of society in the last two decades have been affected by the rapid process of globalization. It is this phenomenon that I would like to start with as a context for European language policy, which tries to counteract the sometimes negative effects of globalization. As Williams (2010) pointed out in the title of his recent book, language, culture and economy are interconnected, and they jointly exert an influence on individuals, their educational decisions and aspirations, also in reference to their children. As Ryan (2006:25) indicated ‘globalization is primarily a socio-economic phenomenon but its manifestations are evident in all areas of our lives, food we eat, clothes we wear, toys we buy, music we listen to etc’. Globalization is often epitomised by the processes of westernisation, Americanisation or even Europeanisation, thus signifying that similar attitudes and lifestyles are adopted around the globe. Appadurai (1990) distinguishes five areas or ‘scapes’ of globalization, which fully characterize the process. These are ethno-, techno-, finance-, media- and ideo-scapes, which refer to the international movement of people, technology, money, information and images, and ideas, respectively. These are the most powerful factors permeating every person’s life in the era of globalization. Henceforth, it is also necessary to discuss and analyse how globalization has affected language use and language behaviour.

1.1.1. Consumerism and emergence of the ‘knowledge economy’

Globalization should primarily be viewed as an economic and political phenomenon, which opened borders and facilitated the free flow of capital and goods. This, in turn, boosted the development of transnational corporations, which moved the manual production of goods to lesser developed countries with cheap labour, and thus made many products cheaper and immediately available in the corporate-host countries. Indirectly, by advertising and constantly creating new products, corporations together with highly influential mass media are also responsible for arousing huge consumerist appetites, which seem to shape individuals’ lives, identity, sense of happiness, values, goals and aspirations. Any product or service, including educational services, can be an object of consumption, thus satisfying the demand of many and bringing profit to the few. What is more, new consumerist needs are constantly aroused. Advertising and media create an image of happiness and self-fulfillment which can only be achieved through the constant acquisition and possession of new products.

Participating in consumerist culture seems to be a must as it allows the display of economic wealth and social status, thus marking a person’s social iden-
tity. Any product can have a positioning value (whether it is a known brand or not). Thus the decision to buy or not may be regarded as a form of social exclusion. Clearly, the socio-economic status of the individual has become more and more important, as it is a key positioning factor in many spheres of life. It allows one to obtain a better quality of goods and services, thus putting individuals with a higher socio-economic status in a privileged position.

Educational services can also serve consumerist demand. Many private schools, language education schools or sporting activity clubs etc. open in order to satisfy the demand of lay people created by media. This may, for example, be a reason for opening language schools for very young children (even as young as 1 year old), which seems to capitalise on the popular catchphrase ‘the earlier (one starts learning a foreign language), the better’. High quality general education, as well as language education, has also become an object of consumption, whereas its lack – an indicator of social exclusion. Good education is often regarded to be the key to entering better paid professions, working in which in turn guarantees better living standards and better educational opportunities for the children of such families. Thus wealth and good education to a large extent are transmitted intergenerationally, which widens the gap between richer and poorer. Not surprisingly, then, education is regarded by many caring parents as the key to obtaining better job opportunities and, consequently, a way of avoiding social exclusion.

However, the key questions to be asked are what education to invest in, which skills will bring employment, profit and financial success? Jobs which were in the past regarded as respectable and well-paid may have lost their prestige and reputation, alternatively there may be too few new openings for them or certain roles may have totally disappeared from a given market (this is particularly the case for manual labour, as production has been moved elsewhere) or been substituted by machines or computers.

The development of new technologies (computers, Internet) in the last three decades has changed the global economy considerably, firstly by enabling fast communication and cooperation between various branches of the same corporation worldwide, and secondly, by changing the skills set required of the labour force, from mainly manual skills to intellectual skills.

The modern economy, although still a capitalist economy, does not rely on human labour as its major resource, as the production of goods can easily be transferred to territories where such labour is less costly. What is, however, more difficult to find, is intellectual and well-educated labour, whose task is to create new ideas, products and technologies, for which new demand could be created. Thus education and creativity are key assets in the new, post-modern,
economy. Industrialism, as a form of capitalist economy, gave way to a new form of economy, which is based on knowledge, information, communication, technology and intellectual labour. Thus it is labeled as ‘the knowledge economy’ or ‘informational capitalism’ (Williams, 2010). Clearly, those societies, which have managed to accumulate highly skilled intellectual labour are the leading economies in the world, as in the case of the US, or as is becoming true of China.

‘The knowledge economy’ highlights the role of knowledge in economic practice. It is said to involve ‘a heightened role for human, as opposed to financial capital or natural resources in the economy. The creation of wealth is held to increasingly involve the generation and exploitation of knowledge’ (Williams, 2010:10). Therefore the relationship between Information Communication Technology (ICT) and work are noted. New technology allows access to scientific and technical knowledge, which in turn can bring additional advantages. The three essential ingredients of a successful knowledge economy are technology, skills and a highly educated labour force (Powell & Snellman, 2004 in Williams, 2010:11).

It is predicted that in the future it will be immaterial labour which will play the largest role in the economy. Immaterial labour involves scientific and technological research, training of the labour force and the development of management, communication and electronic financial networks. Jobs utilising intellectual labour will include: researchers, engineers, computer scientists, lawyers, accountants, financial advisors, publicists, editors and journalists and university academic staff as well as ‘the artists’ (musicians, actors, painters) (Williams, 2010:10). The jobs listed as examples also indicate what skills will be needed to perform them. These are first of all general analytical and reasoning abilities, (as manifested in general mathematical skills) which allow for creativity and innovation. ‘The so-called [creative] class is held together less by the relations to the means of production or income similarities than by the sharing of a common culture’ (Williams, 2010:11).

If this prediction is to come true, then it is not surprising that education towards participation in the ‘knowledge economy’ is an investment in an individual’s future. Thus good quality of education which will provide the skills required for the ‘knowledge economy’ has become highly valued and in (consumer) demand. Thus the goal of education in the knowledge economy is to educate ‘the learning society’, willing to constantly build on its intellect and creativity.

Individual plurilingualism may be an additional asset in the ‘knowledge economy’, as it enables one to partake in the already available resources of knowledge/science, often produced in the more powerful economies (such as the US) and it allows for social mobility in the search for better prospects in
life in the global village, and consequently enables communication outside the local culture. It constitutes an important component of human capital, as it enables communication and cooperation in a multilingual work environment, particularly common in global corporations. Therefore, if increasing human capital is key to innovation and growth, the inclusion of those skills should be of prime importance in the educational systems of those countries/nations which aspire to participate in the knowledge economy and the global market. Indeed, it was specified in the so-called Lisbon strategy (2000) that the European Union should become the world’s second leading economy by the year 2010 after the US. This resolution precipitated further political and educational acts, with the purpose of attaining this goal.

However, since 2008 the world economy has been hit by a serious economic crisis. Having started in the US, it has also affected Europe, which resulted in slowdown in economic development, increased unemployment rates and poverty growth, particularly in south European countries. As a result, the ideals of European integration and cooperation have been put on trial, since the richer countries are not always willing to help the poorer.

At the moment of writing this book (2011–12) it is evident that the goals of making Europe the most successful economy have not been fulfilled. Yet, the assumptions of European language policy seem to be further endorsed as the benefits of plurilingualism extend beyond political and economic goals.

1.1.2. Multilingual and multicultural ‘communities of practice’

Opening borders has allowed not only for a free flow of goods, but also of people, who search for work and better life prospects outside their homelands in ‘imagined communities’ (Anderson, 1991), where life is better, and opportunities for social advancement higher. This increased social mobility often brings into contact people of various ethnic origins, race, religion, culture, and language, thus leading to the creation of multiethnic, multicultural and multilingual communities (as in cosmopolitan cities) or even whole nation societies (as in today’s Britain or Sweden).

Also new technology i.e. computers and the Internet have enabled international contact without physical migration. It is possible to communicate in real time between managers of various corporate branches by video conferences etc. E-mails, online phone-calls, which cross intercontinental borders, are the realities of every day corporate life. Also youngsters use online chat-rooms and messenger systems to communicate over long distances. In virtual space they can get to know people, make friendships, fall in love, argue, break up etc. The op-
opportunities to meet new people from other countries seem to be unlimited. Globalization denotes ‘time-space distanciation’ (Giddens, 1991:21), which means that it has transformed our relationships with others. In traditional relationships close spatial proximity was required, but globalization has challenged this order.

Finally, it has never been easier to travel abroad than now. There are numerous opportunities for travel, either for business or leisure purposes, which with global tourist agencies, online booking and budget airlines has become easier and cheaper than ever before. Needless to say, thousands of young people have an opportunity to study for a few months abroad within the EU sponsored Erasmus programme. Meeting foreigners, speakers of other languages and cultures, can be a common reality for many. So it can be argued that nowadays people of various ethno-linguistic backgrounds meet, work, study, and often live, side by side. This means that they must develop common rules of conduct which will enable peaceful coexistence and/or cooperation. Clearly, it is knowledge of interlocutors’ language(s) that enables communication and mutual understanding.

### 1.1.3. The changing role of the nation state

International mobility has done away with traditionally monolithic societies, which characterized traditional nation-states, also referred to as Westphalian states. The Westphalian type of state, also referred to as the modern state, developed together with the emergence of an industrial society and was characteristic of social stratification. ‘The state served as the integrated form of social consciousness, linking social classes with the nation’ (Williams, 2010:4). A central legitimising force of the state was its ability to protect its economy by limiting access to its labour market.

The national society was integrated by a common official language, religion, governance, and clearly marked and rather closed borders. An individual’s social identity, i.e. citizenry, was marked by the nation-state he belonged to. Members of such a society usually shared the same customs, traditions, history, and overall cultural heritage. Language is the major tool of disseminating culture. As Williams (2010:4) put it,

‘Language emerges as a specific object within the discursive formation that links nation and state, involving the institutional structure that can legitimise or delegitimise discourses, and that has the right to speak about specific issues, and the role of language as an object in such ‘speaking’.’
Consequently, ethnolinguistic minorities who lived within monolithic and monolingual countries very often had to succumb to the dominant culture and sovereignty, and their own cultural and linguistic heritage remained unappreciated, as was the case with linguistic minorities in post-war communist Poland (Komorowska, 2011).

Globalization has also changed the role of the nation state. Individual citizens do not necessarily identify themselves with their states and nations as limited by borders, but perhaps feel they are citizens of a cosmopolitan world. In a ‘cosmopolitan world’ actors from quite different ‘traditions’ are in contact. Giddens (2002:36) called it ‘detraditionalising society’, understood as ‘freedom from the constraints of the past’. Additionally, Williams (2010) notes that traditional governments of nation states have lost their power and authority to the benefit of supranational pan global institutions, such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund etc. Multinational corporations also dictate the rules by regulating the economic market, i.e. by arousing consumerist needs and satisfying them. The global economy minimises the role of the state, but in turn it calls for the unification of markets and free circulation of capital. This is also the basis of neo-liberalism, which is a ‘political project concerned with institutional change’ (Williams, 2010:7), which denotes that governments seriously ‘reduce their engagement in the economy, and secondly use the freed resources to increase completion through structural reforms, so as to enhance the smooth management of the economy’ (2010:7).

Among other drawbacks of globalization Williams (2010:194) notices that it ‘uses technology and relates to a form of politics that sanctions economic deregulation, and according to some, an emphasis on a specific form of democracy.’ Therefore Giddens (2002:15–16 in Williams, 2010:195) argues that globalization contributes to a ‘heightened degree of global inequality’.

Another change will be connected with the new form of polity. The role of individual state sovereignty seems to diminish as it has to comply with the demands of operating within a global context. Therefore an emergence of a supra-state form of governance, such as the European Union, seems to be a necessity. The EU now seems to move towards strengthening its decision making authority by reference to the constituent member states. The tension between universalism and particularism is clear. Williams (2010:219) points out that one of the effects of globalization is how the EU has been transformed ‘from an economic union into what increasingly appears like the early stages of state formation. States strive to retain sovereignty by reference to the movement of people, yet the sovereignty is increasingly limited as regards the movement of capital, markets and information across frontiers’ (2010:219).
1.1.4. Social identity

Every individual defines himself by the kind of community he belongs to. An individual identifies with other members of the same community with whom s/he socializes and shares similar characteristics, such as race, religion, gender, language, sporting events etc. These are the components of a person’s social identity.

The previous form of capitalist economy, i.e. industrialism, was associated with modernity, a concept used to describe the position of the human in society as well as other aspects of social life. However, as industrialism is seen to be in demise, the modern economy destabilised and deregularised, and so the position of the human in modern society is seen as unstable and uncertain, as there are no fixed rules regulating the position of a person in society. In such a situation a new form of modernity arises, sometimes referred to as late or high modernity or even postmodernism (Williams, 2010).

The socio-political and socio-economic changes associated with globalization have also brought to individuals a range of many new available identities, yet this plurality of identity options is seen as threatening, as on the one hand, an individual does not have a straightforward identification with the nation state, and on the other hand s/he may feel at a loss not finding a stable point of reference for himself, especially as the pace of life is fast and changing. There are too many identity options available, and an individual can accept several identities simultaneously, presenting different ones on different occasions: in the public and private space. Thus s/he has to undergo constant intrapersonal negations of identity.

Giddens (1991:1) argues that ‘one of the distinctive features of modernity is an increasing interconnection between two «extremes» of extensionality and intentionality: globalizing influences on the one hand and personal dispositions on the other’. In his view the new self-identity is shaped by the institutions of modernity. Here he recognizes the powerful influence of the mass media and tools of electronic communication in presenting to individuals a variety of identity options as well as creating the identities aspired to. For example, one of the promoted identity options is that success is estimated by wealth, youth and a relaxed lifestyle.

An individual has to make constant choices between the identities offered to him by the cultural heritage passed on by his ethnic/national community, family and that offered by the new media, or other people via forms of electronic communication (e.g. social networks like Facebook). This may lead to breaking away from traditional ways of life, the so-called rites de passages, which were
passed down from generation to generation on both a collective and global level. As Giddens (1991:33) said,

‘modernity breaks down the protective framework of the small community and of tradition, replacing these with much larger, impersonal organization. The individual feels bereft and alone in a world in which she or he lacks the psychological supports and the sense of security provided by more traditional settings.’

He continues to argue that the freedom to choose a preferred lifestyle, a new identity, is illusory. The lifestyles are in fact ‘pre-established forms of behaviour’ dictated by markets. Although they appear to stress individual rights and responsibilities, in fact they promote individualism and consumption. ‘Market-governed freedom of individual choice becomes an enveloping framework of individual self-expression’ (Giddens, 1991:197). Therefore the contemporary human has to constantly make choices. His life politics is one of them. Only a person who is devoid of influence by others, i.e. a person who has attained levels of authenticity and self-actualisation can truly benefit from the available choices.

By contrast, Nikitorowicz (2005) notes that one of the side effects of globalization is the growing activity of local and regional communities, being processes which arise out of fear of globalization, which is largely beyond an individual’s control. In other words, the more strongly we are aware of global processes, the more we become aware of our own heritage and roots in local/regional cultures. This phenomenon is called ‘glocalisation’. Bauman (1997:61) defines this process as ‘selecting and integrating organic globalizing and localising trends – it consists of the redistribution of privileges and shortages, riches and poverty, power and helplessness, freedom and enslavement’ (the author’s translation). Glocalisation is a process of world re-stratification, i.e. stratifying it again on new principles. People admit their local ethnic identity and become even proud of it, which contributes to the revival of many ethnic languages.

Another important concept associated with the creation of new identities is imagination. Individuals imagine themselves as belonging to or aspiring to join other communities, the ‘imagined communities’ (Anderson, 1983) In those communities they believe they have obtained new social status and social prerogatives. The imagined community is by its nature dynamic and specific to the individual. As Ryan (2006:40–41) indicates

‘the learner is constantly creating and recreating an identity in response to the altering perceived demands of membership of the imagined community. Membership and participation in the activities of this community do not occur through
direct engagement with other members of the community; they occur in the imagination.

For many individuals, Europe (or the European Union) can constitute such an ‘imagined community’, as belonging to it is associated with enhanced career opportunities, mobility and participating in economic success.

As the role of the nation state in the globalizing world has diminished, a question concerning the importance and value of the nation arises, whether it is still a major determinant of a person’s identity or whether it has given way to a new form of global community. Would accepting a new ‘cosmopolitan identity’ mean that the national identity would be abolished?

Byram (2008) believes that adopting a new identity is possible, provided there is acceptance of it among other members of the community one aspires to join. The agreement to accept a new member usually depends on sharing common heritage, history, dress, and language among other things. Since there are so many things one has to abandon, and so many one has to adopt, changing one’s national identity is rather rare, as one may live in a community for a long time but never be totally accepted by it. Therefore one may have a kind of bi-cultural identity, trying to put up with the requirements of the old national identity as well as aspiring to join a new host community. In the case of Europeans adopting a new kind of identity, a European or international identity, without abandoning the national one, is an option, especially for ‘enthusiastic linguists’ (Byram, 2008).

A similar concept aiming to reconcile two identity options, i.e. the national and the supra-national, was proposed by Yashima (2002) in respect of motivation for FL learning. She coined a term ‘international posture’. It is defined as ‘interest in foreign or international affairs, willingness to go overseas to stay or work, readiness to interact with intercultural partners, and […] openness or a non-ethnocentric attitude toward different cultures’ (Yashima, 2002:57). Thus, an ‘international posture’ does not require full integration with the new community and abandonment of the old one. In FLL the integrative motive has been replaced by a new motive, i.e. showing a general interest in languages, and attitudes of openness and curiosity.

1.1.5. The emergence of English as a global lingua franca

Increased social mobility and unavoidable contact with persons from a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds has created a need for a common lingua franca to facilitate intercultural understanding. English naturally emerged to be such a language.
In this respect, a renowned British linguist Crystal (2003:7) emphasized the rightfulness of the hegemony of English, not so much by the number of speakers worldwide (who speak English already as a first, second or foreign language), but because of the link between language use and economic, technological, political and cultural power. Thus he sees the origins of the spread of English in the success of people who speak it as their mother tongue on the international scene. He pinpoints that already in the 19th century Britain was the world’s leading industrial and trading country. English became widely spoken in the overseas territories, and so established its supreme role as the language of rule and power. It continued to be a widely used language in the 20th century as the USA emerged as a new superpower, with a huge and constantly growing population of American citizens (and English speakers). Owing to the American supremacy in the world economy, which substituted the role of politics in exercising dominance and control, the English language continued to be associated with power and prestige.

By contrast, Phillipson (1992, 2009) argues that the hegemony of English is unjustified, as it reflects colonial/imperialist aspirations, and sanctions the economic interests of the global capitalist system. The spread of English is tied to ‘an uncritical endorsement of capitalism, its science and technology, a modernisation ideology, monolingualism as a norm, ideological globalization and internationalization, transnationalisation, the Americanisation and homogenisation of the world culture, linguistic culture and media imperialism’ (Phillipson, 1992:247).

For these reasons the dominance of English threatens other languages. This process is labeled with such demeaning phrases as ‘linguistic imperialism’ (Phillipson, 1992) and ‘linguistic genocide’ (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). Phillipson (2003) has even coined the term ‘linguicism’ to refer to a form of discrimination of minority language speakers by those who speak the dominant language. Favouring English as a global language may then denote that many of the world’s speakers, especially those who in Kachru’s (1986) classification fall into the Extending circle (non-native speakers of English, for whom it is a foreign language) fall prey to the discrimination of the global language. Linguicism is therefore a mark of social inequality. To prove this point, Phillipson (2006:357) further says,

‘Linguistic imperialism dovetails with communicative, cultural, educational, and scientific imperialism in a rapidly evolving world in which corporate-led globalization is seeking to impose neo-imperial world order. […] We may be moving in the direction of global linguistic apartheid of the kind that the first prime minister of
independent India, Nehru, warned against, the emergence of an English-knowing caste at the summit of national or international society.'

Shohamy (2006:144) further endorses this view by claiming that in countries where English is not spoken as an official language,

‘it is knowledge of the powerful global language, English, that often serves as a class marker enabling entrance to power groups in terms of education and social class and others such as universities and the labour market – while excluding others.’

By contrast those who cannot speak English are the new form of underclass, whose ‘participation and representation are minimized’ (Shohamy, 2006:144).

A knowledge of English in today’s globalized world can serve as a new form of capital, a linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1991). This position of English can create tension between those who know it and therefore are in power, and those who do not know it and therefore are marginalised and excluded. The consequences of such a situation can be twofold: on the one hand, there is a need for proactive language policy and planning to protect the world’s linguistic variety and oppose the hegemony of English. On the other hand, globalization processes call for the use of one common language. Consequently, language policy planning falls in between those interventions, i.e. between ideology and practice.

‘It is through a variety of overt and covert mechanisms, used mostly (but not exclusively) by those in authority, that languages are being manipulated and controlled so as to affect, create and perpetuate «de facto» language policies, i.e. language practices. These mechanisms are used overtly and covertly in conversations and negotiations as well as in fierce battles in order to exercise control over the language space. […] The mechanisms are in fact language policy tools’ (Shohamy, 2006:xv).

More precisely, the tools may denote language education policy, language tests and language in the power space. To a certain extent, European language policy and planning seems to fulfill this goal by trying to promote multilingualism and linguistic and cultural diversity (cf. Ch. 1.2).

On the other hand, it seems necessary to accept a utilitarian function of English as a lingua franca, and not to perceive it as a threat but as a commodity. Learning English should no longer be associated with the desire to assimilate to the Anglo-American culture but for instrumental reasons. Clearly, English is already used worldwide as a means of global communication, whether it concerns
face-to-face interactions in business meetings, or internet usage. English is also used by people with varied proficiency and norms, thus internationalisation and destandardisation are its major characteristics (Seidlhofer, 2004: 212). 80% of its users are non-native speakers of English. Therefore the usage of English should no longer be evaluated by native-speaker norms. Hence a more balanced approach would be to call it an international language (EIL, e.g. Jenkins, 2000; McKay, 2002).

Recognizing English as an International Language bears many consequences for its pedagogy. The native speaker model is no longer the norm, and a prospective learner should have the opportunity to be exposed to a variety of types of English, including usage by non-native speakers.

The rights of non-native speakers of English should also be recognized and legitimised, and ELF users should be recognized as agents in the development and widespread usage of the English language. Therefore the goals of EIL pedagogy are establishing new norms of correct language use, in which the criterion of ‘intelligibility’ plays a leading role (Jenkins, 2000). In addition, it is recommended that EIL professionals should ensure that learning English is not elitist. At the same time they should appreciate the linguistic diversity of the learners as well as their cultural background. Teaching materials (textbooks etc.) should take into account the local culture of learning, which calls for intercultural teaching (McKay, 2010).

EIL pedagogy also implies a change of motives for FLL. Globally most learners choose English as a first second language to learn. This decision is mainly driven by instrumental motives, such as the opportunity to travel, professional advancement etc. The shift from integrative to instrumental motives for learning languages can be observed in e.g. a large-scale longitudinal study conducted in Hungary. Dörnyei, et al. (2006) studied language preferences and motives to study among secondary school learners at three key historic moments: the collapse of communism in 1989, the development of the free market in the 1990s, and the accession to the EU in 2004. It was aimed at observing how these political changes influenced the attitudes of individual secondary school learners to foreign language communities and their languages. The results showed a shift from learning mainly Russian in the 1990s (due to a shortage of other language teachers), through an increased, although limited, interest in other western languages (in ranking order: English, German, French, and Italian) in the mid-1990s, to the sole dominance of English in 2004.

Additionally, Lamb (2004) observed that instrumental and integrative motives nowadays cannot be easily distinguished. In a study conducted among 11–12-year-old Indonesians learning L2 English, he noticed that the learners’
integrative desire was connected not with a particular Anglophone culture but with a desire to belong to global society, in which English is a means of communication. Thus speaking English had an instrumental value as it helped to achieve integrative goals. Lamb (2004) argues that these adolescent learners aspire to a ‘bicultural identity’, which involves their L1-speaking Self and an English-speaking globally involved version of themselves.

These studies seem to imply that the spread of English may reflect aspirations to join the wider world, and therefore they do not reflect the imposition of Englocentric values. While the spread of English may be a result of colonial imperialism, it is also welcome in many parts of the world by its non-native users, who in a sense wish for ownership of English (Brutt-Griffler, 2002). Kachru in his book *Alchemy of English* (1986 in McKay, 2010:96) says: ‘knowing English is like possessing the fabled Aladdin’s lamp, which permits one to open, as it were the linguistic gates to international business, technology, science and travel.’

Following this concept of English as providing linguistic power, McKay (2010) provides examples of research on foreign language learners’ narratives, who believe that if they only learn that language they would benefit from social and intellectual mobility. Therefore English language learning is a kind of investment in their future prospects. The studies quoted refer to speakers from a variety of settings worldwide, not necessarily European, thus indicating the universality of the phenomenon. An important study refers to South Korean mothers (Park & Abelmann, 2004) who, regardless of economic class, desired that their children learn English, which will in turn enable them to participate in the cosmopolitan world. Yet, as the researchers admit, only wealthy mothers could afford such investments in L2 learning by educating children abroad or giving them private lessons. The less affluent mothers, not able to secure such investments, still enjoyed the dream of sending their children to the bigger world, ‘even if they had to live abroad as beggars’ (Park & Abelmann, 2004:654 in McKay, 2010:97). What is striking is the common and unfounded myth that knowledge of a powerful language alone is a satisfactory prerequisite for joining the cosmopolitan world, whilst in reality it takes many more attributes to gain entry.

1.2. European language policy – context and directions

1.2.1. Historical background of the EU

The European Union is perceived as a supra-state, as through its executive and legislative bodies it impacts the policy regulations of its member states. Thus often the process of European integration is referred to as ‘Europeani-
sation’ (Phillipson, 2003) and is perceived as an instance of globalization. Its institutions and organizations, such as the European Parliament, the European Commission and the European Monetary Union make laws and regulations which are obligatory for the governments of individual member states. Indeed, 80% of national EU member legislation is governed by decisions taken at the supranational level (Phillipson, 1999). At the same time belonging to the EU is an aspiration for many individuals, as it promises acknowledgment of rights and enhanced educational and career opportunities.

The beginnings of the European Union go back to the European Coal and Steel Community, founded in 1950 by six European countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands). The idea developed from the still fresh remembrance of the atrocities of World War Two and the desire to prevent such events in the future by promoting mutual cooperation in trade and industry. Indeed, the next step in the Treaty of Rome was creating the European Economic Community (EEC) or ‘the Common Market’. In 1968 customs duties among the six countries were removed, which allowed for the free flow of goods. In 1973 the community started to expand by accepting new members in the Western block. The fall of communism in 1989 contributed to the further expansion and the unification of the European market. The foundation of the European Union was legislated by the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 (which came into effect in 1993), together with the guarantee of four freedoms in the single market, i.e. the free flow of goods, services, people (i.e. without passports) and money. On 1 May 2004 Poland together with 9 other countries became a member of the European Union.

In 2011 the European Union comprised 27 countries (http://europa.eu/about-eu/eu-history/index_en.htm). Each member state contributes to the community its heritage, culture, language, customs, religion etc. It is therefore the largest community worldwide, which aims to integrate and unite so many different people.

Indeed, one of the leading European mottoes is ‘unity in diversity’ (proclaimed on 4th May 2000), which calls for the recognition and appreciation of the heritage and culture of each member state as well as mutual understanding. The European Union, which was initially started as a purely economic enterprise, is now a political, economic body, playing a role in nearly every European’s life, often as a supra-state over the nation-state. Every EU citizen has a chance to partake in European politics by participating in the elections of their representatives to the European Parliament. Needless to say, nearly every individual can participate and share in the achievements of European policy, e.g. by enhanced mobility and the chance to study/work abroad.
Language education therefore occupies a prominent place in European education policy. It is obvious that language is a key to communication and getting to know other people and cultures. Mutual understanding and cooperation can further enhance attitudes of openness and tolerance towards the Other, thus contributing to peace and stability. In addition, joint cooperation in education contributes to the development of economy, democracy and culture (Gajek, 2005:11). Knowledge of foreign languages is indispensable for the use of digital technologies as well as for professional mobility, international cooperation in education, culture, science, trade and industry. At the same time it is pointed out that a lack of plurilingual skills can lead to marginalisation and social exclusion, hence it is the goal for each EU member state to cater for the needs of their citizens and the demands of life in the future.

Such expectations for the future development of the European Union, which perceived foreign language learning as an indispensable component of human capital and a requirement of the knowledge society, was announced within the Lisbon strategy. It was agreed that within the next ten years the European Union should ‘become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion’ (Presidency Conclusions Lisbon European Council 23 and 24 March 2000, available at http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1_en.htm). More precisely, the strategy implies that serious investments should be made into human capital by catering for its lifelong education and training systems, for example by the development of local learning centres, the promotion of new basic skills, in particular in information technology and foreign languages, complemented with an increased transparency of qualifications, e.g. by promoting a universal format for CVs or by standardising exams (in IT or language skills). The purpose of these measures was to enable enhanced mobility among students, teachers, training and research staff as well as professional workers and consequently to enable universal recognition of skills.

These assumptions show how a widely recognized education system, which caters for foreign language and digital skills in particular, has become a major concern of European education policy. Indeed, educating a European citizen, who would be aware of the common heritage and shared values, is the goal of European ideology, as expressed by its executive body Council of Europe in its founding convention. It aims to ‘develop mutual understanding among the peoples of Europe and reciprocal appreciation of their cultural diversity, to safeguard European

* The effect of this resolution is for example the standardisation and unification of IT and language skills in ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence) and TELC (The European Language Certificate) certificates respectively.
culture, to promote national contributions to Europe’s common cultural heritage respecting the same fundamental values and to encourage in particular the study of the languages, history and civilization of the parties to the convention (i.e. member states)’ (http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/cadreprincipal.htm).

The Lisbon strategy founds its continuation and reconfirmation in a document summarizing the Spanish presidency of the EU in 2002, later on referred to as the Barcelona strategy (Presidency Conclusions, Barcelona, 2002). In this statement the European Council indicated the major lines of development in education up to the year 2010, which was characterized by ‘improved quality, facilitation of universal access, and opening-up to the wider world’ (Presidency Conclusions, Barcelona, 2002:19).

In order to pursue this goal the European Council in article 44 identifies the necessity of improving the quality of foreign language learning, which could be attained by the introduction of two foreign languages from a very early age. In addition, it is recommended that to aid foreign language learning the following measures should be adopted: ‘establishment of a linguistic competence indicator in 2003; development of digital literacy: generalization of an Internet and computer user’s certificate for secondary school pupils’ (Barcelona Presidency Conclusions, 2002:20). The strategies announced at the summits in Lisbon and Barcelona set out the directions for European language education policy, recognizing the importance of foreign language knowledge as an asset of human resources. This, in turn, precipitated further activities, such as issuing reports on the current language learning situation and policy guidebooks, aimed at developing future plurilingual citizens of Europe. Among them the most important document is the one entitled ‘Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment’. It specifies FL learning objectives in reference to knowledge and skills required at a particular language level with a strong emphasis on achieving communicative ability. Thus it constitutes ‘a basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks etc. across Europe’ (Council of Europe, 2001:1).

1.2.2. Protecting the linguistic and cultural heritage of Europe

Europe has an extremely rich linguistic and cultural heritage. Being home to various nations and ethnolinguistic communities, it presents a vast array of languages used and traditions and habits practised, which constitute Europe’s unique nature. Neighbouring ethnolinguistic communities enjoy the protection of their own nation-states, e.g. Poles and Germans, Spaniards and the French etc.
Yet, it should be noted that within the borders of the EU states, communities speaking other languages live alongside the majority population; these are referred to as ethnic minority groups. This is typically in the border areas, where wars and peace treaties have left speakers outside their ethnolinguistic nation state, as in the case of French and German speakers living in Alsace, now a part of France, yet before WWII belonging to Germany (the region has indeed been a contentious area between the two countries for many years), Hungarians living in Romania and Slovakia or many Poles living within the borders of the Ukraine, Byelorussia, Lithuania or people of Ukrainian, Byelorussian and Lithuanian descent likewise remaining in the eastern parts of Poland.

Some communities have arisen due to migration; people who fled from wars and natural catastrophes and have settled in other areas, or wandering tribes who have now settled, as in the case of the Lemko people, who came from the regions of today’s Romania and settled in the south-east Precarpathian region (http://lemko.org/polish/zakorzenienie/index.html).

There may also be linguistic communities, which despite having occupied the same territory for centuries, have never had their own state, being either too small in numbers or too weak in political power. Such communities are numerous across Europe, for example Bretons in France, Lusatian (Sorbs) in south-east Germany, Basques and Catalans in Spain and France, or finally Kashubians in central-north Poland.

For centuries speakers of these ethnic minority groups coexisted with speakers of other groups and lived in the same territory. They passed their language, their culture, their ethnolinguistic identity to their children from generation to generation. Preserving the language was possible since the language was used mainly at home and within the community. It was mainly passed in the oral form, as no obligatory schooling was offered.

This situation mainly persisted till the middle of the 20th century. A case in point may be the situation of pre-war Poland, where multilingualism was a widespread phenomenon, and members of other than Polish ethnic groups constituted ca. one third of the population (cf. Komorowska, in press). Poles, Ukrainians, Jews, Lithuanians and Byelorussians, to name just a few, all lived alongside each other. Yet, World War Two extermination and migrations, as well as post-war communist language policy promoting linguistic homogeneity, resulted in diminished numbers of ethnic minority groups, which today constitute only a small fraction of the population, less than 2% (The National Census 2011 Report available at http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/12773_PLK_HTML.htm).

Similar processes took place in other European countries, which may indicate that the cultural and linguistic richness of Europe is seriously endangered.
Many of the ethnic minority languages could soon disappear and be inadvertently lost. The reasons for such a situation are manifold. Certainly, the major cause is political. Speakers of those languages which have been in power for many centuries have discriminated against speakers of ethnic minority languages. The ‘one dominant language’ policy was particularly advocated in the 18th and 19th centuries where the modern nation-states were being formed, such as in France and Spain. It was believed that linguistic homogeneity could strengthen national identity and also lead to greater economic success. Henceforth only one official language was accepted in the public sphere and minority languages were marginalised.

Among other reasons which should be recognized as contributory factors to the decline of many languages, such as Breton (in France), Galician (in Spain) or Kashubian (in Poland) was the introduction of obligatory schooling, which was usually conducted in the official language of a nation state, thus diminishing the chances of developing literacy in the minority language. Needless to say, press or publishing in the minority language hardly ever occurred (Dołowy-Rybińska, 2011).

Consequently, speaking a minority language was regarded as of low prestige. It led to the conviction that its use was shameful and inferior. Since language use is associated with a person’s identity, his perception of Self, it is clear that using a low-status language impacts one’s perception of Self. Speakers of low prestige languages, who at the same time may experience low social status, may wish to sever their ethnolinguistic ties as a result of negative experiences, feelings of inferiority, and a growing conviction of impossibility of achieving success (Bokszański, 2006). Therefore many parents deliberately decided not to transfer their languages, so as not to diminish their children’s chances of academic and occupational success.

More recent reasons for the diminished use of minority languages are connected to the aforementioned processes of globalization: the dominance of the media (press, TV, the Internet etc.) in public discourse, which favours official languages, and increased social mobility, which deters many from their social ties and requires adjustment and acculturation to new communities. The preference for one global language is even more prevalent on the international scene, which is evident in the widespread use of English as a *lingua franca*. The dominance of English in public discourse is perceived as ‘linguistic imperialism’ (Phillipson, 1992) or leading to ‘linguistic genocide’ (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000).

If parents do not continue to speak their ethnic language to their children, which is referred to as a lack of intergenerational transfer of language, this can lead to the death of a minority language. It is estimated that of the 6000 lan-
guages used globally nowadays, 96% is used by 4% of mankind. This indicates that many languages are used by only a few hundreds or a few thousands of speakers (Crystal, 2005). This puts many of the languages at risk of extinction. *The Red Book of Endangered Languages* published by UNESCO ([www.Helsinki.fi/~tasalmin/Europe_index.html](http://www.Helsinki.fi/~tasalmin/Europe_index.html)) classifies the existent languages into: not endangered (securely passed intergenerationally); potentially endangered – languages spoken by many young people, yet being of low social prestige, and henceforth unpopular in use; endangered languages – which are used by only a small and diminishing number of children; seriously endangered – where the overall quantity of speakers is still considerable, but there are no child speakers; and nearly extinct languages – spoken only by older generations.

A change of viewpoint on the role of ethnic languages can be observed after World War Two in the discussion of human rights and preventing discrimination (Dolowy-Rybińska, 2011). The ability to preserve one’s own ethnic identity and language started to be recognized as a human right, and is publicised by the activities of such international organizations and institutions as UNESCO, the UN and the Council of Europe. Article 2 of *a Universal Declaration of Human Rights* proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 10 December 1948 specifically states that:

‘Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.’

The arguments which are put forward in favour of the need to protect minority languages relate to culture, ethnicity, and identity. As Sapir (1978:18 in Dolowy-Rybińska, 2011:20) indicated, language does not only serve as a means of communication but is a tool for the transfer of culture. Therefore if language disappears, the given culture disappears as well.

Actions which aim to prevent the extinction of languages are referred to as linguistic revitalisation. Fishman (1991, 2001) pinpoints a few domains which should be involved in the process of language revitalisation: securing its intergenerational transmission, ensuring its presence in education, media and public life, and finally language policy and planning. According to Fishman (2001) language policy and planning aiming to protect a given language can only be pur-
sued if a language already has an appropriate place and status in society. Official regulations alone will not revive language use nor maintain it. Therefore any official policy regulations should be proceeded by securing widespread use of the language and upgrading its status in the younger generation, which can be done by introducing the language into schooling, funding mass media in that language, and most of all guaranteeing intergenerational transfer of the language at home.

It is now widely understood that many such languages will soon die out if no appropriate support is given by the state authorities. The most important goal in the case of seriously endangered and endangered languages is to cater for language maintenance among younger generations. Therefore the objective of both political and educational activity should be to upgrade the usually low prestige of ethnic languages. This could be done by, for example, introducing a foreign language into obligatory schooling or the presence of the language in the media and official publishing. Certainly, such activities require considerable financial investment by the state. Minority/regional languages will not flourish if they are not given adequate support by distinguished speakers of those languages, the so-called ‘ethnic intelligentsia’. They usually set up organizations aiming to promote their linguistic and cultural heritage and call for official recognition from the state as well. Examples of such organizations are Bwrdd Yr Gymraeg (the Welsh Language Board), Direcció General de Política Lingüística in Catalonia, Hitzkuntza Politikarako Sailburuordetza in the Basque country or the Kashubian-Pomeranian organization in Kashubia (Dołowy-Rybińska, 2011). These institutions take the initiative and responsibility for the promotion of bilingualism and bilingual education in their regions. They aim for the promotion of their ethnolinguistic group and occupation of an appropriate position in society.

In 1992 as a result of the endeavours of the Council of Europe and the realization of the European ideals of unity and integrity, the European Charter of Regional or Minority Languages was signed. Its main objective was to promote multilingualism and interculturalism, not only by promoting the use of the official languages of the State, but also of regional or minority languages. According to the European Charter of Minority Languages (1992) regional or minority languages are those which were traditionally ‘used within a given territory of a State by nationals of that State who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the State’s population, and are different from the official language(s) of the State’ (1992:2). At the same time, it is recognized that dialect forms of the official languages as well as the languages of migrants cannot be granted the same protection under the Charter.

The major objective of the Parties (i.e. States) which agreed to sign the charter was to plan their future language policy, legislation and practice in such a way
that it is directed towards the protection of the minority languages that exist in their territories. At the same time they agreed to promote mutual respect and understanding between the minority and majority language speakers, and take measures against the discrimination or exclusion of minority language speakers. At this point it should be mentioned that Poland signed the Charter and thus agreed to observe its regulations only in 2009.

The Parties which had signed the Charter are obliged to promote these resolutions in several areas of public life. In education this means enabling at least partial education in the minority or regional language from pre-primary through to secondary level (also in technical and vocational training) to university and life-long continuous education. In judicial authorities this means making provisions for criminal or civil court proceedings (i.e. the production of documents, testimonies etc.) in the minority or regional language in those territories which are inhabited by a substantial number of speakers of that language. Similar rights to use the minority or regional language are to be acknowledged in public administration, media, cultural activities and facilities, economic and social life and transfrontier exchanges (The European Charter of Regional or Minority Languages, 1992).

In Europe, efforts at reviving/maintaining language are well illustrated by the Basques in Spain, the Gaelic Welsh in Britain, or Kashubian in Poland, to present but a few examples. The status of these languages varies, depending on the geo-political situations in which the languages are used, such as linguistic status, literacy development (i.e. whether it has well established forms of literacy rules, publishing in the language etc.), the economy of the country in which it is used, the strength of ethnolinguistic identity and the country’s attitude towards the minority (Fishman, 2001; Dołowy-Rybińska, 2011). In reference to the latter the situation of ethnolinguistic minorities differs depending on what their aims are: minorities fighting for complete independence and thus the creation of their own nation state, as in the Basque country or South Tyrol, or a demand for a strong autonomy, as in the case of Wales or Catalonia, or no political demands but only recognition as in the case of the Kashubians or Sorbs in south-east Germany (www.eurominority.eu).

An example of a culturally and linguistically diverse country in Europe is Spain. The dominant language is Castilian Spanish, established as the official language of the country when the struggle for power and sovereignty, and linguistic homogenisation, took place in the 16th century. Yet, in Spain there are still three other distinct ethnic minorities: the Catalans, the Galicians and the Basques. Of all these the Basques are the group most actively fighting for independence. The Basques live in the so-called Basque country (Pais Vasco), the territory of four provinces in northern Spain and on the French side of the Pyre-
nees. They have occupied the region for many centuries from ca. the 7th century when they established the Duchy of Vasconia. The region south of the Pyrenees was incorporated into the Spanish crown and the region north of the Pyrenees to France in the 16th century as a result of war. In its long history of belonging to Spain, there were periods, when the Basques enjoyed some autonomy: e.g. a certain level of autonomy was granted from the early 16th to 19th centuries in respect of raising finance and passing their own laws, and later on in the Second Republic, when the Republicans granted the Basque country autonomous status, seeking in return support on the verge of the Civil War in 1936. Yet, autonomy was abolished under the dictatorship of Franco who came to power as a result of the Civil War. The remembrance of these days and a deep feeling that they deserved the autonomy which was taken away from them is probably what motivated the Basques to fight for a high level of autonomy, or even separation from Spain. In 1959 the Basque Homeland and Freedom (Euskadi Ta Azkatasuna (ETA)) organization was formed, of which the major objective was to fight for an independent Basque state, which would comprise both the Spanish and French territory. In their activities, they even resorted to such ethically-questionable methods as bank robberies, kidnappings and assassinations (e.g. in 1973 they assassinated the Prime Minister Admiral Carrero Blanco). These actions met with strong retaliation by Franco’s government resulting in repressions such as illegal detention and the mistreatment of prisoners. After Franco’s death (in 1975) the Basque nationalists rejected the Spanish Constitution in 1978. Another nationalist organization, The Basque Nationalist Party, which dated back to 1895, accepted the autonomy statute, whilst still expressing demand for greater autonomy (i.e. ‘independence’), whereas ETA continued its war-like activity with bombings and terrorist actions gaining local support, especially in the 1980s. Since the 1990s ETA’s activity has declined, which is demonstrated e.g. by the silent march against terrorism in Bilbao in 1995, or the return of power to the anti-Iraq war Spanish Socialist Party. ETA continued its terrorist activity, as it was seen e.g. in a car bomb at Madrid’s Barajas airport in 2006 (Zallo, 2007). It was only recently in 2011 that ETA has declared a cease fire and so far has not reneged upon it (http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2041489,00.html).

Surely, the reason for such an avid fight for autonomy is likely to be both the sizeable number of Basque people as well as the economic wealth of the region, which would allow it to thrive as an independent state. The region flourished in the 19th century with the development of industry, mining and shipbuilding, which also attracted immigration from poorer areas of Spain, thus making the region less linguistically homogenous. Yet, a person’s origin was not regarded
as an obstacle to being called Basque. According to ETA anyone who provided labour in the Basque country could be regarded Basque. (http://www.minority-rights.org/1692/spain/basques.html).

The Basque language is by far different from other Indo-European languages, including Spanish which is a Romance language. At the moment ca. 600,000 people speak Basque as a first language and ca. 1.2 million inhabitants of the Basque Country understand or can speak some Basque. Under Franco’s dictatorship (1936–75) the use of the Basque language was forbidden, and teachers who would not comply with the rules of the new government were expelled. So the use of Basque declined automatically (http://www.minority-rights.org/1692/spain/basques.html).

With the regained autonomy statute in 1978, steps were immediately taken to recover Basque status and use. Nowadays it is regarded as an official language on a par with Castilian Spanish in the Basque Autonomous Community region of the Pais Vasco (the Basque Country) and in some Basque-speaking areas of Navarra, which was granted recognition in 1982 by the Language Standardisation Law in the Pais Vasco and in 1986 by Ley Foral del Eusker in Navarra.

The status of Basque in the Basque country seems to be favourable. The use of the Basque language is popularised by various organizations, such as the Secretariat-General for Linguistic Policy and the Consultative Council of the Basque Country. Also Basque started to be taught to adults. Basque was also reintroduced to schools in 1983. In some areas where it was not taught, pro-Basque parents organized private afternoon schools teaching Basque called ‘Ikastolas’, in which the language was taught on a cooperative basis. Now Basque is a medium of instruction in some pre-primary and primary schools, in colleges and certain faculties in the Pais Vasco and Navarra. There exists Basque Radio and Television (EITB) which has four channels and an estimated 1 million of viewers or listeners a day (www.minorityrights.org). Also Spanish newspapers have a section in Basque and the Spanish public broadcaster occasionally produces programmes in Basque. As a result, the use of Basque (or Euskera) is growing amongst the younger generation in mass media and in public administration. In order to get a job in public service a knowledge of Basque is required.

This instance of how a proactive language policy has managed to maintain or even revitalise the use of Basque among the younger generation, can be seen as an example to other regional languages and communities. Truly, what motivated many Basque inhabitants to learn Basque was a strong sense of Basque identity. This, together with the vitality of the ‘ethnolinguistic intelligentsia’, which fought for the revival of the language, managed to gain the support of language policy makers and has precipitated changes in education and in the use of Basque.
Thus they can be seen as a model of how Fishman’s (1991, 2001) guidelines for reversing language shift should be applied (Gorter, Aiestaran & Cenoz, 2012). This is the result of a proactive language policy combined with financial support from the authorities, a supportive legal framework and, above all, public commitment, which all contributed to this ‘success story’ (Baztarrika, 2010).

In consequence of these measures, many young people are bilingual in Spanish and Basque. Their number in the Basque Autonomous Country and in Navarra is rising. It is not so in the French part of the Basque country, where the policy towards the linguistic minority is that of either prohibition or tolerance, as stipulated in the 1994 Revision of the French Constitution (Azurmendi, Bachoc & Zabaleta, 2001), and therefore the number of Basque speakers is decreasing, which is yet another illustration of the effects of language policy on the maintenance and revitalisation of languages (Baztarrika, 2010). 82% of Basque speakers are a part of the Basque Autonomous Community. Speakers of that language number 800,000. There has never been such a large number of Basque speakers in history, and that is why investments into the revival of Basque in the last 30 years can be regarded as a ‘success story’ (Baztarrika, 2010). What is peculiar in the case of Basque, is the fact that a huge portion of its speakers (300,000) have become bilingual not via home transmission but through education, also in adult years. This implies a successful future for the Basque language, as many young adults who are bilingual speak Basque at home, and in this way further aid the transmission of the language intergenerationally, thus strengthening the status of Basque. The statistical data shows that in 2006 75% of young people below the age of 15 could speak Basque, whilst in 1981 the figure was only 20% (Baztarrika, 2010).

The situation in the Basque country seems to be an example of the implementation of European policy. On the one hand, the Basque language is taught there extensively, from pre-primary to university level, which ensures the stable status of the regional language. On the other hand, English is also the most widespread foreign language taught, which ensures that many of today’s young Spanish people are functionally trilingual (Cenoz & Jessner, 2000; Cenoz, 2008). It is also characteristic of Spain, that children start formal instruction at a very early age, at three or even two, even though obligatory schooling starts at six. This means that children are exposed to a 2<sup>nd</sup> or even 3<sup>rd</sup> language in instruction from the very early years (Cenoz, 2008).

As regards linguistic minorities in Poland, for various politico-historical reasons (see above) it is a largely monolithic country. The proportion of ethnic minority groups does not exceed 2% of the population (GUS Report 2011). Poland signed the European Charter of Regional or Minority Languages in 2003 and ratified it in 2009, but its recommendations were being implemented much
earlier. In 2005 the National and Ethnic Minorities and Regional Languages Act was passed, recognizing the status of various minority groups (In Komorowska, 2012:6). According to the Act, the status of a national minority group was acknowledged in relation to Polish citizens of Byelorussian, Czech, Lithuanian, German, Armenian, Russian, Slovak, Ukrainian and Jewish origin; the status of ethnic minority is applied to groups of Karaim, Lemko, Romany and Tatarian origin and the status of regional language is granted to Kashubian.

Kashubian is the only regional language that is currently recognized in Poland. Its status is not very high, as for a long time there has been a debate among linguists whether to recognize it as a language or only as a dialect, i.e. a vernacular form of the language, and thus of lower status (a similar argument is being conducted in respect of the yet-unrecognized language in the Polish territory of Silesia).

Kashubians themselves do not want to be regarded as a minority group (while in fact they constitute the majority of inhabitants of the Pomerania region). They also do not want to emphasize a distinction from Polish national identity. Many Kashubians nowadays claim they are both Polish and Kashubian. Kashubians, originally derive from Slavonic tribes which inhabited the central-north parts of today’s Poland. They have never managed to create their own state and for many centuries they lived in a border area between Germany (Prussia) and Poland, thus have been seriously affected by the processes of germanisation or polonisation. The language was used by the local community only, and mainly at home. After World War Two, in communist Poland the status of Kashubians has dramatically declined. Their language was regarded as merely a dialect of Polish and its use was associated with folk culture; in public life the use of Kashubian was prosecuted; school children in particular were prohibited from speaking Kashubian and were forced to be educated only in Polish; and a lack of academic progress was ascribed to the negative impact of speaking Kashubian. Needless to say, teachers were recruited from other parts of Poland to help eradicate the use of Kashubian. As a result in the second half of the 20th century the inter-generational transfer of the language ceased. Fortunately, the Kashubian-Pomeranian organization, which was to cater for the development of the region, managed to survive these difficult times. The ethnolinguistic vitality and awareness of Kashubians started to develop towards the end of the 19th century. The fall of communism and the political changes in 1989 have given a green light to the enhanced activity of the Kashubian-Pomeranian organization, which has achieved a revival of the Kashubian movement. Many Kashubians have used the tools of democracy (such as elections) to occupy leading positions within local government authorities. This in turn has allowed them to voice their claims for
status recognition, which eventually materialized in 2005 in the *The National and Ethnic Minorities and Regional Languages Act*. Nowadays, the acknowledgment of the status of the language has led to its revitalisation, which continues to develop in two strains: as a folk culture, and as modern culture: i.e. the Kashubian language being used as the language of education, media and also in public life (Dolowy-Rybińska, 2011). There are numerous organizations and institutions which protect the political and administrative interests of the Kashubians as well as popularising Kashubian culture and language. They aim to strengthen Kashubian identity. Kashubians have effectively managed to utilise the available financial resources (including EU funding) to quickly introduce Kashubian as a school subject. The activeness of the Kashubian minority can be observed in the growing number of schools giving instruction in Kashubian. There was a rapid increase from 100 primary schools in 2005 to 183 primary schools, 50 lower secondary, and 5 upper secondary schools in 2010 (Country Report – Poland 2005–2006 in Komorowska, 2012).

Nowadays Kashubian is taught in over 200 schools. Every year a small, but steadily growing number of students take the Matura exam in Kashubian. There are also plans to introduce Kashubian in kindergartens. The major problem is standardisation of the written language, especially as within Kashubian there are many dialects (Dolowy-Rybińska, 2011).

The 2011 National Census revealed that 228,000 people identified themselves as Kashubian, of whom 17,000 name Kashubian as their mother tongue. The remaining Kashubian speakers claimed dual Polish and Kashubian identity. Still this is an increasing change from the 2002 Census, when only 5,062 claimed to be Kashubian (2011 GUS report). This shift marks a growing awareness of and pride in a Kashubian background. It can be speculated that this is also a result of the activity of Kashubian organizations and the promotion of the language and culture. A similar growth in awareness of their linguistic heritage and identity can be noticed among the speakers of the Silesian dialect. Speakers of this language variety constitute the second largest minority in Poland (http://www.stat.gov.pl). For the time being Silesian is not granted the status of a regional/minority language, but rather regarded as a dialect of Polish. Yet, its speakers are particularly active in promoting their dialect e.g. in creating literature in it. They also strive for its official recognition as a regional language by submitting proposals for such bills at local and national parliamentary levels (http://www.wprost.pl/ar/345267/Slaski-jezykiem-regionalnym-Ustawa-umocni-nadzieje/?pg=1).

These examples of ethnic minorities and their languages show two sides of multilingualism in Europe. On the one hand, Europe has a rich heritage of vernacular languages, which are endangered to a lesser or greater extent. Their ex-
istence should be maintained or, even revitalised in the case of those languages which are no longer used by the younger generation. On the other hand, there are numerous languages of immigrants, who are usually expected to assimilate quickly and acculturate to the host country. Their home culture is often neglected. For example, in France the language policy is very strict and emphasis is placed upon the necessity of assimilation to French customs and rules.

These phenomena indicate that nowadays many places in Europe, both cosmopolitan cities, and local regions, are multilingual. Multilingualism is a present day phenomenon, and it is predicted that this will continue. It should not be seen as a threat to unity and integration, but as being of cultural, linguistic and educational value. Henceforth, the overall European language policy is to be directed towards the protection of a broad cultural heritage as well as the rights of the few.

1.2.3. Plurilingualism versus multilingualism; pluriculturalism versus interculturalism

The key concept in the European approach to foreign language learning is the development of plurilingualism. It is a distinct term from multilingualism, which is ‘the knowledge of a number of languages, or the co-existence of different languages in a given society’ (Council of Europe, 2001:4). From this definition it can be seen that multilingualism is a feature of those communities/societies whose members can speak a few languages, e.g. as in the case of ethnic group members who can typically speak their mother tongue (as a home language) and the official language of the country, i.e. at least two languages. Multilingual development can also be encouraged among individuals by diversifying the school offering of foreign languages and encouraging learners to learn a few foreign languages. Byram (2008) makes a more precise distinction that multilingualism refers to geographical locations, whereas pluriculturalism is a tenet of an individual person.

The plurilingual competence, in turn, denotes that the learner should not keep his knowledge of languages and cultures compartmentalised but rather utilise them to obtain an integrated system of communicative competence in which the learner draws on his language knowledge and experience of the wider world, and in which all the languages mutually interact. More precisely it is defined as:

‘The ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent, has profi-
ciency of varying degrees, in several languages, and experience of several cultures. This is not seen as the superposition or juxtaposition of distinct competences, but rather as the existence of a complex or even composite competence on which the user may draw.’ (Council of Europe, *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, 2001, p. 168)

This definition of plurilingual competence assumes that an individual is a social agent, i.e. a person who has experienced living in multilingual contexts and coping with multilingual situations using a repertoire of available languages to him. The communicative competence of a plurilingual speaker is a composite competence of (even partial) knowledge of languages. The learner is an agent of his own competence, i.e. he decides how much language knowledge he needs for functioning in a particular situational linguistic context.

If language(s) is one of the defining features of a person’s identity, then in the case of the European citizen no specific language is indicated as the dominant one, but plurilingualism as the major characteristic of the person.

The importance of knowing a few languages for a future citizen of Europe has been clearly stated in the *European Commission White Paper* (1995), as it not only enables the enhancement of understanding among nations but also allows those nations to partake in the global knowledge economy:

‘Proficiency in several Community languages has become a precondition if citizens of the European Union are to benefit from the occupational and personal opportunities open to them in the border-free single market. [...] Languages are also the key to knowing other people. Proficiency in languages helps to build up the feeling of being European with all its cultural wealth and diversity and of understanding between the citizens of Europe.’ (*European Commission White Paper: Teaching and Learning-Towards the Learning Society*, 1995:67)

A plurilingual speaker should possess an intercultural competence that is different from pluricultural competence. The latter should be associated with the native speaker competence of two languages and with having two (or more) cultural identities. It is assumed that a FL learner may adopt another cultural identity without necessarily abandoning his mother tongue identity, as it is possible e.g. by acquiring a type of ‘an international’ identity (Byram, 2008).

The possession of intercultural competence denotes being a mediator between the home and foreign language culture, i.e. someone who can understand different cultural perspectives and evaluate critically the varied systems of values and beliefs. In his definition of intercultural competence, Byram (1997)
claims this is a construct consisting of five elements: attitudes of curiosity and openness, knowledge of products and practices in a learner’s and a foreign interlocutor’s countries, skills of interpreting and relating documents and facts from another culture to a native culture and the ability of their critical evaluation, skills of discovering new knowledge about a culture, and an ability to utilize it in a situation at hand (Byram, 1997). So it is the goal of FL education to bring up plurilingual speakers who are prepared to act interculturally.

1.3. European language education policy

It can be seen from the issues presented above that foreign/second language learning constitutes a prominent place in European life, and consequently educational policy, for it promotes the learning of the endangered languages of minorities in order to prevent them from extinction, as well as the learning of languages as an important asset of human capital, facilitating mobility, intercultural understanding, and a tool within the learning society.


The recommendations were issued after years of functional research projects exploring the effectiveness of teaching languages to various age groups. For example, with reference to young learners a project by Edelenbos et al. (1998) conducted in Scotland provided much revealing data on the practicalities of teaching languages to children.

This recommendation also marked a shift from purely aiming for excellence and innovation in foreign language learning, and thereby striving to attain native speaker proficiency, to educating foreign languages for European citizenship and social cohesion. A key aim was also to further promote linguistic diversity, in opposition to the widespread dominance of English.

The recommendation specifies the objectives of teaching modern foreign languages with a view to promoting and respecting the linguistic diversity of European citizens as well as education for European citizenship. More precisely, to indicate but a few general guidelines, it recommends that:

- the government states implement the indicated measures in their education policy:
  - by promoting widespread plurilingualism
  - by ensuring early language learning (before the age of 11)
In the same year (1998) the Committee of Ministers and Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe issued Recommendation 1383 on Linguistic Diversification (http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/Adopted-Text/ta98/EREC1383.htm), which called for the broadening of the educational offering of European languages, including local minority languages, as well as further restating the goals of Recommendations R (98) 6.

The key moment which precipitated further actions in European policy on foreign language education was the announcement of the year 2000 as the European Year of Languages. The year was celebrated with numerous festivals, competitions, conferences and media events aimed at celebrating the linguistic diversity of Europe. Altogether there were 26,000 events in 45 countries coordinated by the Council of Europe and the European Union (Council of Europe 2006, Plurilingual Education in Europe. 50 years of International Co-operation). One of its highlights was the celebration of 26 September, and its establishment as an annual event, a European Day of Languages, which has been celebrated ever since (Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Recommendation 1539). The aim of the European Day of Languages is to raise awareness of the linguistic diversity of Europe as well as promote lifelong learning of foreign languages ‘as a way of responding to economic, social and cultural changes in Europe’ (Council of Europe, Plurilingual Education in Europe, 50 years of International Co-operation).

The goals of European educational policy, as recapitulated in the Council of Europe’s statement on the 50th anniversary of International Cooperation (2006:4), are to develop:

- by ensuring continuity and additional language learning at secondary level
- by ensuring that language learning is combined with vocational training (by integrating content knowledge with language skills)
- by promoting lifelong learning of languages by adults
- by ensuring bilingual education in bilingual or multilingual areas (with respect to the rights of the minority language speakers as stated in the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the Framework Convention for the Protection of Minority Languages)
- by stating realistic learning objectives and assessment norms (conforming to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) which will ensure greater international comparability
- by ensuring the provision of an adequate number of well trained teachers of foreign languages’.

(Recommendation R (98) 6 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States Concerning Modern Languages. (https://wcd.coe.int/com.instranet)’

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The goals of European educational policy, as recapitulated in the Council of Europe’s statement on the 50th anniversary of International Cooperation (2006:4), are to develop:
‘Plurilingualism: all are entitled to develop a degree of communicative ability in a number of languages over their lifetime in accordance with their needs

Linguistic diversity: Europe is multilingual and all its languages are equally valuable modes of communication and expressions of identity; the right to use and to learn one’s language(s) is protected in the Council of Europe’s Conventions

Mutual understanding: the opportunity to learn other languages is an essential condition for intercultural communication and acceptance of cultural differences

Democratic citizenship: participation in democratic and social processes in multilingual societies is facilitated by the plurilingual competence of individuals

Social cohesion: equality of opportunity for personal development, education, employment, mobility, access to information and cultural enrichment depends on access to language learning throughout life.’ (Council of Europe, 2005:4)

These guidelines indicate the major fields of activity in implementing European language education policy. In 2003 an official guidebook for the creation of language policies was published which explored the indicated issues further (Beacco & Byram, 2003; revised Beacco, 2007). It was intended as a guidebook for planning language education policy in EU member countries where the aforementioned goals of pluralism, social cohesion, linguistic diversity etc. should be achieved. Indeed one of the key principles of language planning in European countries is that common guidelines should be observed in all European countries. Developing plurilingualism would thus denote both the support of languages in use, including those of national/ethnic minorities, as well as broadening the choice of languages on offer within the educational systems of EU countries. However, it is conceded that economic or demographic changes should be taken into account when planning individual countries’ policies, which may be interpreted as giving priority to English as a common lingua franca. Learning English would enable many to realize the pragmatic goal of developing pluricultural awareness and enhancing intercultural communication. Yet, as Neuner (2002 in Komorowska, 2007) argues, the stipulation of one obligatory language in a language policy may inhibit the realization of other goals of European policy, such as educating for democratic citizenship or supporting linguistic variety. Therefore the decision of which languages to teach is left to the judgement of individual countries and their policies. It is noteworthy that the document itself states (Beacco & Byram, 2002:68) that ‘the forms of plurilingualism (number and nature of linguistic varieties) to be promoted and developed will be defined specifically in relation to each situation (national, regional or local), the sociolinguistic situation (varieties present in the geographical area), and collective needs and group aspirations [the author’s emphasis].’
So the document clearly states that the choice of languages to be taught may depend on group aspirations and needs, which may be an argument in favour of teaching ethnic minority or regional languages as well as a lingua franca. In addition it is advocated that the less opportunity a learner has to develop plurilingual attitudes within his environment, the wider the educational choice of languages should be. It is emphasized that the role of education is not to merely transfer knowledge but to prepare learners to live in the future multilingual world. Plurilingualism is understood as a specific competence, placing ‘language users at the centre in order to give impetus to their professional lives, ensure social integration and recognition by cultural and social communities other than those with which they themselves identify’ (Beacco & Byram, 2002:107).

The Guide (Beacco & Byram, 2003, 2007) indicates the key role of the education system in preparing the ground for developing plurilingual competence. This role should be evident, first of all, in the raising of awareness of the necessity of a plurilingual education, especially among parties responsible for education at a local level. They should raise learner’s awareness of the existence of plurilingual opportunities (including, among others, early language learning activities). They should also cater for intercultural and plurilingual training of language teachers, with adequate preparation for teaching particular groups, for example teachers willing to work with young learners should also have knowledge of the methodology required to work with such young learners.

It should also be mentioned that the objectives of European policy are additionally endorsed by the recommendations of the Education and Culture Directorate General of the European Commission in what is referred to as Action Plans. The second action plan for the years 2004 to 2006 was titled Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity. It proposed 45 actions to be carried out in the years 2004 to 2006 at local, regional and national levels with a view to promoting language learning in three major categories. Firstly, it proposed to extend language learning to all citizens as a lifelong learning activity engaging learners from pre-primary to adult levels, including SEN (Special Educational Needs) learners. Secondly, it aimed to improve the quality of foreign language learning at all levels, with special provision for teacher training and language skill testing. And thirdly, they offered building a language-friendly environment in Europe, by e.g. enabling access to language learning facilities. In this respect the document suggests that knowledge of one foreign language, a lingua franca, is not sufficient, as it would exclude the learning of other European languages, including those of ethnic minorities and regional languages. It is therefore recommended that two foreign languages should be taught from kindergarten or from the onset of schooling. Foreign language education should also be connected
with building cultural awareness and shaping attitudes of tolerance and curiosity. In school instruction foreign language learning should be integrated with general educational goals (content and language integrated teaching). Also, the final learning objectives were rationalised. The aim is not to reach a native-like competence of foreign language education, but an adequate level in writing, speaking, reading and listening skills in at least two foreign languages, as well as development of intercultural competence in them. The necessity of lifelong learning of languages, both autonomously and with a teacher, is emphasized.

To recapitulate on European recommendations and following the official stance of the EU High Level Group on Multilingualism, Komorowska (2007) states that a key factor that can promote the development of plurilingualism is motivation. This means that in order to succeed in plurilingual development, three basic conditions must be satisfied:

- ‘There should be a degree of awareness of the value of languages to be acquired/learnt
- Those who are responsible for teaching are motivated to teach
- And those who take up languages are motivated to learn’ (Komorowska, 2007:8).

The parties responsible for motivation are the various stakeholders involved in the process of decision-making as regards foreign language learning. By appropriate provision for its instruction they can impact upon the development of learners’ motivation extrinsically, in the following ways:

- ‘Governments and self-governments through their language policy, e.g. regulations and legal acts related to the place of languages in the school curriculum or to the degree of language skills required in job descriptions
- Educational institutions of all levels through curriculum design and evaluation procedures
- Employers through internal regulations, qualification procedures and in-service training requirements’ (Komorowska, 2007:9).

Intrinsic motivation of individual learners can also be developed by offering attractive forms of out-of-school or extracurricular learning by:

- ‘The media
- Institutions and organizations organizing out-of-school activities
- Social organizations helping to organize leisure time
- Schools engaged in the organization of extracurricular activities
- Teachers offering engaging tasks and activities during language lessons
- Publishers producing attractive teaching and learning materials’ (Komorowska, 2007:9).
This means that some measures should be taken by both learners and those who are in charge (policy makers, teachers, school head teachers, parents) to promote the learning of foreign languages. The teaching of foreign languages should not be limited to only one lingua franca. It is rather suggested, in line with European recommendations, that the formula ‘the mother tongue + two foreign languages’ is applied. As Komorowska (2007:10) says: ‘the mother tongue is then used in the function of building and maintaining core identity, while other languages help expand horizons’.

Therefore it is recommended that awareness of the importance of other foreign languages should be raised, especially those of minority communities or neighbouring countries, as the knowledge of these plays an important role in building positive relationships and cooperation with members of those communities. A wider choice of languages to study should be offered, particularly when it comes to second foreign languages (as it is unrealistic to expect that the position of English will be abolished). In addition, some modularity in language education must be accepted: a learner does not have to be expected to have near native-like command in all language skills, but may focus on some areas at first, as there is a good chance that if learners feel successful at some areas, this may prompt them to further learning and achieving higher competence (Komorowska, 2007).

1.3.1. Tools for implementing European language education policy

The ways of implementing a pluricultural education are manifold. The Guide itself (Beacco & Byram, 2003, 2007) suggests tailoring language education curricula according to the guidelines presented in the document published by the Council of Europe, The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment – (CEFR, 2001) as well as adjusting it to the needs of particular groups of learners. The document specifies learning objectives and gives clear assessment criteria for particular levels of language knowledge. Curricula, exams and certificates based on these standards enable the comparison of learning achievements in various languages, countries, institutions etc. Therefore they give a more objective view of learner language competences.

Another document used in promoting plurilingual achievement is the European Language Portfolio. This is a learning tool, encouraging learners to self-reflect on their language learning experiences and learning styles, i.e. to assess their own progress as well as obtaining independent confirmation through internal/external assessment. To a large extent it promotes autonomous learning. The Portfolio also contains samples of activities fostering the development of
intercultural competence, which consists in comparing L1 cultural issues with those of L2 culture. The *Portfolio* has been prepared for various age groups (from pre-primary to adult) and teacher trainees, and has been translated into the languages of the EU countries, which were, in turn, officially accepted by the Council of Europe.**

Other activities promoting plurilingualism are:

- **Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL),** which promotes teaching one or a few school subjects through the medium of a foreign language, thus enhancing the overall amount of exposure to L2.

- **European Language Label (ELL)** – a project aimed at distinguishing and rewarding examples of good educational practice, which are worth popularising and expanding further.

- The use of Information Technology in teaching languages, and supporting such projects which enable communication and cooperation through the New Media.

- **Intercomprehension** – the didactic approach which is defined as ‘a form of communication in which each person uses his/her own language and understands that of the other’ (Doye, 2005:7). This idea serves as a background to various educational projects, which aim to create language course curricula based on cross-linguistic similarities of languages in the same family. Knowledge of one of the languages of a family could facilitate communication, albeit limited, in other languages of the same family. Such an approach, it is argued, draws on linguistic diversity and opposes the hegemony of English.

- **Student and teacher mobility programmes**, such as Erasmus, Comenius, currently operating within the European Lifelong Learning programme, enable exchange of students, university staff (Erasmus), novice teachers (Comenius). They foster international cooperation, participating in joint projects and thus enhancing their professional skills. Within the Erasmus programme students can spend a part of their course of the study in a foreign institution, whereas under the Comenius programme beginning teachers can spend their first years working in one of the schools abroad. Needless to say, the experience of staying abroad facilitates foreign language learning and enhances the development of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism (www.erasmus.org.pl, www.comenius.org.pl).

** There exist Polish versions of the European Portfolio for children as young as 3–6 years old (Pamuła, Rzyska, Dobkowska, 2007), for children 6–10 years old (Bajorek, Bartosz-Przybyło, Pamuła, Sikora-Banasik, 2006), for adolescents 11–15 years old, for adults (Pawlak, Bartczak, Lis, Marciniak, 2006). European Portfolio for student teachers of languages (EPOSTL) has been developed by a team of international experts (Newby *et al.*, 2007).
1.3.2. ‘An early start’ in a foreign language in ELP

A call for an ‘early start’ in FLL is present in nearly every document outlining European language education policy supported by available research reports referring to early FLL. As long ago as the 1990s, the Council of Europe identified numerous benefits of early foreign language instruction, which go far beyond linguistic goals (cf. Ch. 3), as these may not be visible instantly, but rather in the long term. The potential benefits of early FL experience relate also to the cognitive and affective development of children (Komorowska, 1996).

Among the affective benefits, one can distinguish the development of curiosity and tolerance towards other cultures and people, learning to cooperate and communicate with others in FL class, sensitising children to similarities between languages and cultures and an increase in children’s self-esteem connected to the pride of mastering a new capacity. Foreign language instruction can provide an additional channel of child’s self-expression through language, movement and arts. Needless to say, FL experience develops critical thinking and creativity. Finally, starting a FLL early increases the chance that the child will be inclined to learn further languages in the future, which is a step forward in the development of plurilingualism.

As for cognitive benefits, FL experience can additionally facilitate a child’s memory development: neuron connections made in early childhood facilitate retention and faster retrieval in later years. Additionally, while learning an FL a child can learn to perform many other cognitive operations, such as logical thinking, analysing, classifying, categorisation, inferencing, searching for similarities and differences (comparing), sequencing, counting and memorizing (Komorowska, 1996).

The first research report on pre-primary and primary teaching of languages was issued in 1998 (Blondin et al., 1998). It lay the ground for the second interim Action Plan of the European Union, and stated early learning of foreign languages as one of its major objectives. The report focused on identifying key factors which affect early FL learning outcomes (cf. Ch. 3) and in consequence called upon European institutions to provide major institutional support in implementing solutions which would counteract possible negative outcomes. These referred to the institutional support and organization of foreign language learning in each member country and teacher training for primary and pre-primary education, among the most important things.

The necessity of starting foreign language learning early was further indicated in the first recommendation of the Council of Europe (Recommendation R (98) 6, proclaimed in 1998 concerning learning modern languages). As a rec-
ommendation for future language policy planning it stated that all children from the very beginning of schooling or as early as possible should be ‘made aware of Europe’s linguistic and cultural diversity’ (1998:2), which implies that children should have an opportunity not only to learn foreign languages but also to learn about other countries, cultures, and their customs, which is aimed at the development of pluricultural competence. National policies should promote and encourage foreign language learning for all children, at the same time ensuring appropriate methods of teaching and assessment as well as continuity of foreign language learning across different levels of education.

Yet, it was also in the Barcelona Presidency Conclusions (2002), where it was clearly indicated that each child should have a chance to learn two foreign languages apart from their mother tongue from its earliest years, i.e. even from the pre-primary stage.

The European Commission in their Action Plan for the Years 2004 to 2006, on the basis of prior research into early foreign/second language learning, announced the objectives of such early instruction, which state that they are linguistic as well as cognitive and affective. It is recognized that early learning of a foreign language is not aimed at the achievement of native-like competency in the foreign language but rather its purpose is to lay the ground work for future plurilingual competence: the early learning of a foreign language will arouse a child’s interest in languages and precipitate further learning of the same and further languages. The plan also states that any benefits of early FLL will be visible if an appropriate provision for high quality of instruction is guaranteed. This refers to well trained teachers, adequately prepared to work with very young children, small classes, sufficient time in the curriculum, and the availability of learning resources (including those for teacher training). All the potential benefits and possible outcomes are clearly described:

‘Early learners become aware of their own cultural values and influences and appreciate other cultures, becoming more open towards and interested in others. This benefit is limited if all pupils learn the same language: a range of languages should be available to early learners. Parents and teaching staff need better information about the benefits of this early start, and about the criteria that should inform the choice of children’s first foreign language’ (Action Plan 2004–2006:7).

In 2006 Johnstone, Edelenbos and Kubanek-German published a report on the survey project which investigated issues in early learning of foreign languages titled: Languages for the children in Europe. Published research, good practice and main principles. The project was set as a follow-up to the Action Plan
for the Promotion of Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity announced by
the European Commission in the years 2004–2006. The value of the report lies
in the fact that it highlights key principles of teaching languages to very young
children (at a pre-primary level). It emphasizes the fact that courses of foreign
languages for children do not have to last long, and rather than being aimed
at striving for native-like proficiency they should focus on arousing language
and cultural awareness, sense of European citizenship, belonging, and oppor-
tunities and rights of mobility deriving from European membership. Among the
many guidelines that the report gives for the successful implementation of early
learning of foreign languages, some of them call for the application of varied
techniques (stories) and media (including technology), as well as early teaching
of literacy skills and discourse skills going beyond a focus on form to meaning. It
emphasizes that the effective teaching of languages to young learners requires
institutional support, which can guarantee good quality teaching (e.g. through
appropriate teacher training), the appropriate placing of languages in the cur-
riculum, as well as continuity of language learning year after year. Educational
institutions are also responsible for counteracting the possible negative impact
of coming from a low socio-economic status (and hence poor access to good
quality teaching). As the report states, ‘children’s enjoyment, their openness
towards other languages and cultures and their linguistic development must all
be worked for and not simply left to chance’ (Edelenbos, Johnstone & Kubanek,
2006:13). The report also restates the former European recommendation (Ac-
tion Plan 2004–2006; Communication, 2003:449, II.1.3) that foreign languag-
es should be taught from a very early age, but the advantages are only visible
if teachers are well-trained to work with very young learners, there are small
groups, a sufficient amount of time in the curriculum and the learning material
is suited to the children. The recommendations clearly indicate that the teacher
is a key element in guaranteeing success in early language learning and that in
their foreign language learning very young learners are mainly driven by the
intrinsic motivation which can be derived from the person of the teacher, the
learning environment and the teaching techniques.

Initially, research and educational practice in reference to an early start con-
cerned primary learners. As a consequence of European recommendations (e.g.
the Guide for Language Policy Development by Beacco & Byram, 2002, revised
2007), in almost all European countries the age of starting obligatory foreign
language instruction has been lowered from early adolescent years (ca. 10–11
years of age) to the beginning of schooling, i.e. ca. 5–6 years of age. Yet, the
recommendation to start FL instruction from the earliest years, i.e. from pre-
school has not yet been implemented. The exception may be in Spain, as it is
the only country where children can start to learn a FL from the age of three (Key Data on Teaching Languages at School in Europe, 2008:9). Also it should be mentioned that whilst in the majority of EU countries two foreign languages are offered in public education, it is hardly ever from the beginning of schooling, not to mention pre-primary teaching, which still leaves some room for innovation and change.

Also as regards the choice of languages, English is the most popular language taught in all countries, and the number of primary learners learning it is constantly rising, especially in central and eastern Europe and Latin countries of Southern Europe, which may indicate the desire to learn a high status language and therefore counteracts the efforts of language policy makers to diversify the choice of languages offered in public education (Key Data on Teaching Languages at School in Europe, 2008:10). At present it can be seen that an ‘early start’ in a foreign language has been one of the key objectives of European recommendations for over a decade, yet few countries have managed to comply with these. Still, the growth of the private sector offering of FL instruction to very young learners, probably illustrates the increasing need and aspiration for an earlier start than offered in public education. In order to investigate this situation the European Commission ordered a comparative study titled Early Language Learning at Pre-Primary Level in Europe: Current Situation and Future Perspectives (2011, available at http://ec.europa.eu/languages/pdf/ellphb_summaries.pdf). In this project data was collected by means of questionnaires from national ministries as well as case studies of instances of good practice, in order to work out common principles for language instruction at pre-primary level. This report as well as previous acts, research reports and activities, has subsequently given rise to the creation of the pre-primary education policy handbook, titled Language learning at pre-primary school level: making it efficient and sustainable (2011, available at http://ec.europa.eu/languages/pdf/ellpwp_en.pdf), which is to serve as a guide to EU member state authorities (such as Ministries of Education) and local authorities (such as educational institutions, i.e. kindergartens, nurseries etc.) responsible for early childhood education and gives principles that should be used when planning further policy in respect of very early language learning.

The handbook follows the decisions made in the Barcelona strategy of 2002, which stated that each child should have the chance to learn two foreign languages from a very early age, irrespective of their cultural and socio-economic background. The value of such early L2 experience is explicitly stated in the Language Policy Handbook (2011):
‘Opening children’s minds to multilingualism and different cultures is a valuable exercise in itself that enhances individual and social development and increases their capacity to empathise with others. ELL activities in pre-primary settings can be an enriching experience and bring considerable benefits. They are instrumental in enhancing competences such as comprehension, expression, communication and problem-solving, enabling children to interact successfully with peers and adults. They can increase powers of concentration and strengthen self-confidence. As young children also become aware of their own identity and cultural values, ELL can shape the way they develop their attitudes towards other languages and cultures by raising awareness of diversity and of cultural variety, hence fostering understanding and respect’ (The Pre-primary Policy Handbook, 2011:7).

The handbook states that the best learning outcomes of early FLL will only be achieved if the main conditions are satisfied, i.e. those of equity, quality, consistency and continuity. Equity states that early foreign language learning should be made available to all children, and socio-economic status should not be a barrier hindering access to good quality instruction at an earlier starting age. This also means diversifying the offering of foreign languages to learn, yet ensuring that the languages offered are supported by the available resources. The quality and consistency criteria emphasize that if all children are to achieve similar learning results there should be provided:

‘tailored education programmes; suitably qualified and motivated staff; specific support to schools, staff and families; and monitoring and evaluation. Education networks can also provide guidance and support in relation to quality, as can the involvement of stakeholders’ (The Pre-primary Policy Handbook, 2011:11).

Due to huge disparities in the quality of instruction offered in various locations e.g. in the private and public sectors, it is recommended that various authorities should be involved in the exchange of ideas and instances of good practice, thus heading for consistency and similar criteria in teaching.

Finally, once equal learning opportunities are provided to all children, the same educational authorities should be involved in the continuity of the transfer from pre-primary to primary education. As stated in the handbook:

‘Where education systems have provided all young learners with opportunities to learn more than one language and an early start is the norm, transfer to the higher level of education is smooth and the overwhelming majority of the population
achieves useful levels of second/foreign language proficiency’ (The Pre-primary Policy Handbook, 2011:12).

Summary

Multilingualism/multiculturalism is a fact in today’s globalized world, also in Europe. ‘Europeanisation’ in Phillipson’s (2003) terms, is a special instance of globalization. The major tenet of this chapter is to recognize that multilingualism and multiculturalism are a daily practice for many European citizens and a focal point/objective of current language policy. Multilingualism is embodied both in people who in addition to speaking an official language also use an ethnic minority/regional language, and immigrants who bring to the host country their heritage/home languages. This multiple use of languages and a ‘melting pot’ of cultures is a context for the formation of European language education policy, which aims both to preserve the multiethnic heritage of Europe, and counteract the linguistic hegemony of English. Finally, it is shown that an ‘early start’ in foreign language learning occupies a prominent position in European policy, of which the ultimate objective is the development of plurilingual and interculturally competent citizens of Europe in the future. The development of European language education policy is depicted on the basis of key documents and a review of activities promoting such development.
Aspirations are one of the major drivers of human activity. By setting long-term goals to achieve one’s desires, mankind directs all of its energies towards the realization of those desires. Such goals may relate to various positions, values and attitudes and thus may be oriented towards attaining varied goals, such as establishing a family, vocational self-fulfillment, material success etc.

One of the most common and powerful types of aspirations are educational aspirations. They relate to a long-term investment and express hopes and dreams in relation to the attainment of a particular level of education, often associated with obtaining a specific occupation. Thus educational and vocational aspirations are often connected. Needless to say, they are believed to guarantee the aspirer a particular status in the social stratum. Parents also hold certain aspirations relating to their children’s future. While they may be idealistic dreams in the beginning, reformulated during the course of schooling and life, they often indicate the educational pathway the child will follow. The nature and intensity of human aspirations do not only depend on an individual’s personal characteristics, but also on the wider historical and political context, such as the country’s economy and opportunities for upward and geographical mobility. Aspirations also evolve over time, where personal and socio-political contexts change, for example a change of political system (e.g. the fall of communism, the rise of a capitalist economy).

Due to their dynamic nature, aspirations have to be reviewed periodically in order to observe how they change in reaction to changing external circumstances. Without doubt, educational aspirations seem to be playing particular role in the development of a global ‘knowledge’ economy. Studies on educational aspirations reveal not only opportunities, but also evidence of barriers encountered; hence their results may have important lessons for further educational policy.

The goal of this chapter is to describe the nature of parental aspirations in reference to their children’s foreign language achievement. It starts with defin-
ing the term ‘aspirations’ and indicating their key determinants. Subsequently, the place of aspirations in psychology, sociology and applied linguistics is presented. The next section is devoted to the impact of the family on the young child’s cognitive development, the rise of the child’s own educational aspirations and consequently, high educational achievement. In this context a review of studies on the interrelationship between parental and child aspirations and educational models of child development are presented. The chapter concludes with the description of Polish middle class, as this group is most likely to possess high educational aspirations.

It should be mentioned that research on the aspirations of young adolescents and adults has occupied an extensive space in Polish pedagogy, going back to even before the Second World War (cf. e.g. Falski, 1937; Sokolowska, 1969; Janowski, 1977; Lewowicki, 1987; Skorny, 1980; Ścisłowicz, 1994; Czerwińska-Jasiewicz, 1997; Sikorski, 1999; Kawula, 1998; Sikorski, 2005; Ochmański, 2007). The changing political scene, as well as economic situation changes in the structure of the family or access to education, all prompt a new flux of interest in human aspirations. Thus, in the following discussion, I will first of all refer to the existing abundance of Polish research on this subject.

2.1. Conceptualisation of the term ‘aspiration’

The nature and object of such aspirations reflect one’s personality and are an important construct of one’s Self. They influence an individual’s school achievements, choice of vocational career, social and cultural activity, and also the formation of interpersonal and intercultural contacts. Due to the multitude of objects of aspirations as well as their varied origins, the study of human aspirations has lain in the interest of such fields as pedagogy, sociology and psychology, thus pointing to its interdisciplinary nature. More recently, human aspirations have found themselves to be the focus of applied linguistics in the poststructuralist theory of SLA, as the following sections will show.

The very term ‘aspiration’ originated from the psychology of motivation, and was subsequently applied to pedagogy. Aspirations are also the object of sociological studies in the context of social mobility (change of social status). According to Janowski (1977), psychologists are more interested in the very ‘nature’ of human activity whereas, sociologists in the objects of these activities, specific goals and values. This distinction will be of value in the following discussion of psychological and social determinants of aspirations.

Although there are two perspectives on the study of aspirations (socio- and psychological), most works try to combine the two viewpoints. Janowski
defines aspirations as ‘relatively stable and strong wishes of an individual concerning properties or states, with which its life should be characterized in the future as well as objects s/he would like to possess [the author’s translation]’. Szefer-Timoszenko (1981:5) states that aspirations are ‘a desire for change which appears to be beneficial in the mind of an individual. It is not a desire for any change but only that which will enable an individual to improve his/her position on an individual scale of values [the author’s translation]’. Similarly, Okoń (1988) in his Dictionary of Pedagogical Terms defines aspirations as ‘the pursuit of reaching intended goals, the realization of intended ideals [the author’s translation]’. Taking all of these definitions into consideration, it is evident that, aspirations are mainly seen as an inner characteristic of an individual. Consequently, the level of aspirations, sometimes used interchangeably with the term ‘aspirations’ is ‘the predicted result of an individual’s activity aimed at reaching the goals established by a subject’ (Okoń, 1998).

In order to show the interrelation of aspirations with other human motivations, Janowski (1977:33) places aspirations in the middle of a continuum, which extends from motives, through wishes and leads to goal orientations and general life orientations (i.e. motive→wish→aspiration→goal orientation→life orientation). This means that numerous motives can materialize as a limited number of wishes, which when repeated can create aspirations. Only constant and strongly held aspirations can lead to goal orientations, a few of which depict an individual’s general life orientation. In addition, aspirations are constantly shaped by other psychological factors, such as an individual’s values and opinions which have an impact on the level of aspiration and the realistic expected outcome of one’s undertakings. A visual presentation of this relationship is given in Fig. 2.1.

![Figure 2.1](image-url)

**Figure 2.1.** The position of aspirations in the ‘motive-life orientation’ continuum (Janowski, 1977:33)
Aspirations can vary in their intensity, and therefore one can distinguish between various levels of aspiration: high, medium or low. The level of aspiration is usually defined in an individual relative to other members of the community, whose typical behaviour establishes a norm (Janowski, 1977:13). By contrast Skorny (1980:10) claims that the level of aspiration can be described by the discrepancy between aspirations and expectations, i.e. the realistic judgment of one’s achievements. The larger the discrepancy, the higher the level of aspiration. More recently Sikorski (2005:4) claims that the level of aspiration is the expected level of performance in relation to an activity; it denotes an individual’s intentions of reaching a particular goal by a particular means within an established period of time, with an investment of a given amount of effort and with a pre-determined level of performance.

There can be various types of aspirations, depending on the criterion used for classification. One of the common classifications (Lewowicki, 1987; Skorny, 1980) divides aspirations according to the object they refer to. Therefore one can distinguish educational aspirations (referring to the choice of subjects/areas for closer study, choice of educational careers), vocational aspirations, personal aspirations (referring to one’s private life), luddite aspirations (in reference to the preferred way of spending leisure time), social (related to one’s activity within various communities/social groups), cultural (connected with one’s perception of either active or passive participation in culture), managerial (connected with social prestige), materialist (connected with living standards, socio-economic status, property) etc.

In addition to these content-based aspirations, Skorny (1980) classifies aspirations according to other criteria, such as the possibility of realization (heightened vs. adequate vs. lowered), connection to activity (wishful vs. activity-oriented), period of realization (current vs. future-oriented), chances of mobility (high or low chances of mobility), connection to awareness (conscious vs. latent), object (state-oriented vs. object-oriented). Sikorski (2005:11) claims that wishful aspirations derive from wishes and needs, which, when they become reinforced, become activity-oriented aspirations.

According to these classifications, educational aspirations belong to the category of content aspirations. Wiśniewski (1986 in Ścisłowicz, 1994:12) defines educational aspirations more precisely as ‘the level of expectations of social individual or collective orientations in respect of education or social and occupational position [the author’s translation]’.

Parental educational aspirations are defined as ‘idealistic hopes or goals that parents may form regarding future attainment’, whereas ‘parental expectations are realistic beliefs or judgments that parents have about their children’s fu-
ture achievement’ (Holloway & Yamamoto, 2008, www.sage-ereference.com/educationalpsychology/Article_n203.html). The latter are usually formed on the basis of the previous educational achievement of a child, whereas the former are typical of parents of young children at the onset of their educational career. Consequently, the level of parental aspirations can be described as high, low, or average in reference to children’s current school performance. Parental achievements can also be a reference point if it is too early to assess a child’s achievements, as the child has not started schooling yet.

Parental aspirations in reference to children can be of a twofold nature: either instrumental, i.e. directed at goal achievements in every aspect of life (in meeting other people, in gaining material or cultural resources etc.) or oriented towards ‘self-realization’ by providing a richness of experience. The goal of this type of aspiration is rather the orientation towards self-development (Hejnicka-Bezińska, 1991 in Kawula, 1998:191). This is also the classic dichotomy between ‘having’ and ‘being’. By promoting a particular position parents have an important influence on the development of their children’s future identity.

Finally, it should be emphasized that the development of aspirations is strongly related to the development of one’s personality, and one’s self-concept in particular (Galas & Lewowicki, 1991). One’s self-concept is a source of information about one’s individual capacities and characteristics, and is formed through individual experiences as well as through evaluating the opinions of others. Self-concept also constitutes the basis for the creation of one’s sense of identity. According to Reykowski’s (1980) regulatory theory of personality, an individual can experience feelings of success or failure only when s/he feels in control of or responsible for actions which result in those feelings. In other words, the formation of one’s self-concept (also referred to as ‘self-structure’, cf. Reykowski & Kočańska, 1980) is associated with the feelings of control and influence over one’s surroundings and oneself. It assumes an individual’s active role in the regulatory mechanisms of personality. An individual should feel he is in control of his actions and responsible for his success or failure. Henceforth, self-concept also plays a role in shaping one’s aspirations. Individuals who possess a high level of self-concept, and thus trust in their own capabilities, usually form high aspirations, whereas persons of low self-concept form lower aspirations (Galas & Lewowicki, 1991).

Łukaszewski (1974) defines self-concept as one’s vision of Self (Real-Self, i.e. who a person is) and Ideal-Self (i.e. who one would like to become). The former may be related to the realistic expectations of the results of one’s undertakings whereas the latter to the ideal outcome of one’s actions expressed in one’s desires and dreams. The difference between the latter and the former
constitutes the level of aspiration. Following one of the previously mentioned taxonomies, Skorny (1980:9–10) believes that Ideal-Self is mainly composed of wishful aspirations, whereas the Real-Self is mainly composed of activity-oriented aspirations. Thus aspirations can be regarded as an important construct of one’s personality and identity. Aspirations express one’s personal wishes as to who one would like to become, and consequently determine one’s activity towards this goal.

2.2. Determinants of aspirations

Aspirations do not evolve to the same extent in every individual. Their scope and level depend both on the inner characteristics of a person as well as the wider social context in which the person lives. It is usually external circumstances which are the deciding factor in whether or not an individual’s potential is realized. In certain unfavourable situational conditions certain aspirations cannot arise, e.g. it is unusual to travel abroad if one lives in a poor single-parent family where there is pressure on a child to start making his own living. By contrast, if external conditions make the realization of certain aspirations possible, this is conducive to the rise of further higher-level aspirations.

Thus an individual’s aspirations are the result of the interplay of the inner psychological (i.e. relating to the person of the decision-maker) and outer social (i.e. the external environment) factors. The most comprehensive and systematic presentation of the various factors affecting aspirations has been more recently provided by Czerwińska-Jasiewicz (1997). In her view, personal factors affect the level of aspirations and depend on an individual’s general level of development, which manifests itself in cognitive and social competence, personality, self-knowledge and knowledge of the world. Self-knowledge should be understood as the knowledge of how one perceives oneself and how one is seen by others, which helps to create the realistic image of Self, and along with it the image of the Ideal-Self, which arises under the influence of positive appraisals from the others. These personal factors, in turn, are shaped by such traits of an individual as his intelligence, aptitude, interests, physical condition (health), and personality. Personality is an inborn trait, which will affect the development of aspirations in the following areas: self-esteem, self-perception of one’s capabilities/opportunities, as well as needs (especially the need to achieve).

Skorny (1980) who, as one of the first scholars in this field made a most systematic list of psychological factors affecting the development of aspirations, distinguished such factors as experience of success and failure, social environment, some motivational processes, personality structure, levels of neurosis,
perception of Self (self-concept), self-acceptance. Whilst expressed differently and less precisely, it is clear that all of these aspects are relevant to the creation of one’s self-concept.

The other type of factors, the external ones, are associated with the environment and denote social situation (position in the social stratum), family situation, school situation. Each of these settings can exert various educational influences on an individual, i.e. it is the family influence (particularly relevant up to 13–14 years of age), the peer group influence (from mid-adolescence onwards) and general influence of the educational institutions, which surround a child that play a substantial part in forming educational aspirations.

The combination of all these factors allows us to observe that in reference to a child’s future aspirations, parents can only exert a limited influence on the arousal of their children’s aspirations. Parents form only one of the social environments surrounding a child, and educational institutions as well as the general local environment are equally important. In addition, each child possesses certain genetically prescribed characteristics, which are beyond regulation.

Lewowicki (1987) developed a slightly different taxonomy of factors affecting the development of aspirations, in which apart from the already mentioned personal and environmental factors he distinguished the pedagogical factors. According to his work, personality factors point to intellectual, emotional and social differences, which develop particularly in the early years of schooling. In his studies (Lewowicki, 1975) he found that the factor which particularly correlated with the effectiveness of the schooling process is the intensity of the arousal process and activity of the neural processes, and only later it depends on an individual’s intelligence. He also noticed that general biological development, as well as motor skills, have an impact on the process of developing educational goals and opportunities.

The other two categories of factors distinguished by Lewowicki (1987) refer to environmental and pedagogical influences. Environmental factors are responsible for cognitive, emotional and motivational development. Therefore they significantly influence an individual’s life orientations, aspirations in reference to the chosen hierarchy of values, and educational/vocational paths. Environmental influences relate to the impact of the family, the school and the wider world.

As regards the family environment, it is composed of a multitude of proximal and distal factors, which can exert influence on a child’s development in multifaceted ways. The proximal factors concern socio-emotional, cognitive and physical interactions between family members, and can be most easily changed, whereas distal factors refer to more stable features of one’s environment over
which one does not have much influence, such as socio-economic status, possessed material resources etc. (Marjoribanks, 2001).

The distal characteristics which are most determinant for the development of aspirations are: socio-economic status (henceforth SES) of parents, parental education, cultural/ethnic background (origin), family traditions, socio-economic living standards, the size of the family, and the age of parents (Ścisłowicz, 1994:22). Szymański (1988) adds that the economic situation of the family is a very important and relevant factor as it determines other distal features affecting child development such as living conditions, study facilities (e.g. a private room/place to study), quality of study materials, as well as proximal factors such as ways of spending free time, cultural capital manifested in parental and sibling education, parental attitude to learning, or parents’ interest in the child’s progress.

All of these may be, in turn, connected with the place of living (city versus village). For example, rural children experience less cognitive stimulation, in respect of reasoning, development of creativity, imagination and higher feelings. There are also certain local cultural patterns of career and education development, which may strongly influence the decisions of an individual (Jacher, 1973). These socio-cultural patterns are regarded as patterns of behaviour established in a certain structure, which enable interpersonal communication, make the behaviour of others more comprehensible, and enable us to affect others. These are factors which homogenize the behaviour of individuals and the behaviour of the collective entity (Jacher, 1973).

Additionally, in reference to the impact of the wider environment, Ścisłowicz (1994:36) mentions that the characteristics of the family environment are influenced by the following features: the type of local community (connected with a particular place of living), the degree of community organization, the degree of social integration and lifestyle patterns. For example, in farming families there is less time and access to cultural entertainment; the impact of the family is marked also by the presence of grandparents, as many families are multigenerational. It is also noteworthy that while parental influence is the most significant, siblings also play a key role; their lifestyle, their interests and their emotional relationships can impact the development of a young child.

As Ścisłowicz (1994:41) notes, the family educates and brings up a child in two ways: naturally and spontaneously by setting an example, and intentionally, by undertaking appropriate goal-oriented activities and verbalizing them. It is the type of upbringing and transfer of knowledge, lifestyle of family members and their life orientations, all of which can denote proximal factors, on which a child’s educational start and later cognitive, psycho-physical and emotional
development depend. The family environment, i.e. its material, social, cultural and educational characteristics, has a considerable impact on school achievements.

School, apart from the family environment, exerts the strongest multifaceted influence on a young person’s life, as it occupies a significant amount of time. Thus, according to Lewowicki (1987) pedagogical determinants refer to, first of all, the person of the teacher, his personality characteristics, his professional education, competence and skills, didactic and pedagogical style and strategies; secondly, the school, its curriculum, syllabuses, the general educational atmosphere, classroom dynamics etc., and thirdly, education policy (including language education policy), the structure of the schooling system, and organization of the education process.

The family environment determines the social position of a young child from the very early years of the child, or even in the prenatal period (Kawula, 1998:176), as it manifests itself in better care, nutrition, or opportunities for cognitive, emotional and linguistic stimulation. Differences in social situation become evident and deepen at every stage of schooling, and are marked as most significant at the beginning of the vocational career. These thresholds in social and educational development are referred to as significant ‘starts’. Thus the moment of birth determines the child’s social and life start (dependant on the parental SES position); at the age of 6–7 the child makes an educational start, at 16–17 a vocational start (by choosing to work or attend a vocational/non-vocational type of school). In early adulthood, at around age 24, one’s position in the social stratum is fairly established, and is the outcome of prior diversification at the key stages of educational and vocational decisions.

Tyszkowa (1990) emphasizes that there is an important relationship between the parental level of education and the school achievements of children. In addition, Pospiszyl (1980 in Ochmański, 1995:38) found that the level of maternal education is a better predictor of success in the case of the younger child, ca. up to the 10th year of age, whereas in adolescence the greater impact on child’s intellectual development is connected with the level of paternal education.

Young people (or their parents in the case of the youngest children), by choosing a particular type of school (private or public primary school, vocational or general comprehensive), manifest their educational aspirations and their level of knowledge. On the other hand, an analysis of the number of young people originating from various social backgrounds (social classes) indicates the efficiency of the educational system and the existence of potential barriers as well as opportunities (Kawula, 1998:176). No individual can choose the type of family they are born into which immediately positions an individual in the social
stratum, yet, the differences deriving from family background can be leveled by the educational institutions, offering everyone equal educational opportunities irrespective of background. Hence this is a great role and mission for educational institutions to make up for the deficiencies arising from the family background, which should also be the goal of a country’s education policy.

Educational aspirations have also been widely studied in the USA (Spera, Wentzel & Mato, 2009; Ojeda & Flores, 2008) and Australia (Marjoribanks, 2003, 2006; Dandy & Nettelbeck, 2002), most notably with reference to the opportunities of adolescents/young adults, social mobility and achieving educational and vocational success, particularly among minority or ethnic group members. These studies also helped to reveal other social factors which usually determine educational aspirations of adolescents and young adults and their educational attainment. For example, in one of the first of these studies, Glass, Neulinger and Brim (1974) established that in families of higher SES first-born and only children had higher educational aspirations for their achievement than younger children, which was interpreted by different parental attitudes to bringing up those children compared to younger siblings.

In a more recent study Ojeda and Flores (2008) found that perceived educational barriers had the most significant effect on young people’s educational aspirations and were a more influential factor than gender, parental level of education or the generation level of living in the host country. Similarly, Marjoribanks (2002, 2006) in his studies of adolescents in Australia found clear correlations between educational attainment and the level of educational aspirations, which in turn varied among members of different ethnic groups. To describe the interrelationship of these three factors he proposed a theoretical framework labeled as the ‘aspiration x attainment x background’. This relationship was further illustrated in a study by Dandy and Nettelbeck (2002), who found that Asian Australian parents had generally higher academic standards and educational aspirations for their children than Anglo-Celtic Australian parents, irrespective of their socio-economic background. Clearly, parents of Asian descent perceived education as the only means of advancement in Australian society, whereas lower SES Anglo-Celtic parents would prefer their children to attend a vocational school or complete an apprenticeship.

A different impact of ethnicity on the level of parental aspirations was also identified by Spera, Wentzel and Mato (2009), who observed that while on the whole all parents held high educational aspirations, which correlated with the high performance of their children, Caucasian parents held lower aspirations for their children than parents of other ethnic groups of the same level of education. This was caused by the additional factor of perceived educational barriers
Figure 2.2. A summary of factors affecting the rise of educational aspirations
to further educational opportunities. A summary of all factors influencing the formation of educational aspirations outlined here is presented in Fig. 2.2. The findings of these studies, in general, bear an important message for future planning of educational policy. They seem to suggest that it should guarantee equal access to good quality education e.g. scholarship programs, to all citizens, but especially to minority group members.

2.3. An outline of psychological research on aspirations

As already discussed, aspirations have mainly been investigated in socio-pedagogical terms, in the context of social mobility. Yet, as associated with personality characteristics, aspirations have also been a primary focus of interest of various psychological theories. The following section aims to give a brief historical outline of the evolution of the very term ‘aspirations’ in psychological theories.

The term ‘aspirations’ was primarily associated with the theory of needs. A ‘need’ is a specific state of a human organism characterized by a deficiency in an element regarded as indispensable for its existence’ (Janowski, 1977:15 [the author’s translation]). The father of the theory of needs was Henry Murray, who developed the theory to account for individual differences among people in learning ability. He believed that every human possesses a certain set of needs, both inborn and acquired, such as a need for achievement, need for autonomy, need for attention, or even a need for aggression, a need for showing respect or belonging, which can be modified in the process of learning. Each individual has a different set of needs, which also differs in intensity, and this is where the differences between people lie (Franken, 2005).

A secondary need, which is acquired largely through the process of socialization (as opposed to primary inborn needs, such as a need for water, food etc.) is the need for achievement, which is where the origins of aspirations can be traced. The need for achievement is characterized as a desire to achieve something difficult, to possess control of physical objects, human beings, or ideas, and manipulate or organize them; to do it in the most skillful and independent way; to overcome barriers and reach a high level, to compete with oneself and others and outperform them, to increase respect for oneself through effective use of one’s talent (Hall, Lindsey & Campbell, 2004).

A follower and major proponent of the needs theory was David McClelland, who particularly investigated the need for achievement. He claimed that this need in particular arises nearly entirely as a result of environmental influences. For example, he showed that children rewarded for achievements develop this
type of motivation much faster. In addition, he showed that certain parental styles also facilitate the arousal of the need for achievement to a greater extent than others (Franken, 2005).

McClelland claimed that a lot of human needs remain in people’s subconsciousness, and therefore individuals’ fantasies rather than openly expressed desires or actions should be investigated. For that reason he developed a validated research tool called the TAT test (Thematic Apperception Test), which investigated those fantasies in stories told on the basis of picture cues. Using this testing procedure he claimed that people who exhibited a high need for achievement in the picture stories also attempted to get involved in enduring and effortful projects and were willing to outperform others. His original input into the theory of needs was identifying correlations between a strong need for achievement with the economic situation of the wider society. Also in the studies of individuals he found that companies which had managers with a high need for achievement usually made better profits than similar type companies which did not have such leaders (Hall, Lindsey & Campbell, 2004).

However, there is a debate about what is the motor of human activity, whether it is a desire to satisfy a need, or rather that needs are formulated as a result of a person’s concept of self-realization, i.e. if they are the cause or the result of the human activity. Therefore since it is not certain what really lies at the backbone of human activity, it cannot be argued that aspirations arise out of a necessity to realize a need (Janowski, 1977). Because of that it is assumed that needs form the basis of certain inclinations, however, whether they are realized by activity depends on various circumstances, such as an individual’s view of the world or previously received rewards.

McClelland’s study of need for achievement lays the foundations of a new branch of psychological research called achievement motivation. While achievement motivation and level of aspirations are certainly not the same, they are related. Achievement motivation, which is a more stable trait, emphasizes the interaction between stable personality features and transient environmental influences, whereas level of aspirations refers more to the task-specific assessment of the degree to which an individual aims to perform, with reference to past performance and social milieu. So achievement motivation can affect level of aspiration, and influence how we think and process information (McClelland, 1961 in Franken, 2005).

McClelland (1985) worked within social learning theory (cf. Bandura, 1977). The theory claims that much of child learning emanates from the observation of adults in their environment, for example that one way to satisfy needs is to acquire knowledge and skills. McClelland’s (1985) research conducted on
parent-child learning led him to formulate the theory that children have an inborn capacity to gain satisfaction from the development of their own skills. If they experience this satisfaction systematically, their motivation for achievement grows. Therefore it is possible to arouse achievement motivation by positioning the learner in situations of challenge or self-realization. In such a situation the person anticipates the feeling of satisfaction which s/he will experience after completing the task (Franken, 2005).

One of the major theories within achievement motivation theory is *attribution theory*. Attribution theory deals with individuals’ perceptions of their causality and their understanding of cause-effect relationships between various phenomena. It also identifies relationships between a person’s perceptions of causality and her behavioural tendency in the future, especially in reference to achievement motivation and the level of aspiration (Weiner, 1972). So attribution theory has utilised the concept of experience in formulating individuals’ aspirations.

The theory claims that people of higher achievement motivation are more likely to attribute their success or failure to their own work and effort. What’s more, past experience of a similar type positively influences a person’s orientation towards goals of similar type. By contrast, people of low achievement motivation ascribe their success or failure to pure luck and coincidence, or lack of ability in the case of failure. This causative relationship can lie at the bottom of formation of aspirations, as only persons who feel that they have influence over their success or failure in the future can formulate stronger aspirations. Weiner *et al.* (1972) introduced the term ‘locus of control’ to describe an individual’s power to direct one’s behaviour, and describes the locus, i.e. the place where an individual places this power in the continuum from objectivity to subjectivity, whether it is dependent on the person’s volition, intelligence, ability, or depends on external influences.

One way to explain this process is the fact that after success or failure, individuals experience different attribution-related emotions (Weiner, 1986). For example, after experiencing success attributed to their own effort, they feel a heightened feeling of competence; if they attribute it to their personality, their general positive self-image and self-concept increases, which may also affect expectations of future achievement.

To sum up, attributions have an impact on expectations and emotions, and these in turn influence an individual’s behaviour. The differences between people of higher and lower achievement motivation indicate that the former are more likely to initiate more goal-oriented actions, work more intensively, are more immune to failure and choose tasks of mediocre difficulty (not too dif-
ficult, so as to avoid failure). Contrary, people of low achievement motivation do not undertake activity connected with achievement (attributing prospective success to external influences, beyond their control, and exclude effort as a possible remedy), give up on tasks when facing difficulty and choose easy, low vigour tasks (as they believe the result is not dependent on their effort).

Another perspective on the role of aspirations in human life has been proposed by Deci and Ryan (1985) in their self-determination theory (SDT). The basic tenet of the theory is that the type of a person’s motivation (rather than its strength) is crucial for determining the person’s well-being, effective performance as well as creative problem solving or conceptual learning. Indeed, in subsequent years of research the theory has been extended to apply to many other areas of life, such as education, parenting, health, sport etc. (Deci & Ryan, 2008). The authors make a distinction between autonomous motivation and controlled motivation. The former entails both intrinsic motivation and ‘the types of extrinsic motivation in which people have identified with an activity’s value and ideally will integrate it into their sense of self’ (Deci & Ryan, 2008:182). Whereas controlled motivation consists of external regulation, i.e. regulation of one’s behaviour by external sources, such as punishment or reward and regulation, i.e. externally imposed rules that the individual accepts as norms and that have been internalized by such external factors as approval, avoidance of shame and contingent self-esteem. Both types of motivation affect human behaviour (and stand in contrast to amotivation) and lead to different outcomes. Autonomous motivation is considered to yield greater psychological health, better learning outcomes in discovery types of tasks, as well as general development of long-term persistence in tasks.

Aspirations or life goals occupy a prominent place in SDT. Similarly to the previous distinction, it is assumed that individuals can possess both intrinsic and extrinsic aspirations. Intrinsic aspirations include such goals as affiliation, generativity, and personal development, whereas extrinsic aspirations refer to such goals as wealth, fame and attractiveness. (Deci & Ryan, 2008). The authors recognize that aspirations have often been studied as needs or motives (as in achievement motivation research), yet they criticize such an approach on the grounds that they are not learned desires. They define aspirations as ‘a function of the degree to which basic needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy have been satisfied versus thwarted over time’ (Deci & Ryan, 2008:183). From this perspective the research on SDT and aspirations (e.g. Vansteenkiste, Simons, Lens, Sheldon & Deci, 2004) suggests that intrinsic goals, relative to extrinsic goals, are also associated with greater health, well-being and performance. When certain intrinsic goals or aspirations are thwarted, people seek to
realize their external goals, which will help them to indicate their worth such as wealth, and fame. External aspirations are sought and pursued as substitutes for the lack of satisfaction derived from intrinsic goals. However, their pursuit, even if successful, also fails to result in the desired satisfaction. As Deci and Ryan (2008:183) express it, ‘they tend to crowd out pursuit of basic need satisfaction, and they fail to foster integration or wellness, even when attained’. The SDT aims to encompass all aspects of human development and motivation. Therefore SDT research investigates the links between autonomous/controlled behaviour and personality development, self-regulation, energy and vitality, mindfulness (awareness), culture and motivation, the impact of social environment etc. Clearly, aspirations and life goals are perceived as an important component of human development and therefore are of interest in relation to SDT.

2.4. A sociological perspective on the role of educational aspirations

2.4.1. Educational aspirations as a tool for social mobility

The sociological viewpoint on the formation of aspirations focuses on the possible influential groups which can impact the formation of aspirations as well as the object of aspirations. The groups are first of all the family environment, then the school environment and latterly the wider social context (Janowski, 1977; Ścisłowicz, 1994; Czerwińska-Jasiewicz, 1997).

As regards the object of aspirations, it relates to the status of the individual/family in the social stratum and influences the possibilities of upward mobility on the social mobility ladder, thus improving living standards, career opportunities, and even aspects of self-realization. The influence of the family environment on the rise of aspirations is discussed at length in section 2.6. At this point it is only necessary to mention that standard of living, family economic status and parental occupation, which are often transferred intergenerationally, tend to limit the range of options available to young people, and thus shape their aspirations. Also the possession of certain goods (computers, cars etc.) or knowledge of how to operate them can also both mark the current SES and direct an individual’s aspirations.

The school environment, by appropriately motivating the learner and arousing his interest in particular areas of study, can also influence the rise of certain types of aspirations. Needless to say, it is also peer group impact, shared values and accepted behavioural patterns and the acceptance or rejection of an individual’s aspirations that shape a person’s goal orientations, as it is often the case that groups make mainly conformist choices (Janowski, 1977:25).
A high level of education has always been equated with professional success and opportunities of advancement on a social mobility level. It is thus not surprising that the aspiration of many parents is for their children to attain higher education, which is a prerequisite of entry into a non-manual middle class profession, which in turn should guarantee a stable income and elevated social status.

In the past (i.e. before World War Two) the key to attaining high educational credentials was economic means, as education was costly and restricted to the few. Thus by limiting access to higher education, the middle class secured its privileged position and reproduced this privilege in the generations which followed. Consequently, the major goal of the middle classes was the succession of their educational and occupational status. By the same token the working classes also often reproduced their levels of education and social position in the following generations, not so much of their own will, but due to economic barriers. It was only in the affluent post-war boom of the 1950s and 1960s that thanks to the introduction of free education, national subsidies and maintenance grants for students, many individuals from the working classes managed to move up the social mobility ladder and obtain higher education. However, as Devine (2004) observes, this did not occur because the middle classes failed to reproduce their educational advantage, but because demand increased for intellectual abilities in the labour market.

Social structure is popularly used synonymously with society; yet, in more professional jargon it denotes a particular attribute and basic element of society. It can take various forms of hierarchy, distance, inequality, as well as divisions and discrimination, which are not inequalities. It can be defined as a structure of relationships between people, social categories, organizations, institutions, and all other elements which appear both on a microscale – on an individual level, and on a global level (Domański, 2007:12 [the author's translation]).

A notion of certain hierarchy or organization implies that there is a certain stratification in society. Stratification emphasizes the existence of inequalities. It is an institutionalized form of inequalities existing in the form of a ranking list, or these are inequalities established in the form of hierarchy (Domański, 2007:39). Stratification can denote all types of behaviour and attitudes which denote superiority over others. It can also denote barriers, divisions, and distances originating from the unequal distribution of goods. Clearly one sign of such stratification is the organization of society into social classes, such as the intelligentsia, or the middle class, the working class, the rural class. The existence of inequalities is associated with the occupation of certain positions,
which are associated with certain status, power (or lack of it) and prestige (or its lack). Such a description of social structure originates from the theories of Karl Marx (1818–1876) and Max Weber (1864–1920). For Marx, the main reason for social inequalities and divisions was the occupation of different roles in the production system and property ownership, and so society was divided into workers and owners of means of production. Weber, in turn, extended the notion of property ownership into other more specific forms of ownership, such as specific qualifications, vocational experience, and any skills useful and required in the labour market (Domański, 2007:41).

The existence of social inequalities in the social structure implies that certain individuals will tend to improve their position and status by attempting to defy various obstacles and barriers, i.e. they will look for means of upward social mobility which will give them a better position in the social stratum, and thus a better income, living standard etc. This process, referred to as social mobility, can take various forms, can proceed more easily or faster depending on a number of factors. It depends on the ‘openness’ (or ‘closeness’) of a particular social structure – in certain situations, upward mobility is simply not possible, as there may be too many barriers for an individual to overcome. The intensity of social mobility in a society indicates whether there are equal opportunities for advancement, and in consequence it has an impact on the development of individual’s attitudes, and functioning in society. On a macroscale, the dynamics of social mobility can influence political stability, the economy or the occurrence of conflicts (Domański, 2007:194).

2.4.2. Socialization vs. allocation models of status attainment

Research on the status attainment process has been extremely rapid in social and pedagogical studies, and a lot of it has been conducted since the 1970s in America. Even though it rarely concerns language learning, it is worth mentioning the general principles that govern the process and are used in the construction of the status attainment models. Kerckhoff (1976) on the basis of available research data ascribes status attainment to either of the two processes: socialization or allocation. The allocation process assumes there is a link between a person’s origin (background) and attainment, whereas ‘the socialization model minimizes the significance of the variations in socialization outcomes as they influence in any direct way the individual’s attainments’ (Kerckhoff, 1976:369). Proponents of the allocation model emphasize more strongly the importance of societal forces which ‘identify, select, process, classify, and assign individuals according to externally imposed criteria’ (Kerckhoff, 1976:369). So
in the socialization model, differential attainment depends on variation in different motives and skills whereas in the allocation model attainment depends on structural limitations and selection criteria (so factors beyond the control of the individual.) Therefore the socialization model sees the individual as free to move in the social system, as this depends on the individuals’ decisions and how well he executes them. In the allocation model individual attainments can be constrained by the social structure and what one is permitted to do. The two models seem to be complementary rather than excluding each other.

To support that view, status attainment takes place through the process of socialization. Kerckhoff (1976) quotes the so-called ‘Wisconsin model’ (Sewell et al., 1975), which elaborates on Duncan’s basic model (1968). According to Duncan’s model, SES of origin and ability affect educational attainment; these three variables, in turn, influence occupational attainment. The most important variables distinguished in the Wisconsin model are the influence and ambition of the Significant Others, which were added to the Duncan model. These two variables seem to adequately explain the variances in attainments.

The socialization and allocation models differ also in their understanding of ‘wants’ and expectations. An allocation view is closely associated with the attainments, because individuals already in adolescence are able to make good judgments of what they can realistically achieve and can foresee the outcomes of their actions. It is believed that everyone has the same ‘wants’ but different expectations depending on their position in the stratification (social) system. In other words, social structure limits the attainment of an individual and one’s knowledge of the significance of such limitations increases as one gets older. Adolescents are already able to foresee what they can achieve, and already at this time parents’ and children’s expectations seem to coincide, i.e. adolescents seem to adopt the stance of their parents. Thus ‘the greater the gap between wishes and expectations, the less faith youngsters have in the importance of ability and effort’ (Kerckhoff, 1976:369).

The allocation model seems to be valid if we take into account any kind of discrimination exercised by institutional functionaries and which should have an effect on attainment: most of all, SES of Origin. Purely because of that variable, there is considerable variation within the school system; this ranges from the initial streaming of children into ability groups in the early grades, to the placement of adolescents in high school and the quality of college attended. Even if we reject the possibility of social constraints, some process of selection and judgment always takes place in the school system, and this may have an impact on subsequent attainment: these are teachers, school counselors etc. who
by indicating ‘poorer’ and ‘good’ learners and their areas of weakness/strength often indirectly make judgments about what a learner can possibly obtain. This, in turn, influences the learner’s expectations of his attainment.

All in all, the current models of status attainment use the individual as a unit of analysis. The following variables are believed to be interrelated and measured in the models: social position, personal characteristics, performance, and attainments. Kerckhoff (1976) believes that the socialization model could be expanded by taking into account elements of the allocation model, such as the influence of the school system.

2.4.3. Bourdieu’s theory of social reproduction

Another influential theory which would explain why social position in the stratum is inherited by successive generations was proposed by the French philosopher and thinker Pierre Bourdieu, as the social reproduction theory (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

According to this theory, families reproduce their positions in the social stratum and educational attainment because of various forms of capital that they transmit intergenerationally. This means, that e.g. parents within privileged classes endow their children not only with economic but also cultural, social and linguistic capitals (Bourdieu, 1977, 1991). By the same token, the lack of transmission of these capitals in less affluent and/or less educated families accounts for social inequalities.

Capital is accumulated labour (in its materialized form or its ‘incorporated’ embodied form) which, ‘when appropriated on a private, i.e. exclusive, basis by agents, or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labor’ (Bourdieu, 2006:105).

Economic theory has incorporated the notion of capital in order to explain the functioning of the social world, particularly the capitalist world. It has reduced the forms of social practices into the forms of the mercantile exchange of capital in order to ensure profit. Yet, any activities oriented towards economic profit (i.e. self-interested) cannot be produced without other forms of exchange, the so-called disinterested ones. So the three interdependent forms of capital are economic capital, cultural and social capital. Economic capital is ‘immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the forms of property rights’ (Bourdieu, 2006:106). The other two forms of capital can also, under certain conditions, be converted into economic capital, yet, this conversion is less certain and delayed in time. Cultural capital is comprised of the so-called embodied state, i.e. ‘in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the
mind and body’, the objectified state, i.e. in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries etc.) and in the institutionalized state, i.e. ‘a form of objectification, which confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital which it is presumed to guarantee’ (Bourdieu, 2006:106).

Bourdieu (1977) argues that academic ability and success depend not so much on economic investments in education but on the domestic transmission of cultural capital and investment of time. At the same time he criticizes the typically economic approach which attempts to perceive a relationship between educational profit and monetary investment. He believes that there is something more to it, that can explain the specific benefits children from particular social classes can obtain in the academic market.

He also observes that the educational system typically contributes to the reproduction of the social system ‘by sanctioning the hereditary transmission of cultural capital’ (Bourdieu, 2006:107), thus it fails to recognize that the ‘scholastic yield from educational action depends on the cultural capital previously invested by the family’. In addition, it is observed that economic and social yield depend on social capital, which is also inherited.

Social capital constitutes a network of lasting, useful relationships that can secure material or linguistic profits. These relationships are the product of ‘investment strategies, individual or collective, consciously or unconsciously aimed at establishing or reproducing social relationships that are directly usable in the short or long term’. The relationships are established via some form of exchange, whether material or immaterial, and presuppose mutual knowledge and recognition, therefore limiting group membership. Traditionally, marriage alliances were examples of establishing such relationships, accompanied by the exchange of gifts etc. Acceptance of a new family member depended on the usefulness of the connections between them. Thus mutual recognition, gifts, helped to maintain in-group homogeneity. In modern societies, where the role of the family is limited, the exclusiveness of certain relationships is maintained by engineering occasions, places and practices, which bring together individuals ‘as homogenous as possible’. As Bourdieu (2006:111) put it: ‘The reproduction of social capital presupposes an unceasing effort of sociability, a continuous series of exchanges in which recognition is endlessly affirmed and reaffirmed’ (Bourdieu, 2006:111).

As regards the transmission of cultural capital, it is connected to economic capital in the sense that economic capital gives time to allow profit to be gained from cultural capital. This means, not only the quantity of time possessed by the family to participate in cultural events, but also the time which can be purchased from others, in order to allocate freed time resources e.g. to longer study,
and thus delayed entry into the labour market, result in longer education, an investment which may pay off in the long run.

In his later work Bourdieu (1991) introduced the term ‘linguistic’ capital, as a special type of cultural capital. In his essay ‘The production and reproduction of legitimate language’, Bourdieu (1991:55) says, ‘the constitution of a linguistic market creates the conditions for an objective competition in and through which the legitimate competence can function as a linguistic capital, producing a profit of distinction on the occasion of each social exchange’. This specific linguistic competence is described as the linguistic habitus, a ‘determinate form of speech on a determinate market’ (Bourdieu, 1991:56). Linguistic utterances or expressions can be perceived as the product of the relation between a ‘linguistic market’ and a ‘linguistic habitus’. When people produce linguistic utterances, they use all available resources to indirectly adapt their expressions to the demands of the linguistic market. Therefore every interaction can be regarded as the reflection of the social structure that it expresses and attempts to reproduce.

Bourdieu (1991:61) believes that the transmission of a linguistic capital is just a particular instance of transmitting cultural capital and that it is subjugated to the same laws. Therefore linguistic competence will depend on the same dimensions as cultural capital, i.e. the level of education (measured in terms of qualifications obtained) and on the social trajectory. Linguistic competence, since it is acquired through continued exposure, is affected by two key factors, i.e. the family and the educational system.

There has been much research, both quantitative and qualitative conducted to verify Bourdieu’s theory. For example, Sullivan (2001) conducted a study in which she tried to verify Bourdieu’s theory with empirical evidence. She inspected the results of British adolescents in their GCSE school exams taken at 16, and tried to find a link between the results and various aspects of the testees’ families’ capital. She found that there was a correlation between GCSE scores and family background, such as parental qualifications as expressed by their degree. Also she found that parental cultural capital is connected with their social class and qualifications. The transmission of cultural capital from parents to children is visible in the children’s cultural activities, such as reading and television viewing habits, which in turn account for a significant proportion of variance in linguistic ability and cultural knowledge. The transmission of cultural capital refers to participation in high cultural or music instruction, which is often practised as a status symbol. However, no significant link was found between parental capital (understood as participation in culture) and their children’s GCSE scores; in this case the schools’ effect on GCSE attainment was stronger. By contrast, no school effect could be found on the linguistic ability
and the cultural knowledge of the students. To summarize, children’s academic attainment (expressed in GCSE scores) is dependent on certain aspects of pupils’ and parental cultural capitals, most significantly this concerns reading and watching TV, as these mediate pupils’ vocabulary and cultural knowledge. These are the cultural participation and the intellectual resources that help pupils at school. In this sense children from families of higher cultural capital have an intellectual advantage over other children. Sullivan (2001) believes these results confirm the ‘usefulness’ of cultural capital, yet do not wholly support the reproduction theory. Sullivan (2001) believes there must be something more than just capital that contributes to the inheritance of social position. In this respect Goldthorpe (2007:19 in Tzanakis, 2011) suggested that a distinction should be made between cultural capital, cultural value and cultural resource, as the latter two, deprived of the Bourdieuan garb, can perhaps more efficiently explain the differences between social groups. He argues that cultural capital should not be bound to social class, but that every culture can become capital in the sense that it includes and connects in-group members. In that sense, varied cultural capitals can be distinguished, such as ethnic, religious, occupational as well as social-network based capital.

Other researchers, such as Devine (2004) emphasize the fact that in the postmodernist era even for middle class parents it is more difficult to secure their children’s educational advantage and their privileged position. This is partly connected to a lack of career stability (especially in the private sector) and the growing disparity between the extremely high salaries of the few and the rather moderate, if not low, for the rest. Therefore it is recognized that it is not sufficient for parents to utilize their economic resources to provide their children with a good education. Also, social capital and cultural capital have to be utilised. On the other hand she says that while the economic capital helps to prevent children from downward mobility, it does not necessarily guarantee professional success.

From these studies it is evident that economic capital lies at the root of all other types of capital as it enables access to other resources, such as social and cultural capital. In this sense it can be argued that different forms of capital are convertible into each other, and so they ensure the transmission of capital and the occupation of an appropriate position in the social stratum.

On the other hand, some research findings question Bourdieu’s theory on the grounds that a good quality of education can alleviate largely unfavourable home conditions manifest in the final achievement of a child. For example, one notable Polish study was conducted by Janicka (2011). In a questionnaire study of lower secondary learners (ca. 13–16 years old) she investigated their attitudes
and ability in learning German as a foreign language in relation to selected school and family environment factors. On the whole, she found strong correlations between school achievements (in learning German and in general) and environment factors, such as the level of parental education, employment, and family structure, as well as educational climate, parenting style, cultural capital etc. Yet, in the case of children coming from unfavourable home environments in which the child does not obtain adequate support (e.g. due to poverty, absence of one parent), she found stronger correlations between school achievements in German and school environment factors, such as fulfilling the need for respect, autonomy, and competence, clear school structure, general well-being and support of the learner, than home environment factors, particularly if the home environment was highly unsupportive of the child’s learning and did not cater for the child’s emotional growth and well-being. This evidence was interpreted as an indication that the school environment has an important function and capacity to play in providing support to a child’s development, particularly in the case of children who come from deprived family environments.

So, it should be recognized that apart from the family, one other transmitter of cultural capital is the schooling system. In other words, deficits of cultural capital not provided by the family, can be compensated for by an educational institution. Early instruction, it is argued, can have an impact on minimizing social inequalities and providing similar educational opportunities to each child. However, despite such educational opportunities, the school is not able to compensate for a lack of eloquence, good taste, and manners acquired in early childhood. Therefore at school, a generally cognitive and educational advantage can be observed in children originating from ‘the higher classes’, and teachers often regard them as ‘more talented’.

2.5. The place of educational aspirations in foreign language learning theory

While the topic of educational aspirations has been widely studied in pedagogy, educational psychology, and sociology, it seems to be rather unexplored in foreign language pedagogy, although their elements can be found/traced in the psychological theories of motivation and/or personality, such as self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) and L2 Motivational Self-System (Dörnyei, 2005).

The recently proposed L2 Motivational Self-System by Zoltan Dörnyei (2005) links the individual’s motivation with personality and one’s vision of Self (i.e. self-concept). The model encompasses various types of motives: intrinsic, extrinsic (incl. instrumental) and integrative, and could be extended to various
learning tasks. According to this model learners themselves decide on the ideal level of language knowledge they would like to achieve/need in a current situation. These needs are often constructed under the influence of external environment factors, such as the teacher, parents, or an opportunity of career progression. What distinguishes this model from the previous ones, such as Gardner’s socio-educational model (1985), is that it places importance on the learner’s self-regulation, i.e. ‘requires the learner’s proactive involvement in controlling the various facets of their learning in a broad and unified framework’ (Dörnyei, 2005:91). The notion of motivational self-regulation implies that learners who are able to sustain their motivation even when faced with difficult and challenging tasks will learn better than students who are less skilled at regulating their motivation. The model assumes there are three major dimensions which make up L2 motivation: Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self, and L2 Learning Experience (Dörnyei, 2005:105–106).

An Ideal-L2 Self embodies a learner’s imagined identity, i.e. his hopes, wishes, desires and aspirations as to who s/he would like to become in reference to L2 learning. If the learner wants to become an L2 speaker, ‘this can be a powerful motivator to learn L2, because of the desire to reduce the discrepancy between our actual and ideal selves’ (Dörnyei, 2005:105). Thus the tension between the two states results in an individual’s increased activity towards attaining a learning goal. A similar link between the necessity to reduce the tension and the rise of aspirations has been noted by other scholars investigating the link to personality (e.g. Galas & Lewowicki, 1997).

The Ought-to L2 Self is defined as the qualities one ought to possess (such as duties and responsibilities), in order to avoid possible negative outcomes (such as failing an important exam, not getting a job/promotion etc.). This often denotes instrumental motives.

The L2 Learning Experience ‘concerns situation-specific motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience’ (Dörnyei, 2005:105). This aspect denotes the role of the learning environment and task motivation in shaping a learner’s intrinsic motivation.

The third component of the model is the language learning experience, which refers to the motivation inspired by the learning environment and experience, e.g. the teacher, the curriculum, the peer group and the experience of success.

Dörnyei (2005:106) himself recognizes that the Ideal L2 Self and the Ought-to L2 Self denote future language perspectives, ‘imagined end-states’, which therefore can be referred to as teleological (referring to short- or long-term goals) whereas Learning Experience refers to the current situation of the learner, and therefore has a more causative nature in respect of L2. In his model Dörnyei sees
aspirations as one of the constructs of a person’s future/ideal identity, thus clearly placing them within the psychological framework in the study of personality.

The topic of educational aspirations also falls into the recently developing area of SLA research called poststructuralism, (also postmodernism or critical theory, cf. Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000; Pavlenko, 2002), whose major tenets are that the study of language development should not merely focus on individual psycholinguistic development, but should take into account the wider social and political context in which learning the language takes place. As Pavlenko (2002:282) put it, it should be ‘an attempt to investigate and to theorise the role of language in construction and reproduction of social relations, and the role of social dynamics in the process of additional language learning and use’ (Pavlenko, 2002:282). Many poststructuralist linguists, following the theory of Bourdieu (1991), regard linguistic practices as a form of symbolic capital, which can be converted into economic and social capital. This means that the knowledge of a particular language or a linguistic practice (such as literacy) enables access to more prestigious forms of education and subsequently more desired positions in the workforce or on the social mobility ladder. A key role in this process is played by socio-economic factors as well as by institutional practices, which may favour or denigrate various linguistic practices. The linguistic practices of an individual are a means of subject positioning or othering. ‘Othering’ refers to ‘the ways in which the discourse of a particular group defines other groups in opposition to itself; an ‘Us and Them’ view that constructs an identity for the Other and implicitly for the Self’ (Palfreyman, 2005:213–214 in McKay, 2010:107). One of the ways of positioning subjects is to limit their access to linguistic resources, such as interaction with the speakers of the majority/privileged language, which are mediated by such factors as race, ethnicity, class and gender and linguistic background. This phenomenon is even referred to as ‘linguistic gatekeeping’ (Pavlenko, 2002).

Therefore language learning in the poststructuralist framework is often seen as a site of struggle for identity construction. The individual’s identity is constructed via discourse practices, i.e. his/her linguistic performance with others, which varies depending on subject positions assigned to an individual by others in a society. The subject positioning is not a stable feature. Individuals may accept or rebel against their positioning, thus they are continuously involved in constructing their identity and positioning themselves as well as others in relation to the speakers they encounter.

This shows that L2 users are seen as principals in charge of their own learning, i.e. they decide what language they want to learn, how much of it, i.e. the extent of it, without losing their identity. Yet, it has to be acknowledged, the
individuals’ agencies and investments in language learning and use are shaped by the range of identities available to them in the L2.

In poststructuralist theories there is ‘a shift from individual «attitudes», «motivation», «personality» to socially constructed «ideologies», «investment», «agency» and «identity»’ (Pavlenko, 2002:293). Instrumental motivation has been regarded as a personality trait whereas investment refers to ‘the complex, socially and historically constructed and dynamic relationships of the learners to the target language and their sometimes ambivalent desire to learn and to practice it’ (Norton, 2000 in Pavlenko, 2002:294). So as a result we should not ask whether a learner has instrumental motivation or integrative motivation, but rather ‘we can ask more nuanced questions about the ways in which L2 user’s investment in a particular language was shaped, and the ways in which it is being reshaped by his or her present engagement with the language and its speakers’ (Pavlenko, 2002:294).

In this poststructuralist framework, educational aspirations should be seen as a socially-construed motive for foreign language learning, associated with one’s vision of Self or in Dörnyei’s terms, Ideal L2 Self. The realization of those aspirations will be possible by means of investments and actions undertaken towards their achievement. Dörnyei (2009) endorses the notion of creating the Ideal L2 Self by the concept of imagination or vision. For him, language learning is inadvertently connected with identity, therefore learning the L2 successfully requires adopting a new vision of Self, which requires first of all substantiating (initiating), maintaining (keeping alive) and operationalising. The notion of vision or imagination implies that it is necessary to create the vision of One’s Ideal L2 Self, by drawing upon the person’s past experiences, by selecting from the multiple aspirations and dreams those that will positively affect language learning. This process involves raising awareness.

Within the framework of Dörnyei’s (2005) L2 Motivational System parental aspirations can be seen as the parents’ view of their Ideal L2 Self in reference to their children’s prospective achievements. It is an imagined vision of the children’s future competence. To realize this vision parents make considerable investments in their children’s language education, by e.g. opting for a very early start in a foreign language or even bringing up their children in artificial bilingualism (cf. Rokita, 2010). In the case of children, their selves are still under construction, their vision of Self will materialize in adolescence, yet they usually originate from the visions held by others, significant in the child’s life, i.e. parents (Zentner & Renaud, 2007).

As Dörnyei (2009:34) points out, ‘in an era when international holidays are becoming increasingly accessible and cross-cultural communication is a stan-
standard part of our existence in the «global village», it is possible to devise creative ideal-self-generating activities drawing on past adventures, on the exotic nature on encounters with a foreign culture, and on role models of successful L2 learning achievers’.

Therefore the goal of educators should be to motivate their learners to create their new-Selves, i.e. their ‘visions of selves’, as second language users.

2.6. The impact of the family environment on a child’s educational achievements and development of educational aspirations

2.6.1. The role of the proximal factors

Possession of educational aspirations is typically the tenet of an adult/adolescent person, who is the principal of his own actions. In the case of children, it is mainly their parents who, especially in early pre-school years, exert the most influence on the child’s cognitive, linguistic, and social development, thus laying ground for their later academic achievements. Parents who hold high aspirations for their children’s achievements are usually actively involved in supporting the child towards the desired goal and attempt to secure its realization by any means possible, often making considerable personal sacrifices (such as resigning from pleasurable consumer goods and services). Therefore the role of the family in a young child’s life needs careful examination.

According to Janowski (1977) the impact of the family environment can be of triple character: it takes place through social status, property and deliberate intentions. The first type of influence is described by such variables as parental education, place of living, standard of living conditions, social position of the parents etc. These properties are transferred onto children as a natural state and condition of young generation’s start into adult life. It is even popularly assumed that children will attain the same socio-economic status as their parents. The second type of influence, generated by living conditions and possessions, equips the young person with the skills to utilise these possessions and can be useful in the realization of the young person’s aspirations. Clearly, nowadays, access to computers, satellite TV, and other electronic media can impact an individual’s skills and prospects for the future. The third type of influence refers to deliberate activity of parents, their opinions and attitudes, values, as well as patterns of behaviour (described as cultural capital), such as ways of spending free time and supported or despised patterns of behaviour or success. Finally, Janowski (1977) also mentions the forth type of influence exerted by the personal aspirations of adults living in the home environment of the young person.
and their feeling of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with achievements. It is also possible that parents may project their own (unfulfilled) aspirations onto their children.

Marjoribanks (2001) points to the same factors of family influence, yet he groups them into two distinct categories: *distal* and *proximal* factors. The distal factors, would refer to what Janowski (1977) distinguished as the socio-economic status of the family, possessed property, which indirectly may influence the person’s opportunities to achieve, whereas the proximal factors refer to the social, cognitive, emotional and physical stimulation that is provided to the child through interaction with family members. It is accepted that the nature of parent-child interactions influences a child’s growth, personality and need for achievements. A favourable family environment can be developed through proximal factors, irrespective of the distal factors, yet for these to develop, a high level of parental educational awareness is necessary.

In respect of the latter, one of the ways in which the family can exert its influence on the child’s future achievements is by formulating and openly wording certain expectations in reference to the child’s future, which in turn, the child may adopt as his own. Parental expectations are formulated on the basis of the child’s prior achievement, as well as the family’s socio-economic status. Yet, for parental expectations/aspirations to materialize in the form of the child’s achievement, four factors, which impact on the nature of the parent-child relationship, have to be fulfilled (Holloway & Yamamoto, 2008). These are:

- closeness of the parent-child relationship; children who have more frequent and trusting contact with their parents are more likely to be influenced by parental suggestions,
- the age of the child; parental expectations are particularly strong in late adolescence as they are formed on the basis of the prior child’s achievements,
- reliability and completeness of information possessed in relation to the child’s achievements, and finally
- parental material resources which enable parents to support the child in realizing his potential.

It is therefore noteworthy, that whilst the majority of authors point to the prevailing significance of the proximal factors, the SES of the family, while not being the key factor, still indirectly preconditions many of the proximal factors. Even the relationship between the family members may depend on SES as it determines how much time they spend at work and with their children.

As was pointed out, the most significant proximal factor is the closeness of the parent-child relationship. Grolnick and Marbell (2009) distinguish three dimensions, which impact the development of this relationship. These are
warmth/involvement, the type of parenting style (autonomy-supportive vs. controlling), and finally, the family life structure.

The first dimension, i.e. warmth/involvement, should be understood as emotional availability, showing empathy and emotions. It also denotes personal, emotional involvement in the child’s life, as well as the provision of certain means, such as time, learning materials etc. Parental involvement in the child’s activities contributes to the development of the child’s self-esteem and self-concept.

The second dimension, i.e. autonomy-supportive or controlling behaviour characterizes the parenting style. The most common classification of parenting styles are described as authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive (Grolnick & Marbell, 2009). An authoritative parenting style is characterized by high demands for the child on the one hand, but also clear rules of family life structure, warmth and support of individualism, on the other. This parenting style is associated with achievement of a higher level of social competence by the child as well as high levels of self-esteem.

Whereas an authoritarian style, which is characterized by clear but imposed rules, and a low level of warmth and a low level of individual support, has a negative impact on the child. It increases the level of the child’s self-concentration at the same time resulting in a low level of instrumental competence, thereby impeding independent decision making in various life situations.

A similar effect is achieved by bringing up the child in a permissive way. An apparent promotion of independence and freedom of choice, associated with a lack of clear rules, results in the development of a low level of self-control and a low level of academic intrinsic motivation. At the age of 8–9 children raised in a permissive way are very self-focused and have a low level of social and cognitive competence (Baumrind, 1996 in Grolnick, 2003).

The third dimension, i.e. the family life structure, denotes the organization of family life (e.g. the existence of clear rules/no rules, regular meal times etc.), as well as the nature of interaction between parents and children (e.g. whether parents can predict if their children will cope with a task or not). In those family environments, in which there is a clear structure of living, there is a steady and reciprocal flow of information, which allows them to get to know their own child and his capacities better, which results in more realistic expectations of the parents in reference to their children. On the other hand, children in such families, knowledgeable of the home rules, can better predict the consequences of their actions. Grolnick and Marbell (2009) claim on the basis of prior research evidence, that children coming from families with a clear family life structure have a stronger feeling of control over their own activities and a greater ability to
predict the consequences of their own activities, which in turn manifests itself in higher school achievement.

A close relationship between parents and children is a necessary condition for the formation of children’s aspirations, as these are largely formed through the process of identification with a beloved parent, i.e. if a child identifies with his father most, s/he will adopt his aspirations (Sikorski, 2005:13, after Cres, 1961). In this respect it is even claimed that to a certain extent aspirations are inherited from one generation to the next through this identification with parents (Sikorski, 2005:14).

Ann Roe (1957, in Sikorski, 2005) has put forward five hypotheses in which she indicates the role of the family in forming the child’s aspirations. First of all, she claims that intelligence and temperament are mainly heritable, and so similarly determine the heritable character of aspirations. And yet, according to the second hypothesis, the heritable aspirations can materialize differently, depending on available experience, an individual’s nature, the socio-economic status of the family, as well as the wider historical context in which one lives. Consequently, shaping aspirations and attitudes, just like other personality features, is connected with individual experience, which in turn is directed by involuntary/implicit memory of events, which cause either satisfaction or frustration, and thus influence the direction of aspiration growth (the third hypothesis). According to the fourth hypothesis aspirations are directed by selective attention, which grows in time. It determines an individual’s focus, either on individual people or on objects and goals. And finally, all of these are formed by the strength of needs, their urgency and necessity, which results in an individual’s behaviour (the fifth hypothesis).

So all in all, while to a large extent the level and strength of aspirations are heritable, the direction and strength of development is determined by the social context in which an individual lives. In the case of the young child, it is first and foremost its family, although some impact of educational institutions (e.g. kindergarten) cannot remain unnoticed. This impact can be observed in numerous research studies on the growth of aspirations as well as cognitive growth in general.

2.6.2. The interrelationship of parental and child aspirations

Individual aspirations do not shape until mid-adolescence. Hence, most of the studies on aspirations refer to either adolescents or young adults, as these individuals are at the threshold of their occupational and/or higher educational careers, and their decisions can be judged as fully considered and responsible.
Yet, as many studies show, even these young individuals confess that in their educational decisions they often follow their parents’ guidance and suggestion.

One of the first Polish studies on the relationship between home environment and the rise of educational aspirations was conducted by Janowski (1977) in the years 1972–1974. In the early 1970s young people seem to have had fairly good educational opportunities, since the socialist economy was still thriving, and this was also the first generation born since World War Two, which did not remember the war atrocities, and thus could look to the future with increased optimism and expectations. Thus the study of their aspirations was particularly interesting. The subjects were 2000 students of the then first and fourth grades of secondary school, i.e. 15- and 19-year-olds. The study was conducted in two representative age groups in order to observe the dynamic change in aspirations in reference to age and the stage in schooling career. Among the key findings was the fact that paradoxically the impact of family grew with age. The family were the major reference for advice, sharing success and failure and talking about plans for the future (aspirations), whereas the evaluation of other external people was not so important (Janowski, 1977:195). The role of the school grew only in the cases where the role of family was small. This may mean that schools have the potential to exert influence where the family does not provide support.

Lewowicki (1987) studied various determinants of aspirations, i.e. personality, environmental and pedagogical ones in adolescents as well as their dynamics (change) on over 4000 learners at primary and secondary school. The data was collected over six years, i.e. in years 1978–1984. The study was very comprehensive and abundant in data; it aimed to describe the general level of aspirations as well as particular types of aspirations in relation to personality, environmental and pedagogical factors. The most distinguished, and relevant for the current discussion, were educational aspirations. Educational aspirations were found to be highly correlated, first of all with intelligence ($r=0.2883, p<0.001$), followed by such personality factors as the intensity of the arousal processes ($r=0.2056, p<0.001$), the balance ($r=0.0155, p<0.001$) and mobility ($r=0.104, p<0.01$) of nervous system processes. In this respect a certain, but weaker correlation was also found between educational aspirations and the nervous system processes and the type of temperament, as well as self-esteem and motivation.

As regards the impact of environmental factors, high educational aspirations turned out to be correlated with the social and educational status of the parents: the highest educational aspirations were possessed by youths coming from the intelligentsia background. With reference to the place of living, the highest level of aspirations was possessed by young people learning in secondary schools in big cities and suburban cities, and especially those who came from smaller
towns/villages, which must indicate their perception of education as an opportunity and means of social advancement. Other environmental factors which affected the rise of high educational aspirations were found to be living conditions and access to educational/cultural goods, parental level of education and gender as girls exhibited higher educational aspirations, whereas boys material ones.

As regards the pedagogical impact of the schooling process on the rise of educational aspirations, an interesting finding was noted, namely, that pedagogical aspirations had some influence on the formation of high level educational aspirations only in reference to primary school children (ca. 14 years old). This impact manifested itself in high school achievements measured (by the grades obtained), the position of the learner in the classroom (the higher the position, and thus self-esteem, the higher the level of educational aspirations). In reference to the older learners (ca. 18 years old), the impact of the educational institution is lessened. Young adults at the threshold of starting university or vocational career are much more aware of their own goals, ambitions and aspirations, have already established opinions about the values of education, which are independent from the quality of school instruction, but may be influenced by some environmental as well as personality factors (such as intelligence).

One of the first studies in the post-communist Poland was conducted by Ścisłowicz (1994). The significance of the study relates to the fact that it was one of the first that described the new geopolitical situation of the country, with free market and open borders, thus enabling wider social mobility as well as career opportunities, enhanced by high levels of education. Thus education became more valued. In addition, this is one of the few studies which examines the relationship between parental and children’s levels (low, medium or high) of aspirations as well as the level of parental aspirations and children’s school achievements (measured by final school grades). The subjects of the research were 11- and 14-year-old learners in a city, a small town and villages (600 altogether) as well as their parents (also 600). The data on parental and child levels of aspirations was collected by means of surveys, and school documents provided information on student achievements (e.g. the registry book). The results of the study showed the correlational relationship between, first, parental levels of aspirations and children’s achievements, and secondly, children’s own aspirations, i.e. the higher the learning results achieved by the child, the higher the parental aspirations in reference to the child’s future (expressed e.g. in plans for tertiary education). These aspirations were also more realistic in the case of older children, i.e. 14-year-olds, who had already proven their academic ability. Also the higher aspirations parents held for their children, the higher aspirations had the children themselves ($r_c=0.537$, p<0.001).
In addition, the researcher found clear and significant relationships between the level of parental aspirations and socio-cultural and economic factors, such as parental occupation and level of parental education. It was found that families holding higher educational aspirations, tried to secure better socio-economic conditions as well as valued education more. By contrast, parents of lower education had lower aspirations for their children (such as only finishing a vocational school). Apart from a lack of parental involvement, those children also found it difficult to continue their education due to poor economic conditions and distance from schools of further education, which were the major inhibiting factors in attaining higher education. Children of rural workers who had only primary education themselves were the most disadvantaged in that situation.

Kawula (1998) in his longitudinal study of the intergenerational dynamics of family mobility observed how three generations of families changed their social position after the World War Two. For this reason he investigated the levels of education and occupations in the three subsequent generations of male members of families as it was believed that the grandfather’s, father’s and son’s occupational position usually determines the position of the family. In the majority of cases he observed upward mobility on the social ladder in the intergenerational continuum, although the extent of advancement (whether one or more positions) depended on the place of living, the farther the distance from the city, the less dynamic the social mobility was. Kawula (1998) found a clear correlation between the intergenerational dynamic of family mobility and the actual schooling achievements and aspirations of a child in the following generation. In other words: if in the family there exists a tradition of striving for advancement on the social mobility ladder (as evident in the advancement of its previous generations), this also has an impact on the formulation of the aspirations of the adolescent child. However, it must be noted that a lack of progression on the social mobility ladder does not mean a lack of aspirations, as the family may already have a very high status in the social stratum. Then its role is mainly to maintain the same position in the following generation. In both cases it is the quality and level of parental educational awareness that determines the child’s success in their schooling career. Kawula (1998:185) found that parental educational awareness, which in turn affected inequalities at the start of schooling, was mostly correlated with the level of parental education (Pearson coefficient $r=+0.475$); Consequently, parental educational awareness was further correlated to the social and vocational aspirations of their children (Pearson coefficient $r=+0.694$). Parental educational awareness is understood as deliberate and conscious measures taken to emphasize the value of education. It manifests itself in participation in cultural and educational activities as well as
the deliberate planning of the child’s educational career and open verbalization of educational goals, which are hoped to be adopted by the children themselves.

Lesser correlation, although still significant, was found between the children’s aspirations and the material situation of the family ($r=0.399$), which indicates that while higher SES families are capable of providing more educational opportunities, this advantage is not deterministic, and does not signify a lack of equally high aspirations in lower SES families and their children. These findings lead Kawula (1998) to conclusion that differences in family impact are a specific characteristic of each family, being an outcome of the individual parental awareness of the upbringing/education process as well as general and pedagogical reflection abilities.

In another study Kawula (1998) investigated the relationship between the family environment and the school achievements of children. This relationship is crucial as schooling success in the early years of children plays a significant role in the later formulation of aspirations of parents in reference to their children. The family environment was described by the following constructs: living standards (determined by SES and parental education and occupation) were described as a place for study (room/corner/desk), frequency of parent-school relations, frequency and length of time spent doing homework, parental attitudes to the role of play, work and learning and type of vocational aspirations in reference to their children. By calculating the correlation between these constructs and children’s school results at secondary school (the grades were obtained from school records), Kawula (1998) confirmed the existence of such a relationship, although it was weak ($r=+0.351$). A higher correlation ($r=+0.439$) was found to exist between favourable conditions of upbringing and care at home and performance at school (measured by the grades). This school performance (expressed in general behaviour and achievement) was regarded to be conditioned by family environment, and still an important predictor of further vocational and post-primary educational start.

Sikorski (2005) investigated the relationship between the level of adolescent educational and vocational aspirations and parental styles. The former comprised a list of statements to which the respondents had to indicate their level of agreement. They described either high, medium, or low level of educational and vocational aspirations. The latter were assessed by means of the Parent-Child Relations questionnaire adapted from Kowalski (1984), whose statements referred to five parenting practices: rejecting, protective, liberal, demanding and loving. The results showed that the highest level of educational aspirations were possessed by those adolescents whose parents adopted either a democratic ($r=0.428$, $p<0.001$) or an authoritative ($r=0.617$, $p<0.001$) parental style.
By contrast, those respondents who described their aspirations as low, also admitted to possessing authoritarian parents ($r=0.183$, $p<0.01$). A more detailed analysis of parental styles showed that adolescents regarded mothers as more influential in shaping their life orientations than fathers. The mothers were assessed as mainly presenting a ‘loving’ but also ‘demanding’ figure, which was influential in shaping one’s individual life plans. When assessing the mothers’ influence (as distinct from that presented by both parents), it was found that in the case of daughters the highest level of aspirations was possessed by those mothers whose style was described as loving, and in the case of sons, the demanding style turned out to be most influential. Whereas, the mothers’ liberal attitude towards sons, and rejecting attitude towards daughters, resulted in low levels of adolescent educational aspirations. In the case of the fathers, the most influential style for the formation of a high level of educational aspirations, both in reference to sons and daughters, was the demanding style. However, it should be noted that the subjects studied pointed equally often to the influence of their parents (38%) as well as their peers (40%) as playing the largest role in shaping their educational aspirations. This finding should be interpreted in the following way: in adolescence there is still an influential role for parents to shape their children’s levels of educational aspirations, yet their direction and sustainability to a large extent depend on the influence of the peers.

Domański (2002) carried out a survey study of a more sociological nature, investigating the relationship between social class (expressed by SES and occupational position) and educational aspirations. He asked adults to imagine their children finishing primary school (then at ca. 14–15 years of age) and respond to questions relating to plans for the future education of their children (e.g. a type of school: general comprehensive or a vocational one, vocational courses etc.) The results clearly showed that lyceum (a type of general comprehensive school) was chosen mainly by the intelligentsia and white-collar workers, followed by technicians, clerks and firm owners. Also it was found that child gender is a crucial differentiating factor in planning for the child’s future. 62% of parents who had daughters chose for their children ‘a lyceum’, and only 31% of parents indicated this type of school for sons, clearly showing their preference for sons’ vocational training rather than general education, thus indicating their career path.

When asked whether they would be willing to bear extra costs for additional classes for their children, it was again the parents deriving from the intelligentsia, white-collar workers, and firm owners who mainly agreed to do so. 95% of them indicated foreign language classes as the most desirable investment, as those parents are most willing to enhance their children’s skills which could profit later in life success. Interesting differentiating activities between the mid-
dle and lower classes were sports and computer science classes. People aspiring to the middle classes were more willing to pay for children’s sporting activities than manual or rural workers.

High educational aspirations are a profitable strategy, especially in the hands of the intelligentsia. Do vocational aspirations follow the same principles of social status? Vocational aspirations are typically measured by means of the internationally standardized tool: Scales of Occupational Prestige, in the form of a ranking list of professions (e.g. Treiman, 1977, for a Polish review cf. Domański, Sawiński & Słomczyński, 2007), which is assumed to reflect stratification hierarchy in the awareness of individuals. Also in this case Domański (2002) observed the same pattern as in the case of educational aspirations: non-technical intelligentsia, and then top managers chose occupations of the highest prestige both in reference to their sons and daughters. Surprisingly high vocational aspirations were held by foremen for their daughters, which were nearly as high as those of technical intelligentsia (Domański, 2002). Statistical regression analysis of the data found a connection between the strength of vocational aspirations (expressed as the desired prestige profession) and such variables as the father’s social and occupational position, which would also support the theory of Bourdieu concerning the intergenerational transmission of social and cultural capital. The observed dependencies were as follows: the highest vocational aspirations (for the most prestigious occupations) were held by the intelligentsia parents, then followed by firm owners and lower position white-collar workers. Social background of the father is a differentiating factor more so in the case of sons than daughters. Fathers of higher SES also have higher aspirations for their sons’ occupational achievements who are expected to achieve at least a similar social status. This is caused by the fact that men decide on the occupational market mechanisms and so shape social structure. On the contrary, expectations towards daughters are less dependent on the social and occupational position of the family and their income. These findings are also in accord with American results (Sewall et al., 1979). They show that aspirations are related to the social status of the parents in a peculiar way: they do not directly correlate with such variables as place of living (city vs. village), income, but the occupational position of the parents. Occupational position has an impact on other areas of life (income, place of living) and also denotes a cultural and social capital transmitted intergenerationally. In other words, those with an intelligentsia origin attain higher professional positions, and these in turn, influence the formulation of equally high aspirations. By the same token, coming from a lower class family is associated with lower social positions, and this indirectly influences the lowering of aspirational levels (Domański, 2002:106).
Similarly, high economic status generates high ambitions and raises expectations/aspirations. Additionally, an interesting finding related to gender and age: the youngest parents, especially mothers (under the age of 30), had the highest vocational aspirations for their sons (they did not differ much in their opinions from fathers in reference to daughters). This could indicate that perhaps sons can expect much more support from their mothers than fathers (Domański, 2002:107). Table 2.1 presents the summary of the studies on the relationship between parental and child aspirations.

### Table 2.1. Summary of Polish studies on the relationship of children’s aspirations and the impact of family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The author</th>
<th>Subjects /aspects studied</th>
<th>Key findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Janowski (1977)</td>
<td>Dynamics of aspiration in 15- and 19-year-olds.</td>
<td>The impact of the family in shaping aspirations grows with age. The impact of school is significant only in the case of an unfavourable home environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewowicki (1987)</td>
<td>14- and 19-year-olds, the relationship between various types of aspirations and personality in relation to environmental and pedagogical factors.</td>
<td>Educational aspirations were influenced by the school only in the case of 14-year-olds; older learners’ aspirations are more influenced by environmental (family) and personality (intelligence) factors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ścisłowicz (1994)</td>
<td>11- and 14-year-olds (600 respondents); the relationships between parental and child level of aspirations.</td>
<td>There is a correlational relationship between parental level of aspirations and their children’s achievements as well as the children’s level of aspirations. Parental level of aspirations is influenced by SES.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kawula (1998)</td>
<td>633 families surveyed on occupations of the three past generations of men.</td>
<td>Child social and vocational aspirations depend mainly on parental educational awareness and the level of parental education; it is less related to the SES of the family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikorski (2005)</td>
<td>The relationship between parenting style and adolescent educational and vocational aspirations.</td>
<td>High educational aspirations are correlated with democratic or authoritative parenting style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domański (2002)</td>
<td>Parents of adolescents/relationship between parental occupational position and aspirations for their children.</td>
<td>High educational aspirations are related to high educational and occupational positions of the parents (SES).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.6.3. The impact of the family on the child’s cognitive, linguistic and educational achievements

From the aforementioned studies it can be concluded that if the child’s educational achievement is determined by the child’s educational aspirations, and these in turn, to a large extent are conditioned by parental aspirations, then it should be the parent’s goal to arouse such aspirations. The family plays the
most important role in shaping the child’s initial interests as well as attitudes to learning, especially in the pre-school years. It can exert its influence on the child’s linguistic, cognitive, social and emotional development. The family environment and its capital (social, cultural, linguistic), to a large extent determine the child’s success in the early years of schooling (Wilgocka-Okoń, 2003; Gottfried et al., 1989). As these are usually the children, who come from such families, which are able to provide cognitively stimulating as well as emotionally stable environments, that start schooling successfully, and often are labeled as gifted, whereas it is often not the particular gift, but the family environment that plays the most crucial role in their development. Early schooling success, in turn, determines the level and types of parental aspirations in reference to their children, as well as of the children themselves in adolescence (Kawula, 1998).

Tyszkowa (1990) proposed a theoretical framework in which the role of the family is placed as central in providing experience for the shaping of the individual’s personality development, provided the individual is actively involved in those experiences. This active participation is the tenet of many psychological developmental theories (e.g. Vygotsky’s socio-cultural/activity theory, cf. Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). The experiences generated by the family leave memory traces in the individual, and henceforth impact upon personality growth, which, however, later on can undergo modification and restructuring in the course of further experience. This experience relates to a wide array of interpersonal interactions and relationships and emotions associated with them as well as all the events, situations and activities that take place in the family. The overall human experience is transferred in three ways: ‘species experience’ acquired by genetic inheritance of neural connections and inborn schemata of activity, individual activity acquired through one’s activity, and social experience acquired through interaction with other people, social communication and enculturation. In that last channel of experience, formation of a very important role is played by inter-generational (grandparents to grandchildren) transfer of experience, i.e. family traditions, national cultural heritage etc. The experiences exert influence on the person’s individual development by changes in the subsystems of the individual’s psyche, in his/her habits, attitudes, patterns of behaviour and interaction, values, opinions etc. (Jacobs & Harvey, 2005).

Another objective of providing the child with multivariate experience and cognitive stimulation is to arouse the child’s interest in a particular activity, as early rooted interests can shape one’s aspirations and orientation in the future (Johnson, 1970) as well as one’s self-concept. The self-concept is formulated in the course of individual experiences and is influenced by the opinions and beliefs of others in one’s surroundings. Hence the development of the
A child’s self-concept will clearly be related to parental care, the parent-child relationship as well as provision of cognitively and educationally stimulating experiences. Subsequently, successful achievements in early schooling may also have an impact on the child’s positive self-concept and the formation of his/her aspirations.

A child’s interests are not of an innate capacity. It is in the course of the learning experience that a child may develop an inclination towards one activity/subject or another. Hurlock (1985) mentions that interests are shaped in three ways: first, by learning through trial and error, secondly, through identification with a beloved person, whose skills, interests and behaviours a child wants to imitate, and thirdly through explicit advice and instructions given by a competent person knowledgeable of a child’s strengths. Many families have little awareness of their impact on the shaping of children’s interests. In their case the family’s impact is mainly perceived through its general atmosphere, which can be described by such variables as living standards, the family’s socio-economic status, parental occupation and education, family size and structure (Super, 1972). However, there are some other families which deliberately aim to shape children’s interests by setting their own examples, encouragement, or providing the child with varied experiences. Hurlock (1985) enumerates factors, which can arouse children’s interests and motivations. These are:

a) parental opinions and attitudes (encouraging/discouraging from an activity);
b) prestige of a profession;
c) admired persons (idols);
d) talents and interests;
e) gender-oriented professions;
f) cultural stereotypes;
g) achievement of independence; and
h) personal experiences.

It is evident from the above that children look at the achievements and interests of their parents, and often want to imitate them. Therefore the lifestyle and interests of family members are also crucial for the development of the interests of the young child.

An example of how parental attitudes shape adolescent attitudes to foreign language learning has been provided by Bartram (2006). In his comparative study of adolescent attitudes to learning a foreign language, which was conducted in Holland, Germany and Great Britain, he established that adolescent preferences are clearly dictated by the guidelines and preferences of their parents. Parental influence was marked here by acting as a role model (either positive
or negative in reference to possessed language skills), openly expressed regrets about missed opportunities, or openly expressed remarks about the value of knowing a particular language. In the study it was found that parents of German and Dutch teenagers particularly emphasized the role of learning English as a foreign language and were less encouraging in relation to French, whereas English parents did not encourage their children to learn any foreign language at all, as they already speak a language of international recognition, and pointed to the benefits of learning other subjects, e.g. maths. In addition, parental own knowledge of foreign languages turned out to be a crucial factor in motivating adolescents to learn as well.

These findings are in accord with what Gardner (1985) proposed in his socio-psychological model of language education. He says that parents are ‘the major intermediary between the cultural milieu and the student’ (Gardner, 1985:109). He indicates that parental influence on the children’s foreign language learning can be both passive and active. The active influence manifests itself in open interactions with the child in the foreign language or about learning the foreign language; this influence can be positive or negative by emphasizing or diminishing the value of a particular language. The passive parental impact on child foreign language learning is evident in parental attitudes to the target language society. If it is negative, it may diminish the expected results in the child’s foreign language learning, despite generally positive and supportive parental attitudes to the child’s schooling achievement.

Thus if we perceive the family as the first and most important environment in which the child’s both individual and social experience is acquired, it is important to recognize its role in shaping both the child’s emotional, cognitive and linguistic experiences. Numerous studies emphasize this role of the family in the child’s development, usually with a view to indicating why certain children, those from favourable family environments, already show an educational advantage and are successful from the beginning of schooling. In this respect the studies point to the role of the family in providing the child with experience, which epitomizes cognitive stimulation. The research studies point to the link between such early cognitive stimulation in the family and later educational achievements.

The cognitive stimulation can refer to early literacy experiences, early math skills, or the arousal of intrinsic academic motivation. In addition, early foreign language learning can serve this function, as a lot of L2 skills are transferable from L1 literacy or math activities.

The home environment, by engaging children in such cognitively stimulating activities as joint play/reading activities, family participation in cultural events,
family discussions on socio-political subjects, enrolling children to interest clubs etc. as well as holding high expectations in reference to the child’s achievements, are all conducive to the arousal of academic intrinsic motivation. Gottfried, Fleming and Gottfried (1998) conducted a longitudinal study on the relationship between home environment and the development of academic intrinsic motivation. The academic intrinsic motivation was investigated in 5 areas: in reference to academic learning in general, as well as in reference to learning literacy, maths, science and social sciences. The tool used was the specially developed Child Academic Intrinsic Motivation Inventory. The results indicated that a cognitively stimulating family environment exerts an influence on the child’s academic intrinsic motivation up to early adolescence. Children who possessed it at the age of 7, also showed a continued development of academic intrinsic motivation two years later, which was independent from such factors as the child’s intelligence or his family’s socio-economic status. Its early development is crucial as it is linked to school achievements, intellectual abilities as well as perception of competence, which results in lower academic anxiety (Gottfried, Fleming & Gottfried, 1998:535). A cognitively stimulating environment does not have a direct link to the SES of the family, and yet it has to be recognized that a family must have sufficient financial resources to enable such an environment, e.g. buying educational toys, books, going on trips, family outings etc.

Another interesting finding referred to the long-term impact of parental task-intrinsic motivations on the development of academic intrinsic motivation. The following tasks were distinguished as particularly motivating: encouraging the child to task endurance, and providing the child with new experiences. Whereas task-extrinsic motivations, such as giving a child a money reward or depriving him of a privilege, decreased the level of academic intrinsic motivation. Similarly, verbal praise, if used too frequently or in reference to easy tasks, diminished the value of academic intrinsic motivation; the child stopped gaining satisfaction from doing difficult and stimulating tasks, but instead expected frequent praise (in return for easy tasks, Gottfried, Fleming & Gottfried, 1998).

Family literacy habits are probably the most significant and common way of influencing child development. Numerous studies indicate the value of joint parent-child activities in relation to the child’s verbal ability, as it results in the child’s use of more complex and richer vocabulary (cf. Saracho & Spodek, 2010 for a review). Traditional children’s literature containing alliteration, rhyme and rhythm, also enhance the child’s ability in phonological discrimination as well as understanding of letter-sound relationship, which are a prerequisite in the later development of reading skills.
Weigel, Martin and Benett (2006) refer to family literacy habits in a broader sense, and apart from parent-child reading activities, distinguish as relevant parental reading habits, subscribing to magazines, library enrollment, and watching TV (especially educational programmes). In an empirical study of these aspects of home literacy they found a correlation between all these aspects of parental literacy and kindergarten children’s passive vocabulary knowledge, text recognition, and even mathematical skills. DeBaryshe (1995) has proposed a family literacy model, in which he assumes there is a relationship between family literacy habits and the verbal skills of the child. Additionally, the model assumes there is a link between parental literacy habits and social-demographic features of the family environment (such as SES). They have an impact on parental beliefs and attitudes to their children’s language and literacy development, which subsequently are realized (or not) in joint parent-child literacy activities, such as poem recitation, singing songs, joint games, picture drawing, storytelling etc.) and in consequence, on the language development of the child. These assumptions behind the model (DeBaryshe, 1995) have been confirmed empirically by Weigel, Martin and Benett (2006). They conducted questionnaires with parents of 3-year-old children not attending kindergarten instruction and verbal ability tests with the children. They found a statistically significant correlation between all the components of the model. They particularly emphasized that joint parent-child reading activities and language games have an important impact on print recognition and the arousal of interest in reading.

Parental influence may not be limited only to joint parent-child reading activities, but also denotes virtual teaching of letter-shape identification, single word reading and spelling rates. If practised by parents, they all equip the child with an advantage in learning to read in his L1. For example, Hood, Conlon and Andrew (2008) in their study of 143 Australian children 6 months before entering school instruction, measured home literacy practices of the children’s families, such as parent-child reading and parental teaching of letters, words and name writing by means of a Home Literacy Environment Questionnaire and children’s capacities to recognize these by means of a Title Recognition test. The literacy development of children was studied over the following 3 years in order to check what impact these early pre-school literacy experiences had on the subsequent acquisition of literacy skills. The findings of the study showed the independent relation of parental teaching of letters to pre-school Letter-Word Identification scores, as well as subsequent scores in letter-word identification, single-word reading, spelling rates and phonological awareness at school Grades 1 and 2. Additionally, parent-child reading also turned out to be related to the children’s vocabulary in Grade 1. Thus it can be clearly seen that both types of home lite-
racy experiences, i.e. joint book reading and parental teaching of letters, are profitable for the children’s success in their own literacy development after they enter schooling. A similar connection is found between kindergarten children’s number competence and their later mathematical competence (Jordan et al., 2009), which suggests that early mathematical skills, like number recognition and simple counting, should also be taught in the pre-school years.

All these cognitive capacities may be deliberately developed in pre-school children by their parents, and they are recognized as indicators of the child’s readiness for school. The role of the quality of home environment and its impact on later school achievements has been found in many studies. Environmental factors are more significant than any sort of genetic predispositions. For example, Forget-Dubois et al. (2009) in their study of infant twins, who would thus have similar genetic codes, observed that the key factor predicting child readiness for school was the linguistic ability of children, which had been partly mediated by the SES of the families and exposure to reading. It was not linked to any kind of genetic endowment.

Consequently, school readiness, which is defined as a ‘multidimensional construct that includes behavioural, emotional, cognitive, and knowledge components that make the child ‘ready to learn’ at school entry’ (Forget-Dubois et al., 2009:736), is a further predictor of schooling success. Those children who come from a favourable and cognitively stimulating environment demonstrate an educational advantage at the onset of schooling, which is maintained throughout later years of schooling (Duncan et al., 2007). Duncan et al. (2007) in their analysis of six longitudinal studies of kindergarten children’s cognitive and socio-emotional skills found that the strongest predictors of school success at school entry were maths (knowledge of numbers and ordinality), reading and attention skills.

In a Polish study on school readiness Ochmański (1995) distinguished several categories of factors that potentially influence the child’s success at schooling. These are socio-economic factors, such as the size and structure of the family, level of parental education, sources of family income (occupation), forms of material care (living standards, level of nutrition and dressing), maternal health, nutrition and age in pregnancy. An additional category of influence is exerted by psycho-social factors, such as parental styles and level of parental control (dominance, helplessness vs. exaggerated focus).

The aforementioned studies uniformly indicate that early cognitive experiences, in literacy or maths, have a positive impact on children’s achievement in later years and determine schooling success. It seems therefore justifiable to assume that early experiences in learning a foreign language may bear similar
effects. It seems likely that skills and strategies developed early in life in learning L1 can be successfully transferred onto learning the second language in middle childhood. Sparks *et al.* (2008) found such a link between early L1 word decoding skills and later L2 word decoding skills, as well as between early L1 spelling skills and phonological awareness and L2 spelling skills. In turn, L2 word decoding skills turned out to be a good predictor of L2 reading comprehension. It is interesting to find that transfer of these skills from L1 was still possible many years after learning L1. Therefore it can be hypothesized that early cognitive stimulation in L1 literacy and mathematical skills will impact not only on school readiness and later achievement but also on later L2 learning.

Finally, it should be mentioned that while SES of the family is a valid factor in the quality of family environment and prediction of later schooling achievement, it is not necessarily deterministic. In many western European and American studies high-SES families are usually those who have achieved high occupational status thanks to a high quality of education. Thus SES is associated with the level of education and occupation. It may just be the level of especially maternal education that determines the quality of child care, ways of spending time and even the quality of language addressed to the child. Higher education is also associated with a greater educational awareness among parents. For example, Hoff-Ginsberg (1998) claims that higher SES mothers (and the better educated), as contrasted with lower-SES (high school educated) mothers, differed in the way they talked to their children. Thus they supplied a different language experience for their children. Higher SES mothers were found to talk to their children more and use a richer vocabulary. They were also more willing to engage in a topic initiated by the child, asked questions more frequently and used fewer imperatives. So the level of maternal education (and consequently SES) determines the quality of child-directed speech.

By contrast, many other studies (e.g. Gottfried, Fleming & Gottfried, 1998) point to the fact that children from lower-SES families but of high quality parental care do equally well at the beginning of schooling. Thus parental educational awareness is the crucial issue, and does not have to be associated purely with SES.

Also the results of such studies advocate a change in educational policy by calling for early intervention kindergarten programmes, in which early literacy and mathematical skills could be developed, thus equipping children from lower SES families with appropriate skills. In addition, it has been suggested that various parent education programmes should be organized in order to make them aware of what measures they should take in order to secure the best educational opportunities for their children.
So it should be concluded that SES is a very important distal variable which sets the context for the functioning of the family, yet its impact is more complex than it seems. There may be families of lower SES, but which have greater awareness of the value of education and therefore may aim to secure the best prospects available for their children. By contrast, there are also wealthy families who may have too little time to take care of their children, thus handing this task to various specialized institutions. While the latter may be profitable for the child’s development too, in the view of psychological theories (cf. Grolnick & Marbell, 2008) and socio-educational research (cf. Crosnoe et al., 2010; Jacobs & Harvey, 2005), a close relationship between parents and children for schooling success is irreplaceable.

It is noteworthy that many of these factors have also been found as crucial in shaping one’s aspirations (e.g. Skorny, 1980; Wade, 2004). Thus to summarize, the following relationship can be identified: a child develops his/her own educational/vocational aspirations in adolescence, and they are usually affected by his/her earlier successes at schooling as well as the general family atmosphere and attitude to schooling and prospects for the child’s future. Thus if parents aim to realize their own aspirations in reference to their children, they should take such measures that will allow the enhancement of schooling success. This in turn, involves both providing appropriate socio-economic conditions (material/nutrition, family atmosphere etc.) for proper intellectual growth as well as emotional and cognitive stimulation, as in the case of child schooling success, it is first of all the pedagogic and educational awareness of the family that matters the most, both in the general education of the family and the formation of aspirations.

2.6.4. Models of the impact of family on child development

2.6.4.1. Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological model of human development

Years of research on the prominent role of the family environment in the early years of the child’s life have also contributed to the rise of integrative models of human (and especially child) development, which encompass research from various fields of study. It was initially Urie Bronfenbrenner in 1979 who formulated the theoretical paradigm for ecological models of human development, whose major tenets are, firstly, that

‘human development takes place through processes of progressively more complex reciprocal interaction between an active, biopsychological human organism and the persons, objects and symbols in its immediate environment’
and secondly, that

‘the form, power, content, and the direction of the proximal processes affecting development vary systematically as a joint function of the characteristics of the developing person; of the environment – both immediate and more remote in which the processes are taking place; and the nature of the developmental outcomes under consideration’ (Bronfenbrenner, 1993:38).

For such influence to take place there must be interaction between the individual and the family at regular intervals for an extended period of time. Bronfenbrenner (1993:38) claims that proximal processes, such as warmth and affection, the use of discipline and control and punishment, occurring in a family environment are a more powerful contributory factor to the development of the individual than more distant environmental factors, such as SES.

Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model of environment consists of five subsystems of concentric character, i.e. which encompass one another: microsystem, mezosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem. A microsystem is ‘a pattern of activities, social roles and patterns of interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face setting’ (Bronfenbrenner, 1993:39). Examples given of microsystems are family, school and peer group. It is particularly the power of impact of the microsystem that is in accord with previously mentioned studies. This aspect of the model clearly indicates that the proximal features of the family environment, which aim for the development of affective relationships as well as educational activities, can be a better predictor of children’s academic achievement than environmental factors, such as SES.

The mezosystem consists of two or more linkages between the two microsystems, in which an individual functions; it describes the connections and processes between e.g. the school and the home, the home and peer group etc. For example, Bronfenbrenner (1986) indicates that placing the child in day care under 19 months had an adverse impact on the development of a stable relationship with the mother, in the context of the overall growth of the affectionate relationship between the mother and child. Or as regards the relationship between the family and peer groups, Bronfenbrenner (1986) reports on studies which indicate a relationship between the family structure (particularly single parent families or families with a stepparent) and the increased likelihood of contact with deviant peer groups.

The exosystem describes the linkages between two or more settings, in which an individual does not live, but is affected by their influence, e.g. in the case of a child it can be the relation between school and the parent’s workplace, or
the parents’ social network and community influences on the function of the family. For example, family life, and hence the growth of the child, can be affected by such events as the loss of paternal employment (which results in family tensions, depression, decrease in social life etc.), maternal employment (and hence ambitions and expectations for her children’s achievements), and strong kinship networks which support mothers in child rearing. Interesting findings were also identified in relation to the place of the child’s residence: while urban residence results in generally negative effects on the very young child’s social and emotional development in early life, a city environment is more beneficial for intellectual development among older children (e.g. Meili & Steiner, 1965 in Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

![Figure 2.3](image_url)

**Figure 2.3.** The place of a child within Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological model of human development (adapted from Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1996)

The macrosystem concerns all the patterns of culture, beliefs, material resources, lifestyles, opportunities etc. that are superior and directive to the previously mentioned micro-, mezo- and exosystems.

And finally a chronosystem focuses on the changes over time that can take place both in the person’s life and in the environment (e.g. a change of place of residence, change of an educational institution, change of employment, SES etc.). Clearly, in the young child’s life such a critical moment would be a transition from home care to kindergarten care (in Poland this is ca. three years of age) and
from the kindergarten to primary school (in Poland ca. six/seven years of age). Hence the favourable family environment (microsystem) as well as positive linkages with other support groups (relatives, kindergarten) can have a positive result in the chronosystem. Figure 2.3 presents a graphic illustration of the model.

2.6.4.2. Model of the intergenerational transmission of educational success (Feinstein et al., 2008)

Drawing on the work of Bronfenbrenner, Feinstein et al. (2008) proposed another model of the family, which aims to explain why an educational advantage is transmitted intergenerationally with a view to calling for the necessity of policy intervention and an enhanced role for educational institutions in forming home-school relations in order to secure the best positive outcomes for the child. On the basis of available research evidence, they claim that parental education is a key factor influencing both the proximal and distal features of the family environment. The proposed conceptual model of the intergenerational transmission of educational success distinguishes between three different categories of family influences: distal family factors, internal characteristics of the family environment, and proximal processes within the family (cf. Fig. 2.4). The distal factors are characteristics of the wider socio-demographic environment of the child, and denote for example, parental education, family structure, family size, income and poverty, maternal employment, and even teenage motherhood. Internal features of the family are closer to proximal factors and include parental cognitions, mental health and well-being and material resources. Proximal family processes include parenting style, educational behaviour, language use, activities outside the home and nutrition.

The model of Feinstein et al. (2008) assumes that each of these three categories of factors is influenced first of all, by parental level of education, i.e. this has an impact on the distal, internal and proximal features of families. It also has both a direct and an indirect (through the other features of the family) impact on child outcomes, such as school achievements, behavioural adjustment, self-concept of ability and self-regulation. Additionally, there is a dependency relationship between each of the features of the family environment, i.e. distal family factors determine the internal features of the family environment, which, in turn, have an impact on the proximal family processes, and there is a very direct relationship between all of these and child outcomes. Feinstein et al. (2008) draw their attention to parental education as the most important factor because it has a mediating effect on all other features of the family environment. For example, a high level of parental education may have an impact
on the family’s income (a distal characteristic), which in turn influences features of the child’s environment such as better housing conditions and better schools, which may have an effect on final educational achievements. Secondly, it is argued that parents with a high level of education may spend their income differently than those with a lower level of education. So it is not just a matter of the level of income but also the distribution of income. Also the parental level of education may have an impact on internal family factors in the sense that those parents are more likely to take protective measures against ill health. Finally, it plays the role in the family’s proximal factors, as parents with a higher education tend to read more to their children, and read a variety of texts, using more varied interactive reading strategies.

To summarize, the model assumes that educational success is passed intergenerationally and is dependent on such family features, mediated by the level of parental education, as income, values, attitudes and parenting style, as well as expectations.

![Figure 2.4. Model of the intergenerational transmission of educational success (adopted from Feinstein et al., 2008:26)](image)

2.7. Educational aspirations of Poles at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries

2.7.1. Characteristics of social structure in the postmodernist era

In postmodern postindustrial societies social stratification can take place by different means than just ownership of property. It is clear that the Marxist division of social classes based on the means of production is no longer valid for most postindustrial societies. One of the key organizing elements of the struc-
ture, especially in postmodern society, is profession. Meritocracy, which consists in awarding individuals according to their merit, i.e. level of education, talent and worth, is a newly developed mechanism defining the contemporary middle class (Domański, 2002).

From a historical perspective, in western societies the middle class was formed by way of struggle with aristocracy and monarchism for democratic values. The members of the middle class are therefore mainly the so-called intelligentsia, sometimes referred to as ‘the new middle class’. It is characteristic that they are highly qualified professionals, who owe their merit and status to hard work and individualistic endeavor. They obtained their high position thanks to the unique skills and knowledge which are particularly valuable in the knowledge economy, and whose role has been growing since 1990s. The other strand of ‘middle class’ in Western societies, or the so-called ‘old middle class’, as its origins go back to medieval times, is constituted by business people, i.e. traders, artisans and clerks. Thus it can be clearly seen, that in the postmodern society, social stratification is mainly governed by the profession that one holds, as occupation dictates the level of income, which allows one to make a living at an appropriately high level. Needless to say, the available financial resources shape one’s consumerist choices, lifestyle and even personality (Domański, 2007:132). Such a perception of social stratification and mobility is less determininistic than in historical times, when birth and inherited wealth decided on one’s belonging to a particular class/state. Everyone, at least theoretically, has the same chances of advancement, provided they invest in their education and future career.

On the basis of Weber’s explanation of class inequalities (it is not based on pure property ownership, or employment-production relationship) Erikson, Goldthorpe and Portocarero (1979) developed a most versatile tool (called EGP scales, after the authors) for measuring and comparing social structures in various societies. The EGP scales recognized ‘new’ classes that describe the social structure of postmodern society more precisely. These are, in order of importance: 1) intelligentsia, top corporate management, large-scale businessman, referred to as service class, 2) specialists in non-manual jobs of middle level (referred to as middle service), 3) office clerks, 4) other workers employed in sales and services (e.g. salespersons, post office assistants, receptionists etc.), 5) firm owners employing others, 6) self-employed owners, 7) supervisory manual workers, 8) skilled workers, 9) unqualified manual workers, 10) rural workers, and 11) farm owners. The classification takes into account four characteristics: the nature of work (non-manual/manual/farmers), the level of qualifications required for the performance of a particular job, the position occupied in the structure of the organization, and attitude to property.
2.7.2. Historical roots of Polish middle class

Members of the middle class seem to be the most ambitious and feel the pressure to achieve success. The economic changes in Poland in the 1990s indicate that a certain group of people, mainly those deriving from the intelligentsia, appear to be equally ambitious. Those who occupy higher positions have higher educational and occupational aspirations in reference to their children. Aspirations to a higher status have always been a defining attribute of the intelligentsia, even in the unfavourable years of communism.

This observation also has been confirmed by diachronic Polish studies on educational aspirations (e.g. Nowakowska, 1977). However, as Domański (2002:95) noted, any studies of educational aspirations in communist Poland were carried out purely for academic purposes and reflected the mentality of white-collar workers who felt secure about their employment and income. Thus any educational aspirations reflected personal choices, rather than being influenced by the demands of the market economy. Educational and vocational aspirations have been invested with a more pragmatic meaning since the political and economic transformation from a centrally planned economy to a free market economy, when access to professions with a steady income became more difficult.

Recognizing that good education, resulting in unique skills and expertise, is a gateway to well-paid professions, which, in turn, make up the middle class, the question arises, who are middle class people in Poland, and to what extent do they resemble the western middle classes. It must be noted that the contemporary Polish middle class, whose status was defined by income and a high standard of living, started forming only after the fall of communism in 1989. Although its origins can be traced back to the ‘intelligentsia’, i.e. well-educated people, in post-war communist Poland, the Polish middle class did not develop a particularly privileged status marked by possessions, as first of all salaries were regulated by the state, and therefore were more or less similar to members of other classes, i.e. rural and industrial, and secondly, the socialist economy in general was characterized by a lack of many products, even indispensable ones. Therefore it was difficult to develop status symbols in the form of possessions. This was also done for political reasons, as one of the leading socialist principles was equality, which did not allow individuals to become extensively richer than others (Domański, 1994:238).

Since the differences in salaries between the ‘intelligentsia’ and industrial or rural workers was not in popular belief regarded as considerable (although in fact there was a steady increase in the salaries of the ‘intelligentsia’ over other
workers’ especially after 1982; cf. Domański, 2000), joining the intelligentsia, and therefore investment in education, was not a general goal of aspirations, as it did not provide for privileged or wealthy living, except for in certain professions which have always been regarded as prestigious, e.g. a university professor, lawyer, doctor or teacher (although teachers were not particularly well paid). Often, the goal of aspirations was rather to imitate the lifestyle and culture of the middle class rather than to truly become one of them.

Another distinguishing feature of the socialist nation was ‘collectivism’, a principle which promoted the interests of a particular group (like trade unions, or professional associations) over the interests of the individual. Domański (1994:241) notes that collectivism can be a remnant of the historical role the intelligentsia played in the fight for national independence in the 19th century. The intelligentsia played a leading role in the Polish nation, in maintaining its heritage and representing the interests of the nation. Not able to realize their ambitions in the actual decision-making, the intelligentsia engaged in debates, reflections about the past and planning for the future of Poland (Domański, 1994:242). The difficult political and historical situation of Poland, lack of independence in the 19th century (as Poland was partitioned by 3 neighbouring countries: Russia, Prussia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire), and later the egalitarian principles of socialism, caused a specific ‘intelligentsia ethos’ to develop. It was characterized by a tendency to collective activity, the major goal of which was to educate and lead the nation, model attitudes and opinions, patterns of behaviour etc. These particular politico-historical conditions did not constitute a fertile ground for the development of individualism, which constituted the major drive for the development of professions in the western economy.

In addition, it should be realized that the post-war intelligentsia was not homogenous. Partly it comprised members of the ‘old’ pre-war intelligentsia (descendents of noblemen, aristocracy, civil servants, as well as some professions, such as doctors, academics). However, it must be remembered that the vast majority of educated people (ca. 35%) were exterminated during World War Two or emigrated soon afterwards, which severely inhibited the development of the intelligentsia. After the war, the positions of the intelligentsia or white-collar workers were filled with people originating from the peasantry or industrial workers. Often their appointments were politically motivated, i.e. constituted rewards for political loyalty (Domański, 1994:236). This ‘new’ intelligentsia comprised people of a different mentality and culture, with a lack of capacity to solve complex problems, necessary for true professionals.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the communist country’s economy was planned centrally in the form of regulations and dispositions. There were many
barriers for private businesses, and they operated mainly in areas where the state was not able to supply services. These were usually small service firms, on the border of the lower classes, such as taxi drivers, furniture manufacturers, car mechanics etc. Their owners usually originated from the lower classes, and although were enterprising and ambitious, did not develop a work ethos similar to that of the western middle classes. What is more, their occupations were popularly regarded as denigrating, and the generated income (usually higher than in state companies) was perceived by public opinion as unjust (nearly on a par with the unjustified privileges of political leaders) (Zaborowski, 1988 in Domański, 1994:196). These negative attitudes to private owners in socialist times also illustrate how the socialist planned economy, mainly resulted in inertia and a lack of initiative, which paralyzed/inhibited the development of a bourgeois-oriented middle class.

All these facts have to be recognized in order to understand why the proper middle class did not develop in the post-war (World War Two) period in Poland. Nowadays, over 20 years after the collapse of communism, which marked the political and economic change, it may still not resemble the western middle class.

2.7.3. Educational aspirations as the defining characteristic of the middle class

Educational aspirations, and consequently investments into one’s education, are in capitalist societies, typical of the middle class, or those who aspire to join the middle class, and are thus regarded as a tool for advancement/position maintenance in the social stratum. It is the middle class which is the major motor of economic development, because first of all, they are most eager to continuously improve their vocational qualifications in order to maintain their already high status, and secondly, they are the most willing to manifest their high status by purchasing exclusive goods which help indicate their belonging to that class, such as their own house, a car, package tours etc. (Domański, 2002:17).

The middle classes also seem to be more aware of their life orientations and goals, as well as the means that lead to their achievement. As indicated by Herbert Hyman (1954) in his essay *The value systems of different classes*, working class people in comparison to middle class have poorer orientation about determinants of life success, lower aspirations, less ambitious career plans, moderate expectations as far as their income is concerned, and lack of belief in changing one’s status (Domański, 2002:94).

When trying to identify the key reasons behind the lower aspirations of the working class, Rubin (1992 in Domański, 2002) points to the experience
obtained from work, and most notably conformist attitudes, typical of manual workers’ mentality. Conformist habits in the workplace demonstrate adjustment to the established rules, and autocratic supervision, and therefore result in a lack of flexibility and creativity. What’s more, these habits of norm observation are also transferred to other spheres of life, e.g. bringing up children, or a conviction, that there is an established course of life one should not defy (Kohn & Scholler, 1986). The authors also indicate that lower class members have realistic life plans, finding their material wealth a critical factor in designing prospects for their children’s future. Clearly, manual workers realize their deficiencies in material wealth, and realize the burden they would have to bear if willing to educate their children further. Therefore it is more realistic and desirable for these children either to start working or get married early, instead of continuing education (Domański, 2002:97). These facts explain why low aspirations are typically held by the lower classes, and why higher classes usually have higher educational aspirations.

2.7.4. Peculiarities of the Polish middle class

The defining features of the middle class are possessing property, wealth and high living standards, occupational position, and finally, on an everyday basis, it is appearance, and life orientations. Middle class people also cater more for their health and standard of living, clearly observing a link between their well-being and ability to work longer and thus maintain their professional social status. This is reflected in their health care preventative measures, living a healthy lifestyle (doing sports), and healthy nutrition.

In addition, it was found that middle class people have more liberal views and attitudes to other people and many contentious problems, such as abortion, homosexuality etc. The reason for this may be that people of higher education may also have higher self-esteem, sense of security, material stability, and in consequence are more open to novelties or nonconventional behaviour. By contrast, people of lower qualifications and unstable status, tend to ascribe their failures to other ‘deviant’ people. A similar attitude may be observed towards foreigners. For example, in the study by CBOS (Central Investigation of Social Opinion Poll) in 2000 and 2001, after formation of the government by the left wing party, an increase of negative attitudes towards foreigners and their residence in Poland was noted, from 47% to 57%. At the same time a growing belief in democracy as the best ruling system was noted, 73% in 2001 (Domański, 2002:89), which may indicate that Polish society is both very traditional and conservative as far as moral values are concerned, and yet still supports democracy.
Aspirations to join the middle class, however, can be seen in the younger generation by e.g. extensively buying property (although on loan), and other status symbols (such as cars, going on package tours etc.). Yet, these manifestations do not constitute middle class *per se*. Whether many young people (people in their 30s, parents of young children) already belong to the middle class or rather seek manifestations of belonging to it/aspiring to it, is another question. Among many lifestyle options, the middle class can adhere to various consumerist behaviours. Participation in institutionalized educational offers can be both an attempt to manifest one’s social status, as well as an expression of educational aspirations, as it can be regarded as a tool for obtaining unique and desirable skills.

The creation of the middle class is a continuous process, and cannot be quickened by the appeals of politicians or media. Changes in the labour market constitute the context for the formation of social structure. Clearly, changes evoked by the process of globalization create new demands for skills and qualifications. Therefore for the formation of the middle class, first of all, there must be developed occupational positions with mechanisms of recruitment, advancement and rewarding characteristics for the capitalist market. The second stage refers to the development of a new mentality, lifestyle and attitudes, which is a long-term process (Domański, 2002:22).

The Polish middle class began to form from scratch after the fall of communism in 1989. Soon afterwards, key economic reforms were introduced, such as introducing the free market, and free currency exchange, which boosted free trade both in the domestic and foreign market. In those early years of transformation it was the small firm owners who profited most, generating the most income, as there was huge deficiency of goods, and nearly everything sold (Domański, 1994:199).

Also the importance of meritocracy in Poland, and the association of income with level of education and qualifications, has been growing rapidly since the 1990s, at the same time widening the gap between the educated (the intelligentsia), business people, and rural and industrial workers, thus leading to social inequality and even social exclusion.

As regards the development of professions typical of capitalist markets, Domański (2000) in his national longitudinal study carried out in the years 1982–1999 observed only moderate growth in those professionals associated with the middle class, which require a capital of professionalism and managerial qualifications. For example, membership of the non-technical intelligentsia (doctors, lawyers etc.) only grew from 3.2% in 1982 to 4.5% in 1999. As regards managerial occupations, the proportion of such positions in the overall workforce was larger even in communist times (1.8% in 1982) reducing to 1.0%
in 1999. Similarly, the technical intelligentsia decreased from 3.1% in 1982 to 2.4% in 1999. So these results show that the first decade of economic transformation saw a lesser involvement of the ‘new middle class’ (Domański, 2002:30). In further research in 2004, Domański (2007) notes a decrease in non-technical intelligentsia (from 4.5% in 1999 to 3.3% in 2004), i.e. lawyers, doctors, academics, secondary school teachers, economists, and artists. A similar decrease was noted in the technical intelligentsia (engineers), from 2.7% in 1999 to 2.0% in 2004, which is surprising, as these professions are associated with economic, cultural, as well as industrial development. It is possible that this is only a temporary situation, and that the market was not able to support all those professionals, especially engineers who were largely educated still in the socialist times.

However, the major motor of economic change after the collapse of communism was a larger number of private firm owners, which is not surprising, as owning property is the basis of a capitalist economy. Their quantity grew from 1.6% in 1982, through 6.2% in 1994 to 11% in 2004. Nevertheless, a specific feature of Polish society is a relatively large (although steadily decreasing) quantity of skilled manual labour; in 2004 it still constituted 20% of the labour force. Another characteristic is a large proportion of farmers/agricultural workers. Farm owners in 2004, despite decreasing tendencies, still constituted 11%. The breakthrough years were the first years of the capitalist economy (1994) when a decrease from 23.0% to 13.4% was noted.

In this respect Domański (2007:298) observes that the change of the political system in Poland has violated the universal tendencies of social structure change. The 1990s did not accelerate the rapid development of modern technologies, the demand for services and bureaucratic enterprises, which would evoke the change of occupations from simple manual ones to highly-skilled labour. The modern social structure should be characterized by a large quantity of top managers and highly qualified and educated specialists, referred to as the service class. Yet, in Poland this category is represented only by 8% of the population, one of the lowest in Europe.

On the other hand, it should be noticed that the first years of political and economic transformation have given access to upward social mobility to many individuals. This was partly possible due to the fact that the open capitalist market created a demand for many occupations, which up until then were non-existent or in short supply. This was especially the case in respect of firm owners (businessmen), 83.8% of which did not inherit the firm from the family but established it themselves. Clearly, many individuals due to the change of the political system have seen an opportunity for their personal career and material wealth development.
Similarly, there was a relatively high influx of new people recruited to the intelligentsia. In 2004 only 27.3% members of this category were the second generation of intelligentsia, whereas three quarters originated from skilled manual workers, farmers and lower level blue-collar workers. These numbers indicate that the early 1990s have created many opportunities for social mobility and improvement of one’s social status. It can be boldly assumed that had it not been for the political change many careers in business or education would not have been possible (Domański, 2007:301).

Those young people who began their occupational career in the 1990s, today (in the year 2011/12) are around 40 years of age (between 35–45), often well established in their careers, most possibly at the peak of their professional and financial achievements. If they have children, they are already teenagers (or younger if the families were started late), thus they have entered the period of making important decisions for their children’s future. It is thus not surprising that they themselves having achieved success, may hold equally high aspirations for their children’s future and thus willingly invest into their children’s education. However, as the recent (starting from 2008 in America) global economic crisis has shown, the opportunities for career development in the future may be fewer and the transmission of the career more difficult, if external political and economic situations are unfavourable.

Domański (2002:6) observes that there are important differences between the Polish and Western (e.g. American) middle classes. One such difference is the feeling of one’s power over success in life, trust in one’s control over the outcome of one’s activity. In Western societies it is assumed that irrespective of background everyone has a chance to succeed in life, provided one invests towards this goal individual effort, knowledge and skills. Similarly the same people acknowledge their failure to lack of ambitions and laziness. On the contrary, people living in Central-East Europe are more likely to ascribe their success or failure to others: politicians, government, bad luck etc.

As an illustration of this point Domański (2002:57) noted a slight decrease in individualism in 1998, as compared to previous studies in 1984. It might have been assumed that once the introduction of a capitalist market had done away with institutional barriers introduced in socialist times, people would have welcomed new opportunities eagerly. On the contrary, despite the boosted growth of small businesses in the early 1990s and a steady increase of salaries in professions associated with high educational capital, people fear to take risks and seek protection in the state. They do not fully realize that in a capitalist economy they have to rely more on themselves than on the protection of the state.
Domański (2002:157) claims that ‘middle class’ societies emerged out of the development of new roles, which enforce self-reliance and orientation towards social upward mobility, willingness of change and anxiety not to drop out. It is only just, and the only way to adopt the ideology of an ‘American dream’. Members of Polish society need to become even more aware that their success depends on their own effort and personal talents. While this ideology was largely irrelevant in the socialist economy, it is much more true now. Domański (2002:159) believes that middle class society is probably the most difficult way of development, but for those individuals with a desire to advance, probably there is no alternative.

**Summary**

The aim of this chapter was to present the ways of aspiration formation, both as an inner character trait of every individual and as a motive for improving one’s social status in the stratum. In the latter perspective, the particular focus was on educational aspirations and their environmental determinants (both distal and proximal), particularly in relation to status attainment models and Bourdieu’s social reproduction theory. The major point was to indicate that educational aspirations to a large extent are heritable, in the sense that they are dependent on parental education and occupation. Yet it is also emphasized that there is a role for educational institutions to help alleviate the negative outcomes of one’s background.

Further the chapter addresses the ways in which parents can exert their influence on their children’s educational attainment, both by attempting to arouse their children’s own educational aspirations (in view of available research data) and by providing cognitive stimulation in the home environment in the early years. It is recognized, in line with Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) model of human development, and additionally illustrated by the Feinstein *et al.* (2008) model of intergenerational success, that the home environment as the most immediate system in the child’s life is the most determinate in relation to the child’s educational success.

Finally, the chapter concludes with a brief socio-historical note on the specificity of the Polish social structure and the rise of ‘the middle class’, as educational aspirations are regarded as their defining features.
An ‘early start’ in foreign language learning: possible outcomes and limitations

The goal of the current chapter is to describe the psycholinguistic and psychopedagogical aspects of an ‘early start’ in foreign language learning. It has been argued in the previous chapters that promoting an ‘early start’ in a foreign language can be both a tool of promoting a plurilingual policy (‘the earlier one starts with languages, the more languages one will learn in the future’) or an expression of parental educational aspirations, i.e. parents perceive foreign language knowledge to be a valuable investment in their child’s future career. Now it is necessary to investigate the linguistic rationale behind such an early start, its value and potential as well as associated problems. In parallel, it is necessary to consider whether early foreign language learning is aimed at achieving future native-like competence, and thus should be regarded as striving for L2 mastery or as development of linguistic multi-competence.

3.1. Defining goals of very early FLL and research directions

The possibility of achieving native-like competence in a foreign language through the early onset of FLL has been associated with studies of age factor, and mostly of the possibility of the existence of a critical period before which the acquisition of the second language is effortless and subjugated to innate mechanisms of language acquisition. Such an advantage of early FLL has been additionally supported by neurolinguistic/neuroimaging studies which claim to demonstrate variations in brain activity among early and late bilinguals, thus pointing to an advantage in early bilingualism. Empirical data on early stage L2 learning indicates similarities between L2 and L1 acquisition processes (cf. Ervin-Tripp, 1974), and is referred to as ‘the identity hypothesis’. It assumes that the similarity of processes in the early stages can signal the involvement of similar mechanisms and prognoses similar development in the two languages in the future.
Multi-competence is a term introduced by Cook (1991) and further popularised in European language policy documents. It denotes ‘the knowledge of more than one language in the same mind’ (Cook, 1991:104). Multi-competence is a new paradigm which calls for the consideration of a language learner from a unique perspective, not as a monolingual speaker striving to achieve native-like competence in L2 (thus deficient in L2), but as ‘a whole person’ who possesses varying knowledge of two (or more) languages, whose knowledge is dynamic, i.e. constantly changing under external environmental conditions. The paradigm assumes that each second/foreign language learner is a unique ‘speaker-hearer’ whose whole linguistic competence (i.e. in L1 and L2) should be appreciated as it is different from that of a purely monolingual speaker. Thus any L2 knowledge and experience has a beneficial effect on the language user, and even if imperfect, i.e. not native-like, should be regarded as rewarding and valuable. Thus in this paradigm there is a shift from a native-like model to a model of an integrated system of knowledge of two (or more) languages. Multi-competence also recognizes every language user’s right to use primarily his/her mother tongue and undermines the native speaker model as being uniquely valued, i.e. it marks a shift from ‘holistic’ to ‘fractional’ bilingualism in Grosjean’s (1989) terms.

Taking into consideration these two perspectives early foreign language learning can be seen as an investment either in future native-like competence in L2 or in a more balanced interconnected multi-competence. Which goal is more attainable will be demonstrated in the following sections in the light of available research data. At the same time it should be noted that most research on an ‘early start’ in formal (instructional) settings refers to children at times as old as 12, or even 14, thus in age groups beyond the purported critical period. This is connected to variations in the age of starting L2 instruction at school (Nikolov & Mihaljević Djigunović, 2006).

Whilst lowering the starting age for L2 instruction has become an official policy for EU countries in the state sector, and in many other countries worldwide, where foreign languages are taught at pre-school level (usually in the private sector), still little empirical data is available on the effects of very early foreign language learning. While every effort is made to present the few available studies here, the general trends and issues in early FLL will be discussed also on the basis of findings in respect of younger primary learners (ca. 6/7–10 years of age), i.e. pre-pubescent learners.

All in all two major lines of research on child second/foreign language learning can be observed: the psycholinguistic and the socio-pedagogical. The first studies on child FLL were focused on verifying the Critical Period Hypothesis in reference to second and/or foreign language acquisition as well as testing the
linguistic, cognitive and affective benefits of early L2 learning. They sought to identify to what extent data obtained from naturalistic settings apply to formal instruction. These studies were mainly psycholinguistic in their approach.

The other, more up-to-date line of research, focuses on the contextual factors that impact the process of foreign language learning. This means:

- the classroom context, which includes the use of appropriate techniques, methods, the availability of educational resources, teacher competences (the pedagogical aspect),
- the larger social context, which can denote the family environment (and thus calls for the necessity of parental involvement in child education),
- the wider sociological context in which learning takes place, such as the educational system of a country.

Such research focuses on ways of maximising the efficiency of early start programmes, their organization (time, length, frequency etc.), language choice etc. The goal of such research is to inform various stakeholders, such as parents, educational institutions and ministries of education, about the effectiveness of various teaching methods and objectives of early FLL (Nikolov & Mihaljević Djigunović, 2011). These two lines of research also mark a shift in focus from the study of (very) early FLL as an individualistic process (i.e. psycholinguistic) to a socio-cultural approach, i.e. more context-based and thus encompassing an increased number of variables.

3.2. The psycholinguistic aspects of very early L2 acquisition

3.2.1. Age factor as an argument for an ‘early start’

First of all, it should be recognized that the popularity of the early teaching of foreign languages is based on the popular belief ‘the earlier (one starts to learn a foreign language), the better’. This belief is rooted in the Critical Period Hypothesis and has been further confirmed in studies of the organization of the bi-/multilingual brain.

The Critical Period Hypothesis was formulated by Lenneberg (1967), originally in relation to the first language acquisition, and roughly stated that language can be acquired by any child thanks to a biological endowment called LAD – Language Acquisition Device. Yet, this is dependent upon exposure to that language taking place before the critical period, after which this predisposition dies out. The end of the critical period for language acquisition is claimed to coincide with puberty (c.a. 12/13 years of age). On the basis of previous studies by Penfield and Roberts (1959) on aphasic patients, who had experienced
brain injury in the left hemisphere (where the regions of the brain responsible for speech comprehension and speech production, called Wernicke’s and Broca’s areas respectively, are located) but were able to recover from aphasia, due to the transfer of speech functions to the right hemisphere. This process, associated with the division of functions of the two brain hemispheres (and called lateralisation), was only possible up until puberty (Arabski, 1985). Yet, other researchers (e.g. Seliger, 1978) claim there can be a number of different critical/sensitive periods for different language areas.

Whilst evidence for the CPH in first language acquisition was typically found in so-called feral children, it remained to be answered whether it is a factor in second language acquisition. Numerous observations of children raised in bi-/multilingual environments showed that those children were able to acquire two or even more languages with ease in early childhood, although it is now known that children acquire each of the languages in the amount proportionate to the input obtained in each language (Pearson et al., 1997). These observations have resulted in the conviction that it is necessary to start learning a foreign language early, when the LAD for the acquisition of multiple languages can still be activated.

The possibility of the existence of a critical period for language acquisition has launched over four decades of research into second language acquisition, aiming to verify whether the age of starting instruction can impact ultimate achievement in that language. The findings are often contradictory and do not give a clear-cut answer. Singleton and Ryan (2004), in their review of research on the age factor distinguish five major lines of research: ‘the earlier, the better’ view, ‘the older, the better’ view, ‘the younger, the better in some respects’ view, ‘the younger, the better, in the long run’ view, and ‘a qualitative change view’.

The first, ‘the earlier, the better’ position, states that if a person starts learning L2 in early childhood, in the end he will achieve better proficiency than those learners who started learning L2 later. One of the best known studies supporting this view is that of Asher and Garcia (1969). The study concerned 71 Cuban immigrants to the USA between the age of 7 and 19, who stayed in the US for at least 5 years, who were tested on their pronunciation of English sentences, which were recorded and judged by native speakers on their fidelity on the 4-point scale. The results obtained showed that although none of the subjects had native-like pronunciation, the closest to achieving it were children who had arrived in the US between the age of 1 and 6, and who had stayed there between 5 and 6 years. It was additionally argued that the younger the child was on arriving in the States, the higher the probability that he would remain longer in the US and therefore acquire native-like pronunciation. Similar findings were
identified by Oyama (1976, 1978) who tested 60 Italian immigrants to the US, who had arrived there between the age of 6 and 20 and had stayed there between 5 and 18 years. The subjects were tested both on pronunciation (Oyama, 1976), by reading aloud a paragraph in English, and in a listening comprehension task (Oyama, 1978). The results showed a clear age of arrival effect in both tests, but no effect arising from the length of stay in the US. The advantages of earlier arrival to a country over later arrival was evidenced also by syntax, both in productive interview (Patkowski, 1980) and grammaticality judgment tests (Johnson & Newport, 1989) as well as in lexis (Hyltenstam, 1992). In these latter studies performance in the tests decreased linearly rather early, from the age of arrival of 7 to the age of 15.

The studies which point to an advantage of earlier arrival in a host country over later arrival, and thus support the ‘the earlier, the better’ position, are often criticized on the grounds that such young children (before the age of 6/7) are in fact native speakers of that language. In addition it should be noted that most of these studies were carried out in naturalistic settings and therefore their findings cannot be easily applied to instructional settings. Another criticism refers to the fact that they typically investigate the linguistic performance of adult learners and look back on their biography (age of arrival, length of stay), yet they may neglect many other environmental factors amount of contact with L2 native speakers at workplace, school etc.

The second position, as identified by Singleton and Ryan (2004) stands in opposition to the first and states ‘the older, the better’. The studies conducted in this vein usually concern learning a language in a formal setting, and they point to the advantages possessed by older learners in comparison to younger ones. One of the first studies in this area was conducted within the FLES programme (Foreign Language in the Elementary School). For example Burstall et al. (1974) investigated a huge population of pupils in schools in England and Wales who learnt French. When the subjects regarded as the experimental group at the age of 13 were compared with 15-year-old learners as a control group (but who had learnt for the same three-year period), the experimental group performed significantly better in tests of speaking, listening, reading and writing. This suggests an advantage for younger learners. Yet, when the two groups were tested again at the age of 16, the advantage of the earlier starters remained only in the listening test, while the older learners (the control group) outscored the earlier starters in all the other three tests. This suggests that older learners may have an advantage only in the earlier stages of FLL and that their performance can be caught up with later on. Similar findings have been noted in two educational projects conducted in Spain: one at the University of the
In the Basque country, Basque-Spanish bilingual learners were taught English as a third language. The project measured progress in learning English between those who started learning it at the age of 11 and those who started learning it at the age of 8 (this was possible due to an educational reform). A group of learners who started learning L2 at kindergarten at the age of 4 was also added. The results of the study clearly showed that when the number of hours of instruction was equal, the older starters outperformed the younger starters in a wide array of tests, such as oral proficiency, listening comprehension, grammaticality judgement, sound perception and pronunciation, written comprehension and written production (Cenoz, 2003; Garcia Lecumberri & Gallardo, 2003; Garcia Mayo, 2003; Lasagabaster & Doiz, 2003). Lasagabaster and Doiz (2003) used a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the written work of three different groups of learners and observed that each group of learners committed different types of errors, the older group making the fewest mistakes. Garcia Mayo (2003) used a grammaticality judgement test to check whether there is a growing metalinguistic awareness related to higher cognitive development, and therefore she measured the performance of three groups of learners of varying starting ages of English instruction at three time intervals. She found that the longer the exposure to the language the more native-like the performance in the tests was, yet the earlier starters did not perform significantly better than the others. Similarly, Lecumberri and Gallardo (2003) in tests of L3 English phonetics found that older learners performed better than younger ones in the perception of vowels and consonants, overall production, intelligibility and degree of foreign accent. Cenoz (2003) in her evaluation of the project argues that cognitive maturity and different input types at different ages give older learners an advantage over younger ones. Yet, younger learners on the whole show more positive attitudes and stronger motivation towards language learning.

The BAF project (Muñoz, 2006) was the first large scale study on the relevance of age factor in the instructional setting. The project was conducted in Catalonia, Spain, from 1995 until ca. 2002, thus it was of a longitudinal nature. It aimed to measure progress and performance in L2 of children who started to learn L2 either at the age of 11 or 8 (which was possible due to changes in the Education Law and gradual lowering of the starting age) with a view to verifying 'the earlier, the better' belief. The data on performance in various language areas was collected by means of a battery of tests at three time intervals after ca. 200 hours of instruction, 416 hours and 726 hours. In total 1,928 subjects were tested, with the same amount of class instruction, which coincided with a fixed
amount of exposure. The comparative results obtained at each testing point
generally showed higher scores from older learners and those who started L2
instruction at a later age. Therefore the study indicates that in an instructional
setting ‘the older, the better’ applies. Younger starters managed to catch up but
did not surpass the older starters in any language measure. The two groups
were most homogenous in aural comprehension (in oral interviews and in pho-
netic discrimination tasks), oral production, and in some fluency measures on
the written composition task. Yet, this homogeneity in listening comprehension
was ascribed more to the amount of exposure than age of the learners. Stronger
age-effects, to the benefit of older starters were found on the measures of
morpho-syntactic development as well as listening comprehension. The former
were ascribed to the difference in cognitive development, which in a formal
language learning situation plays a larger role than in a naturalistic setting. Addi-
tionally, it was claimed that older learners are more able to profit from the
explicit teaching processes that take place in the classroom, which is the reason
for their faster initial progress, whereas younger language learners seem to be
driven more by implicit learning processes, but in order to benefit from these
high levels of language input and exposure need to be provided. In addition, it is
argued that once the younger learners reach the same level of cognitive maturi-
ty, it can be predicted that the advantage of the older starters will be eliminated.

Age differences manifested in the test results were corroborated further by
evidence of the development of language learning strategies. Tragant and Victori
(2006) observed that the most rapid changes in language learning strategy take
place in learners between the age of 11 and 13 (and not as expected in older
learners between 13 and 15 years of age), and consist in the transition from sim-
ple strategy use to more varied and complex strategies, which is to be associated
with age, i.e. the onset of adolescence, rather than e.g. the amount of exposure
to language. In other words increased strategy use marks another development-
mental change facilitating explicit language learning.

The advantage of older learners in an instructional setting can also be noticed
in infant classes. In a longitudinal study tracing L2 development of five very
young learners of L2 English over a period of two years who received roughly
the same amount of course L2 input (Rokita, 2007), the youngest learner Zuzia
(aged 16 months at the beginning of the study) made incredibly slow progress,
remaining silent for the largest part of the two-year course, and after 2 years
reaching the level of 50 L2 words only, while the older child at the beginning of
the study (ca. two and a half years old), who already spoke their mother tongue
and therefore had acquired a conceptual system for the new words to be learnt
also in L2, made faster progress, and in favourable conditions, i.e. supported by
their parents’ involvement could produce ca. 180 words at the end of the study. Similarly, in the cross-sectional part of the same project, learners over the age of four acquired more words productively and passively than three-year-olds, who in turn outperformed the two-year-olds. These studies show that formal learning affects the rate of L2 acquisition very early and that rote memorization plays a more important role than any biological endowment in the process, which also accounts for the advantage of older learners over younger ones as memory, just like other cognitive capacities, develops over time.

The third position, ‘the earlier, the better in some respects’, claims that the advantage of earlier starters extends only to certain areas. Therefore it aims to reconcile the two theories presented above. In the search to identify areas in which younger L2 learners would particularly excel, an ability to acquire a native-like accent is the most often quoted advantage. As Scovel (1988:101) claimed, it is possible because pronunciation, unlike vocabulary or morphology, has a ‘neuromuscular basis’, which allows young children to acquire it with ease. The age of 12 is identified as a critical point, beyond which learners exposed to L2 are not able to acquire a native-like accent.

To reconcile the two views above, it is often said that many of the studies confirming ‘the earlier, the better’ position focused on the native-like accent, whereas studies pointing to the advantages of older learners mainly concentrated on other phonological competences (Singleton & Ryan, 2004:85).

One other way of reconciling the positions was proposed earlier by Cummins (1980:177) who suggested that in the discussion of the age factor, accent should be separated from oral communication, i.e. CALP (cognitive academic language proficiency) and BICS (basic interpersonal communication skills). He claims that BICS and L1 competencies such as accent, oral fluency and sociolinguistic competence, develop differently than CALP which is related to literacy skills both in L1 and L2. He argues that BICS is very much context-embedded, as it relies on paralinguistic and situational cues and is therefore much less cognitively demanding, whereas CALP relies on linguistic cues in communication. He believes the same distinction is valid in L2 and says that ‘the older learners, whose CALP is better developed, would acquire cognitive/academic L2 skills more rapidly than younger learners; however, this would not necessarily be the case for those aspects of L2 proficiency unrelated to CALP (i.e. L2BICS)’ (Cummins, 1979:199ff in Singleton & Ryan, 2004:89). As an argument for this proposition he quotes the findings of the Swedish study (Ekstrand, 1977) on immigrants learning Swedish or a study in Montreal of Anglophone learners of French (Genesee, 1976), whose scores on such cognitively demanding tests as reading, grammar, vocabulary and free writing correlated with the IQ of the
learners, whereas performance in oral communication did not (Cummins, 1983 in Singleton & Ryan, 2004:89).

The fourth position, states ‘the earlier, the better in the long run’, which indicates that the advantage of younger starters can be seen only after a certain period of time. A classic study in this strain is that of Snow and Hoefnagel-Hohle (1978). They studied 69 English learners of L2 Dutch in the Netherlands in the first year of learning it naturalistically. The subjects were divided into five different age groups and were tested three times at 4.5 month intervals on pronunciation, auditory discrimination, morphology, syntax, vocabulary, sentence repetition and translation. Surprisingly, the results of the tests showed no considerable differences in phonological/phonetic skills, but strong age-related performance in other tests. The best performance was achieved by adolescents, followed by adults, and then 8- to 10-year-old children, then 6- to 8-year-olds, and finally 3- to 6-year-old children. However, this advantage progressively diminished at each testing point. The scores were additionally compared to the scores obtained by the ‘advanced’ group (who had been in the Netherlands one year longer), and who did not outperform significantly the adolescents achieving the highest scores in the experimental group. These findings were interpreted as evidence that older learners make faster progress only in the early stages of L2 acquisition, but are soon caught up by younger learners in every language domain, except for vocabulary, which grows linearly in accordance with the duration of learning.

Finally, the fifth position, presents a well-balanced, reconciliatory, and nowadays well accepted view that later L2 acquisition is still possible, but after a certain maturational point, it assumes a different character. It requires much more effort and is not directed and controlled by the same mechanisms as in early childhood. It is no longer LAD but cognitive processes are more involved. In a way it does follow Krashen’s (1981) famous distinction into acquisition and learning of a foreign language, the former referring to the naturalistic situation and the latter to the instructional one. It is also commonly agreed that after a certain maturational point it is much more difficult to achieve native-like proficiency in L2, although some recent studies have focused on identifying successful post-pubescent learners who have achieved native-like levels of accent (e.g. Birdsong, 1992; Moyer, 2004; Jedynak, 2009).

To summarize, the CPH studies refer to either the rate of learning (those that focus on initial stages of language acquisition), or ultimate attainment (those that test adult learners and look at their biographical data for analysis). As regards the rate of acquisition, these studies generally showed that, firstly, in the early stages of both naturalistic and instructional acquisition, older
learners (adolescents, adults, older children) make faster progress than younger learners, especially in morphosyntactic aspects and secondly, despite initial slow progress, younger learners have higher chances of attaining native-like levels of proficiency in L2, yet this is true only in the case of naturalistic learners, such as children of immigrants in a host country. Whereas as regards L2 learning in an instructional setting, where the intensity of instruction is low and thus there is little exposure to L2, it takes younger learners much longer to catch up with older learners (Muñoz, 2006, 2008; Singleton & Leśniewska, 2011).

A lot of studies on the CPH have failed to emphasize clearly the differences between naturalistic and instructional settings. In a naturalistic setting the learners have much more language input than in an instructional setting. What’s more, in the former setting learners have a natural desire to communicate with other people in their surroundings which mobilises the child’s cognitive powers to attend to the language they hear, analyse it, rehearse it, and try it out actively in communication with native speakers of that language (Rokita, 2006). In an instructional setting, learners hear L2 input a few times a week, the major source of that input being the teacher, so it is limited in quantity and quality as there is huge variation in teacher competences, and the language is not used for authentic communication with peers or the teacher, neither in class, nor outside the classroom (Muñoz, 2008). As a result early foreign language instruction uses L2 as a tool for teaching certain language chunks, while children rarely hear it in communicative use.

This distinction between naturalistic and instructed learners is crucial for understanding what a realistic ultimate attainment is in second language learning. The goal of native-like knowledge seems to be applicable only in naturalistic settings, whereas it cannot be realized in the formal (instructional) setting where the final learning outcome depends on many environmental factors, such as the learner’s attitude and motivation, aptitude, learning conditions (frequency and length of L2 contact), teacher competences etc.

DeKeyser (2000) argues that CPH can only apply to implicit learning that takes place through mere exposure to the language, therefore it cannot apply to instructed L2 learners who suffer from a poverty of L2 stimulus. Although young children learn implicitly by nature, this capacity cannot be utilised in situations where there is too little input. For language to be acquired massive amounts of exposure must be guaranteed. If these are lacking young children lack the opportunity to utilise their implicit learning mechanisms (Hypothetical Universal Grammar). Older children can compensate for this by utilising more explicit learning mechanisms which allow them to make faster progress, hence the advantage of older children over younger ones (DeKeyser, 2000; Rokita,
It is evident that learning L2 in such context is usually connected with cognitive processes, hence the advantage of older learners who have better developed memory capacity and cognitive ability. In naturalistic situations in early childhood the innate mechanism for language acquisition can be still utilised, thus enabling the acquisition of one, two or multiple languages naturally at the same time. However, this relates to mainly younger children under the age of 6/7, i.e. before they start schooling. For example, Vanderplank (2008) argues that children in middle childhood, i.e. between the age of 5 and 9, are seriously affected by the process of schooling. Thus second language learning at that age proceeds differently and is ruled by different processes than in younger children in naturalistic environments. On the basis of a case study of his daughter, Vanderplank (2008) observed that her second language learning was positively affected by school and out-of-school experiences which fostered the development of de-contextualised memory, as well as the inner speech and the ‘mind’s eye’, which make the process of learning L2 more adult-like.

A noteworthy attempt to verify ‘the earlier, the better’ hypothesis in an instructional setting was done in a recent study by Larson-Hall (2008). She carried out a study among 200 Japanese college students, whom she divided into two groups – those who started learning L2 early (the median age was 9) and those who started L2 learning late (the median age was 12/13). The learners had only minimal contact with L2 (< four hours per week). They were tested both on grammaticality judgement tasks and phonemic discrimination of sounds difficult and confusing for Japanese learners (/r/, /l/, /w/). Both language aptitude and the amount of total input were controlled. The results of this study showed a strong correlation between the results in the grammaticality judgment test and starting age, and no such correlation with the results obtained in the phonemic test. The latter finding was dictated by a huge variation in the amount of quantity and quality of phonological input received. Whilst most subjects had Japanese teachers as models, some of the most successful subjects had at some point in their learning native speakers of English, which was to have the most causative effect if the contact with the native speaker took place in the early years. As regards performance in the grammaticality judgment tests, those learners who started learning L2 early obtained higher scores than those who started at a later age, which is a finding contrary to many earlier studies. However, the author (Larson-Hall, 2008) admits that this advantage became evident only in the cases of those subjects who admitted having a substantial amount of additional contact with L2 outside formal teaching, such as substantial amounts of homework or extra classes. An early starters’ advantage became apparent only after 800 hours of teaching (while a lot of studies supporting the advan-
tage of older starters tested the learners at ca. 600 hours of teaching, e.g. Mayo & Lecumberri, 2003). Thus in this study age effects were combined with input levels. This finding made the author conclude that starting a foreign language early may be another way of maximising the overall quantity of the L2 input provided to the learner, as the benefit will become manifested only after a vast amount of exposure. Yet, as the study showed, the benefit is more profound and stable in respect of morpho-syntactic rather than phonological aspects of language, which are less susceptible to changing environmental conditions.

Therefore Universal Grammar (previously referred to as Language Acquisition Device), in formal settings does not seem to apply. Listening comprehension may seem to be more susceptible to this influence, but as Muñoz in conclusion to her research project on age factor in a formal setting (2006:34) notes:

‘second language learning success in a foreign language context may be as much a function of exposure as of age. Exposure needs to be intense and to provide an adequate model. Initial age of learning seems more relevant for skills that can be acquired implicitly whereas age at learning can be seen as a factor explaining the rate of learning of most skills.’

Scovel (2000:220), in the face of largely contradictory data on CPH, argues that any educational measures (such as public policy or personal practice) should be taken with caution and parents, ministries of education and educational institutions should be informed about this largely contradictory data. To put it in Scovel’s (2000:220) words, ‘If applied linguists have learned anything at this important juncture in history, we have learned to look at the critical period hypothesis a bit more critically’. It is not therefore a question of whether to teach children foreign languages, but rather how in order to improve learning conditions and methods and eventually to maximise learning outcomes (Nikolov & Mihaljević Djigunović, 2011).

3.2.3. The impact of bi-/multilingualism on a child’s cognitive and affective development

In current research on child foreign language learning, scholars and academics no longer ponder whether it is possible to achieve native-like competence in the second language, but consider rather the potential benefits of early L2 learning for the overall growth of the young child as well as ways of maximising these benefits through the proper organization of early L2 instruction. The goals of early foreign language learning have been explicitly stated in Euro-
pean Union recommendations, which go far beyond purely linguistic benefits, affecting the whole child’s cognitive and affective growth (cf. Ch. 1).

Bilingualism (or even multilingualism) is perceived as a phenomenon affording a cognitively and affectively enriching experience, both to children and adults alike. Consequently, whatever is known of the benefits of early second/foreign language learning has been established by observing the psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic performance of bilingual children. At this point it should be noted that the advantages of bilingualism have only begun to be appreciated since the 1960s. In the first half of the 20th century, individual bilingualism was mainly seen as a drawback, as it was believed to cause delays in speech development in L1 i.e. initial word acquisition either in L1 or L2 was slower in comparison to monolinguals, code switching was seen as harmful L2 interference, and lack of equal competency in two languages, especially in literacy, was seen as a deficiency in a bilingual person. Such an unfavourable opinion of bilingualism was mainly caused by the fact that much research was conducted in immigrant families, of low SES, where parents had to do blue-collar jobs, and often had less time or ability to help their children with academic study. Also a lot of research up until the 1960s was conducted in the dominant, i.e. official language of schooling, which for the immigrant children was the minority language. Needless to say, such children often performed worse in academic performance tests, when they were asked to do cognitive tasks in their minority language, since they often misunderstood the task instructions. For example Macnamara (1966), tested early bilingual school children’s computing abilities. English children attending Irish-language schools appeared to have no problems in mechanical arithmetic tasks but they did perform poorly in solving mathematical word problems, which was partially interpreted as a handicap deriving from bilingualism (although the deficiency in the minority language was also indicated). Only after the social variables (such as parental SES, amount of input in each of the languages, gender) were controlled, did the findings of research on bilingualism give a more favourable account of bilingualism (Katchan, 1986).

As regards bilinguals’ linguistic development, it was mainly Grosjean (1982, 1989) who advocated that a ‘bilingual is not two monolinguals in one’, which was a rebuttal of unrealistic expectations of bilinguals to possess similar competence in two languages and a knowledge of each language equal to that of monolingual speakers. It was after the recognition of the summative value of lexical knowledge in each of the languages and calculation of the total conceptual storage that the advantages of the bilingual over the monolingual person were recognized, and claims of retardation in language development were rejected (cf. e.g. Pearson, 1998). Nowadays it is recognized that a balanced bilingualism
(i.e. one in which a person would have a similar competence in two languages) is rare, and unequal competence in two (or more) languages is a norm.

**Intelligence**

Among the first scholars to identify positive links between bilingualism and aspects of cognitive development were Peal and Lambert (2007 [1962]). This was the breakthrough which indicated the positive impact of bilingual development on intelligence, in contrast with previous studies which identified rather negative impacts of bilingualism. The authors tested 89 bilingual French-English children in Canada and 75 monolingual children in tests of verbal and nonverbal intelligence. The results showed a bilingual advantage in tests of verbal intelligence (inventing terms) as well as some aspects of nonverbal intelligence, which required the manipulation of symbols. These results led the researchers to conclude that bilingual children have greater mental flexibility and creativity. Bilingual children have to use more varied intellectual structures which gives them a subsequent advantage in cognitive tasks. However, the value of the social context of the subjects was also recognized. It was hypothesised that many of the French speaking children came from families with a high level of English knowledge as well as intellectual ability, and that these characteristics (i.e. a positive attitude to English, parental intelligence) were somehow transmitted from the parents to their children, and thus also affected the scores. The results of the study should be interpreted with caution, i.e. they should not be treated as unequivocal proof of the cognitive advantage of bilinguals, but rather as evidence that bilinguals and monolinguals function differently in cognitive tasks (Bialystok, 2001).

However, the Peal and Lambert (2007 [1962]) study initiated a vast amount of research into the linguistic and cognitive processing of bilinguals. Further research focused less on the quantitative aspects of IQ, but rather the qualitative aspects of reasoning, as evident in e.g. divergent (creative) thinking and cognitive style.

**Cognitive style and attention control**

As regards the quality of thinking, the differences between mono- and bilinguals were studied in reference to cognitive style structures. Cummins (1976 in Katchan, 1986) in this respect proposed three hypotheses and supported them with empirical data to prove that early bilinguals show a more flexible and creative attitude to learning, as, firstly, they have to constantly switch between
two codes and differentiate between them, thus having two different learning perspectives. Secondly, a bilingual child participates in a larger number of experiences which also contributes to faster cognitive experience. Thirdly, language learning becomes objectified, i.e. the child learns to talk about objects in his surroundings in a more conscious and contextualized manner.

The most commonly studied learning style in respect of bilinguals/second language learners is field dependence-independence (FDI). In tests of FDI it is generally agreed that bilingual children are more field-independent in comparison to their monolingual peers, which may also account for their better performance in psychometric IQ tests (as IQ tests to a large extent measure FDI) while students who appear to be more field-dependent, usually excel in oral communicative tasks which results from a more social orientation (Bialystok, 2001:193). For example, in a relatively recent study Johnson, Prior and Artuso (2000) used an Embedded Figure Test, typically used in FDI tests as well as intelligence tests, as one measure and communication skills as another (measured by the quantity of information conveyed in a conversation). The findings confirmed a trend identified by many previous studies (e.g. Johnson & Rosano, 1993; Skehan, 1989) that field dependence can be a more predictive variable of oral proficiency in L2 than field independence. However, this claim is also often criticised on the grounds that Field Independence, being an indicator of intelligence, is a good indicator of success in classroom learning, all classroom learning, including foreign language learning. Bialystok (1992) claims that doing a task such as the Embedded Figures task requires selective attention (the two measures were found to be highly correlated) and therefore the primary cognitive benefit of bilingualism will be seen not in the cognitive style, but in a capacity for selective attention.

Further, Bialystok (2005) makes a review of her experimental research on young bilingual and monolingual performance in tasks of mathematical ability, dual language tasks and conceptual processing and the theory of mind (i.e. understanding children’s own and others’ thought processing). These tasks, which exemplify cognitive processing, show that bilingual children do not have an advantage over monolingual children when they have to perform in the minority language (which may also account for the deficiency in performance in earlier cited tasks, interpreted as the retardation of bilingual development (e.g. Macnamara, 1967 in Bialystok, 2005). Also bilingual children obtain lower scores on tests of receptive vocabulary. Yet, in similar tasks relating to cognitive development, in which there was an element of distraction/misleading information introduced, bilingual children showed an advantage over monolingual children. This was attributed to the fact that bilingual children have a greater capacity
for attentional and inhibitory control, which allows them to disregard the distracting elements in the task and pay deliberate attention to the information required. In these aspects of cognitive growth the advantage of bilingual children is marked.

In conclusion, Bialystok (2005) argues that her data is compatible with the findings of Peal and Lambert (1962), in the sense that their data referred only to one type of intelligence, so-called fluid intelligence, which is dynamic and changing throughout one’s life course. She believes that their findings on the role of intelligence are connected with attentional control and control over inhibitory processes, although these are not terms used by Peal and Lambert.

However, she also admits that any connection between intelligence (intellectual attainment) and bilingualism should be measured with caution, as studies focusing on that relationship often disregard such social variables determining the final outcome as ‘differences in social class, educational opportunities and expectations, access to support systems, opportunity from enriching experiences, and home language environment’ (Bialystok, 2005:183) and the fact that children become bilingual for many reasons, not only as part of an educational plan but also out of necessity (emigration, extended family etc.).

**Metalinguistic awareness**

Much of the research on the cognitive aspects of bilingualism has been aimed at identifying and emphasizing the differences in thinking between mono- and bilingual speakers; thus it has mainly been focused on the individual and on a final outcome (i.e. a score in a performance test). However, other lines of research have focused on the very process of language acquisition, and the development of metalinguistic awareness in particular, which is referred to as ‘the ability to think about and reflect upon the nature and functions of language’ (Baker, 1995:122).

Initial research on metalinguistic awareness in young bilingual children focused on their word awareness, i.e. their ability to separate words from meanings. Katchan (2006 [1986]) in her review of research data on early bilingual development to date, points out the saliency of the metalinguistic benefits of such development, which manifest themselves in the ease of switching names for objects in two languages and using them interchangeably (Feldman & Shen, 1971 in Katchan, 1986), in differential capacity of linguistic analysis, which shows in word play or flexible and analytic use of sentence structure (Ben-Zeev, 1977). Ben-Zeev (1977 in Katchan, 2007) additionally points out that younger children are less susceptible to the negative impact of the environment of their
bilingualism, and, as they are more motivated to use two languages, they show better metalinguistic development than older children. Additionally, in other studies it was found that bilingual children are more aware of the arbitrary relationship between words and meanings, and therefore can evaluate tautological phrases or ambiguous statements more objectively (Cummins, 1978; Rosenblum & Pinker, 1983 in Katchan, 2007).

The beneficial influence of metalinguistic awareness, in turn, can have an impact on academic achievements, as it coincides with an ability to reason at the Piagetan level of concrete operations. In other words, faster development of metalinguistic awareness speeds up the development of thinking in terms of concrete operations which is evident in the child’s ability to objectivise the situation, reflect on it and evaluate it (Hakes, 1980 in Katchan, 1986).

Subsequent research conducted on young children’s metalinguistic awareness in the 1980s focused mainly on word awareness (perception of boundaries, separating word and meaning), syntactic awareness (grammatical acceptability of sentences), phonological awareness, as well as attentional control. A need for attention to form as well as control of linguistic processing are regarded as essential components of metalinguistic ability. Control of attention in particular, allows the child to direct attention to specific aspects of either a stimulus field or a mental representation. ‘The need for control is most apparent when a problem contains conflict or ambiguity’ (Bialystok, 2001:130). For example when there are two competing solutions to a task, a child needs to employ his attentional control that will make him focus on the relevant task and disregard the irrelevant information.

To illustrate this point, Bialystok (1987a) conducted a study, in which she tested 120 children aged 5 to 9 (both mono- and bilingual) by means of a task in which there were four types of sentences: syntactically and meaningfully acceptable, syntactically acceptable but not meaningfully, meaningfully acceptable, but incorrect syntactically, both syntactically and meaningfully unacceptable. The results showed that bilingual children in comparison to monolingual ones judged the grammaticality of sentences far better. What’s more, the children were able to judge the grammaticality of the sentence even when it was anomalous meaningfully (e.g. ‘Why is the cat barking so loudly?’). This showed a better developed cognitive (attention) control of linguistic processes in bilingual children (Bialystok, 1987a in Baker, 1995:123).

Another aspect of metalinguistic ability studied by Bialystok (1987b) referred to the young children’s analytic abilities and the isolation of words from sentences. This capacity was studied by asking children to count the number of words in a sentence, which shows children’s understanding of what a word is (as separate
from word meaning) and seeing word boundaries. Normally it is only at the age of seven that children can perform this task, yet bilingual children develop this ability earlier than monolingual children because they are more certain about what a word is and they are more attentive to those units of speech which they considered relevant, which shows they had better cognitive control of the task.

**Phonological awareness**

The value of metalinguistic awareness in children lies in the fact that it is an important prerequisite for the development of reading skills in young children. In this respect it is particularly phonological awareness that is most relevant. Yet, relatively little research has been conducted on the development of phonological awareness in bilingual children. The studies conducted generally indicate an advantage in bilingual children over monolingual children at the time of transition from kindergarten to school instruction (ca. 1st grade) in onset-rime segmentation (Bruck & Genesee, 1995), judging the length of a word (Yelland, Pollard & Mercuri, 1993 in Bialystok, 2001), phoneme deletion tasks or choosing the odd word out on the basis of phonological mismatch (Campbell & Sais, 1995 in Bialystok, 2001), phoneme segmentation task in a word (Bialystok, Majumder & Martin, 2003) yet those advantages disappeared by the end of the first year of schooling. Bialystok (2001:143) argues that bilingual advantage in respect of phonological awareness can be seen only in certain types of simple tasks and is short lived. This evidence, therefore, cannot be regarded as sufficient to claim a fundamental change in the path of metalinguistic development in bilinguals (Bialystok, 2001:143).

Despite these reservations, recent research shows positive link between early bilingualism and the development of reading skills as mediated by phonological skills. Kovelman, Baker and Petitto (2008) were inspired by neurolinguistic studies on brain maturation and myelination, which attribute later learning success to the early learning of certain skills and the associated neurolinguistic organization of the brain. They tested three different groups of 7- to 9-year-old children: Spanish-English bilinguals (Spanish from home and new to English), English-Spanish bilinguals (English from home and new to Spanish) and English monolinguals. All children attended bilingual schools, with 50/50% instruction time in each language. The children were tested with a battery of reading tests. The results showed that the age of first exposure to the second language had a prominent effect on children’s later literacy development. Those children who had been exposed to L2 earlier (before the age of three) performed better in the reading tests, phonological awareness tests (phoneme segmentation,
pseudoword detection) and a general language competence test than older arrivers, followed by systematically older bilinguals. This was interpreted as the beneficial effect of early bilingualism on later literacy development, which can even alleviate negative impacts of SES, thus it was perceived as mainly maturational and not environmental. What’s more, even monolingual children benefited from bilingual exposure in increased skills in phoneme awareness. The results of the study were interpreted as an argument in favour of early bilingual education and parallel development of literacy in two languages.

Divergent/creative thinking

Bilingual experience results in the development of divergent (creative) thinking in children, i.e. an ability to think of many different solutions to an open question or uses for an object. It is possible that the development of divergent thinking is enhanced in bilinguals because the knowledge of two or more languages increases fluency, flexibility and consideration of the same phenomenon from different perspectives.

Divergent thinking is typically tested on scales of fluency, originality, flexibility and elaboration, depending on the number, the variation of categories and extent of answers given. In the 1970s a certain amount of research was conducted on divergent thinking in bilinguals internationally. For example Cummins (1977) in his study of balanced bilinguals vs. non-balanced (‘matched’) bilinguals found that the former scored much higher on fluency and flexibility. The balanced bilinguals also scored much higher on originality over the non-balanced group and the monolingual group used as a control group. These differences between balanced and non-balanced bilinguals are explained by a threshold theory: positive consequences of bilingualism are only marked if children obtain a certain threshold competence. In other words they only become evident if the child’s L2 skills resemble those of L1.

The threshold theories were first formulated in the 1970s (e.g. Toukoma & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1977; Cummins, 1976). According to these theories a child immersed in bilingualism can go through three different levels, a bottom level and two thresholds, which indicate the degree of their bilingualism. At the bottom level children have low levels of linguistic competence, which may impede the development of their cognitive processes. They are limited bilinguals. To avoid the possible negative outcomes of bilingualism, it is necessary for such children to reach the first threshold. The first threshold is characteristic of less balanced bilinguals. At this stage some beneficial advantages of bilingualism in one but not two languages can be noted. The second threshold is characteristic
of balanced bilinguals; it is the level, at which children have age-appropriate competence in two languages and experience the beneficial effects of bilingualism (Baker, 1995).

Evidence for this theory is drawn from studies which ask bilingual children to perform some cognitive tasks and measure their performance against their bilingual competence. For example, Bialystok (1988 in Baker, 1995) measured aspects of metalinguistic competence (analysis of linguistic knowledge and control of linguistic processing) in 6- and 7-year-old children and found a connection between the children’s performance in tests of metalinguistic awareness and the level of their bilingualism, i.e. whether they were monolingual, partially bilingual or fluently bilingual speakers. However, there are criticisms of the threshold theory, as it is not clear how to define each particular level or threshold, which may lead to the artificial creation of stages whereas linguistic development is usually smooth. Also this early theory has been criticised for focusing too much on the individual learner and disregarding other social variables such as cultural, political, community, teacher expectations, and home factors.

The threshold theory further developed into the Developmental Interdependence Hypothesis (Cummins, 1978) which implied that the second language competence of a child depends on the level of the child’s development in L1. This theory distinguishes between CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) and BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills). According to this theory BICs or surface fluency in L2 develops largely independently from the competence level in L1, as it is cognitively undemanding. However, CALP, which is much more context-reduced, can only develop if high level of L1 competence has been achieved already as the relationship between L1 and L2 in CALP is reciprocal. This argument was used against the use of bilingual immersion programmes too early. Children who may have some basic communication skills in L2, may find it difficult to understand highly demanding cognitive content in L2 as they do not have a similar competence in L1. This theory has manifested itself in some immersion programmes in Canada, where immersion children initially lagged behind monolingual children and failed to perform such operations as synthesis, discussion, analysis, evaluation and interpretation. However, they managed to catch up in due course. On the other hand minority children who were allowed to use their minority language initially in the classroom were not retarded in their cognitive language development or in their acquisition of the majority language (Secada, 1991 in Baker, 1995). Cummins (1984) also observed that if minority children acquired certain cognitive skills in the home language, e.g. literacy, these skills are later transferred into the majority language and general development of their intellectual skills because
of the greater exposure to literacy in the majority language and the strong social pressure to learn it’ (Cummins, 1984:143).

**Cross-linguistic transfer**

The interrelationship between L1 and L2 skills and the beneficial reciprocal effect on each has been the focus of recent research as well as the aforementioned theory of multicompetence (Cook, 1991). Recent research into very early foreign language instruction seems to confirm these assumptions. As regards cognitive objectives drawing on the notion of the development of multi-competence, it is argued that many linguistic skills and strategies which the child possesses in his L1 can be transferred to the learning of L2. Furthermore, learning L2 has beneficial effects on learning L1 skills, thus the relationship between learning the two languages is reciprocal. In reference to affective objectives of early language learning a vast area of research focuses on the rise of motivation and positive attitudes to FLL as well as the enhancement of self-esteem (self-concept) and creativity.

With reference to the development of linguistic multicompetence, it is necessary to cite research on crosslinguistic transfer, i.e. the influence of first language skills on learning the second language. It seems that especially in the case of very young learners, whose L2 competence and performance is largely limited, first language skills can be a good predictor of L2 learning skills. Indeed, such a relationship has been observed by Cummins (1979, 1984) and formulated as the Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis, in which he claimed that L2 literacy development is dependent on the level of L1 literacy at the point of starting to learn L2.

More recently, it is mainly the educational research team, Richard Sparks, Jon Patton and Leonore Ganschow, that have carried out research into the relationship between L1 and L2 skills, in which they traced the development of 54 learners over ten years, from primary to secondary school. For example, Sparks et al. (2008) observed there is a correlation between children’s word decoding and spelling skills in L1 as measured in Grade 1 and the children’s word decoding and spelling skills 10 years later, at the onset of learning the second language. Thus early L1 skills are regarded to be a good predictor of success in later L2 learning.

In other studies Sparks et al. (2006, 2009) indicate that good performance in L1 skills in elementary school is related to L2 aptitude, as measured by the MLAT test in the ninth grade. Measures of L1 literacy (reading, spelling) as well as verbal ability and receptive vocabulary accounted for 73% of variance
obtained by learners on the MLAT test in L2 (Sparks et al., 2006). In the 2009 study (Sparks et al., 2009) they measured the long-term relationship between early L1 and later L2 skills with a view to identifying further variables which may influence the process, such as L1 academic aptitude, L2 aptitude, and L2 affect (motivation, anxiety). Of all these variables, the results in the MLAT test were the best predictors of overall L2 proficiency, although a strong interdependency between L1 word decoding and L2 word decoding skills was also observed. The impact of other variables such as L2 motivation and L2 anxiety or early L1 skills added only a small amount of variance. The smaller impact of early L1 skills, which was continuously supported by previous studies of the researchers, was explained by the fact that L2 MLAT scores are better predictors of overall L2 success, than just the measure of early L1 skills. Yet, the latter does not exclude the influence of the former. In addition, it is argued that MLAT tests contain basic language tasks which depict the learners’ linguistic ability irrespective of the language it is taken in. They draw on the metalinguistic knowledge of the learner. As Sparks et al. (2009:747) put it, ‘L2 aptitude may be a proxy for students’ L1 language analytic abilities and their metalinguistic skills’.

It seems that for early stages of foreign language learning phonological memory as well as phonological skills (spelling, decoding) are the most important. They also seem to be the least language specific and therefore their development in L1 and then their transfer onto L2 seems plausible. If that is so, it should be remembered that L1 phonological skills are developed to a large extent in the family environment by joint family literacy practices (such as parent-child reading of texts with rhymes, alliteration, etc) and parental literacy teaching strategies, such as letter/word identification (Hood, Conlon & Andrews, 2008). Thus by working on children’s L1 skills, parents also indirectly lay the foundations for success in L2 learning. Such crosslinguistic transfer has been noted already in studies of naturalistic second language learners (e.g. Dickinson et al., 2004; Huennekens & Xu, 2010).

**Affective domain**

Initial studies on the role of affect in bilingual development focused on such issues as motivation and attitude to L1 and successively acquired L2. It was found that in the case of successive bilinguals their attitude to the mother tongue and perception of its status determined whether L1 knowledge was maintained or led to language attrition. This was typically the case of immigrant learners who spoke L1 languages of low status and limited use. On arriving to host countries where language of high status was spoken, such as English, those
learners struggled to learn L2 in order to assimilate to L2 community. Rejecting L1 and accepting L2 denoted strong integrative motive for learning the latter (Gardner & Macintyre, 1992; Skehan, 1989). Thus bilingual acquisition is often seen as a site of struggle for the dominance of one of the languages (Cummins, 1993). The development in each of the languages is dependent on parental attitudes to L1, who may promote or reject using L1 at home as well as encourage the child to study L2 at school. It also depends on teacher attitudes who may or may not accept initial difficulties in learning L2 or the child’s academic performance demonstrated via testing in L2.

Oliver and Purdie (1998) conducted a study on how the attitudes of primary learners (children aged 9–12) to their L1 and L2 (English) were influenced by the attitudes of their parents, teachers and peers in the playground. They found that the children’s attitudes are not unanimous across all contexts. The children felt that they were expected by their parents, teachers and peers to speak English at school. Whereas at home many of the children were expected to speak their heritage language. Their parents probably used it as a major tool of transferring their cultural values and identity. However, the children felt that even at home they were expected to speak English by their teachers, school principal and peers. This situation created some kind of dilemma for children as they perceived a dichotomy of attitudes to their home language by the Significant Others in their environment, which may inhibit the maintenance of children’s L1. It is concluded that ‘children who feel their L1 and cultural identity are positively valued at school are more likely to experience positive self-esteem which, in turn, will benefit their motivation for success in both L1 and L2 learning’ (Oliver & Purdie, 1998:10).

In this view Genesee (2009) states that many parents unnecessarily haste to abandon their L1 in the hope of fast mastering L2. He believes that a lot of linguistic skills children have acquired at home in their L1, such as phonological awareness, reading comprehension and certain oral skills which can be successfully transferred to learning a second language, thus a home language can be used as a useful resource, and not an obstacle to learning L2. Additionally, he notes after Wong Fillmore (1991) that many minority language parents may not be able to ‘form close affective bond with their children or to exercise full parental responsibilities if they are struggling to use a language they have not mastered’ (Genesee, 2009:14).

Findings of studies on language maintenance, identity and attitudes carry an important message to parents willing to bring up their children in artificial bilingualism. In many settings, where there is limited contact with speakers of high prestige language, such as English, many parents decide that one of them will
speak to their children in a FL from birth, thus trying to maximize the amount of exposure to L2 and following the ‘one parent, one language’ principle (Döpke, Macnamara & Quinn, 1991) they bring up their children bilingually. This is often the case of parents who live in Central and Eastern Europe (Rokita-Jaśkow, 2010). Having managed to learn a FL (usually English) themselves, they realize how difficult it is to learn it in a largely monolingual country and would like to present their children this knowledge as an unusual gift and investment towards future attainment. However, what they fail to recognize is the possible negative impact such upbringing can have on the child affective development. Following the statement of Wong Fillmore (1991) it can be similarly predicted that the parent speaking in a language that is foreign to him/her may find it difficult to express certain meanings in it (such as diminutives, language of comforting etc.) as this is not language taught in an instructional course but developed through naturalistic experience. It cannot be forgotten that language is a tool of forming emotional bonds. Its artificial and somewhat scholarly use may seriously inhibit creating a really close emotional bond with one’s child. Another doubt that should be raised concerns child’s future identity. If the child lives in the monolingual country, such as Poland, attends public schools, has peers speaking Polish, and yet is expected to speak a foreign language by the most significant person’s in his life, this may develop a dichotomy of attitudes and seriously inhibit child linguistic (Polish) and general academic development (Genesee, 2009).

More recent research shows the effect of bi-/multilingualism on personality and emotional development (Pavlenko, 2005; Dewaele, 2010). Dewaele (2010) argues that the method and age of learning the second language have an impact on the speaker’s communicative anxiety. The multilingual language use of the learner is dependent on both the level of emotional intelligence and the current level of language knowledge and use. All these change as the process of acculturation to L2 community proceeds.

In one paper Dewaele and van Oudenhoven (2009) report on a study in which they investigated the impact of multicultural/multilingual contact on personality as measured by the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire, which tests subjects on such aspects of personality as open-mindedness, cultural empathy, emotional stability. The subjects were 79 young teenagers, half of whom came to London as immigrants in early childhood. Those children, referred to as ‘Third Culture Kids’, obtained higher scores in the areas of open-mindedness and cultural empathy, but they had lower scores on emotional stability. What is more, the personality profile was strongly affected by the number of languages known. If the child knew one or more languages better than his L1 (the home
language), which was referred to as multidomiance, this had significant im-
impact on his open-mindedness, but only a marginally higher score on cultural
empathy, and significantly lower scores on emotional stability. These findings
are very revealing; they show that the experience of bi-/multilingualism also has
its downsides. The necessity of acculturating to a new community is a stressful
experience, hence a lower score on emotional stability. It must be remembered
that personality is shaped by social and biographical factors. On the other hand
the necessity of fitting in and adjusting to others enhances open-mindedness
and cultural empathy.

3.2.4. Benefits of early L2 learning in a ‘minimum input’ situation

An important skill that very young children develop in pre-school years and
that affects mother tongue development in early schooling is phonological aware-
ness. Mastery of this skill in early childhood, which consists in auditory discrimi-
nation of phonemes and syllables, is an important prerequisite of the child’s
later learning to read (Krasowicz-Kupis, 1999). Phonological awareness is also
one of the competences which can be developed by learning a second language.
In this respect learning a second language can have a positive effect on learning
the first (L1 literacy). For example, Oberhofer (2011) conducted a comparative
study of bilingual and monolingual children in Austria at a kindergarten (mean
age five years and six months) on metalinguistic tasks, such as repetition of sen-
tences (also ungrammatical), syntactic error detection and correction and word
renaming (lexical relabeling of objects). The results of the study showed that the
bilingual children, who attended an English-only immersion kindergarten per-
formed better on all but one task (the word-order repetition) than monolinguals.
The importance of the study lies in the fact that it revealed important benefits
of early immersion in L2 on the development of the children’s metalinguistic
awareness. The author emphasized as a noteworthy observation the fact that
this benefit occurs even in situations where children have less contact with
a foreign language than in e.g. bilingual families, and in situations of delayed
contact with L2 (i.e. a few years after birth). Still it should be recognized that
the study was conducted in an immersion kindergarten, where only English
was spoken, so the overall amount of input was greater than in an instructional
setting, such as that which takes place in monolingual kindergartens.

Rocławska-Daniluk (2011) also studied the development of metalinguistic
awareness in kindergarten children learning English in a bilingual kindergar-
ten with a partial immersion programme. So the amount of contact with L2
was still considerable although less significant than in the Austrian study. The
project was conducted in two Polish-English bilingual kindergartens in the years 2005–2009 and consisted of longitudinal, cross-sectional, and experimental studies. Their main focus was the development of phonological awareness. In the first diagnostic study the subjects had to perform a series of metalinguistic tasks in Polish (such as spotting the semantic errors in texts, solving riddles, answering questions on a text, imitating the tester’s questions, imitating isolated phonemes after the model, phonemic synthesis) as well as to express and justify their attitude to learning English. In the study 6 out of 23 children were diagnosed with speech disorders, connected with articulation. The results of the first batch of the project showed that the children with speech disorders did not perform worse on metalinguistic tasks than children with normal linguistic development. Speech disorders were not observed to be an inhibiting/discriminating factor for taking up study of a foreign language, both in the opinion of the researcher and the children themselves. The second batch of the project (a longitudinal study) aimed to test whether children capable of phonemic synthesis in Polish can do the same in English, i.e. whether skill transfer is possible. Fourteen children at three time intervals (at 3–4 years, 4–5 years, 5–6 years) were tested on six phonetic realizations of three English words, in which the children had to indicate the incorrect realizations. The results of the study were somewhat inconsistent. A regression in performance over three years was noted in 5 children and progress in 9 children, but it was uneven. The inconsistency was ascribed to poor acoustic conditions of the environment in which the study was conducted and inclined the researcher to carry out the forth batch of the project in the experimental manner which tested the impact of training in phonological discrimination in English. The results obtained by children in the experimental group after the training were much higher than those in the control group. In the conclusion to her research project Rocławska-Daniluk (2011) argues that early foreign language immersion has beneficial effects on the development of very young learners’ phonological awareness, and in order to enhance it even further, early foreign language programmes should focus on sensitising very young learners to correct pronunciation and articulation of sounds also in foreign languages. Children with speech disorders in the mother tongue should by no means be excluded from foreign language instruction, as no negative effect of L2 learning was observed in their case, but speech therapy by a bilingual professional is recommended.

All in all, a positive impact of early foreign language immersion/learning in relation to metalinguistic development in children can be observed. However, they all relate to situations rich in L2 input (immersion programmes). It remains to be seen whether similar advantages would be observed in learning si-
tual situations poor in L2 contact, as is typical of L2 instruction in kindergarten. Since exposure and quality of input appear to be key to successful implicit acquisition in early childhood, and metalinguistic awareness can develop on its own only after an adequate amount of input has been acquired, it seems doubtful. Alternatively, it could be tested whether very young children can profit from more explicit training of certain aspects of metalinguistic awareness, as suggested by Rocławska-Daniluk (2011), which could compensate for a poverty of stimulus.

To summarize, it must be emphasized that all the benefits identified in relation to early bilingualism/second language learning refer to children who possess more or less balanced competence in two languages and more or less equal amount of contact with two languages. The benefits of early L2 learning in minimal input situations will not necessarily equal the same level as in natural situations. Not all benefits of early bilinguals can be extended to very young early second language learners. While the cognitive value of bilingual experience in early childhood should be recognized, it should once again be explicitly stated that in the light of research results, any such advantage should be expected only if a substantial amount of contact with L2 is provided. It is less likely, although it is still unexplored, to what extent the same benefits will materialize in the formal setting. Therefore foreign language education programmes should be aimed at the enhancement of L2 input quantity. It may also be expected that the advantageous impact of early L2 exposure will be proportionate to the amount of bilingual exposure. In addition, it is suggested that if children are also to develop in a weaker language they need to be taught both the language and the subject matter through that language (Bialystok, 2001:232), which calls for bilingual education programmes, CLIL classes etc.

At the same time possible negative effects on the bilingual person’s personality should also be acknowledged. This may be particularly of interest to parents striving to bring up their children bilingually at all costs, by e.g. trying to establish artificial bilingualism. The potential negative impact of such development such as emotional instability, split identity, should be considered as they may not balance the cognitive and linguistic gains. Whilst very limited research has been carried out in that area, some potential hazards on the basis of presented research can be postulated.

Finally, it should be recognized that ‘children who live in a bilingual and bi-cultural world have a different perspective that may not only influence arcane cognitive and linguistic skills but also challenge their world views and social identity’ (Bialystok, 2001:232), thus many other potential benefits as well as drawbacks may still remain unexplored.
3.3. Psycho-pedagogical principles of early foreign language learning

The overview of studies on the role of age factor and the impact of early bilingualism indicates that in the formal classroom, learners cannot achieve the same learning results as in a naturalistic setting. Therefore the focus of early foreign instruction should not be on modeling real-life situations and striving for the impossible, but rather on optimising the learning conditions and learning outcomes.

Whatever is known of the effectiveness of early foreign language programmes has been gathered so far from various innovative language teaching projects and individual research studies. While early projects, such as FLES in the USA, or Primary French in Elementary School (Burstall, 1974) focused mainly on investigating the linguistic objectives of such early learning, and the investigation of other factors (such as learner attitudes, and motivation) was treated as a by-product of the major line of research, more recent research on early foreign language learning goes beyond ‘the earlier, the better’ standpoint and focuses on various contextual factors, at the same time providing useful information to various stakeholders, such as teachers, heads of educational institutions and language policy makers. The same line of research points to huge variability in language learning programmes and language learning outcomes, due to such factors as motivation and attitudes, learning strategies, aptitude, socio-economic status (SES) of the learner, and language anxiety (Nikolov & Mihaljević Džigunović, 2011). Thus research findings, which to date have focused mainly on presenting cases of ‘good practice’, serve as a basis for presenting key principles for early foreign language teaching. Since teaching languages to young learners has become a worldwide phenomenon, international conferences have also been organized globally as a platform for exchange of ideas, sharing of experiences and setting good standards, e.g. the first conferences in Pecs, Hungary held by Professor Marianne Nikolov (in 1999, 2004) or a conference held in Bangalore, India in January 2008, sponsored by IATEFL and the British Council. In addition a few notable books have been published (Nikolov, 2009a, 2009b; Nikolov et al., 2007) depicting key research trends in TEYL (Teaching English to Young Learners).

3.3.1. Pedagogical principles and objectives of early FLL

Since an ‘early start’ in a foreign language occupies a prominent position in European language education policy (cf. Ch. 1), it comes as no surprise that this issue has been given a significant amount of attention and in consequence,
available research data on the process of the early learning of FLs has been closely scrutinised. This has allowed the ground to be laid for informed decisions in respect of future educational planning. Thus whatever we know about the process of child FLL in a formal setting and factors affecting the final learning outcome has been summarized in two reports prepared for the European Commission in 1998 (Blondin et al., 1998) and in 2006 (Edelenbos, Johnstone & Kubanek, 2006). They also provided further incentives for early foreign language teaching research to be conducted, such as the ELLIE (Early Language Learning in Europe) project (Enever, 2011), sponsored by the EU and aimed at investigating the results of the ‘early start’ policy implementation. Since the two European reports provide comprehensive summaries of research findings on early FLL, they will mainly be referred to in the presentation of key factors presenting the principles of good teaching practice. It should be recognized that all these projects, even though referred to early foreign language learning, were conducted among primary learners, i.e. children from about 7–8 years of age to 12 or even 14 years of age. It is clear that no comparisons can be made among such children, who are often teenagers, and kindergarten children, especially in reference to linguistic attainment. Yet, the contextual factors appear to be equally relevant.

The first report on primary and pre-school foreign language education was prepared by Blondin et al. (1998). It presents key research findings from large innovative projects on early FLL undertaken in various European countries up to date, e.g. in Scotland (Low et al., 1995) or Croatia (Vilke, 1995). The report deals with two categories of findings on possible learning outcomes and the key factors determining them. They refer to the context of learning (the level of the school, the teacher and individual learners) and possible outcomes, which highlight children’s development of communication in the foreign language, metalinguistic awareness, cultural awareness, positive attitudes, self-confidence, curiosity, interest, perceived language status and language choice.

With reference to the context of learning, at the societal level Blondin et al. (1998) indicate that children may have varied exposure to foreign languages in different countries or regions, even prior to school instruction. In certain communities various foreign languages are often heard in the street or in the media, while in others children may have no encounters with foreigners, or the only foreign language they hear/speak is one of low status, and thus is little attended to. This observation has clear implications for more conscious attempts at maximising out-of-school exposure to language, by the enhanced presence of foreign languages in the media, on the internet and by providing financial support in infrastructure, i.e. educational projects and initiatives. In this respect parental
involvement in child foreign language learning also seems to be a necessary condition, as parents can mediate in providing their children with more exposure to FLL (in media, the internet, books, travel etc.).

In respect of school context, Blondin et al. (1998) indicate the major problem of lack of continuity, as children pass from primary to secondary levels of education, which is evident in different teaching aims, different methodologies of teaching, poor communication between primary and secondary teachers, or lack of recognition of the value of teaching languages at primary level. Lack of continuity causes loss of motivation and lack of visible progress. Other problems at school level consider the class size and the time of language learning (both the total amount of teaching hours in the whole curriculum and the frequency), both of which affect primarily the development of the learners’ communicative ability.

Further Blondin et al. (1998) indicate the crucial role of the teacher, and the variability in various teaching programmes due to the teacher’s foreign-language competence, varied strategies, methods, materials and equipment used, varied levels of the mother tongue use and knowledge of the specificity of child language development. As a result, it is suggested that more (financial) means should be dedicated to pre-service training of primary and pre-primary teachers of foreign languages to children. Secondary teachers would need to undergo additional training in order to be able to teach young learners.

Finally, variability in young learners’ characteristics and FLL outcomes was noted, which consists in the child’s gender (different attitude to learning among boys and girls), social/ethnic background, the overall starting age of L2 instruction, and general level of academic ability (especially verbal ability). The acknowledgement of these differences among individual learners should prompt educational initiatives aimed at reducing inequalities that may exist among children at the start of their educational careers. All these findings call for future solution and institutional support in overcoming the negative outcomes of improper or inadequate practices in early foreign language learning.

The next report of subsequent research prepared by Edelenbos, Johnstone and Kubanek (2006), was a continuation of work done by Blondin et al. (1998). It contributed significantly to setting standards of good practice in early foreign language teaching. First of all, it aimed to identify examples of ‘good practice’, i.e. high quality teaching in different European countries, and, secondly, to compare different instances of quality standards. These goals were mainly achieved by a recent research analysis, followed by a questionnaire study, accompanied by ‘a good practice’ description sheet distributed via national educational institutions. These measures were adopted in order to identify the main pedagogical principles which should be followed and applied in primary and pre-primary teaching.
The report (Edelenbos, Johnstone & Kubanek, 2006) starts with a review of the research studies into early foreign language learning, which sprang up abruptly in Europe (but also worldwide, e.g. in China, Vietnam, Japan) from the 1990s, which indicated major variability in the institutional provision for the organization of teaching early FL, in terms of varied starting ages of instruction and differences in outcomes among children of various starting age (e.g. Garcia Mayo & Lecumberri, 2003; Bagaric, 2003). The review also covered comparisons of the learning results in conventional and intensive teaching programmes (e.g. Bors, 1999; Johnstone, Harlen, McNeil, Stradling & Thorpe, 1999), provision for (or lack of) continuity (e.g. Nikolov, 2001; Chesterton et al., 2004), teachers’ professional needs (e.g. Dupuis et al., 2003), the use of ICT in teaching young learners (e.g. Nutta et al., 2002), and provision of national initiatives aimed at implementing early foreign language learning programmes (e.g. Driscoll et al., 2004).

Other lines of research focus on the process of teaching and thus pinpoint effective teaching methods and approaches, such as focusing on listening skills (Huppertz, 2004), enhancing pupil oral discourse skills (e.g. by focus on teacher-pupil talk, cf. Oliver & Mackey, 2003), on pronunciation (e.g. Mordellet-Roggenbuck, 2002), reading (e.g. Andrzejewska, 2004) and writing (Kielhöfer, 2004).

Drawing on the reported research findings concerning the effectiveness of various educational practices in early FLL Edelenbos, Johnstone and Kubanek (2006) issued key guidelines that should be adopted when designing courses for young learners on a local scale as well as planning wider educational policy. The concluding maxims have been presented in Table 3.1 with references to selected research studies that contributed to the report.

**Table 3.1.** Main pedagogical principles behind early FLL (adapted from Edelenbos, Johnstone and Kubanek, 2006)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Principles</th>
<th>Examples of studies</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Recognizing the value of early FLL due to the overall longer time of learning; learning both naturally as young children and analytically at a later stage.</td>
<td>Garcia Mayo &amp; Lecumberri, 2003; Bagaric, 2003</td>
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<td>2. Supportive environment and continuity from one year to the next between different levels of education must be guaranteed.</td>
<td>Nikolov, 2001; Chesterton, 2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Initial motivation is mainly intrinsic, derived from enjoyment and fun in classroom activities, yet self-awareness of intrinsic motivation should also be aroused through self-reflection, self-assessment and strategic behaviour.</td>
<td>Nikolov, 1999; Lamb, 2004; Wu, 2003</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Languages available to children locally (e.g. regional or ethnic minority languages) should be appreciated and taught to children as well.</td>
<td>Löger, Wappelshammer &amp; Fiala, 2005</td>
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<td>5. It should be recognized that children develop FLL at an individual rate, progressing through a series of non-linear stages.</td>
<td>Pienemann, Kessler &amp; Roos, 2006</td>
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<td>6. Key learner characteristics contributing to L2 proficiency are motivation and aptitude; the latter can develop progressively through primary school especially in areas of metalinguistic awareness and sound sensitivity.</td>
<td>Pienemann, Kessler &amp; Roos, 2006; Kiss &amp; Nikolov, 2005</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Children should be helped to go beyond prefabricated patterns in their oral skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Children should be given both positive and corrective feedback on their language production to help them refine it further.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Reading and writing should be introduced from an early stage.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Recognizing the value of spontaneous play, as it allows children to attend to form and meaning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Recognizing the onset of metalinguistic knowledge, which can be utilised e.g. through narrating stories, listening tasks.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Technologically-mediated learning should be valued and used.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Language-related outcomes are related to the model of curriculum adopted (i.e. intensity of instruction).</td>
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<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Success in early FLL will not take place if left only in the hands of schools and individual teachers. Support of national and transnational structures is needed in provision for pre-service and in-service teacher training. Parental involvement is a necessary prerequisite to success in early FLL.</td>
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All in all, the research cited in the report has helped to do away with some of the myths deriving from the ‘the earlier, the better’ catchphrase. Nowadays it is widely recognized that the goal of early L2 instruction is not to obtain native-like competence in that language, but it is assumed that an early start will result in a longer overall length of FL study, which may contribute to overall increased L2 proficiency as well as the learning of subsequent languages. Yet, for these goals to take place, optimum learning conditions should be provided, which will result in visible learning results and progress as well as sustain motivation for learning foreign languages. The report (Edelenbos, Johnstone & Kubanek, 2006) concludes that in the early teaching of foreign languages, first of all the role of the teacher should be recognized, who when in possession of adequate competences and capable of giving encouragement, input, interaction and feedback, can create a learning environment conducive to acquisition. At the same time the learning capacity of young learners is recognized and valued. It is emphasized that under the guidance of a skillful teacher, young learners are capable of self-reflection, the use of learning strategies, and are able to successfully acquire language both implicitly and explicitly. For the latter to take place it is advised they should be taught literacy skills from the very beginning of learning L2.

Teachers should understand that children do not progress in their language learning at a constant pace but ‘in a more complex and recursive process’ (Edelenbos, Johnstone & Kubanek, 2006), which calls for a spiral syllabus. Children are also recognized to benefit from learning from one another (in pairs and
groups), and are capable of self-assessment and self-monitoring. In addition it is recommended that children are exposed to various types of discourse, such as narratives, and asked open-ended questions in order to boost their creativity. Finally, it is argued that in order to be beneficial, any feedback on children's performance should not undermine children's self-confidence. The most important value of early foreign language instruction is the development of positive attitudes to foreign language learning by means of intrinsically motivating tasks and activities. It is recognized that occasionally via foreign language learning children can develop new forms of identity (such as a more global/international outlook). It is recognized that socio-economic status can still have a negative impact on the decision to start learning L2 or the quality of instruction available. Hence guidelines are provided for good teaching to do away with inequality and uneven learning opportunities at an early age (Edelenbos, Johnstone & Kubanek, 2006).

It is also emphasized that it does not matter which language is taught to children. It can be either another official language of a country or an indigenous heritage language with or without an official status or just a foreign language. The beneficial impact on a child’s learning and motivation depends not so much on the language chosen but the quality of instruction provided. The report (Edelenbos, Johnstone & Kubanek, 2006) also identified four different models of teaching languages to young learners, which account for the differences in early L2 learning. These are:

1) Roughly one hour per week, based on a given course or set of materials;
2) Roughly one hour per week, based on a more flexible approach that seeks to embed the additional language in other areas of the curriculum, such as small amounts of science, mathematics or geography;
3) A ‘language awareness approach’, which seeks to sensitise children to languages in general, with particular attention to the variety of languages that are actually used in the local community;
4) Immersion or bilingual education, in which children learn a significant part of their curriculum through the medium of the additional language, with a correspondingly large increase in the time made available over the other three models’ (Edelenbos, Johnstone & Kubanek, 2006 in Johnstone, 2009).

The first two types of early FLL (often referred to as FLES – Foreign Language in Elementary School or MLPS – Modern Languages at Primary School) seem to be the most common. It is clear that their biggest weakness is the low intensity of instruction. When compared with bilingual education where children have contact with L2 for a few hours a day, this seems like a large difference, which must result in varied L2 proficiency. Additionally it should be
recognized that it is not the sheer amount of classroom instruction that matters, but its quality as well as providing additional language contact which cannot be the sole responsibility of teachers.

An example of how these guidelines were established in educational practice were tested in the ELLIE study (Enever, 2011). The project titled *Early Language Learning in Europe* was a huge transnational and longitudinal study (2007 to 2010) which comprised 14,000 children in seven European countries, including Poland. The major objective of the project was to investigate how the early start policy was implemented in various countries and what kind of provision was given to ensure good learning results. The study concluded with important implications for modifying educational practice in order to ensure its effectiveness in the following major domains: further language education policy planning, the capacities of the learner, the teacher, the school, out-of-school factors and possible language achievements. To highlight but a few key points, the final project report emphasizes that greater provision for pre-service and in-service primary teacher education should be made, and that teachers should be linguistically highly competent (C2 level). In respect of the language learner, it is indicated that although generally all children are eager to learn languages, the differences in motivation, attitude and their self-concept are strongly marked by the age of 10–11, which may be a result of varied learning experiences. The variability in pupils’ attitudes to FLs may also be a result of varied emphasis on languages in the curricula, by e.g. ensuring continuity of learning from class to class and forms of assessment as well as involvement in international projects. Teachers who strongly believed in the sense of teaching languages to such young learners were recognized to be more successful and also more skillful in keeping pupils focused on a task as well as insisting more on home-school cooperation and promoting out-of-school contact with languages. Parents who were familiar with foreign languages themselves seemed to particularly influence their children in FL achievements. The final learning outcome was recognized to be related to such factors as learner motivation, teacher competences, parental involvement and the amount of exposure to language; these were subsequently recommended as areas for further investment (Enever, 2011).

The key lines of development in early FLL research and pedagogy are clearly manifested in the project activities of the European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz, which aims to give active support to European legislative actions. Therefore projects undertaken in the recent years include those aimed at supporting teachers of young learners by providing them with tools for the effective teaching of languages. Recent publications focus on the shaping of literacy skills and their assessment (cf. Hasselgren *et al.*, 2011) and integrating content
and language teaching with a view to developing pluriculturalism and plurilingualism (cf. Bernaus et al., 2011). Previously, in order to foster self-assessment skills and strategic development, as well as to enhance language awareness and intercultural competence, a European Language Learning portfolio was elaborated, which also has its Polish equivalent, a European Language Portfolio for children aged six to ten (Bajorek et al., 2006) as well as a version for very young learners of L2, aged three to six (Pamuła et al., 2007). Also, current works of ECML cater for the provision of high quality teacher education at primary and pre-primary level. At present activity is taking place to create a Portfolio for pre-primary language teacher education, which is one of the goals of the ECML 2012–2015 programmes (www.ecml.at). The programme itself is called ‘Promoting inclusive, plurilingual and intercultural education’, which probably best encapsulates the objectives of an early start.

A lot of these research findings have found their realization in theoretical guidelines and methodological guidebooks for teaching young learners (e.g. Pinter, 2006; Szpotowicz & Szulc-Kurpaska, 2009; Moon, 2000; Cameron, 2001), yet they usually concern teaching languages to primary school learners. Whilst many methodological procedures can be applied to younger, i.e. pre-school learners, further theorisation as to effective methods and classroom procedures, as well as further research into the possible outcomes of early FLL, should be conducted and models of good practice provided.

As regards research following the report prepared by Edelenbos, Johnstone and Kubanek (2006), it seems to focus on the same guidelines as indicated in their report. This is mainly to be found in three edited books of studies on early foreign language learning (Nikolov et al., 2007; Nikolov 2009a, 2009b; Philp, Oliver & Mackey, 2008). The key current directions in research on young FL learners are therefore:

- **Studies of the provision, and issues such as starting age, intensive programmes, continuity from primary to secondary education, the professional needs of teachers, computer-assisted learning, and new national initiatives;**
- **Studies of learners’ progression and learning processes (teaching language skills and learning strategies, self-assessment);**
- **Studies of attitudes, motivation and other affective factors (gender, socio-economic status);**
- **Assessment studies (e.g. national assessments, assessment of literacy skills);** and
- **Studies of language awareness and intercultural learning (Edelenbos, Johnstone & Kubanek, 2006:43).**

Yet, it should be borne in mind that some of the pedagogical guidelines as
well as research options may not be plausible in relation to the teaching of very young learners, i.e. those below the age of 6, such as the call for self-assessment and use of strategies, due to the developmental limitations of such young children, as such young children are still in the ‘pre-operational stage’, as identified by Piaget (Schaffer, 2006). Therefore certain teaching techniques and classroom practices, and henceforth research opportunities, used in teaching young learners may not apply to the teaching of very young learners.

This, however, does not concern larger societal and institutional factors, such as catering for the provision of teacher education. These are often the subject of closer scrutiny and research following the Edelenbos, Johnstone and Kubanek (2006) report. For example, Mattheoudakis and Alexiou (2009) focused on the impact of parental SES as a discriminating factor in educational opportunity already at pre-primary level. They conducted a comparative study of ways and forms of very early instruction held in private and public kindergartens in two distinct parts of the city Thessalonica: one richer and one poorer (as described by the SES of the inhabitants). They found that children who come from higher SES families (and who live in well-to-do areas) have greater and better L2 learning opportunities, often attending private institutions and enjoying a higher frequency of L2 classes, better qualified teachers, access to additional teaching materials, and an overall earlier age of starting L2 instruction, which accounts for the overall longer period of L2 study. It was also observed that higher SES families passed on to their children certain attitudes, preferences and behaviours, such as openness towards other cultures and languages, which are not taught at school (i.e. a form of social and cultural capital). Therefore the differences in foreign language learning opportunity can become apparent very early. This revealing study is the first one to strongly indicate that differences in educational opportunities (and eventually outcomes) start very early, and foreign language learning is not an exception. It is thus the role of educational policy to take measures which would prevent or at least delay the negative impact of coming from low SES families on young and very young children’s educational achievements.

Pre-primary education also focuses on the role of the teacher’s linguistic skills and his capacity to skillfully conduct meaningful interaction in class. It is obvious that in the very young learner’s classroom it is the teacher who occupies the central role in initiating and sustaining interaction; he/she is also the major source of L2 input. Therefore educational discourse in the young learners’ classroom is often a focus of research. For example Oliver, Philp and Mackey (2008) investigated the impact of teacher guidance on subsequent task performance in four instances: giving instructions to a task without an example, giving
instructions to a task with examples, monitoring a pupils’ task in progress and providing feedback to the task to groups of children of 5 to 7 and 11 to 12 years old. The results of this study showed the beneficial impact of types of guidance and monitoring on subsequent task performance, and task monitoring turned out to be most beneficial to the task. This was probably caused by the fact that while monitoring the task the teacher has a chance to reformulate his instructions and ask and answer additional questions. Needless to say, in this way he/she provides additional L2 input, which older children were able to utilise particularly effectively as they are more cognitively mature to receive, notice and utilise language addressed to them. Nevertheless, the study points to the central position of the teacher in interactive tasks and the necessity of monitoring child tasks involving pair-work.

Following the Edelenbos, Johnstone and Kubanek (2006) pedagogical guidelines, other studies have demonstrated instances of ‘good practice’ at pre-primary level. For example, Jalkanen (2009) describes an immersion kindergarten in Kuopio, Finland, where English is the major language of instruction, as well as of play to encourage the fostering of social skills. The kindergarten serves all the same ‘care’ functions as other Finnish institutions, but with the language teaching component as an additional benefit. Therefore in each group it employs two functionally bilingual teachers – one who can speak sometimes in Finnish to comfort children when in need, and the other who never speaks Finnish, which motivates children to speak English to them. This shows that whilst all care is mainly conducted in English, Finnish is occasionally allowed in instruction and as a means of communication among the children themselves. The teaching of L2 English comprised both explicit instruction from the teacher by means of typical techniques, such as songs, drama, using pictures to illustrate meaning etc., as well as small group activities at play stations with an adult. The beneficial impact of children’s early L2 immersion was confirmed in the final kindergarten leaving assessment, by means of a specially developed test, KATE. This instance shows that the amount of exposure and working in small groups with the teacher are key factors contributing to successful early FL instruction.

Other examples of good practice in teaching very young learners call for greater participation of child learners in communicative/task-based activities. A case in point is the intervention described by Griva and Sivropolou (2009) in an English language course in a Greek kindergarten. There successful FL acquisition was demonstrated to take place thanks to role-playing and interaction in small groups on the basis of topics connected with regular kindergarten instruction. This active involvement of young learners in L2 activities, which
demanded producing output, resulted in the successful development of oral skills and better vocabulary retention.

Other examples of 'good practice' are motivated by the search for innovative ways of teaching, such as by means of IT. A noteworthy example in this case is the SHAIEX (Hypermedia adaptive systems for Foreign Language Learning on the Linux Operating System) active project carried out in Spain at the University of Extremadura (Cumbreno Espada et al., 2006). In this project, children between the ages of three and six were taught English (as L2) and Spanish (as L1) by means of IT, most notably adaptive hypermedia systems, which would provide for additional language input. It was assumed that very young learners can profit from computer technology by obtaining additional sources of input. The designed activities included interactive multimedia tasks, computerised projects, digital resources, and hypermedia. The project was conducted in six steps, which involved learner needs analysis, the development of a series of lessons, analysing the learner profile so as to suit the activities, the learners' interests and capacities, the description of the adapted interface, the comparison of the school systems and the final evaluation of the project. As for the effectiveness of the project, the major finding revealed that the activities enhanced children's receptiveness if the task was accompanied by an interactive mascot. Generally, the authors reported positive attitude in the learners, however difficulties with tailoring content and navigation were also recognized. The project also provided vital feedback as to the future application of online materials for children. For example it was found that children value colour as the most important feature of the activities, which appeared to be even more important than their interactivity. Projects like this are original initiatives and can serve as functional models for other pedagogical initiatives on a more local scale. While for the time being, initiatives and studies focused on very young learners are few and far between, it can be boldly speculated that these will flourish in the near future as more and more parents seek such very early instruction for their children.

3.3.2. Polish studies on an ‘early start’ in a FL

Polish studies on child foreign language learning have mainly focused on lower primary learners (cf. Andrzejewska, 2010 for a review) and have often been conducted in the experimental design with a view to identifying effective teaching methods, to be recommended for further implementation into regular teaching programmes and syllabuses. Most notably they have called for the use of narratives for passive reception and contextualization of language (Gładysz, 2007), focused on teaching vocabulary in contextualized tasks, which enhances
vocabulary retention and recall (Szpotowicz, 2008; Zawodniak, 2005), implementation of learner strategy training at lower primary level, which enhances learning results (Szulc-Kurpaska, 2001), integration of language teaching with other subjects, especially music and arts (Pamuła, 2003), transfer of L1 (Polish) reading strategies into teaching reading in L2 (German) (Wieszczeczyńska, 2007), the use of music and songs in FL acquisition (Siek-Piskozub & Wach, 2006). A few studies have focused on affective aspects of learning a foreign language, e.g. children’s learning of tolerance and response to the Other (Chromiec, 2004; Jaroszewska, 2007).

These studies have mainly been conducted prior to the obligatory introduction of FLL at lower primary level, i.e. from age seven to nine, thus it can be regarded that they lay the foundation for future policy implementation as well as curriculum for foreign language teaching at the lower primary level (cf. www.reformaprogramowa.men.gov.pl).

An interesting study of how European guidelines are carried out in the Polish context was conducted by Stec (2010). Her major claim is that stages and procedures used in syllabus implementation along with teacher competences contribute to successful language acquisition. Syllabus is a key teaching tool. She has evaluated different teaching syllabuses used at lower primary level at three different stages: their design, implementation and evaluation. The lessons conducted on the basis of the curriculum were observed and evaluated by both internal and external evaluators. In conclusion to the study the author argues that an optimal syllabus is as yet still to be developed, considering different teaching situations. Criteria for syllabus design in different teaching situations should be the objective of teacher training courses as well as of further re-formulation and investigation at local and national levels.

As regards pre-primary instructed learners, little research has been done in that area both in Poland and globally. My own study (Rokita, 2006, 2007) seems to be a pioneering one in that area. The study was a psycholinguistic inquiry into the amount and nature of lexical acquisition of infant learners in a formal setting. More specifically it aimed to diagnose how much lexis two- to four-year-old learners can acquire from instruction and whether it leads to the acquisition of structure which could thus account for linguistic creativity and the activation of LAD. The major conclusion of the study was that older children learnt L2 faster than younger ones, and yet none of them entered the stage of linguistic creativity, which could mark true acquisition and not more conscious learning, which conformed to other findings on the impact of age factor in the formal setting.

Rokoszewska (2011) compared several teaching methods used for teaching young learners. One of the groups studied were six-year-old children (pre-school
children at the time) learning with the Helen Doron method, and who served as an experimental group at the same time. The group used brain jogs (activities aimed at fostering the growth of neurological connections) and obtained additional language input through listening to the classroom CD on a daily basis. On comparing the achievement scores of the children learning with the HD course and those in the public kindergarten/school, she found the HD learners to be more successful and to show faster progress; however, she admits herself that these benefits may not be solely due to the method itself, but to such elements of instruction as increased exposure to L2 (listening to CDs), better revision of the teaching material, and smaller groups. Had these conditions been secured in public teaching, the learners would probably have made similar progress.

In another study, Raulinajtys (2011) focused on the function of the puppet in the very young learner classroom in establishing an English-only policy. By accumulating excerpts of classroom discourse she demonstrated that the puppet is a vital participant of educational discourse as it prompts children to longer and more consistent use of L2 than sole teacher talk. The puppet was able to stimulate more authentic and communicative L2 use in the classroom which is otherwise based on repetition and reproduction of the material. Henceforth, it is suggested that pedagogical practice and research should aim to create more communicative language use in the classroom by, for example, setting more task-based activities in smaller groups interacting with each other, yet still under the supervision of the teacher. This solution is already successfully adopted in second language classrooms, and it seems worth implementing it also in foreign language instruction.

Summary

The goal of this chapter was to outline the potential benefits as well as plausible results of very early L2 acquisition, at the same time emphasizing the key distinction that should be made between instructional (formal) and naturalistic contexts. From the discussion on the role of age factor in the process, and most notably the relevance of the Critical Period Hypothesis, it should be concluded that any potential benefits of mere exposure to a second language can only take place in a naturalistic setting, where a huge amount of L2 input, and the communicative desire are the key factors enhancing fast bilingual acquisition. By the same token, it should be recognized that any potential benefits of early bilingual growth are limited to naturalistic bilinguals and can operate only to a limited extent in instructed learners, mainly to those who have enormous amounts of exposure to L2 as in bilingual schools.
As DeKeyser and Larson-Hall (2005) observed, the goals of early second/foreign language learning should be reformulated. Since the same conditions, i.e. a large amount of L2 exposure, cannot be created in a formal classroom, where the amount of instruction is usually limited to a few times per week, rather than struggling for the impossible, i.e. imitating naturalistic learning situations, foreign language instruction should focus on maximising learning outcomes, by enhancing learning conditions (increasing the frequency of instruction, smaller group sizes), by using activating and communicative teaching methods, maximising L2 exposure also in out-of-pre-school contexts as well as investing in pre-service and in-service pre-school teacher education. The task for the various stakeholders involved in early and very early L2 instruction, primarily the children’s parents, teachers and heads of educational institutions, and in the wider context, people responsible for educational policy such as the Ministry of Education, is to help implement the pedagogical principles which ensure high quality teaching and learning practice.
Rationale for the research project and research design

4.1. Background to the study

Why study aspirations and educational aspirations in particular? In seeking an answer to this question, it should be recognized that in democratic societies, the desires and motives of the population can incentivise governments to propose and pass bills, laws and regulations. Integrative or instrumental motives and desires to learn foreign languages can also impact the formulation of language education policy (cf. Ager, 2001).

As shown in Chapter 2, aspirations of individuals change in response to the social and political realities in which they live; they often reflect perceived barriers and/or opportunities. Obviously in the Polish context a key event was the fall of communism in 1989, which opened borders, and provided passports to travel and see the world. Secondly, it became a new fertile market for foreign investors who desperately sought partners with at least an intermediate level of foreign language knowledge. Thus at that time, knowledge of foreign languages was perceived to be a tool to increase career opportunities and overall life success. Those who knew western foreign languages, and there were far and few between, made astonishingly fast careers in business, irrespective of lack of content knowledge, which was learnt later.

Fifteen years later, on 1 May 2004, Poland became a member of the European Union. This step provided another incentive shaping individual aspirations. Being a member of a multilingual global community created even more opportunities to participate in the global economy, and yet, foreign language knowledge was no longer seen as a unique gift/privilege, but as a necessity. If one wants to function effectively in multilingual Europe, s/he has to possess plurilingual and intercultural competences.
An ‘early start’ in a foreign language is one of the official directions of European language education policy. Poland, being a member of the EU, aims to follow and implement the recommendations of the EU policy including the recommendations for an ‘early start’. The starting age of school instruction was lowered to the age of six by means of an educational reform in 2009, which at the same time introduced obligatory foreign language instruction. Thus, since the act all children have the chance to start learning a foreign language from the age of six/seven, which places Poland among those EU countries with the lowest starting age of obligatory FL instruction (Enever, 2009b).

At this point it should be mentioned that the introduction of L2 instruction at such an early age was also dictated by parental educational aspirations, as prior to the reform a foreign language was already taught to lower primary learners as an extracurricular subject, introduced usually as a result of parental demand, notwithstanding the European guidelines. Enever (2007) has referred to this phenomenon as parentocracy, and noted that Poland was the only European country in which parental demands influenced language policy planning. In addition, under parental pressure and following parental preferences, the Polish Prime Minister Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz in his exposé (2005 in Enever, 2007) acknowledged that the first language to be taught should be English as it is the world’s global language. Thus it seems the current reform and language policy are the result of the impact of three forces: globalization, Europeanisation and parentocracy (Enever, 2007:219).

Other important aspects of the educational reform in reference to foreign language learning include the introduction of a second foreign language at lower secondary school level (i.e. from the age of 12–13), and the introduction of obligatory school-leaving exams after each educational level, i.e. after primary, lower secondary and upper secondary levels. These decisions place the position of languages in the curriculum on an equal footing with maths and the Polish language. Clearly, these measures indicate that foreign language education is one of the major objectives of the educational reform. Its noteworthy advantage and achievement is that every child is given a chance to learn two foreign languages; thus foreign language knowledge (or rather its lack) will be prevented from becoming a discriminating factor or a means of social exclusion.

And yet, despite these advantageous school learning opportunities, many parents still opt for an even ‘earlier start’ in a foreign language by enrolling their children in fee-paying L2 instruction at kindergarten age, probably hoping to secure their children an educational advantage in that respect. At least one foreign language is offered for instruction in nearly every kindergarten, either as a subject of regular pre-school instruction (usually in private fee-paying kin-
dergarten) or as an additional early afternoon class (in public kindergartens). Foreign language courses are also often offered in nurseries, i.e. to two-year-old children. Needless to say, numerous ‘language schools’ offer afternoon classes to young and very young children, apparently finding a market niche, caused by parental demand. Whilst a few years ago the chain of Helen Doron schools was the first and only type of institution offering L2 learning to such young children, nowadays, nearly every educational-cultural institution has a course for kindergarten children, e.g. in Cracow children can learn German (at the Austrian Consulate), French (at the French Institute), Italian (at the Italian Institute, *Instituto Italiano*), Spanish (at private language schools), and Chinese (at the Confucius Institute). This educational offering must clearly have arisen in response to the demand of parents through the expression of their educational aspirations for their children.

The primary subject of the current study is foreign language learning at pre-primary level, i.e. by very young learners. The issue is investigated from the following perspectives: from the perspective of parents, i.e. their educational aspirations in reference to their children and from the perspective of the institutional provision that is given to ensure good quality teaching. This perspective entails the collation of information from kindergarten head teachers, who are the key decision makers in their institutions as they decide on such issues as the programme of instruction, choice of languages on offer etc. and from FL teachers of very young learners, who have the most immediate impact on learning outcomes and learner motivation.

The findings of the research may have critical meaning for the planning of future language policy in Poland. One of the possible consequences would be to make foreign language instruction at kindergarten obligatory and thus inclusive for all children; this change could be introduced at least for the obligatory preparatory kindergarten year for five-year-old children. This way all children would have a chance to learn a foreign language more or less to a similar degree, and thus children who at the moment do not have such instruction, would not feel disadvantaged at the onset of schooling. Needless to say, this would also do away with the problem of heterogeneity at primary level (children with varied language knowledge) or lack of continuity (children who have learnt the language before usually have to start from scratch). Secondly, obligatory foreign language instruction at kindergarten level would make the various authorities (especially public kindergarten head teachers, YL teacher training institutions) more responsible for the quality of such instruction. Indeed, it is suggested in the *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe* (Beacco & Byram, 2003, 2007:75) that any decisions regarding language education poli-
cy should first take into account the opinions of people connected with the ‘educational establishment’, such as head teachers, teachers and parents, if they have a say in educational decisions.

As argued in chapter three, the objective of early foreign language instruction is not so much to make the child achieve native-like competence in the foreign language, either now or in the future, but rather to arouse the child’s interest in foreign languages and cultures, and so motivate him/her to learn a foreign language in the future, which is a prerequisite of plurilingual attainment. By adulthood the pupil should be willing to learn and able to communicate in a few foreign languages, although to a varied degree. As Lewowicki (1987) indicated, an individual’s aspirations are determined by personality, environmental and pedagogical influences. While the impact of the family (as the closest environment of the child) on the rise of children’s aspirations is widely recognized (cf. Ch. 2), educational institutions should also arouse and direct children’s aspirations towards learning foreign languages and becoming familiar with other cultures. In other words, the environmental and pedagogical milieu should comprise both family and kindergarten working in tandem on the child’s future plurilingual (and intercultural) competence.

This issue has been further developed by Komorowska (2007b) in an article with the revealing sub-title: ‘Motivation as a key factor in promoting language learning’. In this article she states that the motivating activity should be conducted extrinsically by ‘educational institutions of all levels through curriculum design and evaluation procedures, employers through internal regulations, qualification procedures and in-service training requirements’ as well as in the wider educational context by ‘governments and self-governments through their language policy, e.g. regulations and legal acts related to the place of languages in the school curriculum or to the degree of language skills in job descriptions’ (Komorowska, 2007:13).

Whereas intrinsic motivation of individual learners can be additionally elicited by offering appealing forms of out-of-school or extracurricular learning by: the media, external bodies involved in the organization of out-of-school activities, social organizations helping to organize leisure time, schools engaged in the organization of extracurricular activities, teachers providing appealing tasks and activities during language lessons, and publishers producing attractive teaching and learning materials (Komorowska, 2007:15).

For the time being foreign language instruction at kindergarten level is outside the scope of official educational policy. However, the substantial amount of educational activity in this area could incentivise the introduction of regulation. Therefore, it can be argued that provided the goal of early L2 instruction is
first and foremost to motivate the young learner, it should be the educational institutions, i.e. kindergartens, through the provision of efficiently organized L2 classes and extracurricular events, that motivate learners both extrinsically and intrinsically. It is the role of kindergarten head teachers to cater for the proper organization of such instruction (i.e. lesson frequency, length of the lessons, provision of educational resources, classroom space etc.) as they are the major decision makers who are responsible for its introduction and quality. Also as employers of YL teachers of foreign languages they should particularly investigate the linguistic, pedagogical and interactional competences of the teachers.

Parents of young learners can also influence kindergarten instruction by verbalising their needs and expectations. Additionally, they can motivate their children, and thus arouse their aspirations, to learn foreign languages by providing their children with motivating L2 learning materials (books, DVDs, songs, software etc.) and activities (joint games, trips abroad etc.). In reference to Dörnyei’s (2005) model of motivation, it could be claimed that children's L2 knowledge will be an outcome of their parents' view of Ideal L2 Self as well as the L2 Learning Experience they provide.

If we recognize that knowledge of a particular linguistic form/habit, whether ELF or plurilingualism, is a means of social positioning in global/European society, then it is not surprising that parents want to secure the best educational opportunities by making considerable investments in their children's foreign language education. It remains to be seen what linguistic practices should be particularly cherished, the knowledge of mainly English as a global *lingua franca* or plurilingual development, as mandated under European policy.

### 4.2. Research methods used in the study of aspirations

The study of educational aspirations has a long tradition in Polish pedagogy (cf. Ch. 2). According to Janowski (1977:53), research on aspirations can take various forms depending on the position of an individual in the process of aspiration formation. The research can be either diagnostic (thus describing a point in time, such as the current level of aspirations with the possible outlook for the future development of aspirations) or longitudinal, aimed at observing the development of aspirations or verification of aspirations with actual behaviour. In this respect, the current research is a diagnostic study aiming to observe, firstly, what aspirations parents have for their very young children's achievements in reference to foreign language learning, and secondly, to investigate what measures the parents take/plan to take to ensure the realization of these aspirations.
According to Sikorski (2005:69), the most common and appropriate research tools for such research are diagnostic surveys (questionnaires, oral interviews) and case studies. The survey method used in the study of aspirations enables the investigation of social phenomena and forces, which are dispersed in society, and yet are conducive to the rise of aspirations, whereas case studies are analyses of individuals’ lives aimed at obtaining a diagnosis, and subsequent treatment (Sikorski, 2005:69). Other data collection methods include observation, analysis of school documents (e.g. grades obtained) recording pupils’ achievements.

Among the advantages of using the survey method, Brown (2001:75) enumerates low cost and quick results, guaranteed anonymity, control of bias, access to respondents over a large geographical area and standardization of the tool. Also, it is convenient for the respondents as they can respond in their own time. However, using questionnaires also has severe drawbacks, such as low return rate, often incomplete answers and lack of control over the environment or order of completion. It is also too impersonal, and since it inhibits other observations or comments, it is rather artificial and provides a rather restricted amount of data (Brown, 2001:75).

By contrast, a supplementary method of obtaining survey data is the oral interview. This is a form of qualitative research, which can ensure a much higher return rate, and fewer incomplete answers. It allows control over the order that questions are answered and the environment. It is relatively flexible, personal, allows other observations to be made, and therefore is rich in data. But for this reason it is also very time consuming and expensive, and not very practical, as interviews cannot easily be conducted in geographically distant locations. Since this research is conducted in person, it is never anonymous, and therefore can result in some subconscious bias (Brown, 2001:75).

Qualitative interviews have become increasingly popular in recent years in applied linguistics, particularly in research that aims to carry out inquiry through case studies or ethnographic, narrative, (auto)-biographical frameworks (Talmy, 2010), which is the major direction of poststructuralist research. Talmy (2010:131) describes interviews as a research instrument as ‘a resource for investigating truths, facts, experience, beliefs, attitudes, and/or feelings of respondents. Language tends to be conceptualized in referential terms, as a neutral medium that reflects or corresponds to objective or subjective reality’ in contrast to research interviews as social practice, which aim to focus not only on the content of the interviews but also on the process of negotiation of meaning in the interviews, and establishing relationships between the two interlocutors.
Whilst in general, there is common agreement among applied linguists that in the collection of empirical data both qualitative and quantitative tools should be used, strong criticism is directed towards interviews for they take research participants ‘at their word’, i.e. ‘they offer presentation of data plus content analysis but no problematisation of the data themselves or the respective roles of the interviewers or interviewees’ (Block, 2000:757). This standpoint assumes that not merely the content but also the very process of interviewing should go under examination. Further Richards (2009) points out that in order to be effective, the results of the interview research should not be limited to a few line summaries, but should provide extensive methodological data. Also, in order to prevent any kind of bias, the researcher should not make any prior assumptions, should not form any hypotheses, but take the obtained facts at face value (Brown, 2001).

Another qualitative method of data analysis, the case study, is defined as ‘intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit. Case studies are particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic and rely heavily on inductive reasoning in handling multiple data sources’ (Merriam, 1988:16).

Duff (2008) points out that with the same subjects a few potential case studies can be conducted. The nature of the case study depends on the perspective a researcher wants to adopt, e.g. one may only be interested in the lexical and syntactic aspects of L2 performance. Another current trend in L2 case study research, influenced by postmodernism, postructuralism and critical theory (e.g. Norton, 2000; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000) is to look beyond the linguistic aspects of the learner’s performance and focus more on the personal and contextual features of the interviewee, such as the social and political situation under which the learner decides to take up learning a language, the investments s/he makes in that language etc.

In this vein, Yin (2003:13) provides a more comprehensive definition of the case study, which in his view ‘investigates the contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident’. In consequence, the case study inquiry has to deal with many more sources of information than just quantitative results expressed in data points (i.e. the demand for triangulation of data) and in its analysis has to relate findings to prior theoretical developments and propositions. Consequently, all of these assumptions and suggestions have been incorporated into the current research project.
4.3. The research design

The theoretical part of the book presented the background for the following research design. In chapter one it was indicated that ‘an early start’ is one of the priorities of the official European language education policy, and that European recommendations should be taken into account in planning further language education policy in Poland. Thus socio-pedagogical issues presented in the following chapters as well as in the empirical study should be of relevance and importance to key decision makers in the education system at local and national levels. Chapter two presented theoretical underpinnings on the rise of educational aspirations, their environmental determinants, and their relevance to child educational success. It is found that high educational achievement of a child is an outcome of high educational aspirations of his/her parents and parental involvement in educational activities. It was also established that environmental distal factors, such as family’ SES, parent education level, can be correlates of high educational aspirations. These facts are relevant for the first phase of the research project, which aims to identify aspirations of parents of very young learners of a FL. It will be important to find out what kind of aspirations they hold for their child’s foreign language achievement and how they aim to realize them. Finally, the third chapter aimed to clarify the pedagogical principles and possible outcomes of very early FLL, at the same time dispelling the myth, that just an early age of starting a FL instruction guarantees its native-like competence in the future. This overview of data serves as background to the study of FL teachers of young learners. It is aimed to find out what their beliefs as well as teaching practices are.

4.3.1. The purpose

The purpose of the empirical research which originates from the theoretical discussion is threefold:

- To inquire about the types of parental aspirations and expectations in reference to their children’s FL outcomes and the ways of support given to ensure the realization of aspirations (Phase 1),
- To inquire what measures head teachers of kindergartens, as key decision makers take to ensure that FL education in their institutions, although still beyond policy regulations, is plurilingual, intercultural and inclusive (Phase 2),
- To inquire what beliefs about possible outcomes FL teachers of very young learners hold and what measures they take to ensure that FLL is ‘efficient and sustainable’ (Phase 3).
The research project is aimed at describing best practice in foreign language teaching to pre-primary learners, therefore it is exploratory/descriptive in nature. No previous hypotheses have been formed but rather exploratory research questions. Each group of subjects has been studied in reference to the different research questions presented below.

In the first phase of the project (P1) very YL parents were surveyed on their educational aspirations. More precisely it was aimed to find answers to the following research questions:

1) What is the profile of children enrolled into very early FL instruction (educational and geographical background) and of their parents?
2) What are the parental reasons for child enrollment in very early FL instruction, and for the choice of a particular foreign language?
3) Is there a correlation between parental level of current expectations for their children’s FL achievement and such independent variables as: their level of education, age, the number of children in the family, the order of child birth in the family, child gender, place of residence (city vs. village), socio-economic status of the family (self-perceived), length of learning a FL, type of kindergarten attended (private vs. public)?
4) Is there a correlation between parental level of (long-term) aspirations for their children’s FL achievement and such independent variables as: their level of education, age, the number of children in the family, the order of child birth in the family, child gender, place of residence (city vs. village), socio-economic status of the family (self-perceived), length of learning a FL, type of kindergarten attended (private vs. public)?
5) In what ways do parents aim to realize their aspirations by supporting their children in very early FLL?
6) How does the amount of parental involvement correlate with such variables as: parental level of expectations, parental level of aspirations, parental level of education, the number of children in the family, the order of child birth in the family, child gender, socio-economic status of the family (self-perceived), parents own use of FLs?

Another group of respondents were kindergarten head teachers (Phase 2). Their opinions of the purpose and effectiveness of early L2 instruction as well as its organization in their institutions were asked by means of the developed survey (cf. App. 3). They were surveyed in order to find answers to the following research questions:

1) How does the organization of L2 instruction differ in public/private, city/village kindergartens in terms of length, frequency, fee (inclusiveness), choice of languages, number of children in a group, form of T recruitment?
2) What are the kindergarten head teachers’ reasons for introducing early L2 instruction?

3) What measures do head teachers take to ensure good quality of foreign language teaching and therefore good learning results?

In the third phase of the project (Phase 3) a questionnaire was designed and addressed to kindergarten teachers of foreign languages (cf. App. 4), with the aim of finding answers to the following questions:

1) What is the profile of YL teachers at kindergarten level, in terms of their linguistic and methodological preparation, years of teaching experience, and willingness to teach children?

2) What are the teachers’ beliefs concerning the goals and possible learning outcomes of early L2 instruction according to L2 teachers of young learners?

3) How are the YL teachers’ opinions about possible learning outcomes related to such independent variables as their level of education, age, and length of teaching experience to YLs?

4) What actions do YL teachers take to ensure good quality of foreign language teaching in terms of organizing instruction and motivating young learners?

4.3.2. Method

4.3.2.1. Participants

The focus of the current research project are very young, i.e. pre-primary foreign language learners (3–6 years old), whose process of FLL is investigated from three different perspectives and thus from three groups of respondents who can influence the process, namely: kindergarten head teachers, kindergarten teachers of foreign languages, and parents of kindergarten children.

These three groups of respondents have been addressed as sources of data collection with a view to identifying means and strategies of arousing children’s interest and future aspirations towards foreign language learning. It is assumed that while parents project their educational aspirations onto their children by enrolling them in foreign language instruction, the aspirations in children can develop and flourish only if adequately supported by agents of educational contexts, who decide on its structure and characteristics.

In the first phase of the project 335 parents of very young learners were surveyed. Within this number 259 children learnt a FL in a public kindergarten and 76 children learnt a FL in a private kindergarten. The children derived
from various family backgrounds as depicted by parental level of education, parental age, place of living, SES. A more detailed profile of parents surveyed is provided in section 5.1.1. as identification of parents most willing to invest in their children’s education, and thus describing their profile was one of the goals of the current study. Subsequently, 15 parents (13 mothers and 2 fathers) were interviewed for closer scrutiny of parental aspirations. On their basis 5 children and their learning conditions were presented as case studies.

In the second phase of the project 63 kindergarten headmasters were surveyed. 49 of them headed public kindergartens and 14 private kindergartens. 49 kindergartens were located in the city and 14 in the villages (although the numbers are the same as for the previous variable, they do not refer to the same kindergartens).

In the third phase of the project 90 FL teachers of very young learners took part, of whom 23 worked in private kindergartens and 67 worked in public kindergartens. Also 77 teachers of the total number worked in the city and 13 of them worked in villages. A more detailed profile of a FL teacher of young learners can be found in section 5.4.1. as its identification, i.e. finding out who teaches foreign languages to young learners was also one of the goals of the study.

Description of the parents interviewed

The subjects for the interview were mainly recruited from those parents who indicated their consent to participate in an interview in the written survey. Therefore some self-selection of the subjects took place, which is a limitation of the study. It was observed that most of the subjects who volunteered to participate in the interview were generally well-educated and professionally successful people, who were willing to share their beliefs, and seemed self-confident enough to do so. These were typically individuals possessing an awareness of the value of education (including language education). As already stated, investigating human aspirations is a sensitive subject, thus many people are unwilling to reveal personal information, partly for fear of judgment. Alternatively it is also possible, that some individuals do not actively consider their life pursuits or aspirations, and are therefore less able to express their opinions on the subject. As shown in Chapter 2, aspirations are typical of individuals who are self-confident on the one hand (have high self-concept) and have a tendency for self-reflection.

Thus the SES of the persons interviewed seems to be a critical differentiating factor in the formation of parental aspirations. The SES of the family is mainly judged by the parents’ occupations (and consequently education; FL know-
ledge), which was mainly judged according to the scales proposed by Domański, Sawiński and Słomczyński (2007), which in turn had been based on EGP scales (Erikson, Goldthorpe & Portocarero, 1979). They identify the following classes in postmodern society (in the order of status rank): 1) intelligentsia, top corporate management, large-scale businessman, referred to as service class, 2) specialists in non-manual jobs of middle level (referred to as middle service), 3) office clerks, 4) other workers employed in sales and services (e.g. salespersons, post office assistants, receptionists etc.), 5) firm owners employing others, 6) self-employed owners, 7) supervisory manual workers, 8) skilled workers, 9) unqualified manual workers, 10) rural workers, 11) farm owners.

A profile of the subjects interviewed is shown below in Table 4.1. Parents 1–9 have been classified as of higher SES, and parents 10–15 as lower SES on the basis of Parental Occupation according to the ERP scales (the father’s occupation was the deciding factor in cases of doubt) and data on the living standards (possession of a flat) obtained in the questionnaire.

An asterisk (*) denotes which parent was actually interviewed (mother or father). Altogether 13 mothers and 2 fathers were interviewed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent number</th>
<th>Child name and age</th>
<th>Mother’s occupation</th>
<th>Mother’s FL knowledge</th>
<th>Father’s occupation</th>
<th>Father’s FL knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ula (6)</td>
<td>*Engineer</td>
<td>English (fluent)</td>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>English (basic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Jaś (6) + 2 younger siblings</td>
<td>Pedagogue</td>
<td>Lithuanian (basic)</td>
<td>*Academic (Geography)</td>
<td>Lithuanian, English, Latvian, Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mikołaj (6)</td>
<td>*Academic</td>
<td>English, French</td>
<td>IT specialist</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Kacper (5) + a younger brother</td>
<td>*Financial consultant</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Bank manager</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Hania (4)</td>
<td>*Academic</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>IT specialist</td>
<td>English (fluent), German</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Adam (6)</td>
<td>*Academic</td>
<td>English (fluent)</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>English (fluent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Wiktor (6) + older sister Ula (8)</td>
<td>*Sales manager</td>
<td>Arabic, English, Italian</td>
<td>Automotive systems engineer/sales manager</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Emily (4) + younger brother</td>
<td>*Accountant</td>
<td>Slovak, English</td>
<td>Private firm owner (carpentry)</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ola (4) + younger sister</td>
<td>Psychologist</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>*Academic</td>
<td>French, German, English (all fluent)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3.2.2. Instruments

In order to find answers to these questions the survey questionnaire (cf. App. 1) was designed, which was aimed at eliciting the desired data. The survey consisted of four parts. Part One contained demographic information about the child (sex, order of birth in the family as well as the number of children in the family) and the organization of language instruction the child attends (length and frequency of classes). Part Two referred to parental motives for enrolling their children in early L2 instruction (RQ 2), motives for a particular language choice (RQ 2), aspirations for the child’s achievement at present and in the future and ways of supporting their children’s L2 learning (RQ 1, 3, 5). Part Three asked about the parents’ broader educational/vocational aspirations for the child’s future. Part Four aimed to elicit demographic data about the family and its SES (RQ 4, 6). Questions referring to parental aspirations and expectations (Q 4 and 5, Part 2, App. 1) have been constructed on the basis of the author’s own expertise and experience in teaching very young learners as well as Council of Europe documents describing the benefits of early FLL (cf. Komorowska, 1998, 2007).

The majority of question types in the survey were multiple-choice or cloze type questions, except for questions 4 and 5 in Part 2, which were the Likert-type 5 point questions, asking for the degree of agreement with the statement offered.

The most crucial aspect for the subsequent analysis was to operationalise the high level of aspiration, which was to be subsequently correlated with the indicated independent variables, expectations, parental involvement and the socio-economic status (SES) of parents. These have been operationalised, in the following way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Languages</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Language(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mateusz (3,5) + younger brother</td>
<td><em>Housewife</em></td>
<td>English, German</td>
<td>IT Specialist</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Olivier (5)</td>
<td><em>English teacher</em></td>
<td>English, Russian (basic)</td>
<td>Private firm owner (construction)</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Julia (5) + Natalia (5)</td>
<td><em>Hotel receptionist</em></td>
<td>English (communicative)</td>
<td>Fireman</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Victoria (4,5)</td>
<td><em>Marketing specialist</em></td>
<td>English (basic)</td>
<td>Security guard</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Tom (6) + Zosia (4)</td>
<td><em>Office worker</em></td>
<td>English (intermediate)</td>
<td>Office worker</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Jaś (4)</td>
<td><em>Graduate of Polish philology, freelancer, unemployed</em></td>
<td>French, Russian, English (basic)</td>
<td>Computer graphics designer</td>
<td>English (basic)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the variable ‘aspirations’ refers to idealistic hopes or goals that parents form regarding their child future attainment (Holloway & Yamamoto, 2008). Thus the measure of ‘high educational aspirations’ has been calculated as a summative score of selected items in Q 5, Part 2 (item 2, 3, 4, 7 (reversed), 8, 9, 11) of the questionnaire for parents (App. 1).

the variable ‘parental involvement’ is referred to as involving parents in home-based learning (Epstein, 1987) which constitutes only one way of parental involvement in children’s education; the measure of ‘parental involvement’ is a summative score (0–1) of all positions from Q 6 and 7, Part 2 (App. 1). The higher the score, the more techniques are applied by parents in supporting their children’s FL learning (only the quantity of techniques is measured here, not their frequency).

the variable ‘parental expectations refers to current parental judgements or beliefs about possible child achievements; the measure of ‘expectations’ (as opposed to long-term aspirations) is a summative score of items in Q 4, Part 2 (excluding item 13 ‘I have no expectations’) (App. 1).

the measure of ‘level of socio-economic status’ is referred to as a self-perceived feature measured on a 5-point scale in Q 12, Part 4 (App. 1).

Qualitative interview

To elicit more in-depth information about parental investments in the child’s future, qualitative interviews were conducted with volunteering parents, for which more detailed questions were designed (cf. App. 2). The aim of the interview was to get a deeper insight into the nature of parental aspirations by further investigating such issues as the family’s perception of early FL education as an investment in the child’s future (Qs 1–3), imagined child identity (Q 4), educational plans in reference to the child (Qs 5–6), parental involvement in FLL now and in the future (Qs 7–10), cultural capital as manifested by free time activities (Qs 11–14) and parental educational and social background (in order to investigate if there is an intergenerational transfer of linguistic and cultural/educational capital, Qs 15–17). It should be noted that almost all of these aspects (except for the issue of parental involvement) were not asked for in the survey.

The questionnaire for kindergarten head teachers consists of 3 parts. The first asks for factual data about the institution and organization of foreign language instruction (length of classes, frequency, form of teacher recruitment). The second part asks for motives for the introduction of early foreign instruction in general (Q 1, Part 2), and of particular language(s) in general (Qs 2–3). The
following questions (4–6) ask about elements/techniques which enhance the effectiveness of early FLL and are present in their institution, as well as other ways of motivating YLs to foreign language learning. Question 9 concerns the teacher and their desired qualities. The last, third part, requests some demographic data from the respondent (age, knowledge of foreign languages, years of teaching/managerial experience).

The questionnaire for FL teachers of very young learners consists of 3 parts. The first asks for factual data about the institution in which the teacher teaches and the third about the teacher himself (i.e. age, qualifications, teaching experience, willingness to teach in the future). The second part asks the teachers’ opinions about the choice of a language for study, goals of early FLL in general (Q 1) as well as possible outcomes (Q 2). Question four aims to identify the most important elements of effective early L2 instruction on which the teacher can have an impact as well as methods of motivating YLs to learn foreign languages (Qs 3, 4, 6), with an additional query, which of these he actually employs (Q 5).

An important measure operationalised in this questionnaire for later statistical analysis was the scale of teacher beliefs about ‘realistic FLL outcomes’, developed on the basis of the author’s own expertise in the field as well as research findings on Critical Period Hypothesis in instructional settings (cf. Muñoz, 2006; Rokita, 2007). Teacher belief is defined broadly as ‘tacit, often unconsciously held assumptions about students, classrooms, and the academic material to be taught’ (Kagan, 1992:67). The scores for this scale were calculated from the items in Q 2, Part 2 (App. 4) in the following way: the sum of the scores from items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14 plus the sum of the inverse scores in items 6, 7, 8, 11. The minimum level of the scale was 14, and the maximum level was 42. The higher the score, the more realistic is the teacher’s judgement of possible FLL attainment among very young learners. Whereas the lower the score is, the less realistic the judgement. For the calculations the following formulae have been used (so as to avoid reversing the scores):

‘Very early FLL outcomes’ scale = item 1 + item 2 + item 3 + item 4 + item 5 + (4 – item 6) + (4 – item 7) + (4 – item 8) + item 9 + item 10 + (4 – item 11) + item 12 + item 13 + item 14

After piloting the parent questionnaire, the major changes included changing some multiple choice (App. 1, Part 2, Qs. 4–5) questions into Likert-type questions, in which the respondents, rather than choosing the preferred answer, had to express their attitudes to each statement. This change was dictated by the observed difficulty among parents to choose three best answers from an abundant choice of statements. The pilot study among head teachers was con-
ducted in person, which also profited from additional qualitative information on the subjects studied. As a result, two additional questions in part three of the questionnaire, referring to the form of teacher recruitment (direct vs. via an outsourcing firm) and desired qualities in teachers were generated. No changes were made to the questionnaire for the very young learner teachers. In order to obtain a fuller picture, another data collection method was used, i.e. interviews with selected parents, also piloted in spring 2011.

4.3.2.3. Design

In order to obtain a full view of the problem and enhance the credibility and reliability of the study, a triangulation approach, also called mixed-method approach, is used. Brown (2001:228) identifies various types of triangulation: data triangulation (using multiple sources of data collection), investigator triangulation (using multiple researchers to examine the same data), theory triangulation (using multiple theories or points of view to analyse the data), methodological triangulation (using multiple procedures of gathering data), interdisciplinary triangulation (using perspectives from different disciplines to analyse the data), time triangulation (using multiple data-gathering occasions) and location triangulation (using multiple data-gathering sites). Triangulation should not be used as an automatic procedure but should be carefully thought through and planned, as Fielding and Fielding (1986:31 in Brown, 2001:229) point out, ‘the important feature of triangulation is not the simple combination of different kinds of data, but the attempt to relate them so as to counteract the threats to validity identified in each’.

Following this taxonomy, the current study employs the triangulation approach in respect of data; the sources of information are kindergarten head teachers, kindergarten language teachers and parents of kindergarten children. Additionally, in respect of the study of parental aspirations, methodological triangulation is used, as a questionnaire, an oral interview, and a case study are used. Also location triangulation seems to apply here, as the questionnaires were distributed in various types of kindergartens: in the city of Cracow, in small towns in the Malopolska region, as well as in small villages. Finally, there is interdisciplinary triangulation, as the study of aspirations in ELT is a novelty, and the findings are discussed in reference to pedagogy, sociology, and educational/developmental psychology.

The project is of a cross-sectional character, therefore it mainly uses a questionnaire as the major source of data collection, to enable data collection from a vast number of subjects. Three different questionnaires are addressed to parents, kindergarten head teachers and young learner teachers of foreign lan-
guages (App. 1, 3, 4). These were developed by the author and piloted and revised in spring 2011.

In the quantitative part of the parent study the following variables have been identified:

**Dependent variables:**
- Parental expectations (Holloway & Yamamoto, 2008)
- Parental aspirations (Holloway & Yamamoto, 2008)
- Quantity of parental involvement techniques

**Independent variables:**
- Mother’s level of education
- Father’s level of education
- Mother’s age
- Father’s age
- Number of children in the family
- The child’s birth order
- Place of living (city vs. village)
- Self-perceived socio-economic status
- Length of FLL

In the study of kindergarten head teachers the independent variables, which were taken into account in the analysis were the type of institution (private vs. public) and its location (city vs. village). As it turned out that no head teachers of private kindergartens in the rural areas responded to the survey, the analysis was restricted to three groups of institutions: city public, city private and village public ones.

In the survey of FL teachers the dependent variable ‘teacher beliefs’ and teacher practices have been distinguished and the independent variables were also the type of institution (private vs. public) and its location (city vs. village).

### 4.3.2.4. Procedure

The parent questionnaires were distributed via various kindergartens (after obtaining the consent of the head teacher) between October 2011 and February 2012 on the basis of a random sampling method. The selected kindergarten head teachers were first contacted by telephone and asked whether they would like to participate in the research project, i.e. fill in the questionnaire themselves, give them to the language teachers in their institutions and mediate in distributing the surveys to parents. It should be noted that many of the kindergarten head teachers (especially of public kindergartens) refused to participate in the project, first and foremost on the grounds of unwillingness to ask or obtain
cooperation from parents (a negative response was given during the phone call, before even seeing the questionnaire). In that case the following kindergarten on the list was selected.

Finally, the questionnaires were distributed in the following kindergartens in Cracow: public kindergarten number 173, public kindergarten number 178, non-public kindergarten ‘Bajka’, private kindergartens Sternik, Bajkowe Królestwo, Marchewkowe Pole, Smerfy, Maty Dworek, Rainbow, ‘Kolorowe’, Male Tygryski, and two language schools, which offer instruction in kindergartens ‘Tina’ and Proteuss (from Jaworzno). In the first six institutions the questionnaires were distributed in paper form and in the last four they were distributed via the electronic databases of these kindergartens. For this purpose the questionnaire was activated online (by means of the fee-paying service ‘Webankieta’) and was available for two months, i.e. January and February 2012.

As regards the qualitative interviews, they were also conducted in the period from October to February 2012. The respondents were selected from those who agreed to participate and who supplied their contact numbers on the questionnaire. Altogether 15 interviews with selected parents were conducted and recorded, and subsequently partially transcribed (only parents’ opinions, not facts) for subsequent analysis. From those, five subjects were selected for further scrutiny as case studies.

As regards the questionnaires for kindergarten head teachers, they were distributed by post. Altogether 250 questionnaires were sent out to public and private kindergartens in Cracow and the Malopolska (Little Poland) region, accompanied by stamped addressed envelopes and cover letters with a request to fill them in and return them by the end of January 2012.

As regards the questionnaires for language teachers in kindergartens, they were distributed by post (accompanying the surveys for the head teachers), to kindergartens participating in the project as well as to two firms employing YL teachers which offer services to kindergartens.

4.4. Data analyses

The obtained data was subsequently coded and analysed by means of the statistical programme STATISTICA. The following major inferential statistical procedures were used:

In the study of parental aspirations, measured outcomes have an ordinal character, therefore only non-parametric tests have been used. In order to compare two groups of subjects, such as children attending private and public kindergartens, the Mann-Whitney test was used. It is a non-parametric type of
test, equivalent to the student’s t-test. The analysis consists of two steps. Firstly, the scores of the subjects are placed in ranking order, and secondly a U test is conducted in order to verify the statistical significance of the rank differences.

In order to test if there are any correlational relationships between the outcomes, the Spearman’s rank correlation (rho) test was used. In this type of test the scores are put in ranking order and then compared by means of Pearson’s product-moment correlation r (Ferguson & Takane, 2009).

In the study of FL teachers the chi-square analysis was used in order to test if there are any statistically significant differences between the percentile scores of two groups of respondents, such as teachers working in private and public kindergartens.

In the study of kindergarten head teachers it was decided to rely mainly on the descriptive analysis of percentile scores due to the relatively small number of respondents in one of the groups (head teachers of village kindergartens). Hence it was assumed that no statistically significant and reliable scores would be observed.
This chapter presents the findings of the research project. The analysis has been performed in accordance with the research procedures previously described. Descriptive and inferential statistics analysis has been performed where applicable. Since this project has rather an exploratory diagnostic nature, no prior hypotheses have been formed, but only questions posed. Consequently, to describe the phenomenon of very early foreign language acquisition, at times reliance on descriptive statistics is sufficient. It should be noted that all questionnaire questions which required opinions of the respondents allowed more than one answer to be chosen.

5.1. A study of parental educational aspirations in reference to very young FL learners – quantitative data

5.1.1. A profile of a very young FL learner

The first research question called for a profile of a very young language learner in the sample studied which could be regarded as representative of the population of children learning foreign languages at pre-primary level. In total, 335 parents of very young learners were surveyed, of which 63.58% learnt a FL in a public kindergarten in an extracurricular fee-paying class, and 26.87% learnt a FL in a private kindergarten, where FL instruction is included in the total fee. The age profile of the children studied is shown in Figure 5.1. As can be seen one third of the children studied were five-year-olds, which constituted the largest group of subjects, followed by six-, four-, three- and even a few seven-year-olds.

As regards the length of learning a FL, most frequently the subjects indicated a range of one to two years (38.51%). Just over 30% of subjects had learnt
a FL for less than a year. Only a small proportion of subjects had been learning for longer periods of time: three to four years (4.78%), and one child had been learning for more than four years. These figures indicate that the majority of the children studied started FLL at kindergarten age and only a few individuals started FLL in infancy. This suggests that many parents currently have more realistic expectations than e.g. a decade ago in the heyday of private language schools for infants (cf. Rokita, 2007).

**Figure 5.1.** Age profile of the children studied

**Figure 5.2.** Subjects’ length of learning a FL
All the subjects studied (n=335) learnt English as a FL. Of this number 66 children learnt two foreign languages: 54 children learnt L3 French, 8 children learnt L3 German, and 2 children learnt L3 Spanish (in a private course).

The survey also asked where the subjects lived: 68 subjects (20.7%) lived in a village, 86 subjects (26.1%) lived in a small town and 175 (53.2%) lived in the city.

It is also notable that of the subjects studied, 68.96% are first-born (and often the only) children in the family, 26.57% were second-born children, and only a small fraction of the whole sample were third-born. One child was fourth in the family. This indicates the major objects of parental investment. These are much more often the first-born, and often the only children in the family.

In the case of a very young learner the family background is very important as it can provide cognitive and material support in FLL. In the studied sample nearly half of the children’s mothers (49.1%) were in their early 30s (31–35 years) followed by nearly one quarter of older mothers in the age range between 36–40 years. Similarly, the majority of the children’s fathers were over 30: 43.4% in the age range between 31–35 years old, and 29.7% in the age range between 36–40 years old (cf. Fig. 5.3 & 5.4). This suggests that the majority of the children’s parents were already quite mature and well-established in their professional careers, which may impact their viewpoint on education (Fig. 5.3 & 5.4).

![Figure 5.3. Age profile of the subjects’ mothers](image-url)
Also as regards the education profile of the parents, they are all highly educated, as 68.36% of the mothers and 50.2% of the fathers have a Masters degree. In both groups there are some individuals who even have a doctorate: 6.57% of the mothers and 5.2% of the fathers. Overall, the mothers have a 20% higher level of education than the fathers, of whom 26.5% have only a secondary education, although more fathers than mothers have a bachelor’s degree. A small fraction of fathers, but still a larger proportion than the mothers, have vocational qualifications. Therefore it can generally be seen that the mothers have a higher level of education than the fathers, which is important to note as in the case of very young children it is often mothers who particularly have influence over the education and upbringing of their children at an early age (cf. Kawula, 1998). Thus their level of education may reflect the type of cognitive stimulation given to their children.

Finally, the socio-economic status of parents was measured. Parents were asked to evaluate their own SES according to the scales provided. From the data collected it can be seen that parents in general placed themselves in the middle of the scale and assessed their economic situation as either mediocre (49.2%) or good (40.0%). This suggests that the majority of the parents view the education of their children as a certain form of investment which requires them to refrain
from other purchases, and which can help improve their children’s chances in the educational market. Very few very wealthy or poor families have been identified (or were willing to acknowledge their status as such).

Figure 5.5. Education level of the subjects’ mothers

Figure 5.6. Education level of the subjects’ fathers
5.1.2. Reasons for child enrollment in very early FL instruction and the choice of foreign language

Fig. 5.8 presents the most frequent reasons for parents enrolling their children into very early FL instruction. As can be observed, the most frequently indicated reason for enrolling their children into early FL instruction is still the popularly held belief ‘the earlier one starts learning a foreign language, the better’ (20.3%), which is followed by the opinion that ‘children learn languages faster and easier, and therefore can achieve better results’ (14.2%). These opinions show that many parents believe that ‘an early start’ in a foreign language is very important. However, at the same time they may be skeptical about learning outcomes of such early instruction, as they admit they enrolled the child into early FL classes because ‘there was such an offer, so they responded to it’, supposedly with no clear expectations of success (12%) or they regard foreign language classes a nice variation in the curriculum – fifth position (9.3%). In fourth position sits the opinion that through very early FL instruction parents expect children merely to get used to a FL, to its sound lexis, grammar etc. Statements about the cognitive or affective value of early FLL found much less appreciation (positions from 9 to 11). They also seem to believe much less nowadays in another popular belief that if you start learning a second language early you can learn it like the mother tongue (6%).
As regards the choice of FL, English was the first FL chosen by parents for their children to study. As the major reason for this choice, parents first of all acknowledged the global popularity and usefulness of this language as a *lingua franca* (30.4%) and consequently the usefulness of this language in the job market (29.5%). Clearly, when choosing English as a FL parents are already thinking of their children’s prospective career opportunities and the likelihood of their finding employment. In third position parents acknowledge that knowing English themselves they can prospectively help their children to learn it (13.5%). In fourth position is the assertion that English is the only FL offered
for instruction in the kindergarten (11.3%). Therefore it seems the global popularity of English also has an adverse impact on the choice of languages offered (Fig. 5.9).

Differing reasons for choice of FL were indicated by those parents who enrolled their children to two FLs at kindergarten (n=66). Whilst 20.2% of parents indicated that a particular foreign language may be useful in their child’s future career, almost the same number (19.3%) indicated that they simply took advantage of the opportunity of learning another foreign language offered by the kindergarten. Noting that the most commonly taught second FL was French, it is not surprising that learning it is associated with a high educational status (12.8%). Although other instrumental benefits were also observed, they were of a more personal character, such as prospective usefulness of the language in contact with family (11.9%), parents own knowledge of that language and therefore readiness to help (9.2%) or sharing an interest in that language with the child (7.3%) (Fig. 5.10).

As educational and vocational aspirations often coincide, parents were also asked how they imagine their children will use FLs in adult (professional and personal) life, as it is assumed that parents invest in very early FLL for their children with particular educational and vocational prospects in mind. Figure 5.11 shows that FL knowledge is still regarded as an unusual skill thanks to which their children may get not just any job (the lowest score; only 6.71%), but a better job (14.35%), travel abroad (14.35%), or secure a position in many other professional situations (10.45%) as well as using FL cultural resources (10.38%). From these plans, it is visible that many parents interviewed imagine that their children will function in a largely international environment, both professionally and socially.

Hence there is an emphasis on learning the major language of international communication, i.e. English. As can be seen from Figure 5.12 many parents have no plans as to further FL language education, saying that either the child will decide (23.8%), or even that one foreign language is enough (11.2%), which may indicate low plurilingual awareness, i.e. probable future necessity to know even more than one FL. Only one fifth of the parents (20.4%) pointed to German as a possible language for their child to learn, clearly recognizing its usefulness as a language of a neighbouring country. Further positions on this question are occupied by the most popular language choices, i.e. Spanish (10.5%), French (9.4%), English (indicated as an L3 – 5.16%), Russian (4.7%) and Italian (4.5%).
Figure 5.9. Parental reasons for choosing English as a language of study

Figure 5.10. Parental reasons for enrolling their children into an L3 course at kindergarten (n=66)
Figure 5.11. Parental opinions on their children’s future use of a FL

No plans; the child will decide 23.8%
German 20.4%
No plans; one FL is enough 11.2%
Spanish 10.5%
Depends on school offer 9.4%
French 9.4%
English 5.2%
Russian 4.7%
Italian 4.5%
Other 0.9%

Figure 5.12. Parental preferences for an L3 choice for their children
5.1.3. Parental expectations in reference to their children’s current FL achievement

Following the distinction made by Holloway and Yamamoto (2008), parental aspirations referring to the present achievements of the child are more realistic as they are based on the child’s current achievements and henceforth are referred to as expectations, whereas aspirations refer to more idealistic and long-term goals. The same distinction has been made for the purpose of the current study. Therefore both short-term aspirations (i.e. expectations) and long-term aspirations were investigated in relation to various personal and environmental factors.

Since no previous research had been carried out in relation to parental aspirations in reference to FLL, there was no model instrument to measure these. Therefore it was decided to rely on those variables which are typically distinguished in pedagogical and sociological literature on parental educational aspirations with a view to checking whether they may impact very early FLL. Parental educational aspirations have been found to correlate with such demographic variables as parental level of education (Lewowicki, 1987), birth order of a child (Glass, Neulinger & Brim, 1974), age of the parents, parental occupation and hence SES of the family (Lewowicki, 1987; Ścisłowicz, 1994), place of living (Jacher, 1973) and the educational tradition of the family (Szymański, 1988; Ścisłowicz, 1974). Parental expectations are additionally modified in the course of child learning, on observing his success or failure.

In order to establish the correlation between parental expectations in reference to their children’s current achievements (Q 4, Part 2, App. 1) and selected independent variables, such as parental level of education, age, number of children, the child subject’s birth order, socio-economic status of the family and length of child FL learning, a Spearman’s rho test was used (Tab. 5.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spearman’s rho</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Number of children</th>
<th>Subject’s birth order</th>
<th>Place of living</th>
<th>Mother’s age</th>
<th>Father’s age</th>
<th>Socio-economic status</th>
<th>Length of FLL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n=335</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r_s</td>
<td>.155</td>
<td>.110</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>.076</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td>.055</td>
<td>.066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td>.993</td>
<td>.633</td>
<td>.166</td>
<td>.417</td>
<td>.316</td>
<td>.227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r_s</td>
<td>-.024</td>
<td>-.061</td>
<td>-.062</td>
<td>-.056</td>
<td>-.019</td>
<td>-.038</td>
<td>-.030</td>
<td>.109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>.659</td>
<td>.262</td>
<td>.259</td>
<td>.305</td>
<td>.728</td>
<td>.486</td>
<td>.590</td>
<td>.047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r_s</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>-.035</td>
<td>-.040</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>-.026</td>
<td>-.034</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>.125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>.772</td>
<td>.524</td>
<td>.465</td>
<td>.902</td>
<td>.633</td>
<td>.540</td>
<td>.801</td>
<td>.022</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the statistical analysis conducted by means of the non-parametric Spearman’s rho test (Tab. 5.1) the following statistically significant correlations were identified:

- Between the mother’s level of education and:
  - The score of the first item in the question regarding parental expectations (‘The child will be aware of the existence of other languages’) – weak, positive correlation ($r_s[333]=.155$; $p=.004$).
  - The score of the fourth item in the question regarding parental expectations (‘The child will understand the general sense of a book read in a foreign language/TV cartoon’) – weak, positive correlation ($r_s[333]=.155$; $p=.004$).

The child: 1 – Will be aware of the existence of other languages; 2 – Will become interested in learning other foreign languages; 3 – Will understand simple commands, e.g. in a game; 4 – Will understand the general sense of a book read in a foreign language/TV cartoon; 5 – Will know the names of single items in a foreign language; 6 – Will know how to say ‘hello’, goodbye’, introduce himself; 7 – Will be able to sing a song/say a poem etc.; 8 – Will guess the meaning of unknown words from context in a TV programme, song, computer game etc.; 9 – Will insert foreign words and expressions in spontaneous speech in Polish; 10 – Will try to create new sentences and words in a foreign language; 11 – Will try to talk in a foreign language, e.g. with foreigners on holiday or playing with toys and acting out scenes from class; 12 – Will speak a foreign language fluently; 13 – I have no expectations; time will tell; GS – general score of the level of parental expectations.
‘The child will.insert foreign words and expressions in spontaneous speech in Polish’) – weak, negative correlation \( r_s = -.110; p = .044 \).

· The score of the tenth item in the question regarding parental expectations (‘The child will try to create new sentences and words in a foreign language’) – weak, negative correlation \( r_s = -.145; p = .008 \).

· The score of the twelfth item in the question regarding parental expectations (‘the child will speak a foreign language fluently’) – weak, negative correlation \( r_s = -.267; p < .001 \).

· The score of the thirteenth item in the question regarding parental expectations (‘I have no expectations; time will tell’) – weak, negative correlation \( r_s = -.152; p = .005 \).

· Between the father’s level of education and:
  · The score of the first item in the question regarding parental expectations (‘The child will be aware of the existence of other languages’) – weak positive correlation \( r_s = .110; p = .044 \).
  · The score of the fourth item of the question regarding parental expectations (‘The child will understand the general sense of a book read in a FL/TV cartoon’) – weak, negative correlation \( r_s = -.139; p = .011 \).
  · The score of the sixth item of the question regarding parental expectations (‘The child will know how to say ‘hello’, ‘goodbye’, introduce himself’) – weak, negative correlation \( r_s = -.109; p = .046 \).
  · The score of the eighth item of the question regarding parental expectations (‘The child will guess the meaning of unknown words from context in a TV programme, song, computer game etc.’) – weak, negative correlation \( r_s = -.108; p = .049 \).
  · The score of the ninth item of the question regarding parental expectations (‘The child will insert foreign words and expressions in spontaneous speech in Polish’) – weak, negative correlation \( r_s = -.122; p = .025 \).
  · The score of the twelfth item of the question regarding parental expectations (‘The child will speak a foreign language fluently’) – weak, negative correlation \( r_s = -.229; p < .001 \).
  · The general score of parental expectations – weak, negative correlation \( r_s = -.130; p = .018 \).

· Between the place of living and the score of the twelfth item regarding parental expectations (‘The child will speak a foreign language fluently’) – weak, negative correlation \( r_s = -.109; p < .045 \).
• Between the age of the mother and:
  • The score of the fourth item in the question regarding parental expectations (‘The child will understand the general sense of a book read in a foreign language/TV cartoon’) – weak, negative correlation ($r_s[-.130; p=.017]$).
  • The score of the ninth item in the question regarding parental expectations (‘The child will insert foreign words and expressions in spontaneous speech in Polish’) – weak, negative correlation ($r_s[-.123; p=.025]$).
  • The score of the twelfth item in the question regarding parental expectations (‘The child will speak a foreign language fluently’) – weak, negative correlation ($r_s[-.122; p=.025]$).

• Between socio-economic status (self-perceived) and:
  • The score of the second item of the question regarding parental expectations (‘The child will become interested in further learning of FLs’) – weak, positive correlation ($r_s[.109; p=.047]$).
  • The score of the third item of the question regarding parental expectations (‘The child will understand simple commands, e.g. in a game’) – weak, positive correlation ($r_s[.125; p=.022]$).
  • The score of the fourth item in the question regarding parental expectations (‘The child will understand the general sense of a book read in a foreign language/TV cartoon’) – weak, positive correlation ($r_s[.134; p=.014]$).
  • The score of the sixth item in the question regarding parental expectations (‘The child will know how to say ‘hello’, ‘goodbye’, introduce himself’) – weak, positive correlation ($r_s[.110; p=.044]$).
  • The score of the eighth item in the question regarding parental expectations (‘The child will guess the meaning of unknown words from context in a TV programme, song, computer game etc.’) – weak, positive correlation ($r_s[.176; p=.001]$).
  • The score of the eleventh item in the question regarding parental expectations (‘The child will try to talk in a foreign language, e.g. with foreigners on holiday or playing with toys and acting out scenes from class’) – weak, positive correlation ($r_s[.128; p=.019]$).
  • The score of the thirteenth item in the question regarding parental expectations (‘I have no expectations, time will tell’) – weak, negative correlation ($r_s[-.130; p=.017]$).
  • The general score of parental expectations – weak, positive correlation, ($r_s[.162; p=.003]$).

• Between the length of FL learning by a child and:
• The score of the second item in the question regarding parental expectations (‘The child will become interested in learning other foreign languages’) – weak, positive correlation ($r_{s}[333]=.184; p=.001$).

• The score of the fifth item in the question regarding parental expectations (‘The child will know the names of single items in a foreign language’) – weak, positive correlation ($r_{s}[333]=.114; p=.037$).

• The score of the seventh item of the question regarding parental expectations (‘The child will be able to sing a song/say a poem etc.’) – weak, positive correlation ($r_{s}[333]=.138; p=.011$).

• The score of the eleventh item of the question regarding parental expectations (‘The child will try to talk in a foreign language, e.g. with foreigners on holiday or playing with toys and acting out scenes from class’) – weak, positive correlation ($r_{s}[333]=.124; p=.024$).

• The score of the thirteenth item of the question regarding parental expectations (‘I have no expectations, time will tell’) – weak, negative correlation ($r_{s}[333]=-.126; p=.021$).

• The general score of parental expectations – weak, positive correlation ($r_{s}[333]=.127; p=.020$).

No other statistically significant correlations have been found between the items referring to parental expectations (as presented in Table 5.2) and other variables ($p>.05$).

**Parental expectations and child gender**

In order to investigate whether parents hold different expectations in relation to boys’ and girls’ achievement, a non-parametric Mann-Whitney test was used (Tab. 5.2).

**Table 6.2.** Comparing parental expectations in relation to child gender (results of the Mann-Whitney test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parental expectations</th>
<th>Parents of boys (n=145)</th>
<th>Parents of girls (n=190)</th>
<th>Mann-Whitney test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Mean Rank</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child will be aware of the existence of other languages</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>168.6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child will become interested in learning other foreign languages</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>166.9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child will understand simple commands</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>172.4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results of the statistical analysis conducted by means of the Mann-Whitney test (Tab. 5.2) did not show any statistically significant differences between parents of boys and girls in the levels of expectations towards their achievement in very early FLL (p>.05).

**Parental expectations and the type of kindergarten**

Table 5.3 shows the results of the Mann-Whitney test which was conducted in order to check whether there are any differences in the levels of expectations in FLL between parents of children attending private and public kindergartens.

**Table 5.3.** Results of the Mann-Whitney test; comparing levels of parental expectations in FLL of children attending private and public kindergartens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parental expectations</th>
<th>Public kindergarten (n=225)</th>
<th>Private kindergarten (n=76)</th>
<th>Mann-Whitney test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M Mean Rank</td>
<td>M Mean Rank</td>
<td>U Z p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child will be aware of the existence of other languages</td>
<td>5 145.5</td>
<td>5 167.3</td>
<td>7315.0 -2.166 .030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child will become interested in learning other foreign languages</td>
<td>4 146.8</td>
<td>4 163.4</td>
<td>7606.5 -1.520 .128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child will understand simple commands</td>
<td>4 149.2</td>
<td>4 156.2</td>
<td>8154.5 -.635 .526</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results of the Mann-Whitney test (Tab. 5.3) revealed statistically significant differences between the two groups of parents (those whose children attend private and public kindergartens) in the levels of their expectations in very early FLL in the following respects:

- In reference to the statement ‘The child will be aware of the existence of other languages’, parents of children learning a FL in public kindergartens achieved a lower score on this item (Mean rank=145.5) than parents of children attending private kindergartens (Mean rank=167.3), Z=-2.166; p=.030.

- In reference to the statement ‘The child will know names of single items in a FL’, parents of children attending a public kindergarten obtained a lower score on this item (Mean rank=145.6) than parents attending a private kindergarten (Mean rank=167.1), Z=-2.118; p=.034.

- In reference to the statement ‘The child will be able to sing a song/say a poem etc.’ parents of children attending public kindergartens obtained a lower score on this item (Mean rank=143.6) than parents attending a private kindergarten (Mean rank=172.9), Z=-2.687; p=.007.

- In reference to the general score of the level of parental expectations, parents of children attending public kindergartens obtained lower scores (Mean rank=144.6) than parents of children attending private kindergartens (Mean rank=169.8), Z=-2.185; p=.029.
In other aspects of parental expectations in reference to their children’s early FLL no statistically significant differences between the two groups were identified (p > .05).

5.1.4. Parental aspirations in reference to their children’s long-term FL achievement

Table 5.4 shows the results of the statistical analysis by means of Spearman’s rho correlation test which was conducted in order to find any correlation between parental long-term aspirations and the same personal variables as measured for correlation with parental expectations (based on Q 5, Part 2, App. 1), such as parental level of education, parental age, number of children in the family, self-perceived socio-economic status and the length of learning a FL by a child.

Table 5.4. Parental aspirations and selected personal and educational variables (results of Spearman’s rho test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spearman’s rho n=335</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Number of children</th>
<th>Subject’s birth order</th>
<th>Place of living</th>
<th>Mother’s age</th>
<th>Father’s age</th>
<th>Socio-economic status</th>
<th>Length of FLL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>r_s</td>
<td>-.095</td>
<td>-.138</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>.065</td>
<td>-.078</td>
<td>.025</td>
<td>.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p</td>
<td>.082</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>.738</td>
<td>.239</td>
<td>.156</td>
<td>.646</td>
<td>.587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>r_s</td>
<td>-.027</td>
<td>-.061</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>-.059</td>
<td>.096</td>
<td>-.004</td>
<td>-.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p</td>
<td>.628</td>
<td>.266</td>
<td>.701</td>
<td>.280</td>
<td>.080</td>
<td>.935</td>
<td>.953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>r_s</td>
<td>-.054</td>
<td>-.071</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>-.008</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>-.085</td>
<td>-.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p</td>
<td>.329</td>
<td>.197</td>
<td>.596</td>
<td>.885</td>
<td>.588</td>
<td>.121</td>
<td>.299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>r_s</td>
<td>.110</td>
<td>.169</td>
<td>-.073</td>
<td>-.007</td>
<td>.072</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td>.033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.180</td>
<td>.891</td>
<td>.191</td>
<td>.729</td>
<td>.553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>r_s</td>
<td>-.001</td>
<td>-.041</td>
<td>.083</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td>.101</td>
<td>.112</td>
<td>.113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p</td>
<td>.984</td>
<td>.454</td>
<td>.131</td>
<td>.458</td>
<td>.065</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td>.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>r_s</td>
<td>-.021</td>
<td>-.032</td>
<td>-.072</td>
<td>-.088</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>.073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p</td>
<td>.702</td>
<td>.562</td>
<td>.191</td>
<td>.107</td>
<td>.600</td>
<td>.611</td>
<td>.181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>r_s</td>
<td>-.288</td>
<td>-.202</td>
<td>.100</td>
<td>.090</td>
<td>-.148</td>
<td>-.037</td>
<td>-.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.068</td>
<td>.100</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.495</td>
<td>.454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>r_s</td>
<td>.214</td>
<td>.114</td>
<td>-.012</td>
<td>-.052</td>
<td>.062</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>-.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.038</td>
<td>.827</td>
<td>.347</td>
<td>.259</td>
<td>.775</td>
<td>.800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>r_s</td>
<td>.184</td>
<td>.123</td>
<td>-.109</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.092</td>
<td>.092</td>
<td>.048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.024</td>
<td>.046</td>
<td>.933</td>
<td>.093</td>
<td>.094</td>
<td>.383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>r_s</td>
<td>.097</td>
<td>.107</td>
<td>-.115</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>.060</td>
<td>.071</td>
<td>.054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p</td>
<td>.075</td>
<td>.049</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>.595</td>
<td>.275</td>
<td>.197</td>
<td>.324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>r_s</td>
<td>-.133</td>
<td>-.030</td>
<td>-.164</td>
<td>-.031</td>
<td>.049</td>
<td>-.079</td>
<td>-.035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.588</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.574</td>
<td>.373</td>
<td>.148</td>
<td>.518</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On the basis of the statistical analysis conducted by means of Spearman’s rho test (Tab. 5.4), statistically significant correlations have been found between the following variables:

- **Between the mother’s level of education and:**
  - The score of the fourth item of the question regarding parental aspirations (‘*In adolescence the child will speak at least two foreign languages*’) – weak, positive correlation ($r_s = .110; p = .044$).
  - The score of the seventh item of the question regarding parental aspirations (‘*It’s enough if the child passes school exams in a foreign language*’) – weak, negative correlation ($r_s = -.288; p < .001$).
  - The score of the eighth item of the question regarding parental aspirations (‘*In adulthood the child will use a foreign language fluently at work (reading texts, conversations)*’) – weak, positive correlation ($r_s = .214; p < .001$).
  - The score of the ninth item of the question regarding parental aspirations (‘*The child has to know a foreign language well enough in order to study/work abroad etc.*’) – weak, positive correlation ($r_s = .184; p = .001$).
  - The score of the eleventh item of the question regarding parental aspirations (‘*In the future the child will have a native-like competence in a foreign language*’) – weak, negative correlation ($r_s = -.133; p = .015$).
  - General score of parental aspirations’ level (GS) – weak, positive correlation ($r_s = .167; p = .002$).

- **Between the father’s level of education and:**
  - The score of the first item of the question regarding parental aspirations (‘*In adulthood the child does not have to speak a foreign language fluently; it is enough if he can just communicate, e.g. to make some arrangements*’) – weak, negative correlation ($r_s = -.138; p = .011$).
The score of the fourth item of the question regarding parental aspirations (‘In adolescence the child will speak at least two foreign languages’) – weak, positive correlation ($r_s=0.169; p=0.002$).

The score of the seventh item of the question regarding parental aspirations (‘It’s enough if the child passes school exams in a foreign language’) – weak, negative correlation ($r_s=-0.202; p<0.001$).

The score of the eighth item of the question regarding parental aspirations (‘In adulthood the child will use a foreign language fluently at work (reading texts, conversations)’) – weak, positive correlation ($r_s=0.114; p=0.038$).

The score of the ninth item of the question regarding parental aspirations (‘The child has to know a foreign language well enough in order to study/work abroad’ etc.) – weak, negative correlation ($r_s=-0.109; p=0.046$).

The score of the tenth item of the question regarding parental aspirations (‘The child will have foreign friends, with whom s/he will communicate in a foreign language’) – weak, negative correlation ($r_s=-0.115; p=0.036$).

The score of the eleventh item of the question regarding parental aspirations (‘In the future the child will have a native-like competence in a foreign language’) – weak, negative correlation ($r_s=-0.164; p=0.003$).

The number of children in the family and:

The score of the ninth item of the question regarding parental aspirations (‘The child has to know a foreign language well enough in order to study/work abroad etc.’) – weak, negative correlation ($r_s=-0.109; p=0.046$).

The score of the tenth item of the question regarding parental aspirations (‘The child will have foreign friends, with whom s/he will communicate in a foreign language’) – weak, negative correlation ($r_s=-0.115; p=0.036$).

Between the place of residence and:

The score of the seventh item of the question regarding parental aspirations (‘It’s enough if the child passes school exams in a foreign language’) – weak, negative correlation ($r_s=-0.148; p=0.007$).

The general score (GS) of the level of parental aspirations – weak, positive correlation ($r_s=0.148; p=0.007$).

Between the age of the mother and the fifth item of the question regarding parental aspirations (‘Learning effects will depend on the school and the teacher’) – weak, positive correlation ($r_s=0.112; p=0.041$).
Between the age of the father and the fifth item of the question regarding parental aspirations (‘Learning effects will depend on the school and the teacher’) – weak, positive correlation ($r_{[333]}=.113; p=.038$).

Between the self-perceived socio-economic status and:

- The second item of the question regarding parental aspirations (‘In 2–3 years the child will be able to communicate in a foreign language, e.g. on holidays abroad’) – weak, positive correlation ($r_{[333]}=.159; p=.003$).
- The score of the fourth item of the question regarding parental aspirations (‘In adolescence the child will speak at least two foreign languages’) – weak, positive correlation ($r_{[333]}=.153; p=.005$).
- The score of the fifth item of the question regarding parental aspirations (‘Learning effects will depend on the school and the teacher’) – weak, negative correlation ($r_{[333]}=-.111; p=.042$).
- The score of the seventh item of the question regarding parental aspirations (‘Learning effects will depend on the school and the teacher’) – weak, negative correlation ($r_{[333]}=-.109; p=.046$).
- The score of the eighth item of the question regarding parental aspirations (‘In adulthood the child will use a foreign language fluently at work (reading texts, conversations)’) – weak, positive correlation ($r_{[333]}=.124; p=.023$).
- The score of the tenth item of the question regarding parental aspirations (‘The child will have foreign friends, with whom s/he will communicate in a foreign language’) – weak, positive correlation ($r_{[333]}=.156; p=.004$).
- The general score of the level of parental aspirations (GS) – weak, positive correlation ($r_{[333]}=.184; p=.001$).

Between the length of learning a FL by the child and the second item in the question regarding parental aspirations (‘In 2–3 years the child will be able to communicate in a foreign language, e.g. on holidays abroad’) – weak, positive correlation ($r_{[333]}=.113; p=.038$).

Between other variables and the items in the question on parental aspirations as presented in Table 5.4, no other statistically significant correlations were identified (p>.05).

**Parental aspirations and child gender**

In order to test whether the subjects’ parents have different and statistically different aspirations towards their children depending on the child’s gender, a non-parametric Mann-Whitney test was conducted. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 5.5.
Table 5.5. Comparing parental aspirations in relation to child gender (the results of the Mann-Whitney test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parental aspirations</th>
<th>Parents of boys (n=145)</th>
<th>Parents of girls (n=190)</th>
<th>Mann-Whitney test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Mean Rank</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In adulthood the child does not have to speak a foreign language fluently; it is enough if he can just communicate, e.g. to make some arrangements</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>166.0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 2–3 years the child will be able to communicate in a foreign language, e.g. on holidays abroad</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>166.4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 5–6 years the child will be able to speak a foreign language fluently</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>166.9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In adolescence the child will speak at least two foreign languages</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>159.7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning effects will depend on the school and the teacher</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>166.2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning effects will depend on the child’s aptitude</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>165.7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s enough if the child passes school exams in a foreign language</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>173.1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In adulthood the child will use a foreign language fluently at work (reading texts, conversations)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>156.7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child has to know a foreign language well enough in order to study/work abroad etc.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>154.1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child will have foreign friends, with whom s/he will communicate in a foreign language</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>160.5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the future the child will have a native-like competence in a foreign language</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>156.3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General score of parental aspirations (GS)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>155.0</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of the conducted analysis (Tab. 5.5) showed statistically significant differences between parents of boys and girls in relation to the following aspirations:

‘In adulthood the child will use a foreign language fluently at work (reading texts, conversations)’ – in reference to this statement parents of boys declared lower aspirations (Mean rank=156.7) than parents of girls (Mean rank=176.6), Z=-2.035; p=.042.

‘The child has to know a foreign language well enough in order to study/work abroad etc.’ – in reference to this statement parents of boys (Mean rank=154.1) declared lower aspirations than parents of girls (Mean rank=178.6), Z=-2.404; p=.016.

‘In the future the child will have a native-like competence in a foreign language’ – in reference to this aspiration parents of boys declared lower aspirations (Mean rank=156.3) than parents of girls (Mean rank=177.0), Z=-2.152; p=.031.
General score of the level of parental aspirations – parents of boys obtained a lower general score (Mean rank = 155.0) than parents of girls (Mean rank = 177.9), Z = -2.153; p = .031.

No statistically significant differences in other items referring to parental aspirations and child gender were identified (p > .05).

**Parental aspirations and the type of kindergarten**

Table 5.6 presents the results of the Mann-Whitney test conducted to investigate if there are any differences in aspirations of parents whose children attend private and public kindergartens.

**Table 5.6.** Comparing parental level of aspirations for children attending private and public kindergartens (the results of the Mann-Whitney test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parental aspirations</th>
<th>Public kindergartens (n=225)</th>
<th>Private kindergartens (n=76)</th>
<th>Mann-Whitney test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Mean Rank</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In adulthood the child does not have to speak a foreign language fluently; it is enough if he can just communicate, e.g. to make some arrangements</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>157.6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 2–3 years the child will be able to communicate in a foreign language, e.g. on holidays abroad</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>143.7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 5–6 years the child will be able to speak a foreign language fluently</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>148.5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In adolescence the child will speak at least two foreign languages</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>148.3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning effects will depend on the school and the teacher</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>147.8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning effects will depend on the child’s aptitude</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>149.2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s enough if the child passes school exams in a foreign language</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>158.5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In adulthood the child will use a foreign language fluently at work (reading texts, conversations)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>144.3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child has to know a foreign language well enough in order to study/work abroad etc.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>144.2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child will have foreign friends, with whom s/he will communicate in a foreign language</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>143.7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the future the child will have a native-like competence in a foreign language</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>149.5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General score of parental aspirations (GS)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>142.4</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results of statistical analysis performed by means of the Mann-Whitney test revealed statistically significant differences (Tab. 5.6) in levels of aspirations between parents whose children attend private kindergartens and parents whose children attend public kindergartens:

- ‘In adulthood the child does not have to speak a foreign language fluently; it is enough if he can just communicate, e.g. to make some arrangements’ – in reference to this statement parents of children attending public kindergartens obtained a higher score (Mean rank=157.6) than parents whose children attend private kindergartens (Mean rank =131.5), Z=-2.304; p=.021.

- ‘In 2–3 years the child will be able to communicate in a foreign language, e.g. on holidays abroad’ – in reference to this statement parents of children attending public kindergartens (Mean rank=143.7) obtained a lower score than parents whose children attend a private kindergarten (Mean rank=172.6), Z=-2.637; p=.008.

- ‘It’s enough if the child passes school exams in a foreign language’ – in reference to this statement, parents whose children attend public kindergartens obtained a higher score (Mean rank=158.5) than parents whose children attend private kindergartens (Mean rank=128.8), Z=-2.692; p=.007.

- ‘In adulthood the child will use a foreign language fluently at work (reading texts, conversations)’ – in reference to this statement parents whose children attend public kindergartens obtained a lower score (Mean rank =144.3) than parents whose children attended private kindergartens (Mean rank=170.8), Z=-2.506; p=.012.

- ‘The child has to know a foreign language well enough in order to study/ work abroad etc.’ – in reference to this statement parents whose children attend public kindergartens obtained a lower score (Mean rank =144.2) than parents whose children attend private kindergartens (Mean rank=171.1), Z=-2.444; p=.015.

- ‘The child will have foreign friends, with whom s/he will communicate in a foreign language’ – in reference to this statement parents whose children attend public kindergartens (Mean rank=143.7) obtained a lower score than parents whose children attend private kindergartens (Mean rank=172.6), Z=-2.679; p=.007.

- In reference to the general score of parental aspirations, parents of children attending public kindergartens obtained a lower score (Mean rank=142.4) than parents of children attending private kindergartens (Mean rank=176.6), Z=-2.976; p=.003.
5.1.5. Parental involvement in very early FLL

Parental involvement in the FLL process is indispensable if immediate learning outcomes are to be achieved. Parents need to be involved in the revision of class material as well as providing opportunities for additional contact with a FL and sustaining motivation (cf. Ch. 3). Figure 5.13 shows the frequency of use of various techniques of parental involvement as reported by the parents surveyed. As can be seen, the most common technique is revising/questioning children on new words (e.g. What is X in English?), which constitutes 16.0% of all answers, followed by singing FL songs (most typical content of FL classes) (12.4%), revising class material (10.1%), watching FL cartoons with children (9.9%), playing FL games with a child (8.8%), and buying educational materials, picture dictionaries etc. These are all rather non-communicative activities, based on repetition of the same material. Few attempts to provide additional forms of meaningful input were observed. More communicative ways of practising the FL, such as reading FL storybooks to children (5.6%) or playful communication in a foreign language, make up only a small fraction of the techniques used.

![Figure 5.13.](image)

**Figure 5.13.** Types of parental involvement in very early FLL
In pedagogical studies on parental aspirations, a relationship has been identified between the level of parental aspirations and various types of support given to their children (cf. Roe, 1957 in Sikorski, 2005; Ścisłowicz, 1994). In order to check whether a similar correlation exists in very early FLL, a Spearman’s rho test was conducted between the quantity of various types of support given to children and the general scores (levels) of parental expectations, as well as parental aspirations (Tab. 5.7).

Table 5.7. Correlations between the quantity of parental support activities and parental expectations/parental aspirations (results of the Spearman’s rho test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spearman’s rho (n=335)</th>
<th>Parental expectations General score (GS)</th>
<th>Parental aspirations General score (GS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quantity of parental involvement</td>
<td>r_s</td>
<td>.245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of Spearman’s rho test (Tab. 5.7) show weak but positive statistically significant correlations between the quantity of parental involvement activities and the levels of both parental expectations ($r_s[333]=.245; p<.001$) and parental aspirations ($r_s[333]=.251; p<.001$).

**Parental involvement and selected personal variables**

Table 5.8. Correlations between the quantity of parental involvement and personal variables (results of the Spearman’s rho test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spearman’s rho (n=335)</th>
<th>Education level</th>
<th>Father’s age</th>
<th>Mother’s age</th>
<th>Number of children</th>
<th>Child birth order</th>
<th>Socio-economic status</th>
<th>Parental use of FL (quantity of activities)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quantity of parental involvement activities</td>
<td>r_s</td>
<td>.212</td>
<td>.050</td>
<td>.066</td>
<td>.111</td>
<td>-.044</td>
<td>-.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.360</td>
<td>.229</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>.421</td>
<td>.818</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The statistical analysis conducted by means of a non-parametric Spearman’s rho test (Tab. 5.8) shows the following statistically significant correlations:
- There is a weak, positive correlation between the amount of parental support given and the mother’s level of education ($r_s[333]=.212; p<.001$).
- There is a weak, positive correlation between the amount of parental support given and the age of the father ($r_s[333]=.111; p=.042$).
- There is a weak, positive correlation between the amount of parental support given and the socio-economic status of the family ($r_s[333]=.218; p<.001$).
There is a moderate, positive correlation between the amount of parental support given and the parents’ own use of FLs (as expressed by the amount of resources/activities used) \( r_{s}^{(333)} = .420; p < .001 \).

No other statistically significant correlations have been found between other variables \( (p > .05) \).

**Parental involvement and child gender**

**Table 5.9.** Amount of parental involvement and child gender (results of the Mann-Whitney test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents of boys (n=145)</th>
<th>Parents of girls (n=190)</th>
<th>Mann-Whitney test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>M</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mean Rank</strong></td>
<td><strong>M</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of parental involvement</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>157.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.9 shows the results of the Mann-Whitney test conducted in order to check whether there are any statistically significant differences in the amount of support given in very early FLL to children in respect of their gender. No statistically significant differences were identified \( (p > .05) \).

**Parental involvement and the type of kindergarten**

**Table 5.10.** Comparison of parental involvement given to children in public and private kindergartens (results of the Mann-Whitney test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public kindergarten (n=225)</th>
<th>Private kindergarten (n=76)</th>
<th>Mann-Whitney test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>M</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mean Rank</strong></td>
<td><strong>M</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of parental involvement</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>141.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of the Mann-Whitney test (Tab. 5.10) show statistically significant differences in the amount of support given to children in very early FLL. Parents whose children attended private kindergartens employed a statistically and significantly higher amount of varied techniques in supporting their children’s learning \( \text{Mean rank} = 178.5 \) than parents whose children attended public kindergartens \( \text{Mean rank} = 141.7 \), \( Z = -3.219; p = .001 \).
5.2. Parental educational aspirations in reference to very early FL learning – qualitative data

5.2.1. Interviews

The interview questions were in general designed to elicit more detailed information on the nature and object of parental aspirations in respect of their children’s foreign language learning (cf. App. 2). The interviews were partly conducted in the mode of poststructuralist/socio-cultural theory, which perceives language as symbolic capital (a form of cultural capital), which can be transferred intergenerationally, as an investment, and thus requires from parents a considerable sense of agency. Also, following Dörnyei’s (2005) model of motivation (L2 Motivational Self-System), it could be argued that future plurilingual competence will only be attained if parents make considerable investments in their children’s early L2 learning and provide language learning experience (in the form of quality instruction, learning resources, as well as their own involvement in the learning activity). In addition, by holding high educational aspirations for their children’s plurilingual achievement parents may try to imprint in their children their vision of the children’s future identity, i.e. their Ideal L2 Self. Whether this desired identity approximates an international outlook, global/bi-cultural identity or whether it succumbs more to local ethnolinguistic vitality will be of interest here. Thus the results of the interview will be presented in relation to the key areas covered, i.e. the family’s perception of early FL education in the child’s life (i.e. whether it is seen as investment or not), imagined child identity, educational plans in reference to the child, parental involvement in FLL (now and planned for the future), cultural capital (as manifested by free time activities), and parental educational and social background (in order to investigate if there is an intergenerational transfer of linguistic and cultural/educational capital). Since the critical factor in formulating high educational aspirations is the SES of the family, the same factor is taken as a reference point in discussing the results of the interview. It is assumed that parents of various SES have varied opinions, attitudes, opportunities and resources in educating their children, both globally and in the foreign language.

The place of FLL in the child’s global education

As regards the role of foreign language learning in the child’s education, all parents unanimously agree that it is very important to know a foreign language in the future for the general occupational career, and they all point to
the necessity of knowing English as an obvious *lingua franca*. Few parents indicate a necessity or plan to make their child learn another foreign language. In this respect they avoid the responsibility for the choice of language (‘it depends what language is offered at school’) or the child’s future preference (‘he/she will choose’). This indicates that in the case of many parents, early FL investment refers only to one language, and even if a child already learns two languages (parent 14, parent 7), this is usually motivated by educational opportunity (another foreign language was offered in kindergarten), and not deliberate parental choice. Only two parents stated openly that the child will necessarily have to know a few languages in the future, and that starting early will give the child a chance to learn subsequent languages in the future (parent 7, parent 11). This indicates that many parents are not really aware of a future necessity to speak at least two foreign languages, which will make the child an even stronger competitor in the occupational market.

The very term ‘investment’ causes some resentment in parents: against its connotations of give and take exchange; only parent 4 openly stated, ‘We both, my husband and I, agreed that if we have to invest in anything, it is our children’s education’. They are realising their goal already by their preference for private sector education for their children (kindergarten, plus primary school, and similar plans for lower secondary school). A similar stance was adopted by parent 14. Therefore it seems the term ‘investment’ is preferred by those parents who seem to have a fairly high material status (higher SES). However, in this group there are also parents, who could be referred to as intelligentsia (academics by profession, e.g. parent 2, parent 5), who do not treat FLL as a goal in itself but rather as a tool to attain other goals, such as self-realization (through meeting foreigners and foreign cultures – parent 9, parent 6).

This is the case for those who already speak foreign languages and who have been able to participate in the international community through their knowledge; they use foreign languages in their professional and/or social lives, and therefore appreciate the value of knowing foreign languages, at the same time realizing that nowadays, in a largely multilingual world, knowledge of foreign languages is a necessity rather than an unusual ability. They realize that FL knowledge alone is no longer sufficient to obtain success either professionally or personally. Thus, they often assert that languages are merely tools to obtain other merits, such as education abroad, broadening horizons etc. Four parents recognized the difficulty of achieving and guaranteeing success in today’s world, and in consequence have reverted to a close, emotional and traditional upbringing, often in Christian values, as a remedy against an insecure future in the globalized world (parent 1, 2, 5, 10).
Parent 2 claims that the most important thing to invest in is the child’s upbringing; if this is performed well, it will result in a positive learning outcome.

While in higher SES families FL knowledge is seen as a tool to achieve other goals and as only one of the components of future professional/personal success, among lower SES families a much more instrumental attitude to FLL can be observed. For many of the lower SES parents, FL knowledge is a tool for obtaining material success, by getting a good job in the future, emigrating and living abroad in the US or England (parents 8, 12, 14) or communicating with relatives already living abroad (parent 14). It is noteworthy that those parents intend their children to learn mainly English as a *lingua franca* and do not wish them to learn more languages, which is more often desired in higher SES families. Some lower SES parents even postpone investment into FLs, stating that ‘everyday worries, such as financial matters, or daily chores, occupy my mind so much that I do not think of additional classes or activities for my child’ (parent 15).

Lower SES parents often seem to enroll their children in FL classes in kindergarten purely because they are offered, having no clear expectations, deliberate plans or sense of purpose.

*Future child identity*

As regards future child identity, a similar discrepancy between lower and higher SES parents was observed, which seems to coincide with parents’ own knowledge of foreign languages. Those parents who use foreign languages in their daily lives (these tend to be higher SES parents) claim to have ‘an international identity’; they feel they are citizens of the world/Europe and acknowledge the enriching experiences that have only been possible thanks to their FL knowledge (parents 1–4, 6, 7, 9). Similarly, they encourage a similar ‘international identity’ in their children, characterized by an openness towards and curiosity in other cultures and people. They have nothing against their children studying abroad or living abroad while still maintaining contact with their parents in Poland by means of budget airlines and Skype. As parent 6 says, ‘nowadays, it is not like the past, when if a child left it was for good’. Only parent 5, although of higher SES, did not aspire for an international identity. Although she has a high command of L2 English, she learnt it rather as a school subject and admits to having too little contact with foreigners and thus opportunities for communicative practice.

Lower SES parents do not appear to give any thought to the question of identity. When asked who they would like their children to become, they usually
have no idea/opinion. While they consider the possibility of their children living abroad/emigrating, they assume this will be within the Polish community. Clearly, the option of an ‘international identity’ is unknown to them, and is therefore not desired for their children.

**Educational plans for the future**

Parents also differ in their opinions about planned investments into foreign language knowledge in the future. Clearly, this is at least partly determined by available financial resources, and so SES of the family. The same parents also recognize the necessity, not only of increasing the amount of contact with L2, but also of creating opportunities for communication in a foreign language. Higher SES parents claim they would like their children to have private lessons with a native speaker from ca. eight years of age (parent 3) or plan for private sector primary and lower secondary education, where there are smaller groups, higher frequency of lessons, and presumably a better quality of teaching (parents 1, 2, 4), or hope to send their children on a foreign language course abroad (parent 3) or even make the child study abroad (parents 6, 7).

As regards lower SES parents, all of them (parents 10–15) said they would primarily rely on school instruction. They acknowledge that they would provide additional help in a foreign language only when needed, e.g. if their child has learning difficulties, or school instruction is inadequate (parents 13, 15). Then they would, for example, enroll their children in additional classes or provide private lessons. Parents also profess a willingness to help their own children themselves or by buying study materials (such as computer programmes, books etc. – parent 11). A lack of desire to enable communication in a foreign language is evident.

**Parental involvement in FLL**

Variation in parental involvement in the current learning of foreign languages of their children can also be observed. It can be clearly seen that those parents who speak foreign languages themselves, have a larger repertoire of techniques available to motivate and encourage their children to learn a FL. They often, but not always, are also of higher SES. First of all, they act as ‘role models’: they often speak foreign languages in the presence of their children, either on holiday abroad (parents 2–4, 6, 7, 9) or when having foreign guests at home or visiting them abroad (parents 3, 6, 9, 11). For them FL is used as a real means of communication. This shows their children realistic language use and
develops an awareness in children that if they do not learn foreign languages they will not be able to communicate with their peers.

Also, those parents who speak FL fluently and find time to play with their children, are personally involved in practising/teaching them FL at home, by playing games with puppets or acting out cartoon stories (parents 3, 5, 8, 11). Yet, this technique was used only by some mothers, who were fluent linguists themselves. The same mothers occasionally read storybooks in FL and also encouraged their children to watch cartoons in a FL via cable TV (parents 3, 5, 6, 8). Three parents practised speaking to their children in a FL, at least occasionally, to encourage authentic communication (parents 5, 6, 8).

Parents who have had less contact with foreigners due to their poor FL knowledge tend to practise FL less communicatively by questioning children on the contents of classroom instruction (‘What was taught in the FL class?’), singing class songs together with children (parents 11, 13, 14). They buy more limited resources, such as colouring books, magazines with labels; picture dictionaries. A good opportunity to learn some elements of a foreign language is via cartoon channels for children (such as MiniMini) which have short programmes on TV. This shows there is a necessity to support early FLL at the level of institutions, media etc. as not all parents are capable of supporting their children’s learning themselves.

**Cultural capital**

Parents’ knowledge of foreign languages can be regarded as an important linguistic capital that they can transfer to their children as can be seen by the way that parents of various SES and FL knowledge support their children’s foreign language learning. The differences in SES also seem to influence other forms of cultural capital, as manifested in the ways the parents spend free time with their children. This issue is important as family activities may provide for cognitive stimulation, which, in turn, may result in a more positive attitude to learning and subsequent academic success (cf. Sullivan, 2001). In other words, children’s interests aroused early in the family environment can result in the further pursuit of those interests and high levels of achievement. Cultural capital also indicates parental educational awareness of how they can influence their children’s development.

In this respect a difference between higher and lower SES families can also be observed. Parents of higher SES, having more financial resources, travel abroad relatively frequently, which gives their children a ‘foreign’ experience. Also the same parents report that they like spending time actively, sightseeing as
well as doing sports (parents 1, 3, 4, 7). Sporting activities are often conducted in a form of organized instruction. The children go to classes in swimming, skiing, gymnastics, judo etc. Clearly, staying fit and healthy is one of the major objectives of those parents in their child’s education.

This does not mean lower SES parents do not care for the health of their children, but this investment is usually limited to going outdoors/to the playground, and what is notable, also visiting friends with children of a similar age, so that they can play with each other (parents 11–13, 15). This is not very frequent among higher SES parents. Higher SES parents also claim that they limit their children’s use of TV or computers (e.g. ‘If they want to watch TV, it should be only in English’ – parent 6), which indicates a more deliberate approach to decisions in reference to the children’s upbringing and education (parents 6–8, 10).

Typical cultural activities are not common and are only practised occasionally by individual parents of both higher and lower SES. Some higher SES parents claim there is no need for that at such a young age. Only one parent gives his/her child piano lessons (parent 6), apparently as a prerequisite of a good education.

**Intergenerational transfer of linguistic capital**

As regards the social background of higher SES parents, they are of varied origin. Five of them are descendents of Cracow’s intelligentsia (parents 2, 3, 6, 7, 9). Their parents, who were often academics, knew some foreign languages even in communist times, although this wasn’t necessarily English, but e.g. French or Russian. Even if they did not know English they usually sent their children to private English lessons. Foreign language knowledge, even though opportunities to travel abroad were scarce, was regarded as a status symbol. Therefore they insisted that their children speak some foreign languages. In one case (parent 9) the mother spoke to the child in French every day in order to bring it up Polish-French bilingual. In the case of those parents, some intergenerational transfer of linguistic capital can be observed. These are also the same parents who, having received it from their parents, although they may owe their professional success to FL knowledge, no longer consider this skill as a unique skill, but rather as an integral component of their child’s education.

On the other hand, among the interviewed parents, there is a group of highly successful mothers, who despite coming from provincial areas (they typically left their home towns to study in Cracow), managed to learn foreign languages, often in late adolescence/early adulthood, which subsequently enabled them to obtain relatively good occupational positions, often in international corporations.
(parents 1, 5, 7, 8). This considerable advancement on the social mobility ladder was possible thanks to their own parents’ investments in additional classes (private lessons) or studying another subject (e.g. economics) as well as favourable politico-economic circumstances, which offered many new openings for those who knew foreign languages. Thus it can be observed that while SES of origin may not always be inherited, ambitious and hard working individuals are able to progress, provided the political and socio-economic situation is conducive to it. Parental involvement and support in child education is also an indispensable condition. This is probably what was lacking in parents of currently lower SES. They usually do not speak foreign languages well, which has inhibited their social advancement in times of economic prosperity. Their low FL skills resulted from sole reliance on school instruction (which was usually of low quality) and a lack of parental investment in that direction (parents 12–15).

**Concluding remarks**

The interviews were mainly conducted with mothers (except for two cases, parent 2 and parent 9), which indicates that in the case of very young children they are the primary caregivers and most responsible for their children’s education. Often being very ambitious and educationally successful themselves, they seem to hold very high aspirations for their children. Thus, current investment, and possibly future academic/linguistic achievements, to a large extent depend on maternal educational awareness and involvement in the child’s education. This finding is in line with Kawula (1998), who also observed that in the case of young children it is, first of all, the mothers who exert most influence on their children’s early development.

Whilst maternal FL knowledge is indispensable in active involvement in their children’s FL education, the same capacity in both mothers and fathers allowed the parents to obtain high occupational positions, and therefore proficiency in FLs often coincides with higher SES. Consequently, high SES seems to coincide with increased educational awareness of parents, which in turn, has an impact on the parental level of aspirations held for their children, and consequently, the amount and quality of investment into their children’s very early learning of languages. Only those parents who have had a successful FLL experience are able to successfully help their children in early foreign language learning. Parental involvement is an indispensable component of the teaching process at such an early age.

What is surprising, however, is the choice of language made by those parents for their children to study, which is first and foremost English, although many
of those parents have profited more from knowing other languages. For example the Slovak and English speaking mother found a job in the Shell Corporation (thanks to her knowledge of Slovak and economics – parent 8), the mother who graduated with Arabic, uses her knowledge about Islam in business discussions with Muslim partners in the Far East (parent 7), the father who knows Lithuanian, wrote a doctorate on the basis of original sources (parent 2). In their case the knowledge of a rarer language (in addition to English) appeared to be crucial. Therefore it can be speculated that in early childhood parents mostly aim to arouse their children’s interest in languages, develop openness and curiosity to other cultures, and learning English, as a global language, which is the first and natural choice.

Finally, it should be noted that the conclusions referring to the role of SES in forming aspirations, as well as the kinds of support given to very young learners, are based on observations and derive from a relatively small sample. Yet, the impact of SES on the quantity of parental involvement was found in the quantitative part of the project as well (cf. Tab. 5.8).

This seems to reveal certain tendencies. Whilst one cannot generalize that all lower SES parents give less support to their children, it must be acknowledged that any investment into child FL education does require some financial resources. So that this does not become a major barrier in obtaining plurilingual competence and to subsequently give all children equal professional opportunities, provision must be made for good quality FL education from kindergarten level onwards (Tab. 5.11).

Table 5.11. Summary of parental beliefs in reference to early FLL (interview results)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FL as investment</th>
<th>Higher SES</th>
<th>Lower SES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language learning not as a goal per se; One of the components of good education; Its knowledge taken for granted; A means for self-actualization, meeting other people (integrative motive); A FL as a natural gift that can be given to children; Future success seen as living a happy, independent life, appreciation of family values, close relationships (as a remedy to globalization); Prediction: knowledge of at least two foreign languages required</td>
<td>FLL motivated instrumentally (to get a job, to emigrate and live abroad); Tool for obtaining material success</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future child identity</td>
<td>Three parents wish for ‘international outlook’, make a child feel at home anywhere; FL knowledge = increased mobility; All parents accept living (temporarily) abroad while still maintaining contact with the home country (skype etc.)</td>
<td>No dilemmas about future identity; Rather adhering to national identity (even when emigrating)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Educational plans for the future

- Private lessons with a native speaker;
- Primary and gymnasium education in the private sector (smaller groups, higher frequency of lessons, better quality of teaching);
- Travelling abroad (summer school in an English speaking country);
- Making the child study abroad

- Enrolling in extracurricular classes (courses) when needed, but reliance on school instruction emphasized;
- Help with homework, buying educational resources (books)

#### Parental involvement in FLL

- Acting as a 'role model' (e.g. in trips abroad, meeting foreign friends);
- Personal involvement in child’s play (puppets, games, occasional reading of stories);
- Promoting cartoon/DVD watching in English;
- Speaking to the child in L2 at least occasionally (3 cases)

- Buying a limited range of FL resources (colouring books, magazines with labels, picture dictionaries)

#### Cultural capital

- Frequent travelling abroad;
- Visiting friends, sightseeing, sports (skiing, swimming, gymnastics, ballet, often in an organized form);
- No need for cultural entertainment at this age;
- Music classes (parent 7); Limited/no use of TV, computers, play station

- Being outdoors; Visiting friends, occasional theatre/cinema; Television, playstation

#### Intergenerational transfer of linguistic capital

- Varied origin, both ambitious individuals arriving from the provincial areas to study in Cracow and descendants of Cracow’s intelligentsia (5 cases);
- The latter already ‘inherited’ foreign language knowledge from their parents, while the former admit to their parents investments in private lessons/courses, even if they themselves did not know foreign languages;
- Ambitious mothers who made social advancement thanks to (language) education

- Poor FL knowledge due to lack of learning/investments in youth and adolescence (limited to school learning of poor quality)

### 5.2.2. Case studies

Each case study first describes the socio-economic and educational background of the child’s parents, as it is assumed these variables condition the learning environment, learning opportunities and overall cognitive and linguistic growth of the child. Therefore, in the description of each case study, parents’ occupational/educational background are given as an indication of SES (cf. Domański, Ch. 2), their level of foreign language knowledge, their interests and ways of spending free time as indicative of the family’s cultural capital, and information about the parents’ origin and their parents’ educational practices (to indicate whether there is intergenerational transfer of capital). All these are considered as a background to the parental level of aspirations and parental involvement in very early L2 learning. It is notable that the children’s parents are in their mid-thirties, which indicates that they are already fairly well established in their professional careers and will have developed certain firm opinions on child education and upbringing.
Case Study 1 – Wiktor (six years old)

Wiktor seems to belong to a family typically representative of the Polish middle class. Both parents possess senior managerial jobs in sales, which require them to travel frequently on business. The mother travels regularly to the Far East (China, India, Pakistan) and the father travels more to western Europe and the USA. The mother is a graduate of Arabic philology, and apart from Arabic also knows English (which she nowadays uses daily at work) and Italian. The father, being a graduate of automotive systems and robotics engineering, also has a fluent command of English. The mother comes from a small town outside Cracow, the father, being the son of academics (i.e. intelligentsia), has lived in Cracow all his life and is a graduate of a renowned secondary school and university. So in a way, it can be argued that academic success has been transferred intergenerationally, at least on the part of the father.

However, the mother appears to be a very ambitious individual, who first of all has had very high aspirations for her own achievements (e.g. she learnt two foreign languages in early adulthood). The mother must also have been a very ambitious individual in reference to herself, as she comes from a smaller town outside Cracow, and by moving to study here has made a considerable step upwards on the social mobility ladder.

Believing good education to be key to success in professional life, she naturally holds high aspirations for her children’s achievements and would like to inspire her children to strive for academic success. The mother makes all the major educational decisions herself, and also spends most of the time with the children as the father works long hours, takes the children to additional afternoon classes, checks their homework etc. Her investments are visible in her careful choice of a kindergarten and primary school, based on opinions canvassed from other parents, the results of school-leaving exams etc. As the mother says, ‘Cracow provides so many opportunities that it would be a shame not to take advantage of them’ (parent 1 – “Kraków ma tyle możliwości, że szkoda by ich było nie wykorzystać”). Although the parents have decided on a public primary school (one of the top ones), they are certain that they will send their child to a private lower secondary school (gymnasium) to ‘make up for certain deficiencies’ (‘as there will be some’, she claims), and further on they are prepared for their children to study abroad.

On the importance of education and the necessity of provision for cognitive stimulation, she says:

‘Uważam, że edukacja jest mega ważna w dzisiejszych czasach; Chodzi o to, żeby to dziecko nie było takie zahukane [...] nie znam tego, nie miałam tego, tutaj się
nie dogadam, tu nie rozumiem. W ogóle samoocena takiego dziecka tak spada, że myśli, a to ja mogę już tylko ulice sprzątać’ (parent l).

‘I believe that education is super important nowadays; It is all about not making the child inhibited, thinking «I don’t know this, I didn’t have that, here I cannot communicate, I do not understand». The self-esteem of such a child is so low, that he thinks he is only good for sweeping the streets’ (The author’s translation).

In consequence, these parents want their children to try out many different activities and hobbies, on the one hand for general cognitive stimulation, and on the other as a way of detecting children’s strengths and talents. The parents treat foreign language knowledge only as one of many desired capabilities, in addition to sports. Wiktor attends swimming and ballet classes. He also goes skiing regularly during winter, including abroad. Also, free time and holidays are mostly spent outdoors, doing sports, sightseeing, hiking etc.

The boy is not at all disadvantaged despite being the younger sibling in the family; the parents seem to provide equal educational opportunities to both children. However, it should be noted that whatever educational decisions are made (such as the type of school), it is first of all, made in reference to the two year older daughter and the son simply follows in her footsteps.

At the moment Wiktor learns two foreign languages at a private kindergarten: English and French. The parents did not particularly think of foreign languages when enrolling the child into the kindergarten; they just accepted them as part and parcel of the educational offer, although they took it for granted that foreign languages would be taught. For the time being, they do not particularly invest their own time and effort into teaching/practising the languages with the child themselves. The mother only occasionally revises class material with the child. They do not have very high expectations for achievements from such an early start; they believe this is rather a form of accustomisation to language and that the time for more serious study will come. She claims that at the start of primary school she will enroll her son into extracurricular classes. For one thing, she also cannot find time for extra practice with the children as most weekday afternoons are spent taking the children to various afternoon classes. However, the mother believes the children are aware of how important foreign languages are as they are present in the parents’ daily professional lives and used actively by the parents on holidays abroad (a few times a year). Consequently, the children realize that their parents travel to foreign countries where they have to speak foreign languages as well as hearing their parents speak them. They also are aware of the communicative barriers which arise due to lack of FL knowledge when they themselves cannot play with other children when abroad.
Hence it is visible that parental investment in the child’s education is delegated into the hands of specialist institutions. Also the mother seems to occupy nearly all the children’s free time with additional classes. She believes it is necessary to spend time productively from very early on and she organizes the timetable deliberately and conscientiously. For example, she deliberately withholds access to computer games, playstation etc. to the benefit of sports and other activities which will prospectively develop her children’s interests. However, she does seem to respond to the child’s interests, for example she is thinking of enrolling the children in classes in robotics as she has observed in Wiktor a talent for construction and design. In these endeavours, she seems to show a thorough educational awareness:

‘Jest czas, i trzeba wykorzystać pewne możliwości, tak jak na przykład ja żałuję, że miałam możliwość wykorzystania tego, a tego nie zrobiłam bo odżywał się mój leż; Więc ja im tak tłumaczę, że jeśli czegoś teraz nie zrobić, to potem będzie coraz więcej obowiązków, więcej nauki w szkole i oni to przyjmują’.

‘There is time, and one has to take advantage of certain opportunities. I, for example, regret that I had a chance to do this and that, but I didn’t do it because of my laziness. So I explain to them that if they do not do something now, later on there will be more duties, more learning at school, and they accept this’.

To summarize, Wiktor’s parents having achieved educational and professional success realize how difficult it will be to reproduce it in the following generation, when competition for desirable job openings will be even more fierce. They are aware of the importance and value of a high level and versatile education as well as the necessity of developing their children’s interests; therefore they cater for their development from the very beginning. Education is definitely regarded by them as a valuable investment and foreign language education is only one aspect of this investment. However, rather than being personally involved, they prefer, and can afford, to hand over this task to specialist expert institutions.

Case study 2 – Emily (four years old)

Emily’s mother is attempting to bring her up bilingually, by speaking to her in English. She is the first-born child of parents who in early stages of their marriage spent a few years in the US trying to earn money to purchase a flat. The mother, a graduate of Slovak philology and economics who also knows English well (FCE level), has now found employment in an international corporation (mainly thanks to her knowledge of Slovak and accounting). The father has only
secondary level of education, and now runs his own carpentry firm, which occupies him almost full time. Therefore it is the mother who mainly takes care of the children, Emily and the younger brother, now 1,6. Both parents come from working class families outside Cracow, yet in the case of the mother, sufficient financial support was provided by her parents for her foreign language and university education, which indicates both high educational awareness and high aspirations for their daughter.

Since Emily was born in the US, she has dual citizenship. Her parents consider this to be a great opportunity that should not be wasted. They imagine that when Emily grows up she should have the option of emigrating to the US and living there. Therefore her parents, especially the mother as she spends more time with her, want to bring up the child bilingually, as a knowledge of English is necessary to be a lawful citizen in the US. Thus the decision to teach the child English from birth was dictated by a purely instrumental motive.

Since the baby was born in the US, she was initially surrounded by English to a large extent. The mother, on the advice of the family doctor, decided to speak English to her. In addition, she took her daughter to events with other parents and children, e.g. library meetings. They lived in an English speaking area (not the Polish district) of Chicago, so the baby had quite a lot of exposure outside the family. However, the family had to return to Poland when Emily was 18 months old. At that stage, it can be said that English was Emily’s first language. On returning to Poland, in order to maintain the English language the mother continued to speak English to her daughter, thus trying to establish artificial bilingualism. In the case of Emily, parental (or more precisely maternal) involvement in her L2 learning is particularly evident. Not only does the mother speak English to her child regularly, but she frequently reads English storybooks to her. In addition, Emily watches cartoons only in English (via cable TV).

However, now at the age of four, maintaining these strategies seems to be more and more difficult. For one thing, the mother admits she is running out of words, as her competence is limited to FCE level; she is not bilingual herself. For another, clearly Polish tends to dominate in Emily’s environment now, as she has started to attend kindergarten, and also spends less time with her mother who firstly, had to take care of her younger son, and six months later returned to her professional work.

The mother would like to secure the best learning opportunities by maximising exposure to L2 and enrolling the child in additional L2 classes; but despite researching the educational market she could not find an appropriate school in Cracow, which would provide language teaching to children at an advanced level and would teach the language communicatively and not solely songs and
games, thus she recognizes the problem with continuity. Her dream is to enroll the child in an English speaking international school, but she openly admits that there are serious limitations in terms of finances.

As a result of all these measures, Emily could now best be described as a passive bilingual. She understands all the utterances of her mother, but either responds nonverbally or in Polish (most often). She rarely initiates conversation in English, as clearly she feels there is no reason for this (as mum addresses Tadziu, the younger son in Polish). So her L2 active competence is tending to diminish, although there must be traces of ‘deeply hidden competence’ as she occasionally produces some phrases and sentences spontaneously. For example, once during a walk, on looking at a puddle, she said: ’Mummy, I can see my reflection’, which made mum proud of her.

To summarize, the case of Emily is an instance of considerable maternal involvement in her child’s L2 education, which has resulted in relatively high L2 competence. Yet, this successful case also indicates the problems with guaranteeing the child adequate support, challenge and continuity at the institutional level.

Case study 3 – Julia and Natalia (both five years old)

Julia and Natalia are twin sisters aged five. Their mother is a hotel receptionist, so she knows reasonably good English and German, although she mainly learnt them in late adolescence/early adulthood: English in secondary school and German from higher education. The children’s father is a fireman, and to make a living he has two jobs, thus he is often out of home at work. The children are often under the care of their mother or in day care/kindergarten. Although the mother spends a considerable amount of time with the children, this may not be always very active, as the mother often works at night. The parents both come from eastern parts of Poland from farming families and have no help/family support in the children’s upbringing. It can be seen that they struggle hard to maintain a good level of living (as manifested in the possessions bought), yet the mother admits it is difficult to realize many of their desires, such as summer holidays. However, they do seem to have high aspirations in terms of guaranteeing their daughters’ adequate living standards (buying a lot of toys, pets, clothes etc.) and participating in cultural activities occasionally, e.g. the theatre.

Interestingly, both parents have relatives living in the US, and they also used to go there occasionally to earn money for larger purchases (such as a car). America appears to them to be a ‘dreamland’, a land of opportunity. The mother hopes that her daughters will emigrate there. She even openly states that she would like her daughters to attend secondary school there and later on, univer-
sity. This is her dream and plan. Thus foreign language learning in this case is again motivated instrumentally.

The sisters both attended English classes offered in a nursery (from the age of two) and later on at a public kindergarten, where they had on average two classes per week. The mother generally is very happy with their achievements, as ‘they can sing virtually every song, and when I ask them what a given word means, they can always say it. The teacher praises Julia in that respect particularly’. It is visible from this comment that the mother relies heavily on the teacher’s opinion in that respect. Her own involvement in the language education of her daughters is minimal, despite her adequate competence in English. Her input is restricted to buying her daughters books with labels in the form of picture dictionaries. Also the children possess a few educational American-made toys which can teach e.g. numbers or a few recorded phrases. For the time being the mother does not plan any additional financial investments into FL instruction, such as additional classes. Also at primary school level she mainly wants to rely on what the school will offer. The mother considers that the only way for the girls to master English (and improve their living standards) is to emigrate to the US.

This case clearly shows how a family’s economic situation determines the amount of maternal/paternal active involvement in the education of their children. The parents have little time and energy to spend on educational activities as well as less idea of how additional language practice could be conducted. Therefore the necessity of relying on educational institutions in that respect is unavoidable.

Case study 4 – Mateusz (four years old)

Mateusz is the middle child of an academic (father) and a pedagogue (mother; currently working at home). He has an older sister (seven) and a younger brother (two). He attends a private kindergarten associated with a religious organization, where English is taught every day. Although the decision for enrollment was primarily motivated by the Christian values promoted in the kindergarten and their impact on the child’s upbringing, the father, who is an enthusiastic amateur linguist (with knowledge of English, Lithuanian, Latvian and learning Chinese) recognizes that foreign language education is an important component of global education, and that the presence of foreign language instruction in a kindergarten curriculum is/should be of high importance. The mother does not really speak any foreign language, therefore she does not concern herself with this area of development, and it was the father who was interviewed.

The father has a strong conviction that investing in his children’s current
needs and education is the best investment for the future. As he says, his future depends on how he has brought up his children. (Pl. ‘Moja przyszłość zależy od tego, jak mam wychowane dzieci’). So he believes the emphasis should be laid, first of all, on child upbringing, based on such traditional values as discipline, self-control, perseverance and hard work. The consequence of such an upbringing should also be high educational achievement.

With this objective in mind, the parents chose a kindergarten with a strong emphasis on religious education. Also in the family they tend to spend a lot of time together on family walks, visits with family/friends etc. They usually go abroad on holiday (mostly to Croatia). This experience, according to the father, somehow increases the children’s awareness of the existence of other countries and languages (such as knowledge of names of countries, country flags, questioning about the names of objects in other languages).

As regards the child’s foreign language education, the father treats it with some reserve. He agrees it is important, but is of the opinion that one should not exaggerate, by for example teaching too many languages at once. He says, ‘language is only an additional tool enabling the realization of other skills; it is something which enables the exploitation of our basic knowledge’ (Pl. ‘Język jest dodatkiem, narzędziem umożliwiającym realizację innych swoich umiejętności, to jest coś, co zdecydowanie poszerza możliwość wykorzystania naszej bazowej wiedzy’). Consequently, the father does not particularly teach the children English at home, relying on kindergarten and further school instruction. Yet, when it comes to his social identity, it seems to be closely related to foreign languages, as he feels he is ‘a citizen of Europe’, not so much in the political but cultural sense. He appreciates the fact that he can travel abroad, speak Italian when asking for wine in an Italian village etc. In this sense he feels that knowledge of various languages is an enriching experience lasting his whole life. He expects that his children will develop a similar ‘international identity’.

The father comes from an intelligentsia background; his parents were also academics; he was also sent to English classes from primary school level. In this sense it can be argued that some intergenerational transfer in educational achievement and foreign language knowledge can be observed. However, the same transfer cannot be observed in the person of the mother. This case demonstrates that those individuals who have already mastered a foreign language in their own childhood do not consider it the most important skill/tool for success in the education of their own children. They realize that other values can be more important for an overall success in life. Foreign language knowledge is taken for granted and assumed that it will be acquired through formal instruction as well as foreign language use in natural situations.
Case study 5 – Olivier (five years old)

Olivier’s mother is a primary school English teacher, and therefore it could be assumed that this puts him in an advantageous position in respect of the degree of maternal involvement in foreign language practice. His father who possesses a small construction firm does not speak any foreign language, which he regrets, and therefore he insists that his son learns foreign languages. Both parents come from the Swietokrzyskie region. The mother is the major care giver as the father spends a lot of time working outside the home. So the child mainly spends his time accompanying his mother in household chores, visiting friends and in the playground.

Oliver attends an English course in a public kindergarten twice a week. At home the mother teaches him English occasionally, when the opportunity arises. For example, when the child finds some of her teaching materials, e.g. flashcards, the mother tells him the English name of the subject presented. Also at times they read/browse through English course books for children together. The mother tried to show Olivier some English cartoons on YouTube, but gave up, as the child preferred those in Polish. Yet, this kind of teaching is not very systematic. As the mother says, teaching English at kindergarten level is only about playing, the time for serious study will come at school. The most common way of practising English, however, is playing a course CD with songs, and singing them to a guitar accompaniment. No communicative language use is practised.

The child knows the profession of his mother, so it was quite natural and obvious for him that he would attend an English class. However, it is usually the child’s initiative to do some tasks in English (when he finds some materials), rather than a deliberate educational action of the mother. The mother believes in the necessity of good education, but she makes the point that she does not want to force the child to anything:

‘Wiadomo, że każdy chce, żeby dziecko coś osiągnęło w życiu, no i jedyna droga jest przez edukację. Myślę, że zdaję się na to co go będzie interesować i w tym kierunku będziemy szli. Jak będzie chciał to będzie to robił; myślę, że to jest mój charakter, bo mnie nikto do niczego nie zmuszał’.

‘It is well known, that everyone wants their child to achieve something in life, and that the only way is through education. I think that my decisions will depend on what will interest the child and we will aim for this direction. If he wants to do something, he will do it; I think I have developed this attitude because I was not forced to anything myself’.
In this sense she follows the stance of her own parents who also did not force/suggest anything as far as the directions of her education were concerned. The decision to become an English teacher was made during her last year of secondary school. However, she does admit that her parents were always interested in her progress and were ready to provide additional help when needed. Consequently, she expects to provide Oliver with similar support.

The major conclusion that can be drawn from these case studies is that although parents have rather realistic expectations as far as the current achievement of their children is concerned, i.e. they do not strive for native-like competence at this stage, they show little awareness of the necessity of their own involvement in the language education of their children to maximise the amount of exposure to a foreign language (e.g. via media, additional language practice with a parent), and to provide challenge and interest in language learning tasks (in order to sustain motivation and lay the ground work for autonomous learning in the future). Too often they place too much faith in educational institutions and have too little trust in their own capacity as a foreign language teacher. It seems that only those individuals who have a philological education themselves (such as Emily’s mother) know how to learn and seek opportunities for FL learning, i.e. learning strategies. However, even this is not always certain, as the case of Olivier showed. Therefore it can be concluded that more publicity and more parent education is needed in that respect, e.g. by means of practical guidebooks published with ideas for home practice, short training sessions etc.

5.3. Institutional provision for very young FL learners – a study of kindergarten head teachers

FL teaching at pre-primary level is not part of the official kindergarten curriculum. Yet, since many parents are convinced of the necessity of starting FLL early, they demand that such instruction is offered at kindergarten level. This concerns both private and public institutions. While collecting the data for the study, and especially in the pilot phase of the project, it was observed that in public kindergartens it is usually a fee-paying course organized by some external FL teaching company, who offer FL teaching during the regular hours of kindergarten instruction. In private kindergartens the situation may be similar, but it also occurs that a FL teacher is additionally employed full-time (if the instruction takes place every day), or in some cases one of the regular kindergarten teachers/tutors who is knowledgeable of a FL, may additionally conduct FL classes. This shows that FL instruction, its frequency, duration, a choice of a FL etc. to a large extent depends on the kindergarten’s head teacher. S/he is the
major decision maker in this respect. By selecting a FL teacher, by supervising and monitoring his/her work (or lack of it) and by providing adequate facilities and aids, s/he has a substantial impact on the arousal of children’s interest and motivation to learn FLs as well as on visible learning outcomes. In addition it should be recognized in line with European guidelines (cf. Recommendation 7 on The use of the Council of Europe’s Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and the promotion of plurilingualism, 2008) that FL education should be pluricultural, inclusive and intercultural. Therefore persons and institutions responsible for it should take steps towards attaining these goals. Consequently, data on these issues was collected by means of a questionnaire (App. 2), and the study of kindergarten head teachers constitutes the second source of information on the process of very early teaching of FLs. Altogether there were 63 head teachers surveyed: 49 in public kindergartens (77.78%) and 14 in private kindergartens (22.12%). Private kindergartens were found only in the city (or town). In the villages only public kindergartens were found (14). The data obtained is presented below.

5.3.1. Ways of organizing FL instruction in different settings

Initially it was planned to compare ways of organizing instruction in different types of kindergartens, private and public, as well as those in the city and in the village. However, since there were very few surveys returned from village kindergartens, it was decided to rely on descriptive rather than on correlation analysis, as the sample of head teachers from the villages was relatively small. The reason for this fact may be that the number of operating kindergartens is rather small. Private kindergartens are more common in towns than in villages. A number of kindergartens have recently been opened in rural areas, mainly with the help of European Funds, with a view to encouraging rural parents to enrol their children (in the first year, attendance is free). FL is usually taught only to the oldest group of children if adequate funds are found (and a teacher). Most commonly it is taught in the so-called ‘0’ grade, which is located in the local primary school and the primary teacher also teaches the ‘0’ grade class. The reason for this is that far fewer parents would be prepared to pay an additional fee to a kindergarten. Figure 5.14 shows the distribution of fees for FL instruction.

It can be seen that in the vast majority of public kindergartens (both in the city and in villages) FLL for a child requires extra costs to be borne. It does not usually require additional fees in private kindergartens but this is because FL instruction is already included in the overall fee, which is higher than public kindergarten
fees. Free instruction is at times offered in some public kindergartens but only when additional funding is secured. This shows that ultimately not all children can participate in the course. When asked if the head teachers plan to address this situation, a few of them (especially in rural areas) said they will try to get extra funding to resolve this, whereas in public kindergartens in the city, the majority of head teachers openly stated that it is the parents’ decision whether they want to enrol the child into a FL course and want to pay. Sometimes they acknowledge that there are children who do not attend a FL class not due to financial problems, but due to speech/articulation problems, on the advice of a speech therapist that such a course would be counterproductive (sic) to very young learners. This shows that the old myth of a negative impact of very early FLL is still popular, contrary to the most recent research findings (cf. e.g. Rocławska-Daniluk, 2011).

![Figure 5.14. Costs of very early FL instruction in various types of kindergartens](image)

Only four head teachers said that they use/plan to utilise their kindergarten teachers’ FL knowledge, and ask them to have FL classes with all the groups of children, which seems to be the most favourable solution as it provides for inclusive (i.e. available to all) and cost-effective teaching.

In fact, especially in many public kindergartens, it was found through personal communication that the head teachers were often not very enthusiastic about FL courses as they disturbed the organization of their kindergarten day (Children had to be taken out from various groups; a FL can be taught only in the afternoon). Had it not been for parental pressure, it can be supposed that a FL would not be offered at all. One of the surveyed head teachers said openly that it is not her obligation and responsibility to supervise FL teaching and she
was happy to delegate this task to private firms offering such teaching. This attitude seemed to be typical of older head teachers, probably less knowledgeable in FLs themselves, and not having experienced their beneficial impact. A different and generally more positive attitude was observed among those head teachers who either knew FLs themselves or had children who learnt them.

![Figure 5.15. Comparison of duration of very early FL instruction in various types of kindergartens and settings](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>village public</th>
<th>city public</th>
<th>city private</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 30 minutes</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>54.0%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 minutes</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Figure 5.16. Comparison of the frequency of very early FL instruction in various types of kindergartens and settings](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>village public</th>
<th>city public</th>
<th>city private</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice a week</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 times a week</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 3 times a week</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As regards other aspects of FL organization, such as frequency and duration, there were no significant differences between public and private kindergartens, those in the city and those in the villages. As Figures 5.15 and 5.16 show, a FL is typically taught twice a week for 30 min. Only in a small minority of institutions is it taught either for a shorter (ca. 20 min) or longer (45 min) period of time. Also it was found that only those kindergartens which aspire to be considered ‘language kindergartens’ (Pol. \textit{przedszkola językowe}) offer FL teaching more than twice a week, usually every day.

5.3.2. Head teachers’ reasons for introducing very early FL instruction

The second research question asked the reason why the kindergarten head teachers decided to introduce FL instruction in the institutions headed by them (cf. Q 1, Part 2, App. 3). As Figure 5.17 shows, the most common reasons for introducing a FL in the kindergarten were the head teachers’ own convictions that such early FL instruction will potentially result in future benefits for linguistic development (20.1%), which succumbs to ‘the earlier, the better view’, as well as the overall child’s emotional, social and intellectual development (18.1%). Only later was it acknowledged that FL instruction reflects a common social trend (16.8%) and was introduced under parental pressure (16.1%). It is quite surprising that the least popular answer was arousing motivation for future FLL (14.2%), as it is in fact one of the most important goals of educating towards plurilingualism. As regards distribution of the reasons among the subgroups studied (i.e. public village, public city and private city kindergartens), it is generally proportionate to the overall score. The major difference observed was that parental demand was often the second most important reason for introducing FL early in public kindergartens. This shows that parents feel a necessity to guarantee their children an ‘early start’ in a FL and do not want their child to be disadvantaged in comparison to those children who attend private institutions and where a FL is already a part of the curriculum. Another noticeable difference is the fact that it was mainly in private kindergartens that the arousal of children’s motivation to learn a FL was cited as a reason for an ‘early start’. This may imply that in private kindergartens there is an enhanced awareness of the necessity to provide higher quality provision for FL teaching.

In most kindergartens there is only one FL taught and that is English, which defies the goal of fostering plurilingualism. There is no/little choice of other languages. In the sample of 63 kindergartens studied the second foreign language offered was French (10 kindergartens), and in two of them it was German. In one kindergarten other foreign languages used to be offered (Spanish and Italian),
and in another one further languages are planned, but those head teachers acknowledged that the most difficult task is to hire teachers of other languages who would know child-friendly methodology or simply how to approach very young children. The popularity of French in kindergartens in Cracow is probably largely due to the activity of the French Institute and one private school, which are known for providing in-service training for teachers, as well as being active in the educational market: they often offer their services to private kindergartens.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation for future FLL</th>
<th>Village public</th>
<th>City public</th>
<th>City private</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class attractiveness</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental demand</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social trend</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child development</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future benefit</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6.17. Kindergarten head teachers’ reasons for introducing FL instruction

To justify the introduction of English as the main or only language offered, the head teachers pointed most often to the popularity of English worldwide and hence its prospective usefulness (27.6%), and therefore its recognition as a *lingua franca*. The second most popular answer pointed to continuity of this FL in primary school; thus kindergarten instruction can facilitate learning of the same FL later on (17.2%), and the third most popular answer was that English is also preferred by parents (15.5%). All these top three most common reasons comply with the status of English as a global language, thus learning it is the first and often the only choice of a FL. The fourth reason stated was that many kindergarten head teachers regard one FL as sufficient (13.8%) and it is clear that they are convinced that the time for further FLL will come later (7.8%). Less popular reasons related to a lack of other teachers or educational offer, maybe also due to the fact that teachers of other languages do not seek such employment. As regards reasons described as ‘other’ (7.8%), most head teachers pointed to a lack of parental desire to enrol their children in other FL classes.
Figure 5.18. Kindergarten head teachers’ reasons for choosing English as the main FL of very early instruction

5.3.3. Ensuring quality provision

The third research question aimed to find out what measures kindergarten head teachers take in order to ensure high quality provision for FL instruction which brings visible learning outcomes as well as motivating very young learners to further FLL. Figure 5.19 shows kindergarten head teachers’ opinions on factors affecting FL outcomes. It can be seen that the most important factor, indicated by head teachers of public and private city kindergartens as well as village kindergartens, is the teacher and his competences (17.4%), followed by small groups (14.7%) and creating a nice and pleasant atmosphere (12.1%), which is in fact also dependent on the teacher. Only the fourth most popular response related to a factor partly dependent on the head teacher, i.e. availability of varied teaching aids (11.4%). This factor was particularly emphasized in village kindergartens and less so in private kindergartens, in comparison to other factors.

A more interesting account is given in Figure 5.20 which shows the head teachers’ opinions on effective FL instruction and compares them to actual practices in two groups: city and village kindergartens. As can be observed, teacher professionalism is reported to be practised in the city kindergartens even more commonly than it is regarded to be an important factor. However, in the villages this factor is reported to be less common than it is considered to be important. This could be interpreted that head teachers in the city are more satisfied with the teaching skills of their teachers than head teachers in the villages.
Figure 5.19. Kindergarten head teachers’ opinions on factors affecting very early instruction
(Fig. 5.20). When looking at other factors, the largest discrepancies between practices and beliefs can be found in relation to the following (Fig. 5.20):

- Small groups – in the villages instruction is practised in small groups far less than is regarded to be of importance.
- High class frequency – in the city high frequency classes are offered far less than is regarded to be of importance.
- Atmosphere – both in the city and in the villages the head teachers believe that their teachers create a pleasant stress-free atmosphere, yet they attribute less importance to it.
- Material availability – both in the city and in the villages the head teachers believe there are sufficient materials used.
- Home revision – more head teachers in the city believe home revision is important than practise it, whereas head teachers in the villages believe home revision is practised, but attribute less importance to it.
- Contact with foreigners – especially in the city, more head teachers believe that this feature is important than provide such contact.
- Learning environment – in the city the head teachers believe that the learning conditions are very good, yet that they have no impact on FLL outcomes.

Among other factors influencing very early FLL, lesser differences were observed between head teachers’ beliefs and practices.

Finally, the respondents were also asked if any activities/events are organized in their institutions in order to enhance FLL and arouse plurilingual and intercultural awareness (Fig. 5.21). It was found that the most common way of motivating very young learners to learn a FL in all three types of institutions were tests/final exams, although this method of motivating young learners is least common in private institutions. The other methods mentioned were a mini-library, song contests, theatrical performances and art/craft contests. There are very few events which would promote FLL in general, such as a European club/lessons, meeting foreigners from other countries or a Language portfolio. These are practically absent in village kindergartens, and in the city any kinds of events promoting FLL (those mentioned and theatrical performances) are more common in private kindergartens than in public ones. Also, what distinguishes public kindergartens from private ones is perhaps a greater emphasis on showcasing the child's FL skills to parents (in tests, in contests) than striving towards the children’s plurilingual development, the results of which may be less measurable.

The head teachers were also asked about any additional plans for changes to be introduced to their institutions in order to arouse motivation in FLL (Q 6, Part 2, App. 3). In response to this question the head teachers indicated the following plans: changing the teacher, using the language club activities available at (neighbouring) primary school/private language school, buying an interactive board, recording a CD with the kindergarten children’s FL songs, additional contests, introducing a FL portfolio, and introducing other FLs. However, these ideas were given by only a few individual head teachers (one to three suggestions each). The majority of the head teachers did not answer this question and half of those that answered it said they do not need to introduce any changes as the motivation of parents and children is already high (probably judged by the number of participants). One head teacher mentioned she would like to increase the frequency of FL lessons and for FL to become part of the curriculum. In fact, she plans to introduce her own curriculum and have it approved as a ‘pedagogical innovation’.
Figure 5.21. Activities promoting FLL in various types of kindergartens and settings
Using only a FL

Flexibility/fast reaction to boredom

Precise lesson plan and its realisation

Teacher preparation of his own aids

Ability to maintain discipline

Friendly approach to children

Teacher preparation of his own aids

Precise lesson plan and its realisation

Flexibility/fast reaction to boredom

Using only a FL

Figure 5.22: Kindergarten head teachers’ opinions on skills and competences required from a FL teacher
Since the teacher appears to be the most important element of the teaching process, a question was added to the questionnaire (Q 7, Part 2, App. 3) on the skills/competences required in a teacher. In total, 30 head teachers answered this question (Fig. 5.22), pointing to the following features (in ranking order):

1) wide variety of activities in the lesson, which ensures a vivid pace;
2) physical teacher involvement and willingness to sing, play and use vivid gestures with children;
3) frequent rewarding and praising of children;
4) friendly approach to children;
5) ability to maintain discipline;
6) teacher preparation of his own aids;
7) precise lesson plan and realizing it exactly (this is particularly emphasized in private kindergartens);
8) flexibility/fast reaction to boredom.

Surprisingly, very few head teachers demand that their teachers speak only a FL during the class. The major difference between the types of kindergarten is that lesser demand on teacher preparation is reported from the village head teachers, as is visible in a lack of answers on preparation of aids or precise lesson plans.

5.4. Institutional provision for very young FL learners – a study of FL teachers of very young learners

The third source of information in the research project was FL teachers of very young learners. As indicated in the study of head teachers, the teacher is regarded as the most important component in the FL teaching–learning process, hence teachers’ beliefs as well as practices in very early teaching of a FL are investigated below. Subsequently, comparative analysis is conducted between private and public institutions in reference to each issue investigated.

5.4.1. A profile of a FL teacher of very young learners

The first research question asked for the profile of a FL teacher of very young learners, as the sample of teachers can be treated as representative of the whole population. Hence it is important to find out who teaches children FLs and what their qualifications and competences are. The sample studied consisted of 67 teachers working in public kindergartens (74%) and 23 in private kindergartens (26%). Also 77 respondents (86%) worked in the city, whereas only 13 respondents (14%) worked in villages.
In Figure 5.23 a graphic illustration of the teachers’ age profile is presented.

![Age profile of the VYL teachers studied (n=90)](image)

It can be seen (Fig. 5.23) that nearly all the teachers are younger than 36 years old (99%). Over 50% of the teachers studied are below 25 (52%), followed by those aged 26–30 (26%) and finally those in the 31–35 years age bracket (21%). Only one of the teachers interviewed was over 40 (1%).

Another teacher quality investigated was their level of education (Fig. 5.24).

![YL teachers’ education level (n=90)](image)

The results shown in Figure 5.25 indicate that the majority of the teachers surveyed have a higher level of education (over 95%) – 53% of the teachers have
a Master’s degree, and 43% have a Bachelor’s degree. Only 3% of the teachers have only a secondary level of education. However, not all teachers in the sample have graduated from philological departments. As Figure 5.25 shows, slightly over half of the respondents have graduated from philological departments (53%). The remaining teachers have completed post-graduate studies in FL didactics, passed a CPE (Cambridge Proficiency in English) exam – 7%, CAE (Cambridge Advanced English) exam – 18%, FCE (First Certificate in English) exam – 10% and a further 8% passed exams other than those mentioned.

Finally, the teachers were also asked if they ever had any course in didactics of teaching FLs to young (and very young) learners and whether they plan their professional future with that age group (Fig. 5.26), which indicates whether teaching children is only a temporary activity or whether the teachers would like to develop professionally in that direction.

As Figure 5.26 shows, 67% of the teachers studied had a course in FL didactics to young and very young learners. However, when they were asked if they plan to specialize in teaching children and plan their professional future with teaching this age group, the answers were diversed: 37% answered positively, 39% were not certain, and 24% answered negatively. The considerable number of teachers were hesitant/uncertain about working with very young learners in the future, which may suggest that they treat this occupation as temporary. This is a bit worrying as such an attitude may limit the teachers’ investment into raising their own qualifications as well as involvement in lesson preparation (materials, aids etc.).
Figure 5.26. Teachers’ preparation and preferences for teaching very young children

Figure 5.27. Average length of working as a teacher (in years)

Figure 5.27 shows the average length of experience working as a teacher and teaching very young children.

On average the teachers in the sample had worked in this profession for 5.2 years, and as a YL teacher for 3.5 years.

Comparing teacher profiles in public and private kindergartens

In order to check whether there are any differences between teachers working in private and public kindergartens, as regards their age and professional qualifications and experience, cross tabs and chi-square analyses have been performed. Tables 5.12, 5.13, 5.14, 5.15, and 5.16 show the results of the conducted analyses.

236
Table 5.12. Teachers’ age in public and private kindergartens (cross tabs and chi-square results)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Kindergarten</td>
<td>47.8%</td>
<td>53.7%</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Age</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
<td>76.6%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Kindergarten</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Age</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
<td>69.6%</td>
<td>74.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Kindergarten</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Age</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
<td>73.7%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Kindergarten</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Education</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Kindergarten</td>
<td>56.5%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Education</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
<td>72.9%</td>
<td>72.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
<td>74.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pearson Chi-Square

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>chi²</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.751</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.861</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis conducted by means of the cross tabs and chi-square test (Tab. 5.12), did not show any statistically significant differences between teachers working in private and public kindergartens ($chi^2[3] = .751; p = .861$).

Table 5.13. Teachers’ education level in private and public kindergartens (cross tabs and chi-square analysis)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Kindergarten</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>43.5%</td>
<td>56.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Education</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Kindergarten</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Education</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>74.4%</td>
<td>72.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cross tabs and chi-square analysis of frequency ranges of teachers’ education levels in private and public kindergartens did not show statistically significant differences (Tab. 5.13) \((\chi^2[2]=1.089; p=.580)\).

In addition, teachers’ FL qualifications (Tab. 5.14) as well as their preparation for teaching young and very young learners (Tab. 5.15) have been compared in the two types of kindergartens.

**Table 5.14.** Teachers’ qualifications for FL teaching in private and public kindergartens (cross tabs and chi-square test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications for FL teaching</th>
<th>Philological studies</th>
<th>Postgraduate studies in FL didactics</th>
<th>CPE exam</th>
<th>CAE exam</th>
<th>FCE exam</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private Kindergarten</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Kindergarten</td>
<td>56.5%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Qualifications</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Kindergarten</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Kindergarten</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Qualifications</td>
<td>72.9%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>81.3%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>74.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>74.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Kindergarten</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Qualifications</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the basis of cross tabs and chi-square analysis (Tab. 5.14) no statistically significant differences were identified in FL qualifications of teachers working in private and public kindergartens \((\chi^2[5]=4.731; p=.450)\).
Table 5.15. Teachers’ competences in YL didactics (cross tabs and chi-square analysis)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>% within Kindergarten</th>
<th>% within YL didactic competences</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>69.6%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>% within Kindergarten</th>
<th>% within YL didactic competences</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
<td>76.7%</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>44</td>
<td>65.7%</td>
<td>73.3%</td>
<td>48.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>67</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>74.4%</td>
<td>74.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>% within Kindergarten</th>
<th>% within YL didactic competences</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pearson Chi-Square

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>chi²</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.117</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.733</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Also as regards preparation for teaching young learners, the results of the cross tabs and chi-square analysis (Tab. 5.15) did not show any significant differences in percentile numbers of teachers who have had such preparation in private and public kindergartens ($\chi^2[1]=.117; p=.733$).

The teachers’ plans to specialize in teaching very young learners were also compared in the two types of kindergartens (Tab. 5.16).

Table 5.16. Teachers’ plans to specialize in teaching very young learners (cross tabs and chi-square analysis)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>I don’t know</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Kindergarten</td>
<td></td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>47.8%</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Teaching YLS plans</td>
<td></td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The analysis conducted by means of cross tabs and chi-square test did not show any statistically significant differences between teachers of private and public kindergartens in answer to the question whether the teachers plan to specialize in teaching children in this age group ($\chi^2[2] = 2.329; p = .312$).

In order to compare the length of teaching experience of teachers working in public and private kindergartens a non-parametric Mann-Whitney test was used (Tab. 5.17).

**Table 5.17.** Comparing the length of teaching experience of teachers in public and private kindergartens (Mann-Whitney test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers working in:</th>
<th>Public kindergarten (n=67)</th>
<th>Private kindergarten (n=23)</th>
<th>Mann-Whitney test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Mean Rank</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching experience (general)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>45.59</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching experience in kindergarten</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>44.46</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis conducted by means of a non-parametric Mann-Whitney test (Tab. 5.17) did not show any statistically significant differences between teachers’ length of teaching experience (both in the teaching profession in general and in kindergarten) in the public and private kindergartens ($p > .05$).

Similarly, a comparative analysis was conducted among teachers working in the city/town and those in villages, in order to check whether different types of FL teachers are employed in these two environments. Therefore analogically to
the comparison of groups of teachers working in private and public kindergartens cross tabs and chi-square analyses were used. Tables 5.18, 5.19, 5.20, 5.21 and 5.22 show the results of the conducted analysis.

First, the teachers working in two settings are compared in respect of age (Tab. 5.18).

**Table 5.18.** Comparison of FL teachers working in the city and in the villages (cross tabs and chi-square analysis)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>&lt; 25</th>
<th>26–30</th>
<th>31–35</th>
<th>41–45</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within City/Village</td>
<td>53.8%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Age</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within City/Village</td>
<td>51.9%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Age</td>
<td>85.1%</td>
<td>95.7%</td>
<td>73.7%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>85.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>85.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within City/Village</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Age</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pearson Chi-Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>chi²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.241</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis conducted by means of cross tabs and chi-square test (Tab. 5.18) did not show any statistically significant differences in the age of teachers working in the city and in the villages \( (\text{chi}^2[3] = 4.241; \ p=0.237) \).

Table 5.19 shows the results of the comparative analysis of the two groups of teachers in respect of their place of work: city/town vs. village.

**Table 5.19.** Comparison of teachers’ education levels in the city and villages (cross tabs and chi-square analysis)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Bachelor's degree</th>
<th>Master's degree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within City/Village</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Education</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results of the conducted statistical analysis (Tab. 5.19) showed a statistically significant difference in teacher education level in the city and in the villages ($\chi^2[2]=6.850; p=.033$). 15.4% of the teachers working in the villages have only secondary education, whereas in the city it is only 1.3% of all the teachers in the sample who have only a secondary level of education.

Another aspect of teachers’ qualifications investigated was their FL teaching qualifications (Tab. 5.20).

**Table 5.20.** Comparing FL qualifications of teachers working in the city and in villages (cross tabs and chi-square analysis)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City/Village</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>% within City/Village</th>
<th>% within Education</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>% within City/Village</th>
<th>% within Education</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>87.2%</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pearson Chi-Square

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>chi^2</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.850</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.033</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications for FL teaching</th>
<th>Philological studies</th>
<th>Postgraduate studies in FL didactics</th>
<th>CPE exam</th>
<th>CAE exam</th>
<th>FCE exam</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Village</td>
<td>Count 48</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within City/Village</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Qualifications</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>93.8%</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>85.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>85.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>Count 40</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within City/Village</td>
<td>51.9%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Qualifications</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>93.8%</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>85.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>85.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Count 8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within City/Village</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Qualifications</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On the basis of the analysis conducted by means of the chi-square test, no statistically significant differences (Tab. 5.20) were identified between teachers working in the villages and in the city as regards their FL teaching qualifications ($\chi^2[5]=3.646; \, p=.601$).

Since an important aspect of FL teacher qualifications is the ability to teach young and very young learners, this aspect was also asked about and compared in the two groups (Tab. 5.21).

**Table 5.21.** Comparing teachers’ YL didactics in the city and villages (cross tabs and chi-square analysis)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have you ever had a course in teaching YLs?</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within City/Village</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>69.2%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within YL didactic competences</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**City/Village**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>26</th>
<th>51</th>
<th>77</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% within City/Village</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
<td>66.2%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within YL didactic competences</td>
<td>86.7%</td>
<td>85.0%</td>
<td>85.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
<td>56.7%</td>
<td>85.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**City**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>30</th>
<th>60</th>
<th>90</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% within City/Village</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within YL didactic competences</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ch$^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.045</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.832</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis conducted by means of the chi-square test (Tab. 5.21) did not show any statistically significant differences in teacher preparation for teaching YLs foreign languages among teachers working in the city and in the villages ($\chi^2[1]=.045; \, p=.832$).
Finally, teachers’ readiness to specialize in teaching VYLs was compared between teachers working in the city and in the village (Tab. 5.22).

**Table 5.22.** Comparing teachers’ plans to specialize in teaching VYLs (cross tabs and chi-square analysis).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you plan to specialize in teaching very young learners?</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>I don’t know</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within City/Village</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Teaching YLs plans</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City/Village</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>% within City/Village</th>
<th>% within Teaching YLs plans</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Village</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
<td>82.9%</td>
<td>84.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
<td>71.0%</td>
<td>62.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pearson Chi-Square</th>
<th>chisq</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.730</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.694</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The chi-square analysis (Tab. 5.22) did not show any statistically significant differences as regards plans to specialize in teaching VYLs between teachers working in the city and in the villages ($\chi^2[2] = .730; p = .694$).

In order to test whether there are any significant differences in the length of teaching experience between teachers working in the villages and in the city, a non-parametric Mann-Whitney test was used (Tab. 5.23).

**Table 5.23.** Comparing the length of teaching experience of teachers working in the city and villages (Mann-Whitney test).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers working in:</th>
<th>Village (n=13)</th>
<th>City (n=77)</th>
<th>Mann-Whitney test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M Mean Rank</td>
<td>M Mean Rank</td>
<td>U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching experience (general)</td>
<td>3 33.35</td>
<td>4 47.55</td>
<td>342.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching experience in kindergarten</td>
<td>2 37.08</td>
<td>3 46.92</td>
<td>391.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The analysis conducted by means of the Mann-Whitney test (Tab. 5.23) did not show any statistically significant differences in the length of experience both of general and kindergarten teaching between teachers working in the city and in the villages ($p > .05$).

5.4.2. Beliefs in respect of the goals of early FL instruction according to FL teachers of young learners

The second research question asked for teachers’ beliefs in respect of the goals of FL instruction. Teachers were asked to indicate their level of agreement to each of the statements (1 – I disagree entirely, 5 – I agree entirely) in question 2, part 2 of the questionnaire (App. 3). Figure 5.28 presents the results of the analysis conducted of the sample studied.

![Figure 5.28. Teachers’ beliefs in respect of the goals of very early FL instruction](image)

The earlier one starts FLL, the better results it will bring in the future
Children become used to a FL; its sound, other words, grammar etc.; become aware of the existence of other languages
Development of memory and other cognitive operations (e.g. analysing, finding similarities and differences etc.)
The child becomes more open and self-confident in contact with others/foreigners
Supporting child emotional, social and intellectual development
Children learn FLs more easily than adults
Development of motivation for further FLL in the future
Children learn about foreign cultures and countries and develop interest in them
Children can learn a foreign language as quickly and easily as the mother tongue
Aiding development of child personality
Children learn to express their feelings and opinions through words, movement, artwork
Development of critical and creative thinking
In FL classes children learn cooperation with others
It is too early for FL as the child has not yet learnt Polish

Median

245
The majority of surveyed teachers agreed entirely with the statement that ‘The earlier one starts FLL, the better results it will bring in the future’ and that ‘Children become used to a FL; its sound, other words, grammar etc.; become aware of the existence of other languages’ (M=5 – the answer ‘I agree entirely’).

The respondents partly agreed (M=4 – the answer ‘I partly agree’) with other statements which pointed to the fact that very early FLL enhances ‘the development of memory and other cognitive operations’ as well as that the child ‘becomes more open and self-confident in contact with others/foreigners’.

The scores on the borderline between the statements ‘I don’t know’ and ‘I partly agree’ (M=3.5) were those, which said that very early FLL ‘supports intellectual, emotional and social development of the child’ and that ‘children learn FLs more easily than adults’.

To the remaining statements the teachers showed a neutral attitude (M=3 – ‘I don’t know’).

In order to test whether there are any statistically significant differences in opinions on the goals of very early FLL between teachers of private and public kindergartens a nonparametric Mann-Whitney test was used. Table 5.24 shows the results obtained.

**Table 5.24.** Comparing teachers’ beliefs in respect of the goals of very early FL instruction in private and public kindergartens (results of the Mann-Whitney test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Teachers working in:</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Mann-Whitney test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public kindergarten (n=67)</td>
<td>Private kindergarten (n=23)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is too early for FLL, as the child has not yet learnt Polish</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Mean Rank</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Mean Rank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In FL classes children learn cooperation with others</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>38.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of critical and creative thinking</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children learn to express their feelings and opinions through words, movement, artwork</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>42.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aiding development of child personality</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>44.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children can learn a foreign language as quickly and easily as the mother tongue</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children learn about foreign cultures and develop interest in them</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>39.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As a result of the statistical analysis done by means of the Mann-Whitney test (Tab. 5.24) statistically significant differences in opinions have been found between teachers working in private and public kindergartens in reference to the following statements:

- ‘Development of creative and critical thinking’ – teachers working in public kindergartens attribute to this statement a higher score (Mean rank=48.3; M=5) than teachers working in private kindergartens (Mean rank=37.3; M=3, U=582.0; p=.048).

- ‘Development of motivation for further FLL in the future’ – teachers working in public kindergartens attribute to this statement a statistically and significantly higher score (Mean rank=48.3; M=3) than teachers working in private kindergartens (Mean rank=37.5; M=3, U=586.0; p=.046).

- ‘Children become used to a FL; its sound, other words, grammar etc., become aware of the existence of other languages’ – teachers working for public kindergartens attribute to this statement a statistically and significantly higher score (Mean rank=50.5; M=5) than teachers working in private kindergartens (Mean rank=30.8; M=3, U=433.0; p=.001).

No other statistically significant differences between the opinions of the two groups of teachers were identified (p>.05).

Table 5.25 shows the results of the statistical analysis conducted by means of a Mann-Whitney test, the goal of which was to search for potential differences in opinions on the goals of very early FLL between teachers working in the city and in the villages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development of motivation for further FLL in the future</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>48.3</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>37.5</th>
<th>586.0</th>
<th>-1.993</th>
<th>.046</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children learn FLs more easily than adults</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>654.5</td>
<td>-1.245</td>
<td>.213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting child emotional, social and intellectual development</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>682.0</td>
<td>-.992</td>
<td>.321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child becomes more open and self-confident in contact with others/foreigners</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>711.5</td>
<td>-.587</td>
<td>.557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of memory and other cognitive operations (e.g. analysing, finding similarities and differences etc.)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>723.5</td>
<td>-.515</td>
<td>.607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children become used to a FL; its sound, other words, grammar etc.; become aware of the existence of other languages</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>433.0</td>
<td>-3.469</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The earlier one starts FLL, the better results it will bring in the future</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>51.7</td>
<td>627.0</td>
<td>-1.538</td>
<td>.124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.25. Comparing teachers’ beliefs on the goals of very early FL instruction between teachers working in the city and in villages (results of the Mann-Whitney test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Teachers working in:</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The village</td>
<td>The city</td>
<td>Mann-Whitney test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=13)</td>
<td>(n=77)</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Z</td>
<td>p</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is too early for FLL, as the child has not yet learnt Polish</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>497.0</td>
<td>-.053</td>
<td>.957</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In FL classes children learn cooperation with others</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>496.0</td>
<td>-.058</td>
<td>.954</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of critical and creative thinking</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>390.5</td>
<td>-1.429</td>
<td>.153</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children learn to express their feelings and opinions through words,</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>385.0</td>
<td>-1.462</td>
<td>.144</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>movement, artwork</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aiding development of child personality</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>489.5</td>
<td>-.141</td>
<td>.888</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children can learn a foreign language as quickly and easily as the</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>446.5</td>
<td>-.701</td>
<td>.483</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mother tongue</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children learn about foreign cultures and countries and develop</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>495.5</td>
<td>-.067</td>
<td>.947</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interest in them</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of motivation for further FLL in the future</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>457.0</td>
<td>-.583</td>
<td>.560</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children learn FLs more easily than adults</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>462.5</td>
<td>-.506</td>
<td>.613</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting child emotional, social and intellectual development</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>432.5</td>
<td>-.946</td>
<td>.344</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child becomes more open and self-confident in contact with others/</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>424.5</td>
<td>-.938</td>
<td>.348</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>foreigners</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of memory and other cognitive operations (e.g. analysing,</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>346.0</td>
<td>-2.099</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>finding similarities and differences etc.)</td>
<td>57.4</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children become used to a FL; its sound, other words, grammar etc.;</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>343.0</td>
<td>-2.008</td>
<td>.045</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>become aware of the existence of other languages</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The earlier one starts FLL, the better results it will bring in the</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>437.5</td>
<td>-.838</td>
<td>.402</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>future</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of the statistical analysis performed by means of the Mann-Whitney test (Tab. 5.25) showed statistically significant differences between teachers working in the city and in the village in reference to the following statements:

- ‘Development of memory and other cognitive operations (e.g. analysing, finding similarities and differences etc.)’ – teachers working in kindergartens located in the villages attributed a statistically and significantly higher score to this statement (Mean rank=57.4; M=3) than teachers working in the city (Mean rank=43.5; M=3, U=346.0; p=.036).
- ‘Children become used to a FL; its sound, other words, grammar etc.; become aware of the existence of other languages’ – teachers working in kindergartens located in villages attributed to this statement a statistically and signifi-
Significantly higher score (Mean rank = 57.6; M = 5) than teachers working in the city kindergartens (Mean rank = 43.5; M = 3, U = 343.0; p = .045).

No other statistically significant differences in opinions between teachers working in the city and in the villages were identified (p > .05).

5.4.3. Teachers’ beliefs in respect of possible outcomes of very early FLL

Q 2 Part 2 of the questionnaire (App. 4.) asked teachers to indicate what the plausible FLL results of very young learners are. The respondents were asked to refer to each statement on a 3-point scale (1 – I disagree, 2 – I don’t know/depends, 3 – I agree). Figure 5.29 shows the results obtained from the sample.

![Figure 5.29. Teachers’ opinions in respect of the possible FLL outcomes of very young learners](image-url)
The teachers studied in the sample agreed with the majority of the statements referring to the possible FLL outcomes ($M=3$ – the answer ‘I agree’). The statements were as follows: ‘The child will understand simple commands’, ‘The child will communicate using single words and memorized chunks (e.g. greetings)’, ‘The child will know a few texts in a FL by heart (e.g. songs, poems, drama parts)’, ‘The child will understand the general sense of a storybook, cartoon etc.’, ‘The child will act out scenes from a FL class using memorized chunks’, ‘The child will learn more vocabulary than children starting FLL later’, ‘The child will have very good pronunciation in a FL’, ‘The child will be able to conduct simple conversations in a FL’, ‘The child will spontaneously insert FL words into Polish speech’.

The teachers surveyed expressed uncertainty about the outcomes of very early FLL only in reference to four statements ($M=2$ – an answer ‘I don’t know/it depends’). The statements are: ‘The child will understand the general sense of a conversation s/he participates in’, ‘In 2–3 years the child will create his own sentences in a FL’, ‘In adolescence the child will be able to use a FL like a native speaker’, ‘In 3–4 years the child will be able to communicate in a FL freely’.

In order to test whether there are any statistically significant differences in opinions on the possible FLL outcomes at pre-primary level between teachers of public and private kindergartens, a Mann-Whitney test was used (Tab. 5.26).

**Table 5.26.** Comparing teachers’ beliefs in respect of possible FLL outcomes in very young learners in private and public kindergartens (results of the Mann-Whitney test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Public kindergarten (n=67)</th>
<th>Private kindergarten (n=23)</th>
<th>Mann-Whitney test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The child will have very good pronunciation in a FL</td>
<td>3 43.9</td>
<td>3 50.2</td>
<td>663.5 -1.129 .259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child will understand the general sense of a conversation s/he participates in</td>
<td>2 45.6</td>
<td>2 45.2</td>
<td>763.5 -.073 .942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child will understand simple commands</td>
<td>3 45.2</td>
<td>3 46.5</td>
<td>747.5 -.833 .405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child will be able to infer meaning from the context of a cartoon, computer game etc.</td>
<td>3 44.4</td>
<td>3 48.6</td>
<td>698.5 -1.060 .289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child will communicate using single words and memorized chunks (e.g. greetings)</td>
<td>3 44.8</td>
<td>3 47.5</td>
<td>724.5 -.863 .388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 2–3 years the child will create his own sentences in a FL</td>
<td>2 45.5</td>
<td>2 45.6</td>
<td>767.5 -.030 .976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 3–4 years the child will be able to communicate in a FL freely</td>
<td>2 45.5</td>
<td>2 45.6</td>
<td>769.0 -.016 .988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In adolescence the child will be able to use a FL like a native speaker</td>
<td>2 47.1</td>
<td>2 40.7</td>
<td>660.0 -1.104 .269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child will learn more vocabulary than children starting FLL later</td>
<td>3 45.4</td>
<td>3 45.8</td>
<td>764.0 -.073 .942</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The analysis conducted by means of the Mann-Whitney test (Tab. 5.26) showed statistically significant differences in respect of the realistic evaluation of possible FLL outcomes \( (U=469.0; p=.005) \). Teachers working in public kindergartens achieved lower scores on this scale \( (\text{Mean rank}=41.0; M=34) \), than teachers in private kindergartens \( (\text{Mean rank}=68.6; M=35) \).

No statistically significant differences were identified between the two groups of teachers in reference to the remaining statements \( (p>.05) \).

A similar comparative analysis of teachers’ beliefs in respect of expected FLL outcomes was carried out between the groups of teachers working in the city and in the village. Table 5.27 presents the results of a further statistical analysis conducted by means of a Mann-Whitney test.

Table 5.27. Comparing teachers’ beliefs on possible FLL outcomes in very young learners in the city and in villages (results of the Mann-Whitney test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers working in:</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Mann-Whitney test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The village</td>
<td>The city</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( n=13 )</td>
<td>( n=77 )</td>
<td>( U ) ( Z ) ( p )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Mean Rank</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child will have very good pronunciation in a FL</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child will understand the general sense of a conversation s/he participates in</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child will understand simple commands</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child will be able to infer meaning from the context of a cartoon, computer game etc.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child will communicate using single words and memorized chunks (e.g. greetings)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 2–3 years the child will create his own sentences in a FL</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 3–4 years the child will be able to communicate in a FL freely</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In adolescence the child will be able to use a FL like a native speaker</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child will learn more vocabulary than children starting FLL later</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The child will know a few texts in a FL by heart (e.g. songs, poems, drama parts)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher education level:</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree (n=39)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td>477.0</td>
<td>-.495</td>
<td>.621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree (n=48)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>486.0</td>
<td>-.186</td>
<td>.852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mann-Whitney test</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>469.0</td>
<td>-.533</td>
<td>.594</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The child will be able to conduct simple talks in a FL  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher education level:</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree (n=39)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>469.0</td>
<td>-.533</td>
<td>.594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree (n=48)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>422.0</td>
<td>-.1275</td>
<td>.202</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The child will understand the general sense of a storybook, cartoon etc.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher education level:</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree (n=39)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>469.0</td>
<td>-.533</td>
<td>.594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree (n=48)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>48.7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>459.0</td>
<td>-.528</td>
<td>.598</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The child will act out scenes from a FL class using memorized chunks  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher education level:</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree (n=39)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>469.0</td>
<td>-.533</td>
<td>.594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree (n=48)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>48.7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>459.0</td>
<td>-.528</td>
<td>.598</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The child will spontaneously insert FL words into Polish speech  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher education level:</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree (n=39)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>469.0</td>
<td>-.533</td>
<td>.594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree (n=48)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>48.7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>459.0</td>
<td>-.528</td>
<td>.598</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘Very early FLL outcomes’ scale  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher education level:</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree (n=39)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>469.0</td>
<td>-.533</td>
<td>.594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree (n=48)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>48.7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>459.0</td>
<td>-.528</td>
<td>.598</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of the statistical analysis conducted by means of the Mann-Whitney test (Tab. 5.27) showed a statistically significant difference between the two groups in evaluating the statement ‘The child will learn more vocabulary than children starting FLL later’ (U=321.5; p=.013). Teachers working in the villages obtained a lower score in evaluating this statement (Mean rank=31.7; M=2), than teachers working in the city (Mean rank=47.8; M=3).

No other statistically significant differences were identified between the two groups of teachers in evaluating the remaining statements (p>.05).

5.4.4. Teachers’ beliefs on possible FLL outcomes and selected personal variables

The third research question asked whether there is any relationship between teacher beliefs regarding possible FL outcomes and their personal variables, such as level of education, age or length of experience.

Table 5.28 shows the results of the analysis conducted in order to examine teachers’ beliefs in respect of possible FLL outcomes in reference to the teachers’ level of education. The three teachers who had only a secondary level of education were excluded from the analysis due to the small size of the sub-sample.

Table 5.28. Comparing teachers’ opinions on possible outcomes in very early FLL in relation to level of education (Mann-Whitney test)
The child will be able to infer meaning from the context of a cartoon, computer game etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The child will communicate using single words and memorized chunks (e.g. greetings)</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>42.3</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>45.4</th>
<th>869.5</th>
<th>-1.133</th>
<th>.257</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In 2–3 years the child will create his own sentences in a FL</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>846.0</td>
<td>-.823</td>
<td>.411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 3–4 years the child will be able to communicate in a FL freely</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>818.5</td>
<td>-.134</td>
<td>.257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In adolescence the child will be able to use a FL like a native speaker</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>913.5</td>
<td>-.207</td>
<td>.836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child will learn more vocabulary than children starting FLL later</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>911.5</td>
<td>-.257</td>
<td>.797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child will know a few texts in a FL by heart (e.g. songs, poems, drama parts)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>906.0</td>
<td>-.463</td>
<td>.644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child will be able to conduct simple conversations in a FL</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>593.5</td>
<td>-3.268</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child will understand the general sense of a storybook, cartoon etc.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>872.0</td>
<td>-.794</td>
<td>.427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child will act out scenes from a FL class using memorized chunks</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>876.0</td>
<td>-.746</td>
<td>.456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child will spontaneously insert FL words into Polish speech</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>786.0</td>
<td>-1.426</td>
<td>.154</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘Realistic FLL outcomes’ scale

The analysis showed statistically significant differences between the groups in evaluating the statement ‘the child will be able to conduct simple conversations in a FL’ ($U=593.0; p=.001$). Teachers possessing only a Bachelor’s degree obtained lower scores on this statement ($Mean rank=35.2; M=2$), than teachers possessing a Master’s level of education ($Mean rank=51.1; M=3$).

No other differences between the two groups were identified in the evaluation of other statements ($p>.05$).

In order to test whether there is any correlation between teachers’ opinions in respect of possible FLL outcomes of kindergarten children and two independent variables, such as their age and length of experience working as a teacher, a non-parametric Spearman’s rho test was used. Table 5.29 shows the results of the conducted analysis.

**Table 5.29.** Correlations between teachers’ beliefs regarding possible FLL outcomes, teachers’ age and length of teaching experience (results of Spearman’s rho test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spearman’s rho (n=90)</th>
<th>Teachers’ age</th>
<th>Length of experience at kindergarten</th>
<th>Length of experience as a teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The child will have very good pronunciation in a FL</td>
<td>$r_s$</td>
<td>-.045</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$p$</td>
<td>.673</td>
<td>.983</td>
<td>.391</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results of the Spearman’s rho test (Tab. 5.29) revealed statistically significant correlations between the following variables:

There is a weak, positive correlation between the teacher’s age and the opinion that ‘The child will know a few texts in a FL by heart (e.g. songs, poems, drama parts)’ ($r_s=0.224; p=0.034$).

There is a weak, positive correlation between the teacher’s length of teaching experience in a kindergarten and a statement ‘The child will learn more vocabulary than children starting FLL later’ ($r_s=0.208; p=0.049$).

No other significant correlations between either the teacher’s age and/or length of teaching experience and any other statement were identified ($p>.05$).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$r_s$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>$r_s$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>$r_s$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The child will understand the general sense of a conversation s/he participates in</td>
<td>-0.135</td>
<td>0.205</td>
<td>0.119</td>
<td>0.266</td>
<td>0.206</td>
<td>0.051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child will understand simple commands</td>
<td>0.025</td>
<td>0.812</td>
<td>0.032</td>
<td>0.763</td>
<td>0.078</td>
<td>0.468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child will be able to infer meaning from the context of a cartoon, computer game etc.</td>
<td>-0.031</td>
<td>0.768</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td>0.888</td>
<td>0.065</td>
<td>0.541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child will communicate using single words and memorized chunks (e.g. greetings)</td>
<td>0.130</td>
<td>0.222</td>
<td>0.143</td>
<td>0.178</td>
<td>0.161</td>
<td>0.129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 2–3 years the child will create his own sentences in a FL</td>
<td>0.047</td>
<td>0.661</td>
<td>0.100</td>
<td>0.351</td>
<td>0.124</td>
<td>0.244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 3–4 years the child will be able to communicate in a FL freely</td>
<td>-0.033</td>
<td>0.758</td>
<td>0.054</td>
<td>0.615</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In adolescence the child will be able to use a FL like a native speaker</td>
<td>-0.039</td>
<td>0.714</td>
<td>0.071</td>
<td>0.503</td>
<td>0.035</td>
<td>0.742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child will learn more vocabulary than children starting FLL later</td>
<td>0.058</td>
<td>0.585</td>
<td>0.208</td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td>0.192</td>
<td>0.070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child will know a few texts in a FL by heart (e.g. songs, poems, drama parts)</td>
<td>0.224</td>
<td>0.034</td>
<td>-0.039</td>
<td>0.718</td>
<td>0.037</td>
<td>0.727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child will be able to conduct simple conversations in a FL</td>
<td>0.044</td>
<td>0.683</td>
<td>0.075</td>
<td>0.482</td>
<td>0.109</td>
<td>0.309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child will understand the general sense of a storybook, cartoon etc.</td>
<td>-0.118</td>
<td>0.343</td>
<td>0.122</td>
<td>0.190</td>
<td>0.072</td>
<td>0.110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child will act out scenes from a FL class using memorized chunks</td>
<td>-0.118</td>
<td>0.269</td>
<td>0.122</td>
<td>0.291</td>
<td>0.072</td>
<td>0.498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child will spontaneously insert FL words into Polish speech</td>
<td>0.019</td>
<td>0.856</td>
<td>0.143</td>
<td>0.180</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Realistic FLL outcomes’ scale</td>
<td>-0.004</td>
<td>0.969</td>
<td>0.080</td>
<td>0.451</td>
<td>0.149</td>
<td>0.162</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.4.5. Teachers’ beliefs and practices on providing quality in very early FL instruction

The fourth research question, based on the data obtained from questions 3 and 6 of the questionnaire (Part 2, App. 4), asked teachers to identify those elements of educational practice that bear greatest importance both for FLL outcomes and arousing motivation for early FLL (Q 6) as well as to indicate those elements which they use in practice themselves (Q 4). The results obtained are presented in Figure 5.30.

![Figure 5.30. Teachers’ opinions and acknowledged use of elements enhancing very early FLL effectiveness](image-url)
As Figure 5.30 shows, the most important element which enhances FLL at pre-primary level in the teachers’ opinion is ‘small learning groups’ (78% of teachers indicated this element). The second most frequent answer was ‘using numerous and attractive teaching aids’ (64%), followed by ‘teacher professionalism’ (51% of respondents) and ‘a nice and stress-free atmosphere in classes’.

About one third of teachers indicated ‘rewarding and praising the child’ (33%) and ‘an additional contact with a FL through audio/video recordings, Internet’ (27%). 23% of teachers claimed that ‘conducting a class only in a FL’ is an important aspect of teaching practice.

The remaining elements were indicated as effective only sporadically: ‘home revision with parents’ was indicated only by 12% of the teachers, ‘classroom conditions (interior) and decorations’ by 8%, ‘regular assessment/testing’ by 6%, ‘contacts with foreigners/travelling abroad’ by 6%.

In analysing the results shown in Figure 5.30, certain differences between teachers’ opinions on effective FL teaching and educational practice can be observed. In practice, only 28% of teachers work with small groups of children (up to 10 people), although 78% of teachers regard this as a very important element influencing teaching effectiveness. A similar discrepancy can be observed in the case of ‘teacher professionalism’. 51% of teachers acknowledge this element as very important, yet only 33% recognize their own performance as such. Similarly, while 51% of teachers regard frequency of conducted classes as an important factor, only 12% of teachers teach frequent classes.

Some other discrepancies can be observed between teachers’ opinions and practice in the case of ‘rewarding/praising children’. Here 33% of teachers regard this element as effective, while many more practice it (46%).

In the case of other elements of teaching practice, the differences between teachers’ opinions and actual practice are smaller.

The surveyed teachers were also asked to indicate what elements/events they have introduced into their FL classes with very young learners in order to arouse/sustain children’s motivation in FLL (based on Q 6, Part 2, App. 4). Figure 5.31 shows the results obtained.

The most popular motivational activity carried out in very early FL instruction turned out to be ‘a library with FL books/audio and video recordings’, reported by 35.6% of teachers.

The remaining techniques in ranking order were ‘final contests with rewards’ (33.3%), ‘theatrical performances’ (30%), ‘FL song contests’ (20%), ‘art contests on intercultural topics’ (11.1%), ‘meetings with foreigners’ (7.8%),
‘a language portfolio for children’ (5.6%), ‘European Day of Languages’ (4.4%) and ‘European club/lessons’ (3.3%).

The answer ‘Other activities’ was indicated by 17.8% of the teachers, who usually enumerated, ‘Language Olympics contest’, ‘Open Days for parents’ and different types of performances and shows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A library with FL resources</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final tests/exams with rewards</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatrical performances in a FL</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FL song contests</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art contests on intercultural topics</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting foreigners</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Language Portfolio for children 3–6</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Day of Languages</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European club/lessons</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 5.31.** Motivating techniques introduced in very early FL instruction

### Summary

The aim of this chapter was to present the quantitative and qualitative results obtained from the research project, which comprised three groups of respondents: parents of very young learners, FL teachers of very young learners and kindergarten head teachers. The data was analysed descriptively and/or inferentially and presented in the form of tables and figures. The interpretation and discussion of the research results is conducted in chapter six.
The aim of the following chapter is to summarize and discuss the key findings of the research project on very early FL learning, which comprised three separate studies focused on very young learners’ parents, foreign language teachers and kindergarten head teachers.

6.1. A study of parental educational aspirations in reference to very young FL learners – data interpretation

The questionnaire study of parental aspirations revealed that indeed many parents want their children to learn a foreign language early and treat ‘an early start’ as an important educational investment towards their children’s professional future. In answer to the first research question, it can be said that parents who choose FL instruction at kindergarten are usually well-educated (especially mothers), i.e. they generally have a Master’s degree (Fig. 5.5 & 5.6). Also, the majority of parents, both mothers and fathers, are over 30 (Fig. 5.3 & 5.4), which may imply they are mature enough to have developed a certain educational awareness as well as professional and material stability. The socio-economic status of the children’s families is described as good or medium (Fig. 5.7); the latter implies that enrollment into a FL course can be a form of sacrifice/investment as parents choose to allocate the limited resources that they have to the education of their children. All of these factors, i.e. education, age, allocation of resources, may also imply an enhanced educational awareness of many parents, irrespective of their SES.

The majority of the children studied are first-born, and are often the only child or have only one other sibling, which also suggests parental awareness and a conscious decision to invest in the quality of their children’s upbringing. Most of the children studied lived in the city and had been learning a FL for at least
one to two years, which suggests that children in the city have more opportuni-
ties to start learning a FL early as it is offered as an extracurricular activity more
often and at an earlier age (Fig. 5.2 & 5.1).

Among the motives given (Q 2) for enrolling their children into very early FL
instruction (cf. Fig. 5.8), the prevailing one is the common ‘catchphrase’, the
earlier one starts a foreign language the better, clearly ascribing success in FLL to
the necessity of an early start, which is also confirmed by the second most popular
belief that children learn FLs more easily than adults (Fig. 5.8). These common
clichés seem to be deeply engraved in many parents’ minds, who are not expert
linguists. It can be clearly seen that by enabling their children to start FLL (or
even two languages as was the case for several parents) early, they hope to secure
for their children the best possible educational credentials for future professional
careers. As Figure 5.11 shows they often picture their children belonging to the
international community and working in a multilingual environment.

This goal seems to be further confirmed by the choice of FL studied. Lear-
ning English (Fig. 5.9), which is recognized as having a global language status, is
the first and usually the only choice. It is this language that is usually demanded
by parents, and therefore the only one taught at kindergartens, both private and
public. Clearly, instrumental motives for FLL outnumber integrative ones, or
those that relate solely to a FLL experience, i.e. arguments relating to cognitive
or affective benefits for the whole development of the child, such as raising
linguistic and cultural awareness, enhancing memory and cognitive thinking or
socializing with others. While English is often chosen for instrumental reasons,
a second FL, most often French, was chosen (Fig. 5.10) for its cultural value,
such as high (traditional) status of the language, its usefulness in contact with
relatives/friends, and parents’ own knowledge of the language which could be
used to help in the learning process and to share with children an interest in
the culture of that language. These different motives for choosing a particular
foreign language seem to follow the European trend and directions. English is
typically chosen as a first foreign language to study, clearly in recognition of its
global role, and only the choice of further foreign languages for study are moti-
vated by other less instrumental motives.

Most parents seem to notice only the linguistic benefits of an early start in
a foreign language. However, it should be also recognized that whilst opting for
the early start, parents are not certain of the likely outcome. Perhaps in the
course of observing their child learn a FL, they notice that progress is not strong
or fast. That is why many parents claim they ‘only’ want their children to get
used to a foreign language, and plan deliberately for the child to learn only one
FL (Fig. 5.12). This shows that the majority of parents are not aware that in the
future the child may need plurilingual skills, i.e. s/he may need to know at least two languages in the future, although not necessarily to a high standard.

This shows that in realizing the European goals of achieving plurilingual competence, the role of educational institutions is likely to be of key importance in providing varied FL choice of study at different educational levels. As the opinions of the majority of parents show, the decision which foreign languages the child will learn in the future will depend on the educational offer at school (Fig. 5.12). Also at kindergarten level, half of those parents whose children learnt two FLs, said they did this only because the second foreign language was offered so they decided to take advantage of the opportunity (Fig. 5.10).

These findings show there is still little awareness among parents of reasons for starting very early instruction. ‘The earlier, the better’ view may no longer mean mastering the second language to a native speaker level, but the expected outcome is rather vague, hence parents’ tentative expectations.

Parental expectations as well as parental explanations have been further extrapolated by statistical analysis. Selected questions relating to parental expectations (Tab. 5.1) showed positive, although weak, correlations with selected demographic variables. The mothers’ level of education correlated positively with only one item, i.e. the higher the level of the mother’s education, the more they were convinced that their children would develop language awareness through FL instruction. This, albeit an abstract goal, seemed to be the most realistic outcome to achieve. Negative, although weak, correlations have been found between selected demographic variables and certain other questions relating to parental expectations of their children’s achievements, especially those more difficult to achieve, such as understanding the general sense of a book/cartoon, code-switching or creative use of a FL or even attaining fluency. This means the higher the level of maternal education, the higher the linguistic awareness of what the child can realistically achieve in an instructional FL course, where there is limited amount of contact with L2. One can speculate that as the highly-educated mothers also have some competence in a FL, this makes them more knowledgeable of the language learning process. In addition, it is usually mothers who are the major caregivers of very young children, therefore spending more time with them and gathering more information from their children on their language learning experience and progress. This finding can be further supported by other pedagogical research, for example, Pospiszyl (1980 in Ochmanfisk, 1995) found that up to the ca. 10th year of life it is mainly the mothers who exert influence on their children’s intellectual development.

Similar negative correlations were also found between unrealistic expectations and the mother’s age, i.e. the older (the more mature) the mother, the
more she seemed to be aware of possible shortcomings in FLL. Thus it could be interpreted that mothers' level of education and age translate into increased educational awareness.

The fathers’ level of education also correlated positively, although weakly, with the expectation that the child will become aware of other languages. In addition, weak negative correlations with the same items relating to rather unrealistic expectations were identified. However, what is different and striking is the fact that weak negative correlations were found between the fathers’ level of education and such items which could be realistically achieved, for example ‘the child will know how to say ‘hello’, goodbye’, introduce himself, as well as the general score of parental expectations. This finding suggests that the higher the level of fathers’ education, the fewer expectations the fathers have towards their young children’s achievements and/or knowledge of their children’s progress, as they may be less involved in educational activities with their children (see above).

These findings can be further interpreted when looking at correlations between socio-economic status and certain parental expectations. Here weak but positive correlations have been found with many individual expectations, such as becoming interested in further FLL, attaining many realistic goals (e.g. understanding commands) and also less realistic goals (e.g. guessing the meaning from context and attempting to communicate in a FL). What is more, there is a negative correlation between SES and the statement ‘I have no expectations’. These findings indicate that the higher the SES, the higher the expectations of the achievement of the child.

Why, therefore, do high expectations not correlate with a high level of parental education as they do with family’s SES? This discrepancy could be interpreted in the following way. SES was measured as a self-perceived feature, thus it denotes individual perception of material situation and status as felt mainly by mothers, who were the major respondents of the survey. Socio-economic status does not always coincide with high occupational position in Poland. The ERP scales (Erikson, Goldthorpe & Portocarero, 1979) which were constructed for postmodern western societies assumed that high occupational position in the creative class coincides with higher salaries and material wealth. This is still not always the case in Poland, which has a less stable social structure, and a middle class which is still forming (cf. Ch. 2.7.4). Many fathers, who may not have a high level of education, may still be professionally and financially quite successful as self-employed businessmen. It is usually the fathers’ occupation that earns the most and decides the material status of the family. Therefore it can be argued that it is the mother’s perception of SES, as well as her high level of education, that correlates with high expectations in early FLL of their children.
It is also important to emphasize that weak but positive correlations have been identified between the length of learning a FL by a child and certain expectations, such as becoming interested in other foreign languages, knowing names for single items in a FL, singing a poem etc. as well as the general score for expectations. This suggests that parental expectations become more precise and realistic as the child progresses in the FL course.

As regards where the respondents lived, only a weak and negative correlation with this variable was found with the expectation that ‘the child will speak a foreign language’. This means that parents living in villages and having lesser contact/experience with speakers of FLs, or children having learnt FLs, have somewhat unrealistic expectations of the possible outcomes of FL learning at the kindergarten.

No correlations were identified between parental expectations and the number of children in the family or child birth order (Tab. 5.1) or child gender (Tab. 5.2). This can be easily explained by demographic changes in family structure. As nowadays most families have one or two children (as in the study sample), there are no rational or economic reasons to differentiate forms of investment. The situation has changed since a few decades ago when families used to have more children, and financial resources allowed for investment into only a few of them (cf. Glass, Neulinger & Brim, 1974).

Finally, a notable difference was identified between parents whose children attend public and private kindergartens (Tab. 5.3). The former achieved lower scores than the latter in their general level of parental expectations as well as in selected items, which appeared statistically significant, such as ‘the child will be aware of the existence of other languages’, ‘the child will know names of single items in a FL’, ‘the child will be able to sing a song/recite a poem etc.’. This finding can be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, parents who enrolled their children into private kindergartens may have in general higher expectations of their children’s achievements and their institution. Since they pay higher fees, they may also be of higher SES (and higher educational and occupational positions, consequently), which translates into higher client-service demands from educational institutions, but may also indicate higher educational awareness. Educational decisions are taken more deliberately and conscientiously, whereas in the case of those parents whose children attend public kindergartens, a more passive approach can be observed: they have no clear expectations as to their children’s FL achievements, either because they have little knowledge of FLs themselves or feel they have lesser impact on educational institutions.

Similar correlations were on the whole found between parental aspirations (long-term goals) and the same personal and educational variables (Tab. 5.4).
High aspirations in reference to child FL long-term achievements, as expressed by such statements as ‘the child will know two languages in the future’ or ‘the child will speak a FL fluently’ etc. as well as the general score (GS) of parental aspirations were found to be positively correlated to: the mother’s level of education, the father’s level of education and self-perceived SES. These findings are similar to those found in reference to parental expectations. A high level of education seems to coincide with higher SES which translates into higher aspirations. As these parents seem to be high achievers themselves, they hold equally high expectations for their children. Similar relationships between the level of parental aspirations and their own level of education or SES were found in other sociological (Domański, 2002) and pedagogical research (Ścisłowicz, 1994), thus confirming that similar factors influence the rise of parental aspirations in the case of global as well as more specific FL education. Foreign language education is an important capital and an object of aspiration, of which only certain parents are aware.

Other correlations relate to parental aspirations and the parents’ age. It was found that the older the parents (both the father and the mother), the more trust they placed in educational institutions and their responsibility for FL achievements, as reflected by the statement ‘Learning effects will depend on the school and the teacher’. This finding may imply that older parents are satisfied with their own education and achievements, which they owe more to the schools they attended rather than their own background. This belief may also mean that many older parents are more aware of the importance of good educational establishments and the competences of the teacher, rather than their own involvement, especially as their children grow. This awareness is often evident in careful choice of a school based on canvassing opinion from other parents, final exam results etc. as the qualitative part of the project showed. However, it is not certain from this study whether the parents will opt for the public education system, or whether, having adequate resources, they will decide to enroll their children into private education.

A certain correlation was also found between parental aspirations (General Score) and the place of living. In general, parents living in the city have slightly higher expectations than those living in towns and villages. They also claim they expect more from their children than just passing school exams. These findings may indicate that parents of the latter realize what burden they would have to bear if they wanted to invest in their children’s education further.

Finally, the length of learning a FL by a child was also found to correlate to expectations of high achievement as expressed by the statement ‘In 2–3 years the child will be able to communicate in a foreign language, e.g. on holidays
abroad’. This finding seems to show that as children progress with their FLL, their parents pose subsequent and higher aspirations.

While in reference to child gender there were no differences as regards current parental expectations, they showed significant differences in relation to parental aspirations, i.e. long-term investments (Tab. 5.5). Similarly, as identified in a vast amount of previous research (cf. Domański, 2002), many parents decided to invest more in the education of their daughters than of their sons. Perhaps this is because of the well-known fact, confirmed empirically, that girls themselves have higher educational aspirations while boys material ones (cf. Lewowicki, 1987). Parental FL aspirations in reference to girls manifested themselves in correlations with such statements as ‘In adulthood the child will use a foreign language fluently at work (reading texts, conversations)’, ‘The child has to know a foreign language well enough in order to study/work abroad etc.’, ‘In the future the child will have a native-like competence in a foreign language’ as well as the general score of parental aspirations. They all show quite ambitious plans for the girls’ FL attainment. It could also be argued that many parents believe that girls are more skillful verbally and therefore may find FLL easier, and are therefore capable of achieving higher levels of attainment.

Finally, in comparing levels of aspirations between parents of private and public kindergartens, similarly to current expectations, parents whose children attended private kindergartens generally held higher expectations in reference to their children’s future FL achievements, stating that they expect fluent FL use, capability to study abroad or even knowledge of two languages, whereas parents of children attending public kindergartens obtained higher scores only on those items which referred to a minimum level of FL attainment, such as merely passing exams, or only communicative FL knowledge. Also as indicated by the general score of parental aspirations, parents of children attending private kindergartens have higher aspirations than parents of children attending public kindergartens. These differences may be associated with the fact that parents whose children attend private kindergartens may have slightly higher SES, as a consequence of higher education level and age (the older the parents, the more stable their financial situation). As their attainments (high level of education, higher SES) may be a result of their own high aspirations, it is quite natural that they adopt a similar attitude to the education of their own children, whereas parents whose children attend public kindergartens, who are more likely to be of lower SES, probably recognize their own limitations in realizing certain goals and therefore have lower aspirations for their children. These findings are in line with those of other studies conducted by e.g. Marjo-
ribanks (2001) and Domański (2002), who also found that the SES of the family determines the level of parental aspirations towards their children.

The last two research questions (Q 5 & 6) referred to parental involvement. They aimed to find out how parents of very young FL learners intend to realize their aspirations through their own involvement in the process. It is assumed that if parents have high educational aspirations they should also support their children’s FL learning by providing additional revision of the class material and/or providing opportunities for additional FL input. As was argued in Chapter 3, in very early FL acquisition success is the outcome of learning opportunity (exposure) and motivation to learn a FL.

As Figure 5.13 shows, the most common techniques of parental involvement in the FLL process tend to be non-communicative, based on rote repetition of class material. While it is definitely necessary, as children forget the material quickly, this type of language practice does not provide additional language input, nor does it show communicative language use in context. The only exception is joint parent–child watching of FL TV (4th position), however it is not certain whether parents explain new vocabulary while watching TV or if it is just passive viewing. The activities which could fulfill the goal of communicative and contextualised FL practice, such as FL storybook reading or playing with puppets to demonstrate scenes or even attempts at short communicative exchanges when abroad, take place very rarely. However, it is this type of communicative FL practice that is most motivating and rewarding. Also, opportunities to use the Internet for FLL (e.g. using interactive websites with games, watching films on YouTube etc.) are largely underestimated. Therefore it seems that many parents have little knowledge of how to practice FLs with their children nor little time to devote to it. Additional publicity/training on this issue seems to be required.

Statistical analysis of the quantity of parental techniques given sheds further light on this issue. It showed that there is a positive, although weak, correlation between the amount of parental involvement techniques used and the general score of both parental expectations and parental aspirations levels (Tab. 5.7). This means that the higher the level of parental expectations and aspirations, the more different techniques of parental involvement they claim to use. This finding can be further substantiated by correlations with other variables, namely with the mothers’ level of education, the fathers’ age, the SES of the family, as well as parents’ own use of FLs in daily life (Tab. 5.8). Also parents whose children attend private kindergartens claim to give more support than parents of children attending public kindergartens (Tab. 5.10). These are the same variables which were found to correlate with levels of parental expectations and aspirations, as well as quantity of parental involvement.
However, it should be acknowledged that the following correlations have been found only in relation to the quantity of parental involvement techniques used altogether. Little is known about the frequency of using these techniques or the quality of their usage (e.g. types of parental scaffolding used). For this purpose further inquiry is needed. Yet, the data obtained from qualitative interviews shows, that mothers who know foreign languages themselves, more often and more willingly use varied and communicative FL practice activities. It can be concluded then that parental foreign language knowledge has an impact on the quality of parental involvement in a child’s FLL.

Findings from the qualitative part of the study seem to support these results. While FL aspirations can be generally seen in both lower and higher SES families, the differences lie in the motives, expectations of the final outcome, future child identity, as well as support given to children in FLL. Higher SES families want their children to learn FLs in order to belong to an ‘international’ community, both professionally and socially. They often recognize that one FL may not be enough, although very few parents have already chosen a second FL for their child. Success in FL knowledge is often transferred intergenerationally which translates into parents’ own current active use of FLs in their daily lives, and consequently more active support in a child’s learning. It can be boldly said that FLs are part and parcel of their everyday life. Consequently it could be claimed that it was to a large extent their knowledge of FLs, which determined the parents’ own current high occupational positions, as manifested in their levels of education and self-perceived SES.

To conclude, the most important finding from this study is that differential educational opportunities in FLL manifest themselves very early in the child’s life. If we assume the ultimate educational and vocational achievement of a child is an outcome of a formula ‘aspiration x attainment x background’ (Marjoribanks, 2002), the family background may determine the child’s educational future already at the start of the child’s schooling career. As the study of parental aspirations showed (cf. Ch. 5.1) very young children may come from varied family backgrounds whose parents place different importance and value on early foreign language learning. Parental aspirations and expectations are dependent on such factors as parental level of education (especially maternal), parental age (especially paternal) and SES. These in turn are also related to the quantity of parental involvement techniques used. Parents’ own FL knowledge appears to be the most significant factor in that respect. These findings are in line with other studies (e.g. Marjoribanks, 2001; Domański, 2002) which claim that the SES of the family is the key determining factor of parental level of aspirations.
6.2. Institutional provision for very young FL learners – a study of kindergarten head teachers

The study of kindergarten head teachers aimed to reveal key facts about the standards of current FL teaching at pre-primary level. The head teachers to a large extent are the major decision-makers in organizational aspects of the curriculum, especially as FL instruction is not yet a part of an obligatory curriculum. As the findings of the study showed, the major reason why head teachers decide to introduce a FL is the generally held conviction that ‘the earlier one starts learning a foreign language, the better’ and its beneficial impact on a child’s overall development (Fig. 5.17). The motivational benefits of encouraging further FL learning are less appreciated. Also it is mainly in public kindergartens that FLL is introduced on parental demand and in response to their aspirations. It seems the parents do not want their children to be disadvantaged in comparison with children attending private kindergartens.

All the reasons given for the choice of English (Fig. 5.18) as the first and often only FL taught derive from its high global status, and hence it is taught at primary level and is the most desired language among parents of kindergarten children. Little interest was observed in teaching children a second foreign language, as it was perceived to be burdensome for the child. It may, however, also be speculated that a second language would be an additional financial burden for the parents. Far fewer parents are interested in enrolling their children into a second (fee-paying) foreign language course. However, when the instruction of the second foreign language was free (e.g. the regular kindergarten teacher also taught a FL, as in the case of German), it was often met with a positive reaction, at times even more so than English tuition, as was reported by a kindergarten head teacher. This shows that it is not so much the choice of a particular language which matters, but the teaching and pedagogical skills of the teacher. It was also reported by some head teachers of private kindergartens willing to extend their educational offer, that it was difficult to find teachers of other FLs prepared to teach very young children.

This may explain why they opt mainly for English as a lingua franca (cf. Fig. 5.18): if parents have to invest limited resources in FL education for their children, investment in a language of high global status seems to be the most cost effective, especially if many parents also believe in the necessity of starting early in order to achieve native-like command of that language, and consequently increased length of the overall study of that language. Such high goals and investments leave little space (and resources) for additional FL learning, at least at pre-primary level.
In discussing the results of this study, it is worth referring to the European guidelines for foreign language education. Whilst a FL is not an obligatory part of the kindergarten curriculum as yet, it should be assumed that educational institutions and their head teachers may implement European recommendations. As Recommendation 7 (2008) on The use of the Council of Europe’s Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and the promotion of plurilingualism states, FLL should be inclusive, plurilingual and intercultural. If we take these features as the goals of and criteria of evaluating pre-primary education, the picture of very early FL teaching may not appear to be very positive. First of all, very early FL education is not plurilingual; as can be concluded from the above lack of variation of linguistic offer and low score of the ‘FL motivation’ goal on the scale of head teacher reasons for introducing FLs. This implies there is little awareness among head teachers of the goals of very early FL instruction as well as of European language education policy. This bears consequences on the form of instruction, namely efforts are made to strive for mastery of one dominant foreign language rather than the development of plurilingual multi-competence.

Secondly, very early FLL is definitely not inclusive, the major excluding factor being the socio-economic situation of the parents (Fig. 5.14). As many head teachers acknowledged, it is the parents who decide whether to enroll the child or not, and the financial costs of the course were indicated as an inhibiting factor, even in the case of SEN children (in the few kindergartens which had so-called ‘integrative’ groups). In general, the head teachers surveyed do not plan to do anything to resolve this situation, except for a few individuals from rural areas who had the chance to obtain extra funds to sponsor the course. It was only in the private kindergartens that usually all children were included, but obviously it was usually children of higher SES parents that attended them.

It was also investigated whether there are any differences between FL instruction in private and public kindergartens and in the city and rural areas. While in general there are no major differences in the organizational aspects of FL teaching, differences were observed in the quality of teaching. Both private and public, city and village kindergartens offer a FL course mostly twice a week for 30 minutes (Fig. 5.15 & 5.16). The more favourable exceptions, which provide FL instruction daily, are ‘Foreign Language-oriented kindergartens’, but institutions of this sort are still few and far between, in Cracow at least, which may show that the value of very early FL education has still not been fully recognized.

However, as regards the activities/events organized in the kindergartens in order to motivate very young learners, tests/final assessment and song contests (intermediated by libraries) are the most common motivating techniques in the
public sector. Clearly, these techniques aim to showcase memorized language, apparently to the parents who pay for the course and denote mainly instrumental motivation. It is practiced as if memorization and repetition will lead to fluent mastery of the language. While these techniques are also present in private kindergartens, more common are those which are aimed at the development of communicative competence (drama/theatrical performances) and the arousal of intercultural competence (other techniques used in private kindergartens, not public ones, cf. Fig. 5.21). The latter include meeting foreigners (such as teacher trainees/apprentices within the Comenius programme, not only of English nationality), European club/lessons, or even celebrating the European Day of Languages. In truth, these events are probably organized in order to enhance the general appeal of the educational offer of a private kindergarten (as competition is fierce nowadays), but they can definitely have an impact on arousing the child’s intrinsic motivation. No such events are organized in the village kindergartens. Whilst some such events are also reported in public city kindergartens, they constitute a small fraction of the class, hence it is difficult to claim that measures are being taken to develop children’s intercultural awareness.

Finally, it should be noted that the differences between private and public, city and village kindergartens in providing for this development, although not very big, also signify unequal learning standards and opportunities provided to children from various social backgrounds.

Another aspect investigated amongst kindergarten head teachers were factors influencing effective FL teaching. It is, first of all, the teacher that is recognized (Fig. 5.19 & 5.20) as the most important factor influencing FL success. What is more, generally the head teachers are satisfied with the skills and competences of the teachers they have. It seems this is the major factor they rely on in organizing successful FL instruction. In the teacher they first of all value such skills as varying the teaching activities, so that the children do not become bored, and the teacher’s own active physical involvement in teaching, such as singing, using mimicry, acting out etc. (Fig. 5.22). This shows the teacher is regarded as the most important element in the teaching process; the class manager as well as a ‘teaching aid’ in itself. It seems the teacher’s pedagogical and interactional skills are valued the most, and not so much their linguistic abilities, as the head teachers’ opinion that the teachers should speak only in the FL in class was in last position. This lack of appreciation of language skills may signify that the head teachers realize that speaking the FL all the time in class may not be very realistic, as the children often do not understand what is going on, the groups are too big, and the progress slow. Some head teachers said that such an approach is suitable only in private courses, where the groups consist
of four to five children. The head teachers realize that children’s interest in FLs arises from keeping children active and busy, by doing interactive activities. That is why the following features required in a FL teacher relate to other aspects of child pedagogy, such as frequent praising and rewarding, a friendly approach to children, as well as an ability to control the group. These aspects are much more emphasized than teachers linguistic skills.

These requirements in relation to teacher competences seem to be quite justified, as in order to teach such young learners, one has to have first of all a knowledge of child psychology, children’s ways of learning, and has to know how to handle them. This indicates that the best teacher of very young learners is one specializing in child pedagogy/psychology. This, however, should not lead to the neglect of the teacher’s FL skills. The very low score (the last item) on the ranking list of features required in the teacher, implies there are lesser demands on the teacher’s FL skills. While perhaps there are moments when the teacher can switch to the children’s mother tongue, s/he should speak a FL as much as possible, using a variety of techniques (gesture, pictures, objects etc.) to clarify the meaning. Also it should be recognized that it is not enough to teach very young learners single words in isolation, but that children should have a chance to witness and participate in FL discourse (cf. Cameron, 2001). This happens when, for example, the teacher uses a FL fluently to manage a class (in instructions etc.), comments on his and the pupils’ activities, or even asks personal questions. For this to take place the teacher has to be a fluent and confident FL user himself/herself. Thus this lack of appreciation of the teacher’s FL skills seems to be in contrast with the expectation, also of the kindergarten head teachers, that an early start in the foreign language guarantees success. More publicity on raising awareness that the teacher’s FL skills are also indispensable should be done.

To conclude, two major changes need to be implemented to arise from the study of kindergarten head teachers:

- Firstly, since in the very young learners’ classroom there is a need for a teacher with first of all very good pedagogical skills, it seems the best teachers are those willing to work with such young children who have an appropriate approach to VYL instruction. These should be graduates of pedagogy departments, and not only, necessarily, philology ones. This however, does not mean that good pedagogical skills should compensate for poor linguistic competences. These are important too. Fluent and communicative use of a FL is required. It must be remembered that a FL teacher is first and often the only model of language for very young learners. Therefore any errors the teacher makes may negatively impact the child’s FL competence. This particularly concerns the acquisition of pronunciation, although wrong use of lexis or
grammatical/syntactic mistakes may also develop in children bad linguistic habits, which if untreated may become fossilized. In such cases the advantages of ‘an early start’ are seriously doubtful. This suggests that the best FL teacher of the very young learner is a graduate of pedagogy with good FL skills, which calls for enhanced FL training in pedagogical departments, and/or developing postgraduate and graduate studies in early years pedagogy for those FL philology graduates, who are willing and motivated to teach very young children in their vocational future.

- Secondly, for very early FL education to become inclusive, intercultural and plurilingual, FL instruction should become part of the obligatory curriculum. If that happened, awareness would be raised among head teachers of the goals of very early FL education, for example that its major goal is not striving for native-like mastery of one particular language but rather an arousal of interest and motivation to learn many other foreign languages at kindergarten and later on. This may result in the closer supervision of teaching (e.g. through class observation) as well as more frequent organization of events/activities aimed at developing awareness of other cultures and languages such as European club/lessons. This change in educational policy should be further endorsed in changes in teachers’ education.

6.3. Institutional provision for very young FL learners – a study of FL teachers of young learners

The analysis of the current FL teacher profile indicates that they are mostly young people (Fig. 5.23), quite well-educated as far as their general level of education is concerned, and also linguistically (Fig. 5.24). An advanced certificate in a FL seems to prove an adequate level of FL knowledge. What is more, the analysis of teachers’ qualifications and competences in various settings, such as public and private kindergartens (Tab. 5.12–5.17) or city and village kindergartens (Tab. 5.18–5.23), indicates that there are no substantial differences in teachers’ general and language education. The aspects compared were: teachers’ education level, teachers’ FL teaching qualifications, completion of a course in teaching YLs, readiness to specialize in teaching VYLs as well as the length of general and kindergarten experience. This shows that there are no significant differences between teachers’ qualifications in private and public or city and village kindergartens, thus it cannot be claimed that a particular group of children (e.g. those attending private kindergartens) have better teachers and thus better learning opportunities than the other. One exceptional and statistically significant difference was found, namely that in the villages it is more
common to find teachers with only a secondary level of education (Tab. 5.19). Yet, it has to be taken into account that there were fewer teachers in the villages surveyed in total, thus each score has a higher impact on the overall statistics. This finding also suggests that there is already a wide availability of well-educated FL (or at least English) teachers on the educational market compared to e.g. a decade ago, which gives potential for specialization in teaching this age group.

However, what is worrying is the fact that although 66% had a course of FL didactics to young learners, only 37% of all teachers would like to continue teaching this age group in the future (Fig. 5.26). This tendency is further supported by the fact that the teachers do not have very much teaching experience (Fig. 5.27), which may all suggest that teaching very young learners is only a temporary occupation, and that many teachers do not want to continue their professional development in that direction. This is important because only full dedication to this job can bring good learning and teaching results. This may be connected with the relatively low prestige of teaching children and relatively low pay for teaching this age group. The teachers are usually paid by the hour and they have to work in several kindergartens at the same time, which may inhibit forming more personal relationships with the children taught and full involvement in teaching this age group.

The second research question asked for teachers’ beliefs in relation to the goals of very early FL instruction as well as possible learning outcomes. It aimed to verify to what extent the teachers are aware of their own role and influence carried out through educational activity on children’s FL outcomes and attitudes. The goals of very early FLL have already been made clear through e.g. CPH research, and other educational studies (as summarized e.g. in Edelenbos, Johnstone & Kubanek, 2006) and are clearly outlined in European guidance (cf. Ch. 1, e.g. Komorowska, 1998, 2007b). It is widely known now that that the goal of such very early teaching of FLs in minimal input situations is no longer to strive for native-like mastery, but rather lay the groundwork for lifelong learning of languages. Thus, the well-known catchphrase ‘the earlier one starts learning a FL, the better’, should be rephrased. It should no longer be interpreted as the earlier one starts, the better proficiency one achieves in a FL, but the earlier one starts, the more languages one has a chance to learn in the future. Teachers should be aware of the overall positive impact of FLL experience on children’s development and motivation towards FLL and recognize their own contribution to the fulfillment of this goal.

However, as Figure 5.28 showed, the teachers surveyed mainly agree that the goal of FL instruction is the belief in ‘the earlier, the better in the long run’ standpoint as well as accustomization to FLs, although they are less positive/un-
decided in relation to another popular cliché: ‘children can learn a FL as quickly and easily as the mother tongue’. While the lesser conviction of the latter probably comes from a lack of evidence from observing the children’s progress, the former beliefs cannot be verified in the early years of FLL, thus they remain only beliefs with no supporting evidence.

A rather neutral/undecided standpoint was presented in relation to the now acknowledged goals of FLL, such as development of motivation for further FLL in the future, developing intercultural awareness and interest, development of creative and critical thinking, aiding development of child’s personality and providing opportunities for child’s self-expression, which are the aspects the teacher should feel most responsible for. These findings show that FL teachers of very young learners, who should be agents of educational policy, are still largely unaware of the goals of very early FL education, despite acknowledgement of having completed a course in teaching YLs, and still believe in the same clichés as lay people. However, teachers should be experts on the goals and possible outcomes who also inform others, e.g. parents and head teachers. This is somewhat surprising since the teachers should observe from their own experience that progress is very slow, and does not involve creative use of language. The results suggest, however, that they believe that ‘an early start’ will give the children an advantage over those who start FL later on.

When comparing teachers’ beliefs between teachers working in private and public kindergartens (Tab. 5.24), the teachers of the latter obtained higher scores than the teachers of the former in reference to three statements. Namely teachers of public kindergartens were convinced more often that through early FLL, the children will develop creative and critical thinking, will develop motivation to further FLL and will become used to a FL, its sounds, grammar etc. as well as become aware of the existence of other languages (i.e. develop some [meta]linguistic awareness). Similar differences in opinions about goals of very early instruction were noticed between teachers working in the city and in the village, the former obtaining higher scores in reference to two statements, namely that through FLL the children can develop cognitive thinking and memory as well as metalinguistic awareness. Bearing in mind that the majority of the teachers working in the city also worked in public kindergartens, the two findings can be treated as being consistent (Tab. 5.25).

These findings show that teachers of public institutions are slightly more aware of the cognitive, linguistic and motivational value of very early FLL. This may be caused by the fact that the teachers have better access to additional in-service training (e.g. in their own firms) as well as the fact that observing the children’s slow progress they may draw the conclusion that linguistic goals
are less attainable and therefore the learning objectives must be of a different nature, referring to more abstract and less measurable benefits.

As regards the possible current outcomes of very early FLL, the teachers studied have quite realistic judgement of what the children can learn in a FL (Fig. 5.29), as was shown in the agreement to such statements as ‘The child will understand simple commands’, ‘The child will communicate using single words and memorized chunks (e.g. greetings)’, ‘The child will know a few texts in a FL by heart (e.g. songs, poems, drama parts)’, ‘The child will understand the general sense of a storybook, cartoon etc.’, ‘The child will act out scenes from a FL class using memorized chunks’, ‘The child will learn more vocabulary than children starting FLL later’, ‘The child will have very good pronunciation in a FL’, ‘The child will be able to conduct simple conversations in a FL’, ‘The child will spontaneously insert FL words into Polish speech’. The answers were undecided/neutral in reference to those statements which required more communicative use of a FL now or referred to the more distant future, such as speaking fluently in adolescence, or creating sentences in two to three years, i.e. statements which could denote agreement with ‘the earlier, the better view’. So some mismatch can be observed here between teachers’ opinions of the goals of very early instruction (‘The earlier, the better’ position was the most common reason for starting FL instruction, cf. Fig. 5.28) and actual expectations of achievement. It seems therefore that many teachers repeat the common clichés, yet current teaching practice allows them to observe the actual children’s progress and linguistic ability. Also there were no differences in teachers’ judgement of possible achievements as expressed by individual statements between teachers of private and public kindergartens (Tab. 5.26) and those working in the city and the village (Tab. 5.27). Only in the possible FLL outcomes scale did the teachers of private kindergartens have a higher score than teachers of public kindergartens (Tab. 5.26), which possibly denotes that generally private kindergarten teachers may have closer supervision and thus more knowledge of the children’s progress. Also, in reference to the statement that children who start FLL early will master more vocabulary than children starting FLL later (Tab. 5.27), teachers working in the city expressed this opinion more often than teachers in the villages, which may again indicate a closer observation of the children’s progress as well as more intensive teaching, more systematic assessment/forms of revision and visible outcomes. It should be recognized that especially in public kindergartens, where parents pay an additional fee, teachers may feel more obliged to carry out regular assessment/revision sessions as the learning outcomes are often presented in ‘open classes’ for parents. Also FL teaching at kindergarten is often carried out on the basis
of lexical syllabuses, hence the child’s progress can mainly be measured by the number of lexical items mastered by the child.

The teachers’ opinions in relation to possible FL outcomes were also correlated with selected personal variables (research question 3). Here also the correlations were single and solitary. For example it was found that teachers with a Master’s degree obtained higher scores on the statement “the child will be able to conduct simple conversations in a FL”, than teachers with a Bachelor’s degree (Tab. 5.28). There was also a weak positive correlation between the teachers’ age and the opinion that ‘The child will know a few texts in a FL by heart (e.g. songs, poems, drama parts)’, i.e. the older the teacher the more positive about this statement s/he was. Similarly, a weak positive correlation was found between the teachers’ length of teaching experience in a kindergarten and the statement ‘The child will learn more vocabulary than children starting FLL later’ (Tab. 5.29). All these findings indicate that the older, the more experienced, the more educated the FL teacher is, the more knowledge s/he possesses in relation to the child’s possible FL outcomes.

The fourth research question asked for the identification of factors that can most influence very early FLL outcomes. Additionally, the teachers were asked to acknowledge which of the factors were present in their own practice. The results of the study showed that the most important factor for positive FLL outcomes is ‘small groups’, which is quite understandable as in small groups there can be more frequent interaction between the teacher and individual pupils, and consequently, each child would have much more FL practice. Unfortunately, this factor is also one of the least commonly practised, as the group size is beyond the control of the teacher (Fig. 5.30). The following commonly indicated factors, which were usually practised to some extent, were such factors as numerous and attractive teaching aids, teachers’ professionalism, stress-free atmosphere and praising/rewarding children. However, it should be noted that the teachers slightly underestimated their own competence (or are self-critical) as more teachers regard teacher professionalism as an important factor than actually admit practising it. Also more teachers acknowledge praising/rewarding children, than actually believe this has an impact on FLL outcomes.

However, what is surprising is that very few teachers acknowledge the importance and/or the use of such factors as caring for the classroom interior/decors. As identified in other research (e.g. Wu, 2003), an appropriate classroom environment can have an impact on the children’s development of intrinsic motivation. Also there is very little teacher encouragement to enhance the overall amount of children’s practice (FL input) by e.g. home revision, contact with foreigners/travelling abroad, or (although this did achieve a slightly higher score)
additional FL contact with audio/video recordings and the internet. All these findings show that the teacher considers him/herself the major person responsible for the FLL outcome.

While teachers may definitely not be able to cater for all these, it is surprising that they do not regard these aspects of FLL as an indispensable practice, supposedly thinking that very young children are too young for such methods. However, part of the teachers’ role is communication with parents and informing them what resources are available and how they can use them to enhance child’s FL motivation and practice. Travelling abroad on holiday for many children is not that uncommon nowadays (even if it is just to a neighbouring country), therefore it would be useful to use the children’s experiences to develop language and intercultural awareness. Yet, for this to take place close cooperation/information sessions between teachers and parents are required.

Finally, the teachers were asked what activities/resources they use to motivate children to FLL (Fig. 5.31). A surprisingly high percentage of respondents referred to the library with FL teaching materials. While possessing such a library is a worthy thing, from this type of quantitative survey we know nothing about its size, or how it is used. Perhaps by the ‘library’ many teachers mean a bookshelf with a few handbooks/CDs/DVDs useful for them to conduct classes. It does not seem to be a library with books/videos for the children to borrow, as the opinions above showed there is very little thought given to after class practice at this level.

Surprisingly while the teachers did not point to assessment as an important factor influencing FLL outcomes (Fig. 5.30), they use it (final exams/tests with rewards) as the second most frequently cited motivating techniques, followed by theatrical performances, FL song contests, and ‘open days’ for parents, other types of contests and shows (referred to as ‘other’, cf. Fig. 5.31). All these techniques mainly encourage children to show off their linguistic abilities (attained through rote memorization and rehearsals) and rely mainly on instrumental motivation. While instrumental motives may not necessarily be wrong, they are usually oriented at short-term goals, whereas if we want to develop in children a willingness and interest in life-long learning of FLs, activities oriented at arousing intrinsic motivation should be carried out. This includes such activities which foster the development of openness and curiosity of other cultures and languages, i.e. language/culture awareness raising activities such as European lessons/club, celebrating the European Day of Languages, using the European Language Portfolio for Children aged 3–6, talks/contests on intercultural topics or meeting foreigners. Yet, these turned out to be least popular in the FL teachers’ practice.

Therefore it can be seen that the popularity of instrumentally motivating
techniques is probably connected with the teachers’ belief ‘the younger, the better’, and the striving for linguistic competence. However, as is known from studies on attainment of young instructed learners (e.g. Muñoz, 2008), this goal may be difficult if not impossible to attain in minimal input situations. A change of viewpoint on the goals of very early FLL, i.e. developing interest and motivation towards FLL, would possibly also change the types of motivating techniques used with young and very young learners.

Thus the measures that should be taken are, raising teachers’ awareness of the goals of very early instruction, implementation of the recommendations of the ELP, and improving didactic skills towards attaining these goals.

To summarize, it should be recognized that the standard of current FL education at kindergarten level is not bad. There is already a huge availability of well-qualified teachers (perhaps partly due to the fact that other positions are already occupied), although they may not always be sufficiently willing or motivated to teach very young learners.

The study did not identify large and statistically significant differences between teachers of private and public or city and village kindergartens, as regards their qualifications, motivation to teach children, or opinions (deriving from knowledge) on the goals and possible achievements of children’s outcomes. The indicated differences in teachers’ opinions are solitary and there is a possibility that they arose by chance or because of a relatively small sample group. Besides they only reflect opinions and not stable features or skills.

6.4. Limitations of the research project

The research project presented is not without its limitations, which should be controlled for in the studies to come. It has to be recognized that in the three studies described among the participants who finally agreed to take part in the project, a severe limitation was the self-selection of the respondents (cf. Dörnyei, 2001), i.e. relatively few of the surveys were actually returned, both from the parents (ca. 40%) and the head teachers (return rate 20%). The reasons for that may be lack of time or little awareness of the significance of their opinions for social and educational change. On the other hand, as was learnt through later analysis of the survey results of the research as well as its qualitative part (interview), the topic itself, i.e. language education aspirations, may have selected certain respondents as well. Many respondents had a knowledge of foreign languages and were apparently middle class; as regards their profession, there were a lot of teachers and academics (intelligentsia). As is evident from literature in the field (Domański, 2002), educational aspirations are the
tenet of the middle class. Therefore I would also suspect that the survey simply
did not appeal to the interest and knowledge of certain types of parents, e.g. lo-
wer class with poor language knowledge. Indeed, it was reported to the research-
er that some parents refused to take a survey home only after a brief look at its
contents. If that happened another parent on the list was selected.

A similar stance may have been adopted by kindergarten head teachers. Only
those who place high importance on FLL and are knowledgeable of how it pro-
ceeds in their institutions may have taken care to respond to the survey as well
as to ask the teachers employed to do the same. This fact was learnt through
the pilot study from the refusal to take part of many head teachers, especially of
public kindergartens, where the responsibility for teaching FLs is totally in the
hands of private firms. Should a similar study be conducted again, it is sugges-
ted that it takes place in a more direct and personal form, e.g. through phone
calls as visiting every kindergarten in person does not seem to be very feasible.

Generally, there was a much higher return rate among FL teachers (57%),
as many of them were approached by the firms employing them during a staff
meeting.

In addition, it should be acknowledged that the opinions of parents are not
representative for the whole population of parents. The study did not reveal
the opinions of many parents of lower education and/or SES who did not enroll
their children into FL instruction because of financial reasons, therefore it is not
known what kind of aspirations they may have for their children in that respect.

Another weakness of the study is connected with the sampling of the res-
pondents. Too few subjects (parents, kindergarten head teachers, FL teachers)
were recruited from rural areas, which inhibited generalized comparisons. De-
spite efforts to collect data from these subjects, it has to be acknowledged that
FL is taught less frequently in rural areas and at a later starting age (usually in
‘0’ grades in primary schools), hence the difficulty in finding respondents.

Finally, it should be recognized that while it is stated in language policy
guidebooks (e.g. Ager, 2001) and documents (Beacco & Byram, 2002:68) that
parental aspirations should be taken into account when planning further lan-
guage education policy, to date there has been no such study of parental aspi-
rations in reference to such young children and in reference to FLL. Also the
widely discussed issue of the impact of SES on the rise of parental aspirations
has mainly been the tenet of research in educational psychology and in refe-
rence to older learners. Therefore any research instruments (surveys, interview
questions) had to be designed and piloted by the author herself, which may not
have left them without fault. For the same reasons no comparisons can be made
to other studies on very early FLL.
Final conclusions

The goal of this chapter is to present conclusions from the theoretical and empirical research on the nature of parental aspirations. Firstly, Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological model of human development is applied in order to account for the development of child educational aspirations. Secondly, pedagogical implications from the research project as well as suggestions for future research in the area of very early foreign language learning are presented.

7.1. A proposal for the model of development of child educational aspirations

Bronfenbrenner’s (1979, 1993) model can be seen as generic, i.e. it can be applied to any topic, provided the context (understood as location of the processes) is clearly specified. Therefore, to summarize the aforementioned discussion of research findings as well as theoretical underpinnings presented in Chapter 2 on the role of parents in the formation of the interests and aspirations of their children, it is proposed that the stimulation of children’s educational aspirations be explained with reference to the Bronfenbrenner’s model of human development.

In doing this the following assumptions should be made:

- Children’s own educational-vocational aspirations do not develop until mid-adolescence, and yet, when they arise they seem to be influenced by the children’s own self-concept, i.e. belief in their own capabilities and skills as well as environmental influences, such as parental expectations, opinions and attitudes; to some extent they can also be influenced by peers, but the opinion of peers in the choice of educational and vocational career is less significant if the relationship between the children and the parents is close. It should also be mentioned that children’s positive self-concept is enhanced when they receive support and acceptance from their parents.
Children’s self-concept and trust in their educational abilities as well as parental expectations in that respect rise, in turn, on the basis of positive school outcomes and success in early schooling.

To guarantee these positive school outcomes, it is important to ensure appropriate preparation in the pre-school years, i.e. at kindergarten level. The pre-school child is influenced, first of all, by his family environment, and to a lesser extent by kindergarten instruction as well as wider socio-educational context (such as educational policy). While early individual differences in intellectual capacity can already be observed at pre-school age (such as temperament, intelligence, cognitive style, personality) and to some extent are mainly hereditary, their impact is not absolutely deterministic. It is first of all the family’s proximal processes, i.e. close affectionate relationships in the family (as manifested by warmth, responsiveness, authoritativeness) and educational activities that bear most importance for school preparation, and enhance the so-called ‘good start’. At the pre-school level they are more significant than the distal features of the family, such as the family’s socio-economic status.

To apply the Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) system individual educational aspirations could be viewed as a macrosystem (i.e. a system of certain attitudes, beliefs in the value of education etc.), which is formed gradually through the impact of the microsystem, i.e. the child’s family, and especially its proximal processes as well as the mezosystem, i.e. the relationships between home and kindergarten, and later primary, instruction. The exosystem created by the links between the family and the parental workplace, which determines parental SES, income, time to cater for proximal variables, is also relevant, although less directly. Finally, the chronosystem, the critical periods for the rise of aspirations would be the transition from adolescence to adulthood (individual aspirations) as well as the transition from kindergarten to pre-school (educational success as a prerequisite to the rise of educational aspirations in adolescence).

To summarize, I would argue that early pre-school experience in the family, and to a lesser extent in the kindergarten, will have an impact on the children’s success in early schooling and subsequently on the rise of appropriately high educational aspirations. At the same time it should be recognized that in the transition period from kindergarten to primary education, the differences in social and environmental backgrounds of the children are already heavily marked, enhancing the gap between the children who come from advantageous and disadvantageous family backgrounds, thus putting the latter at risk of failure in educational success and, consequently, vocational success in the future. This leaves a huge role for educational institutions, such as kindergartens, as well as wider educational policy, to compensate for these inequalities in educational opportunities.
7.2. Pedagogical implications

Foreign language learning at pre-primary level is beyond any regulation by the state and officially it is not a part of the curriculum devised for kindergarten instruction. And yet it is commonly taught both in state (public) and private kindergartens. In public kindergartens it is usually conducted for an additional fee and from the school year 2011/2012 in Cracow it is to be taught as an additional afternoon course, outside regular teaching hours (when the kindergarten curriculum is realized). This decision is motivated by cost cutting, which only allows the first five hours spent in the kindergarten to be free of charge. This means that for every additional hour parents have to pay extra, which together with a fee for a FL course may be too heavy a burden for many parents to bear, and therefore an obstacle to many children learning a FL at a pre-primary level.

To realize European objectives of foreign language education, namely that two foreign languages should be taught from the very beginning, as expressed in the Barcelona presidency conclusion (2002), and also that FL education should enhance social cohesion and prevent inequalities, further measures should be taken both in language education policy and at institutional levels. This means that access to certain educational opportunities and resources should not be limited, as this is the key factor that differentiates between learners from various backgrounds and impedes achieving educational success. Limited access to foreign language learning at pre-primary level can result in such inequality. What is more, it shows that discrimination into higher and lower achievers starts very early.

The role of pedagogical research, including this study, is to inform various kinds of stakeholders with a view to laying the ground for subsequent change and innovation. The key stakeholders concerned with the process of very early teaching of foreign languages to very young learners and also decision-makers are: parents of the very young learners, FL teachers of very young learners, kindergarten head teachers, and on the wider stage, FL teacher educators and future language education policy makers.

First of all, stakeholders and decision makers should all be made widely aware, that the goal of very early FL instruction is no longer to obtain near native-like proficiency in one FL, most likely English, but rather to develop a plurilingual and intercultural attitude in children from the very early years. The old myth ‘the earlier one starts, the better FL proficiency one obtains in the future’, should be replaced by the statement ‘the earlier one starts, the more languages (although to varied degree) the child learns’ throughout his life. Yet, for this goal to materialize, all very young children should have positive and high quality
experiences with FLL. Developing intrinsic motivation for FLL should be the goal of very early instruction, and the motivating activity should be carried out by the key stakeholders mentioned (cf. Komorowska, 2007b). Yet, as the results of the study showed, more publicity and awareness-raising activity about these objectives still needs to be carried out among the stakeholders i.e. teachers, and kindergarten head teachers themselves.

More precisely, the following changes are suggested:

For language education policy makers

It is an inescapable fact that many parents want their children to learn a FL from the very early years. This calls for further changes in language education policy and lowering the age of starting obligatory FL instruction even further. Parental aspirations concerning very early instruction of FLs to their children can constitute an incentive to further changing language education policy. If this measure is taken, subsequently, continuity in FLL from pre-primary to primary levels should be guaranteed.

In order to fight inequalities in early education opportunities, in recent education reforms in Poland serious measures have been taken to reduce inequalities through the design of kindergarten curricula, which place high importance on early preparation for L1 reading (cf. Bogdanowicz, 2007, Metoda Dobrego Startu [eng. The Good Start Method]) as well as mathematical skills (cf. Gruszczyk-Kolczyńska, 2007) and lowering the age of obligatory kindergarten instruction from the age of six to five. It seems a further measure should also be to include early FLL in the kindergarten obligatory curriculum. Learning FLs from a very early age, and therefore enhancing opportunities for plurilingual attainment, is one of the necessary conditions in a country which is largely monolingual, and where FLL is not acquired naturally. This measure would consequently result in better supervision of teaching standards (by e.g. kindergarten head teachers) and improve FL teaching quality.

Findings from other pedagogical research (Lewowicki, 1987) should be recalled which identified that the influence of educational institutions on the rise of children’s aspirations is particularly prominent up to mid-adolescence. Even if it is too early to talk about the rise of very young children’s own aspirations, appropriate measures should be taken to lay the groundwork and maintain appropriate interest and motivation towards FLL, so that they result in the children’s own aspirations for high FL achievement in mid-adolescence and later-on.
**For kindergarten head teachers**

First of all, head teachers should be made aware of the value of very early FL learning as well as the factors which can impact its efficiency and motivate very young learners. They should be convinced of the importance of FLs now and for the children’s educational and vocational future, so that they acknowledge the high status of their teaching in the global kindergarten curriculum.

Until very early FL instruction becomes an obligatory part of the curriculum, head teachers are the major decision makers in the FLL process. The aspects which they may influence are first of all hiring a teacher who should be appropriately qualified and motivated to teach very young learners; naturally close supervision of the teacher’s work (by e.g. lesson observation), and encouraging the teacher to organize FL awareness-raising/intercultural events (such as European Day of Languages, using a European Language Portfolio, theatrical performances etc.). This usually takes place in private kindergartens which employ a FL teacher directly and enter into a contract with him. Employing a teacher from a private firm, which is common in public kindergartens, usually delegates the power and responsibility to other persons, which results in less supervision of the teaching quality. An alternative solution used by some private kindergartens is to have a regular kindergarten teacher with knowledge of a foreign language who would also teach a FL to children (for additional pay). Such a solution, although observed to be used sporadically, is often quite successful, as such teachers have the very much needed pedagogical skills and desire to work with such young children.

Finally, they should also consider the possibilities of widening the FL offer into other FLs, at least for the older children, for whom it may be the second FL. Alternatively, instead of teaching subsequent FLs, some kind of language awareness events/classes (at times called European club etc.) could be organized so that children have a chance to learn about other countries and languages and to arouse interest in learning them.

**For FL teachers of very young learners**

FL teachers of very young learners should be made aware of the European language education policy recommendations. They should be prepared to take responsibility for developing in their child learners intrinsic motivation to FLL. This covers all aspects of pedagogical activity, such as catering for self-development, cooperating and informing parents of very young learners of their children’s work and the parental involvement required in the process.
They should also acknowledge that teaching very young learners is very specific and requires special skills, such as a considerate approach to such young children (pedagogical skills), openness and confidence (as manifested in interactional skills), fluent use of a FL (B2/C1 levels) and last but not least, an enthusiasm and willingness to teach children. Thus the best teachers will be those who plan to specialize in teaching this age group and who do not treat it merely as a temporary job.

**For teacher training institutions**

More investment into teacher training of very early FLL is required. It seems it should be best carried out at pedagogical departments, specializing in educating teachers in pre-school and early years education. Their graduates are specifically equipped to work with young and very young children in terms of pedagogical and psychological preparation and it is assumed they are willing to do so. This solution seems to be plausible as most university students nowadays have already had FL education from primary school level and should have mastered at least one FL to an upper intermediate level (B2). What they need at university level is further expansion/reinforcement of their language skills as well as training in FL didactics.

Additionally, FL teachers of very young learners could be recruited from the graduates of philological departments (probably only those who are willing to specialize in teaching this age group). However, their preparation should include a more intensive and longer (e.g. one-year-long) placement in a kindergarten.

**For parents of very young learners**

More publicity and information about the goals and possible outcomes of very early FLL should also be given to parents of very young learners. More precisely, they should be made aware that FLL outcomes as well as FL motivation levels are strictly dependent on the type and quality of provision for instruction given. This includes the length and frequency of classes, teachers’ pedagogical and linguistic competences, forms of assessment and additional activities geared towards arousing interest and motivation in other cultures and languages.

It should be also recognized that no sole institution or teacher can be made wholly responsible for FLL outcomes. Parental involvement in the process of very early FLL is indispensable, as has been voiced in European guidance (e.g. Edelenbos, Johnstone & Kubanek, 2006). It should consist in maximising the amount of exposure to L2 (e.g. home revision, additional contact through books/media) as well as building awareness of other languages/cultures.
Parental involvement can be further endorsed and facilitated by the media in the public space, as it is clear that children will not benefit from them when being sat in front of them alone, but parents can additionally help to clarify new meanings. For this to take place, more (and in more diverse languages) language education programmes should be available on public TV and more interactive foreign language learning for young learners websites should be available on the internet. While some such noteworthy initiatives have already been observed (e.g. the programme Lippy and Messy on the Polish public Channel One is shown periodically, or short FL programmes are on the MiniMini channel available through private TV subscription) still there is plenty of room for improvement. While certain programmes and websites (e.g. EnglishforKids by the British Council) can be found for English language learners, those promoting other languages should also be made available. Institutional and financial support for such projects should be secured.

7.3. Suggestions for future research

Initial studies on child FLL were psycholinguistic in nature, mainly with a view to verifying the relevance of the age factor for the instructional classroom (cf. Ch. 3 for a review). Since the CPH does not seem to be evidenced in an instructional classroom, it is recognized that the goals of very early FL instruction are different than striving for native-like mastery in the future. It is now recognized that there is a huge variety of provision for very early FLL and this is what causes variation in learning outcomes. Hence more recent research focuses on the environmental, social and pedagogical underpinnings of very early FL instruction.

Thus it can be predicted that subsequent studies will contribute to this area as more and more children will learn more and different FLs, and the environmental/classroom conditions will change. The first comprehensive and comparative study on the process and practices in Europe at pre-primary level was only conducted in 2011 (Early Language Learning at Pre-Primary Level in Europe: Current Situation and Future Perspectives, European Commission 2011). Many studies are limited to describing single case studies, descriptions of classes or projects and institutions as examples of ‘good practice’ (Nikolov & Mihaljević Djigunović, 2011). This shows that qualitative research on environmental conditioning of very early FLL could provide even more insight into the quality of the provision for very early FL instruction.

So it seems that future research into very early FL instruction could also focus on identifying instances of ‘good teaching practice’, projects using innovative techniques and new media, particularly in reference to languages other
than English. It seems that a valuable contribution would be to compare FL instruction between private ‘Foreign language-oriented’ kindergartens and ‘ordinary’ private kindergartens in order to observe if there are any differences in provision for FLs in those institutions. The study could be conducted by means of the same instruments, additionally accompanied by qualitative methods, such as classroom observation and interviews with FL teachers/head teachers.

It would also be of interest to observe how the provision for FL instruction may change over time, possibly due to increased awareness of European language policy recommendations, more fierce competition in the educational market (among private kindergartens, firms employing FL teachers), and possible language policy change (e.g. lowering the age of obligatory FL instruction). A replication study could be conducted in a few years time.

Finally, the impact of parental educational aspirations on child FL achievement could be explored further, perhaps in a longitudinal study, in order to check whether ‘an early start’ gives children an advantage over ‘later starters’, in any aspect, e.g. linguistic/plurilingual achievement, attitudes and motivation to FLL, developing ‘international identity’. In this respect the model proposed in section 7.1 could be tested.

7.4. Final remarks

Learning foreign languages in post-war Poland has been particularly difficult, for it is largely a monolingual country, with few ethnic minorities and few languages spoken. It is not without meaning that it was isolated from the rest of Europe for over half a century. Hence FL knowledge has been always regarded as a unique capacity, a key to professional success, a promise of a better life (when emigrating) and therefore a goal of aspirations. Even today with open frontiers and unlimited opportunities for travel, bi-/multilingualism is a fact of life only for a small fraction of the population.

Since many of today’s adults, who may also be parents of very young children, are often failed FL learners themselves, starting FL early appears to be a recipe for success with languages. By enabling their children a very early start in FL instruction, they often wish for their children’s better future, or simply predict that plurilingualism will be a must and a fact of life for citizens in a globalized world. In a country where there are minimal opportunities to learn FLs naturally, early formal instruction in FLs will be always a necessity, thus giving rise to subsequent innovative change in FL pedagogy and scope for further research.
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295
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306


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List of figures

Fig. 2.1. The position of aspirations in the ‘motive-life orientation’ continuum
Fig. 2.2. A summary of factors affecting the rise of educational aspirations.
Fig. 2.3. The place of a child within Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological model of human development
Fig. 2.4. Model of the intergenerational transmission of educational success
Fig. 5.1. Age profile of the children studied
Fig. 5.2. Subjects’ length of learning a FL
Fig. 5.3. Age profile of the subjects’ mothers
Fig. 5.4. Age profile of the subjects’ fathers
Fig. 5.5. Education level of the subjects’ mothers
Fig. 5.6. Education level of the subjects’ fathers
Fig. 5.7. Self-perceived socio-economic status of the subjects’ parents
Fig. 5.8. Parental reasons for child enrollment in a FL course
Fig. 5.9. Parental reasons for choosing English as a language of study
Fig. 5.10. Parental reasons for enrolling their children into an L3 course at kindergarten
Fig. 5.11. Parental opinions on their children’s future use of a FL
Fig. 5.12. Parental preferences for an L3 choice for their children
Fig. 5.13. Types of parental involvement in very early FLL
Fig. 5.14. Costs of very early FL instruction in various types of kindergartens
Fig. 5.15. Comparison of duration of very early FL instruction in various types of kindergartens and settings
Fig. 5.16. Comparison of the frequency of very early FL instruction in various types of kindergartens and settings
Fig. 5.17. Kindergarten head teachers’ reasons for introducing FL instruction
Fig. 5.18. Kindergarten head teachers’ reasons for choosing English as the main FL of very early instruction
Fig. 5.19. Kindergarten head teachers’ opinions on factors affecting very early instruction
Fig. 5.20. Comparing head teachers’ opinions and practices on factors influencing FL instruction in various types of kindergartens and settings
Fig. 5.21. Activities promoting FLL in various types of kindergartens and settings
Fig. 5.22. Kindergarten head teachers’ opinions on skills and competences required from a FL teacher
Fig. 5.23. Age profile of the VYL teachers studied
Fig. 5.24. YL teachers’ education level
Fig. 5.25. Teachers’ qualifications for teaching languages
Fig. 5.26. Teacher preparation and preferences for teaching very young children
Fig. 5.27. Average length of working as a teacher
Fig. 5.28. Teachers’ beliefs in respect of the goals of very early FL instruction
Fig. 5.29. ‘Teachers’ opinions in respect of the possible FLL outcomes of very young learners
Fig. 5.30. Teachers’ opinions and acknowledged use of elements enhancing very early FLL effectiveness
Fig. 5.31. Motivating techniques introduced in very early FL instruction

List of tables

Tab. 2.1. Summary of Polish studies on the relationship of children’s aspirations and the impact of family
Tab. 3.1. Main pedagogical principles behind early FLL
Tab. 4.1. Interviewed parents of very young learners
Tab. 5.1. Parental expectations and selected personal and educational variables
Tab. 5.2. Comparing parental expectations in relation to child gender
Tab. 5.3. Comparing levels of parental expectations in FLL of children attending private and public kindergartens
Tab. 5.4. Parental aspirations and selected personal and educational variables
Tab. 5.5. Comparing parental aspirations in relation to child gender
Tab. 5.6. Comparing parental level of aspirations for children attending private and public kindergartens
Tab. 5.7. Correlations between the quantity of parental involvement activities and parental expectations/parental aspirations
Tab. 5.8. Correlations between the quantity of parental involvement and personal variables
Tab. 5.9. Amount of parental involvement and child gender
Tab. 5.10. Comparison of parental involvement given to children in public and private kindergartens
Tab. 5.11. Summary of parental beliefs in reference to early FLL
Tab. 5.12. Teachers’ age in public and private kindergartens
Tab. 5.13. Teachers’ education level in private and public kindergartens
Tab. 5.14. Teachers’ qualifications for FL teaching in private and public kindergartens
Tab. 5.15. Teachers’ competences in YL didactics
Tab. 5.16. Teachers’ plans to specialise in teaching very young learners
Tab. 5.17 Comparing the length of teaching experience of teachers in public and private kindergartens
Tab. 5.18 Comparison of FL teachers working in the city and in the villages
Tab. 5.19. Comparison of teachers’ education levels in the city and villages
Tab. 5.20. Comparing FL qualifications of teachers working in the city and in villages
Tab. 5.21. Comparing teachers’ YL didactics in the city and villages
Tab. 5.22. Comparing teachers’ plans to specialise in teaching VYLs
Tab. 5.23. Comparing the length of teaching experience of teachers working in the city and villages
Tab. 5.24. Comparing teachers’ beliefs in respect of the goals of very early FL instruction in private and public kindergartens
Tab. 5.25. Comparing teachers’ beliefs on the goals of very early FL instruction between teachers working in the city and in villages
Tab. 5.26. Comparing teachers’ beliefs in respect of possible FLL outcomes in very young learners in private and public kindergartens
Tab. 5.27. Comparing teachers’ beliefs on possible FLL outcomes in very young learners in the city and in villages
Tab. 5.28. Comparing teachers’ opinions on possible outcomes in very early FLL in relation to level of education
Tab. 5.29. Correlations between teachers’ beliefs regarding possible FLL outcomes, teachers’ age and length of teaching experience
Appendices

Appendix 1. A survey for parents of very young learners of a FL

We wszystkich częściach ankiety proszę postawić znak ‘x’ w odpowiednim wierszu lub kolumnie lub uzupełnić odpowiedź. Jeśli można wybrać więcej niż jedną odpowiedź, zostało to zaznaczone przy pytaniu.

Część 1 – informacje o dziecku

W części pierwszej proszę o udzielenie odpowiedzi na temat danych osobowych dziecka oraz informacji o formach nauki języków obcych.

1. Jakiej płci jest dziecko?
   - ☐ Chłopiec
   - ☐ Dziewczynka

2. Ile Pan/Pani dziecko ma lat?
   - ☐ 3 lata
   - ☐ 4 lata
   - ☐ 5 lat
   - ☐ 6 lat
   - ☐ 7 lat

3. Ile Państwo mają dzieci?
   - ☐ 1
   - ☐ 2
   - ☐ 3
   - ☐ 4
   - ☐ 5 i więcej

4. Które z kolei urodziło się dziecko, którego dotyczy ankieta?
   - ☐ Pierwsze
   - ☐ Drugie
   - ☐ Trzecie
   - ☐ Czwarte
   - ☐ Piąte
   - ☐ Następne (które, proszę podać)

5. Jakich języków obcych uczy się dziecko?
   - ☐ Angielski
   - ☐ Niemiecki
   - ☐ Francuski
   - ☐ Włoski
   - ☐ Hiszpański
   - ☐ Rosyjski
   - ☐ Inny (jaki?)

6. Jak długo dziecko uczy się języka obcego?
   - Język 1) _____________________
     - ☐ Do 6 miesięcy
     - ☐ 6–12 miesięcy
     - ☐ 1–2 lata
     - ☐ 2–3 lata
     - ☐ 3–4 lata
     - ☐ 4–5 lat
     - ☐ powyżej 5 lat
   - Język 2) _____________________
     - ☐ Do 6 miesięcy
     - ☐ 6–12 miesięcy
     - ☐ 1–2 lata
     - ☐ 2–3 lata
     - ☐ 3–4 lata
     - ☐ 4–5 lat
     - ☐ powyżej 5 lat

7. Gdzie dziecko uczy się języka obcego?
   - ☐ Na kursie w szkole językowej
   - ☐ W przedszkolu publicznym
   - ☐ W przedszkolu prywatnym
   - ☐ Na lekcjach prywatnych
   - ☐ Z rodzicem w domu
   - ☐ Inne (proszę wymienić) _____________________

Część 2

W części drugiej chciałabym się dowiedzieć, dlaczego Państwo zapisali dziecko na kurs języka obcego oraz czego się Państwo po nim spodziewają.

1. Jakie były najważniejsze przyczyny, którymi się Pan/i kierował/a zapisując dziecko na kurs języka obcego? (Można wybrać maks. 3 odpowiedzi)
   - ☐ Im wcześniejszej dziecko rozpocznie naukę języka obcego, tym lepiej go opanuje w przyszłości
   - ☐ Zajęcia językowe są atrakcyjnym urozmaiceniem dnia w przedszkolu
1. Czy nauka języka pomoże dziecku być bardziej otwartym i pewnym siebie w kontaktach z innymi ludźmi, także obcokrajowcami?
- Tak
- Nie

2. Czy nauka języka obcego jest bardzo dobrą 'gimnastyką' dla mózgu?
- Tak
- Nie

3. Chcesz, by dziecko przyzwyczaiło się do języka obcego, jego innego brzmienia, innych słów, gramatyki itp.?
- Tak
- Nie

4. Chcesz, by dziecko wiedziało, że istnieją inne języki, kraje i kultury?
- Tak
- Nie

5. Wierzysz, że dziecko może opanować język obcy łatwo, szybko i tak dobrze jak język ojczysty?
- Tak
- Nie

6. Ucząc się języka obcego w przedszkolu dziecko nie będzie miało z nim problemów w szkole podstawowej?
- Tak
- Nie

7. Większość dzieci w grupie mojego dziecka uczęszcza na zajęcia językowe, więc zapisałam na nie również swoje dziecko?
- Tak
- Nie

8. W trakcie zajęć językowych dzieci uczą się współpracy z innymi dziećmi?
- Tak
- Nie

9. Dzieci uczą się języków obcych łatwiej i szybciej niż dorośli; mogą więc osiągnąć lepsze efekty?
- Tak
- Nie

10. Zachęciła mnie reklama danej firmy językowej?
- Tak
- Nie

11. Taka była oferta w przedszkolu; sądzę, że nauka mu nie zaszkodzi, a zawsze się czegoś nauczy?
- Tak
- Nie

12. Inne (proszę podać)____________________________________________________________________

2. Dlaczego dziecko uczy się języka angielskiego? (Mogą wybrać maks. 3 odpowiedzi)

- Ten język najbardziej przyda się dziecku w przyszłości (w karierze zawodowej itp.)
- Ten język przyda mu się w kontaktach z rodziną/znajomymi za granicą
- Ten język jest bardzo popularny, używa się go na całym świecie
- Tylko kurs takiego języka był proponowany w przedszkolu
- Sam/a znam ten język, więc mogę uczyć własne dziecko/pomóc mu w nauce
- Znajomość tego języka świadczy o wysokiej kulturze i dobrym wykształceniu
- Planujemy wyjazd do kraju w którym jest on używany
- Sami znamy/interesujemy się tym językiem i kulturą kraju, w którym jest on używany, więc chcemy zainteresować nim dziecko
- Inny powód (proszę podać) ____________________________________________

3. Dlaczego dziecko uczy się drugiego języka obcego? (Maks. 3 odpowiedzi)

- Ten język najbardziej przyda się dziecku w przyszłości (w karierze zawodowej itp.)
- Ten język przyda mu się w kontaktach z rodziną/znajomymi za granicą
- Ten język jest bardzo popularny, używa się go na całym świecie
- Tylko kurs takiego języka był proponowany w przedszkolu
- Sam/a znam ten język, więc mogę uczyć własne dziecko/pomóc mu w nauce
- Znajomość tego języka świadczy o wysokiej kulturze i dobrym wykształceniu
- Planujemy wyjazd do kraju w którym jest on używany
- Sami znamy/interesujemy się tym językiem i kulturą kraju, w którym jest on używany, więc chcemy zainteresować nim dziecko
- Inny powód (proszę podać) ____________________________________________
4. Jakich osiągnięć dziecka w języku obcym oczekuje Pan/i teraz/w ciągu najbliższego roku? (Proszę się ustosunkować do każdego stwierdzenia stawiając znak ‘x’ w odpowiedniej kolumnie)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oświadczając, że istnieją inne języki</th>
<th>Zdecydowanie tak</th>
<th>Raczej tak</th>
<th>Nie wiem</th>
<th>Raczej nie</th>
<th>Zdecydowanie nie</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Będzie miało świadomość, że istnieją inne języki</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zainteresuje się dalszą nauką języków obcych</td>
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<tr>
<td>Będzie rozumiało proste polecenia, np. w grze</td>
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<tr>
<td>Będzie rozumiało sens czytanej książeczki w języku obcym/kreskówki w TV</td>
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<tr>
<td>Będzie znało nazwy pojedynczych przedmiotów w języku obcym</td>
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<tr>
<td>Będzie umiało się przywitać, pożegnać, przedstawić w języku obcym</td>
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<tr>
<td>Będzie umiało zaśpiewać piosenkę/powiedzieć wierszyk w języku obcym itp.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Będzie umiało domyśleć się znaczenia słowa z kontekstu w programie TV, piosence, grze komputerowej itp.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Będzie spontanicznie wtrącać słowa i wyrażenia obcojęzyczne w mowie potocznej</td>
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<tr>
<td>Będzie próbowało tworzyć nowe zdania i słowa w języku obcym</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Będzie próbowało rozmawiać w języku obcym, np. z obcokrajowcami na wakacjach lub bawiąc się zabawkami i odgrywając scenki lekcji języka obcego</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
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<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Będzie mówiło płynnie w języku obcym</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
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<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nie mam żadnych oczekiwań, to się okaże</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
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<td>[ ]</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Jakich efektów w nauce języka obcego oczekuje Pan/Pani u swojego dziecka za kilka/kilkanaście lat? (Proszę się ustosunkować do każdego stwierdzenia stawiając znak ‘x’ w odpowiedniej kolumnie)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>W wieku dorosłym dziecko nie musi mówić płynnie wystarczy jeśli będzie umiało się porozumiewać w języku obcym, np. załatwić jakąś sprawę</th>
<th>Zdecydowanie tak</th>
<th>Raczej tak</th>
<th>Nie wiem</th>
<th>Raczej nie</th>
<th>Zdecydowanie nie</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W wieku dorosłym dziecko nie musi mówić płynnie wystarczy jeśli będzie umiało się porozumiewać w języku obcym, np. załatwić jakąś sprawę</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
6. W jaki sposób wspiera Pan/i dziecko w nauce języka obcego? (Można wybrać więcej niż 1 odpowiedź)

- [ ] Powtarzam z dzieckiem materiał lekcyjny w domu
- [ ] Bawię się z dzieckiem w gry językowe, np. Memo
- [ ] Śpiewam z dzieckiem piosenki w języku obcym
- [ ] Czytam mu książeczki w języku obcym, tłumacząc nowe słowa
- [ ] Kupuję mu gry edukacyjne, słowniki obrazkowe, programy komputerowe do nauki j. obcego, kursy DVD/video itp.
- [ ] Próbuję rozmawiać z dzieckiem w języku obcym, np. wykorzystując pacynki
- [ ] Przepytuję dziecko ze znajomości słów
- [ ] Zachęcam dziecko do kontaktu z obcokrajowcami (np. przywitania się, drobnych zakupów za granicą itp.)
- [ ] Dziecko gra w obcojęzyczne gry na komputerze/w Internecie z rodzinami
- [ ] Dziecko gra w obcojęzyczne gry na komputerze/w Internecie samo
- [ ] Dziecko ogląda obcojęzyczne bajki w telewizji z rodzinami
- [ ] Dziecko ogląda obcojęzyczne bajki w telewizji samo
- [ ] W rozmowie wskazuję na zalety znajomości języków obcych
- [ ] Inne, proszę wymienić ____________________________________________

7. Czy podróżują Państwo z dzieckiem za granicę?

- [ ] Tak  □  □  □  □  □  □
- [ ] Nie

Jeśli tak, ile razy byli Państwo z dzieckiem za granicą od jego narodzin? (Proszę podać liczbę) ________
Część 3

W tej części chciałabym się dowiedzieć, jakie plany życiowe/marzenia, co do przyszłości zawodowej i edukacyjnej mają Państwo w stosunku do swojego dziecka.

1. W jakich sytuacjach życiowych i zawodowych, Pana/Pani zdaniem przyda się dziecku najbardziej znajomość języków obcych w przyszłości? (Można zaznaczyć więcej niż 1 odpowiedź)
   - Żeby dostać w ogóle pracę
   - Znajomość języków ułatwi dostanie lepszej pracy (np. na stanowisku kierowniczym) i wyższych zarobków
   - W kontaktach z klientami obcokrajowcami
   - W kontaktach z pracodawcą/zleceniodawcą
   - Rozumienie tekstów fachowych z branży
   - Podróże zagraniczne
   - Podtrzymywanie kontaktów towarzyskich z obcokrajowcami
   - Praca za granicą
   - Korzystanie z dóbr kultury obcojęzycznej (książki i filmy w oryginale, muzyka itp.)
   - We wszystkich sytuacjach wymienionych powyżej

2. Jakich innych języków chciał(a)by Pan/i, by dziecko uczyło się w następnej kolejności?
   - Angielski
   - Niemiecki
   - Francuski
   - Włoski
   - Hiszpański
   - Rosyjski
   - Inny, jaki ___________
   - Nie planuję; dziecko zdecyduje samo
   - To zależy, jaki język będzie oferowany w szkole
   - Nie planuję; jeden język obcy dziecku wystarczy

3. W jaki sposób planuje Pan/i zapewnić dziecku dobre wykształcenie w zakresie nauki języków obcych?
   - Będziemy umożliwiać dziecku kontakt z językami poprzez podróże, kontakty z obcokrajowcami itp.
   - Będziemy kupować materiały edukacyjne (programy komputerowe, słowniki, samouczki itp.)
   - Będziemy zachęcać dziecko do przykładania się do nauki szkolnej (odrabianie zadań domowych itp.)
   - Dziecko będzie chodzić do szkoły podstawowej prywatnej
   - Dziecko będzie chodzić na kursy językowe
   - Dziecko będzie mieć lekcje prywatne języków obcych
   - Oprócz nauki szkolnej sami będziemy pomagać dziecku w nauce języków obcych
   - Nie planujemy dodatkowych nakładów; nauka szkolna powinna dziecku wystarczyć
   - W przyszłości planujemy wysłać dziecko na kurs językowy/do szkoły za granicą
   - Chcielibyśmy, by dziecko przynajmniej przez jakiś czas studiowało za granicą
   - Inne, jakie? ___________________________________________________________

Część 4

Ostatnia część ankiety dotyczy informacji demograficznych (tj. wykształcenia, zamieszkania, itp.). Proszę postawić znak ‘X’ w odpowiednim polu.

1. Kto wypełnia ankietę?
   - Ojciec
   - Matka
   - Oboje rodziców
   - Opiekun
2. Ile lat ma matka dziecka?
   - Poniżej 25 lat
   - 25–30 lat
   - 31–35 lat
   - 36–40 lat
   - 41–45 lat
   - 46–50 lat
   - Powyżej 50 lat

3. Ile lat ma ojciec dziecka?
   - Poniżej 25 lat
   - 25–30 lat
   - 31–35 lat
   - 36–40 lat
   - 41–45 lat
   - 46–50 lat
   - Powyżej 50 lat

4. Jakie języki obce znają Państwo? W jakim stopniu (podstawowym, średniozaawansowanym, zaawansowanym)?
   Matka _________________________ Ojciec _________________________
   _________________________ _________________________
   _________________________ _________________________

5. Kto ponosi większą odpowiedzialność za kształcenie dzieci (decyduje o wyborze szkoły/zać jednostkowych, wozi dzieci na nie, odrabia zadania domowe itp.)?
   - Ojciec
   - Matka
   - Oboje rodziców

6. Jakie wykształcenie ma matka?
   - Doktorat
   - Wyższe magisterskie
   - Inżynierskie/licencjat
   - Średnie
   - Zawodowe
   - Podstawowe

7. Jakie wykształcenie ma ojciec?
   - Doktorat
   - Wyższe magisterskie
   - Inżynierskie/licencjat
   - Średnie
   - Zawodowe
   - Podstawowe

8. Do jakiego zawodu otrzymali Państwo wykształcenie?
   Matka __________________ Ojciec __________________

9. Jaki zawód Państwo wykonują?
   Matka __________________ Ojciec __________________

10. Przy użyciu których przedmiotów lub w których sytuacjach wykorzystują Państwo znajomość języków obcych (przynajmniej czasami)?
    - Internet
    - telewizja kablowa/satelitarna
    - prenumerata/stały zakup czasopism
    - radio internetowe
    - spotkania towarzyskie z obcokrajowcami
    - rozmowy telefoniczne/przez Skype
    - programy i gry komputerowe/Playstation
    - encyklopedie i słowniki/podręczna biblioteka
    - filmy DVD
    - korzystanie z biblioteki publicznej
    - wyjazdy zagraniczne
    - zakup książek

11. Gdzie Państwo mieszkają?
    - Wieś
    - Wieś/okolica podmiejska (do 30 km od dużego miasta)
    - Małe miasto (do 100 000 mieszkańców)
    - Duże miasto (powyżej 100 000 mieszkańców)

12. Jak Pan/i ocenia swoją obecną sytuację materialną?
    - Jest bardzo zła, brakuje nam na podstawowe potrzeby
    - Wystarcza nam środków tylko na podstawowe potrzeby, musimy liczyć wydatki
    - Umiarkowana; musimy odkładać na każdy większy zakup
    - Dobra; nie mamy problemów z realizacją żadnych potrzeb
    - Bardzo dobra, kupujemy luksusowe produkty (np. markowe alkohole, markowe ubrania, produkty (z delicatęsów) i usługi (wycieczki zagraniczne, prywatna opieka medyczna itd.)
Appendix 1a. English translation of the questionnaire for parents

In all sections, please mark ‘X’ in an appropriate column or line, or fill in an answer.

Part 1 – Demographic information on a child
In Part 1 I would like to provide some information on your child and his foreign language instruction.

1. Child gender
   □ Boy    □ Girl

2. How old is your child?
   □ 3   □ 4   □ 5   □ 6   □ 7

3. How many children have you got?
   □ 1   □ 2   □ 3   □ 4   □ 5 and more

4. Which one was the child according to the birth order?
   □ First □ Second □ Third □ Forth □ Fifth □ Next

5. What foreign languages does your child learn?
   □ English □ German □ French □ Italian □ Spanish □ Russian □ Other (which one?)

6. How long does your child learn a foreign language?
   □ Up to 6 months □ 6–12 months □ 1–2 years □ 2–3 years □ 3–4 years □ 4–5 years
   □ Above 5 years
   Language 2)___________________
   □ Up to 6 months □ 6–12 months □ 1–2 years □ 2–3 years □ 3–4 years □ 4–5 years
   □ Above 5 years

7. Where does the child learn a foreign language?
   □ Private language course □ Public kindergarten □ Private kindergarten

Part 2
In Part 2 I would like to find out why you have enrolled your child into a foreign language course and what you expect from it.

1. What were the most important motives for enrolling your child into a foreign language course? (Choose max. 3 most suitable answers)
   □ The earlier the child starts learning a foreign language, the better s/he will learn it in the future
   □ FL classes are an attractive form of complementing kindergarten curriculum
   □ FLL will help the child become more open and self-confident in interpersonal contacts, also with foreigners
   □ FLL is a good ‘mental’ exercise (‘brain gym’)
   □ I would like my child to get used to other languages, their sound, words, grammar etc.
I would like the child to develop awareness of other languages, cultures and countries

I believe the child can learn a foreign language easily, quickly and as good as the mother tongue

Having learnt a FL in a kindergarten the child will not have any problems with it in the primary school

Since most of the parents enrolled their children in a FL course, so did I

In a FL class a child would learn how to cooperate and socialize with others

Children learn FLs easier and faster than adults, and so can achieve better results

Attending a language course with a child was for me a form of socialization with other parents

I was attracted by advertising of a language course

There was an offer of a FL in a kindergarten. I believe this will not do a child any harm, and he will always learn something

Other (Please, specify)_______________________________________________

2. Why have you chosen for your child to learn English and not a different language? (You can choose max. 3 answers)

This language will be most useful for the child in the future (in professional career etc.)

This language will become useful in contacts with family/friends abroad

This language is very popular and used globally

In the kindergarten a course of only this language was offered

I know the language myself, so I can help my child in learning it

The knowledge of this language is a tenet of high culture and good education

We are planning to live in a country where it is used

We know and are interested in the language and its culture and want to infect the child with it

Other (Please, specify)__________________________________________

3. Why does the child learn a second foreign language? (Choose max. 3 answers)

This language will be most useful for the child in the future (in professional career etc.)

This language will become useful in contacts with family/friends abroad

This language is very popular and used globally

The course of this language was offered in the kindergarten

I know the language myself so I can help my child in learning it

The knowledge of this language is a tenet of high culture and good education

We are planning to live in the country where it is used

We know and are interested in the language and its culture and want to infect the child with it

Other (Please, specify)__________________________________________
4. What foreign language achievements do you expect in your child in the nearest future (now/within a year)? (Please refer to each statement by putting a cross ‘x’ in an appropriate column)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Definitely ‘yes’</th>
<th>Rather ‘yes’</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Rather not</th>
<th>Definitely not</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Will be aware of the existence of other languages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will become interested in learning other foreign languages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will understand simple commands, e.g. in a game etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Will understand a general sense of a book read in a foreign language/TV cartoon etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will know the names of single items in a foreign language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will know how to say ‘hello’, ‘goodbye’, introduce each other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will be able to sing a song/say a poem etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will guess the meaning of unknown words from context in a TV programme, song, computer game etc.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will insert foreign words and expressions in a spontaneous talk in Polish</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will try to create new sentences and words in a foreign language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will try to talk in a foreign language, e.g. with foreigners on holiday or playing with toys and acting out scenes from class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will speak a foreign language fluently</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have no expectations; the time will show</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. What foreign language results do you expect in your child in adolescence/early adulthood? (Please refer to each statement by putting a cross ‘x’ in an appropriate column)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Definitely ‘yes’</th>
<th>Rather ‘yes’</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Rather not</th>
<th>Definitely not</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In adulthood the child does not have to speak a foreign language fluently; it is enough if he can just communicate, e.g. to make some arrangements</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>In 2–3 years the child will be able to communicate in a foreign language, e.g. on holidays abroad</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
In 5–6 years the child will be able to speak a foreign language fluently

In adolescence the child will speak at least two foreign languages

Learning effects will depend on a school and the teacher

Learning effects will depend on the child’s aptitude

It’s enough if the child passes school exams in a foreign language

In adulthood the child will use a foreign language fluently at work (reading texts, conversations)

The child has to know a foreign language well enough in order to study/work abroad etc.

The child will have foreign friends, with whom s/he will communicate in a foreign language

In the future the child will have a native-like competence in a foreign language

6. How do you support your child in foreign language learning? (You can tick more than one answer)

☐ I repeat class material with a child
☐ I play games with a child, e.g. Memo
☐ I sing songs with a child in a foreign language
☐ I read FL books to a child, explaining new words
☐ I buy educational games, picture dictionaries, computer/DVD learning programmes etc.
☐ I try to talk to a child in a foreign language, e.g. using puppets
☐ I revise new words with my child
☐ I encourage my child to a contact with foreigners, e.g. greetings, small shopping when abroad etc.
☐ My child plays computer/Internet games with parents
☐ The child plays computer/Internet games alone
☐ The child watches foreign cartoons on TV with parents
☐ The child watches foreign cartoons alone
☐ In free talk I pinpoint benefits of knowing foreign languages
☐ Others (please, specify) ........................................................................................................

7. Do you travel with your child abroad?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If answered positively, how many times have you been abroad with your child since its birth? _______
Part 3
In this part I would like to find out what plans, and dreams you have got in reference to your child’s educational/vocational future

1. In what situations will the child need foreign language knowledge? (More than 1 answer can be marked)
   - In order to get any job
   - In order to get a better-paid job (e.g. at managerial position) and higher salary
   - In contacts with foreign clients
   - In contacts with an employer
   - Reading professional texts (documents, articles etc.)
   - Travelling abroad
   - Socializing with foreigners
   - Working abroad
   - Using cultural resources in a foreign language (literature, film, music etc.)
   - In all of the situations above

2. What other foreign languages would you like your child to learn next?
   - English
   - German
   - French
   - Italian
   - Spanish
   - Russian
   - Other (which one?)
   - I don't plan; the child will decide
   - It depends what language will be offered at school
   - I don't plan; one foreign language is enough

3. How do you plan to secure good level of foreign language education in your child?
   - We will enable the child contacts with languages through travel, contacts with foreigners etc.
   - We will be buying educational materials (computer programmes, self-study books etc.)
   - We will be encouraging the child to conscientious study at school (doing homework etc.)
   - The child will be going to private primary school
   - The child will be going to additional foreign language courses
   - The child will have private lessons of foreign languages
   - Apart from school instruction we will be helping our child in foreign language learning ourselves
   - We are not planning additional measures; school instruction should be sufficient
   - In the future we would like to send the child to a course/school abroad
   - We would like the child to study abroad at least partly
   - Others (which one?) ____________

Part 4
The last part of the survey concerns demographic information (i.e. level of education, place of living etc.) Please mark a sign ‘x’ in an appropriate place.

1. Who fills in the questionnaire?
   - Father
   - Mother
   - Both parents
   - Caregiver

2. How old is the child’s mother?
   - Below 25
   - 25–30
   - 31–35
   - 36–40
   - 41–45
   - 46–50
   - Above 50
3. How old is the child’s father?
   - Below 25
   - 25–30
   - 31–35
   - 36–40
   - 41–45
   - 46–50
   - Above 50

4. What foreign languages do you know? At what level (elementary, intermediate, advanced)?
   - Mother _________________________
   - Father _________________________

5. Who bears major responsibility for the child’s education (decides about the choice of school/additional classes, takes children to them, does homework etc.)?
   - Father
   - Mother
   - Both parents

6. What’s the mother’s level of education?
   - Doctorate
   - MA/MSc
   - BA
   - Secondary
   - Vocational
   - Primary

7. What’s the father’s level of education?
   - Doctorate
   - MA/MSc
   - BA
   - Secondary
   - Vocational
   - Primary

8. What profession did you get educated for?
   - Mother _________________________
   - Father _________________________

9. What do you do for a living?
   - Mother _________________________
   - Father _________________________

10. Using which of the objects below do you practice foreign languages at least occasionally?
    - Internet
    - computer programmes/games, Playstation
    - cable/satellite TV
    - encyclopedias and dictionaries
    - subscription to magazines
    - DVD films
    - Internet radio
    - public library loans
    - socializing with foreigners
    - travelling abroad
    - Skype conversations
    - buying/reading books

11. Where do you live?
    - Village
    - Suburban village (up to 30 km from a city)
    - Town (up to 100 000 inhabitants)
    - City (above 100 000 inhabitants)

12. How do you assess your own economic situation?
    - It is very bad; we cannot afford basic needs
    - We have got enough means for basic things; we have to count expenses
    - Moderate; we have to put money aside for each larger purchase
    - Good; we have no problems with realization of needs
    - Very good; we buy luxurious products and services (foreign trips, private medical care etc.)
Appendix 2. An interview with parents – stimulus questions

1. Czy postrzega Pan/i edukację dziecka jako inwestycję? Jeśli tak, jakich efektów Pan/i oczekuje od tej inwestycji? W jakim sensie ma ona pomóc osiągnąć dziecku sukces życiowy, materialny, osobisty itp.?

2. Jakie miejsce w edukacji dziecka ma dla Pana/i wczesna nauka języków obcych? Czego Pan/i po niej oczekuje?

3. Zakładając, że chciał(a)by Pan/i , by dziecko osiągnęło sukces i szczęście w życiu, jak Pan/i wyobraża sobie przyszłe życie dziecka?

4. Kim Pan/i chce by było dziecko w przyszłości? Z kim/czym chce Pan/i żeby dziecko się w przyszłości utożsamiało (rodzina, naród, sąsiedztwo, religia)? Do jakiej społeczności by należało?

5. Jaką ścieżkę edukacyjną (rodzaj szkoły podstawowej, gimnazjum, szkoły średniej, wyższej, zajęcia poza-lekcyjne) planuje Pan/i dla swojego dziecka?

6. Jaka rolę widzą Państwo dla siebie w edukacji dziecka (pomaganie w lekcjach bądź nacisk na całkowitą samodzielność, odpowiedzialność szkoły itp.).

7. Jak zamierza Pan/i wspierać naukę języków obcych w przyszłości (formy kształcenia, zakup materiałów, wyjazdy, wybór języków obcych, itp.)?

8. W jaki sposób wspiera Pan/i naukę języka/ów obcych dziecka obecnie (pogadanki, dodatkowa ekspozycja na język, zakup materiałów itp.)?

9. Czy są Państwo zadowoleni z obecnej nauki języka obcego przez dziecko (jego formy, częstotliwości itp.)? Czy mają Państwo wgląd w to jak prowadzone są zajęcia? Co Państwo o niej sądzą?

10. Kto w rodzinie (matka/ojciec) bardziej zajmuje się edukacją dziecka (wozi na zajęcia, kupuje materiały, bawi się z dzieckiem w gry edukacyjne, itp.)?

11. W jaki sposób spędzają Państwo czas po przyjściu z pracy i dziecka z przedszkola?

12. Jak spędzają Państwo czas wolny od pracy (święta, wakacje)?

13. Czy mają Państwo jakieś pasje, które próbują/chcieliby Państwo zaszczerpić dziecku?


15. Skąd Państwo pochodzą?

16. Jakie wykształcenie i znajomość języków obcych mieli Państwa rodzice?

Appendix 2a. English translation of the survey questions.
The place of FLL in the child’s global education

1. Do you perceive your child’s education as an investment? If so, what kind of ‘return’ do you expect to obtain? In what sense is it supposed to help achieve your child professional, material, personal etc. success?

2. What place does early foreign language education occupy in your child’s education? What do you expect from it?

3. Assuming that you would like your child to achieve success and happiness in life, how do you imagine your child’s future?

   **Future child identity**

4. Who do you want your child to be in the future (future identity?) To what community s/he would belong (language=>identity) ?

   **Educational plans for the future**

5. What kind of educational career do you plan for your child (type of school, public vs private, extracurricular classes)?

6. How do you see your role in the child’s education (helping at homework/emphasis on independence, school responsibility etc.)?

7. How do you plan to support the child’s FLL in the future (form of instruction, additional exposure to language, educational resources, travel, choice of FL to study)?

   **Parental involvement in FLL**

8. How do you support your child’s foreign language education now (conversations, resources, providing additional exposure etc.)?

9. Are you satisfied with the child’s FL learning outcomes? What do you think of the instruction (its form, frequency etc.)?

10. Who in the family is more responsible for the child’s education (takes him/her to classes, buys educational materials, plays with the child)?

   **Cultural capital**

11. How do you spend free time after work and the child’s return from kindergarten?

12. How do you spend holidays?

13. Have you got any interests that you would like to infect your children with?

14. Do you use foreign languages daily? Can children witness your use of languages?

   **Social background/Intergenerational transfer**

15. Where do you come from (social background)?

16. What level of education and FL knowledge do your and your spouse’s parents have (intergenerational transfer of capital)?

17. Did your parents support your education, incl. FL education? How? Is there anything you would like to repeat in your child’s education or on the contrary?
Appendix 3. A survey for head teachers of kindergartens

Część 1
W części pierwszej chciałabym uzyskać podstawowe informacje nt. sposobu organizacji nauczania języków obcych w przedszkolu przez Pana/Panią kierowanym, jak też i na temat samej instytucji (proszę postawić znak ‘V’ w wybranym miejscu lub odpowiedzieć na pytanie).

1. Jakiego rodzaju placówką jest kierowane przez Pana/Panią przedszkole?
   □ Publiczne (samorządowe) □ Niepubliczne □ Prywatne □ Inne (jakie?)

2. Gdzie znajduje się przedszkole?
   □ Wieś □ Wieś blisko dużego miasta (do 30km) □ Małe miasto (do 100 000 mieszkańców) □ Duże miasto

3. Ile dzieci uczęszcza do przedszkola?
   (Proszę podać liczbę) ________

4. Ile jest grup w przedszkolu?
   (Proszę podać liczbę) ________

5. Czy nauka języków obcych obejmuje wszystkie dzieci?
   □ Tak □ Nie

6. Czy jest ona dodatkowo płatna?
   □ Tak □ Nie

7. Jakich języków obcych mogą się dzieci uczyć w przedszkolu? (Proszę wymienić)
   __________________________________________________________

8. Jak często odbywają się zajęcia języka obcego w przedszkolu?
   Język __________________________________________
   □ 1 raz w tygodniu □ 2 razy w tygodniu □ 3 razy w tygodniu
   □ Więcej razy (proszę podać, ile)? ________________
   Język __________________________________________
   □ 1 raz w tygodniu □ 2 razy w tygodniu □ 3 razy w tygodniu
   □ Więcej razy (proszę podać, ile)? ________________

9. Jak długie są lekcje każdorazowo?
   Język __________________________
   □ 30 min □ 45 min □ 60 min □ Inne (Proszę podać, jak długo) ______
   Język __________________________
   □ 30 min □ 45 min □ 60 min □ Inne (Proszę podać, jak długo) ______

10. Jak liczne są grupy językowe?
    (Proszę podać liczbę dzieci w grupie) __________________________
Część 2

W części 2 chciałabym się dowiedzieć, dlaczego zdecydował/a się Pan/i wprowadzić naukę języka/ów obcego/ych w przedszkolu. W każdym pytaniu można zaznaczyć maksymalnie 3 odpowiedzi, najbardziej pasujące do Pani/a przekonań.

1. Dlaczego w ogóle zdecydował/a się Pan/i wprowadzić naukę języka obcego w przedszkolu?
   - □ Zajęcia językowe są atrakcyjnym urozmaiceniem dnia w przedszkolu
   - □ Rodzice dzieci wyraźnie domagali się wprowadzenia zajęć z języka obcego
   - □ Takie jest zapotrzebowanie społeczne/ogólny trend
   - □ Wiele firm językowych oferowało swoje usługi, więc w końcu zdecydowałem/łam się na jedną z nich
   - □ Wierzę, że im wcześniej rozpocznie się naukę języka obcego, tym lepsze przyniesie ona efekty w przyszłości
   - □ Wczesna nauka języka obcego sprzyja rozwojowi motywacji do dalszej nauki języków w przyszłości
   - □ Wczesna nauka języków obcych wspiera rozwój intelektualny, emocjonalny i społeczny dziecka
   - □ Inne (jakie? proszę podać) __________________________________________

2. Dlaczego zdecydował/a się Pan/i wprowadzić tylko naukę języka angielskiego (a nie innego)?
   - □ Uważam, że jest to najczęściej używany język i najbardziej przyda się on dzieciom w przyszłości
   - □ Rodzice nie chcą, aby dzieci uczyły się innego języka
   - □ Lekcje pokazowe z języka angielskiego wydawały się najciekawsze
   - □ Po nauce języka angielskiego przyjdzie jeszcze czas na naukę pozostałych języków
   - □ Brak innej oferty ze strony firm językowych
   - □ Większa liczba zajęć językowych stanowi zbyt duże obciążenie dla dzieci
   - □ Ten język jest łatwy do opanowania dla Polaków
   - □ Możliwym było zatrudnienie nauczyciela tego języka
   - □ Ten język będzie kontynuowany w szkole podstawowej
   - □ Inne przyczyny (jakie?) ______________________________

3. Które z poniższych elementów mają największy wpływ na efektywne nauczanie języka obcego?
   - □ a. Małe grupy (do 10 osób)
   - □ c. Profesjonalizm nauczyciela
   - □ e. Wystrój i urządzenie sali
   - □ g. Regularne ocenianie/testowanie
   - □ i. Powtórki materialu z zajęć z rodzicami w domu
   - □ k. Duża ilość atrakcyjnych materiałów dydaktycznych, tj. obrazki, gry językowe
   - □ m. Inne, proszę wymienić ______________________
   - □ b. Przyjemna atmosfera w czasie zajęć (zabawy, brak stresu)
   - □ d. Prowadzenie zajęć wyłącznie w języku obcym
   - □ f. Duża częstotliwość zajęć (min 3 razy w tygodniu)
   - □ h. Nagradzanie dzieci i chwalenie
   - □ j. Kontakty z obcokrajowcami, wyjazdy zagraniczne
   - □ l. Dodatkowy kontakt z językiem poprzez nagrania audio/video, Internet
4.które ze wspomnianych elementów w pkt. 6, są realizowane w kierowanym przez Pana/ Panią przedszkolu? (Proszę wymienić)

_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________

5.które z poniższych elementów/wydarzeń promujących naukę języków obcych są organi- nizowane w Pani/Pana przedszkolu?

☐ Klub europejski/lekcje europejskie
☐ Europejski Dzień Języków
☐ Portfolio Językowe dla dzieci 3–6
☐ Biblioteczka z książeczkami/nagraniami audio/video w językach obcych
☐ Przedstawienia teatralne w języku obcym
☐ Konkursy piosenki obcojęzycznej
☐ Sprawdziany końcowe z nagrodami Inne (jakie? proszę wymienić)
☐ Konkursy prac plastycznych o tematyce interkulturowej (porównanie kultury polskiej i obcej)
☐ Spotkania z obcokrajowcami/rówieśnikami z innych krajów

6. Czy ma Pan/Pani jakieś plany dotyczące rozwijania motywacji dzieci do nauki języków obcych w kierowanym przez Pana/Panią przedszkolu? Jeśli tak, to jakie?

_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________

7. Jakiego przygotowania do lekcji i jej prowadzenia oczekuje Pan/i od nauczyciela najbardziej? (Proszę zaznaczyć maks. 3 odpowiedzi)

☐ Dokładny plan lekcji i realizowanie go
☐ Duża różnorodność zabaw, wykorzystujących aktywność ruchową dziecka
☐ Wykorzystanie komputerów/tablicy interaktywnej na lekcji
☐ Sprawne reagowanie na nudę/elastyczna zmiana ćwiczeń w reakcji na sytuację
☐ Zaangażowanie osobiste nauczyciela (samodzielny śpiew, dużo ruchu, wyrazistych gestów itp.)
☐ Przygotowanie własnych pomocy (np. kart obrazkowych, modeli z papieru)
☐ Nauczanie w oparciu o podręcznik/karty pracy (xero)
☐ Używanie wyłącznie języka obcego
☐ Częste chwalenie i nagradzanie dziecka (np. naklejkami, pieczątkami itp.)
☐ Umiejętność zapanowania nad grupą/dyscyplina
☐ Wyraźna życzliwość w stosunku do dzieci (uśmiech, przyjazny dotyk, osobiste uwagi itp.)
Appendix 3a. A questionnaire for kindergarten headmasters
– English version

Part 1
In this part I would like to obtain some information on the way of organizing FL teaching in the kindergarten headed by you. Please tick (‘V’) or give an answer where required.

1. What type of kindergarten is the institution you head?
   □ Public  □ Private

2. Where is it located?
   □ Villages  □ Suburban village (up to 30km from town)  □ Small town (up to 100 000 inhabitants)
   □ City

3. How many children are there in the kindergarten?
   (Please give a number) ________

4. How many groups are there in the kindergarten?
   (Please give a number) ________

5. Do all children participate in FL classes?
   □ Yes  □ No

6. Is FL instruction additionally paid?
   □ Yes  □ No

7. What FLs can children learn in the kindergarten? (Please specify)
   _______________________________________________________________________

8. How often are the classes in kindergarten held?
   Language _______________________
   □ Once a week  □ Twice a week  □ 3 times a week  □ More often (specify) ______
   Language _______________________
   □ Once a week  □ Twice a week  □ 3 times a week  □ More often (specify) ______

9. How long are the lessons?
   Language _______________________
   □ 30 min  □ 45 min  □ 60 min  □ Other (Please, specify) ______
   Language _______________________
   □ 30 min  □ 45 min  □ 60 min  □ Other (Please, specify) ______

10. How many children are there in the language group?
    (Please, specify) ____________
Part 2

In the second part I would like to find out why you have decided to introduce a FL in the kindergarten. In each question mark max. 3 answers that match your opinion best.

1. Why have you decided to introduce FL instruction in the kindergarten?
   - FL classes add variety to the kindergarten instruction
   - Parents explicitly demanded their introduction
   - Such is the social demand/general trend
   - Many private language firms offered their services, so I agreed to one of them
   - I believe that the earlier one starts learning a FL, the better results it will bring in the future
   - Early FL learning contributes to the development of motivation for further FL learning
   - Early FL learning contributes to intellectual, emotional and social development of a child
   - Other (please, specify) ____________________________________________________________________

2. Why have you decided to introduce classes of English (and not a different language)?
   - I believe this is the most common and useful language
   - Parents do not want their children to learn a different language
   - ‘Trial’ lessons in English seemed to be the most interesting
   - After learning English there will be still time to learn other FLs
   - Lack of other language offer from educational firms
   - More language classes are too burdensome for children
   - This language is the easiest to learn for Poles
   - It was possible to employ a teacher of this language
   - Learning of this language will be continued in the primary school
   - Other reasons (please, specify) __________________________________________________________

3. Which of these elements have the biggest influence on effective FL learning?
   - a. Small groups (up to 10)
   - b. Pleasant atmosphere during classes/lack of stress
   - c. Teacher competences
   - d. Conducting classes only in L2
   - e. Classroom conditions and decorations
   - f. High frequency of classes (min. 3 times a week)
   - g. Regular assessment
   - h. Praising and rewarding children
   - i. Home revision of class material at home
   - j. Contacts with foreigners/trips abroad
   - k. A huge amount of attractive teaching aids
   - l. Additional contact with language through audio/video recordings, Internet
   - m. Other (please, specify) __________________________________________________________________

4. Which of the elements in section 3 are realized in your kindergarten?
___________________________________________________________________________________________

5. Which of the following elements/events promoting FL learning are organized in your kindergarten?
   - European club/lessons
- European Day of Languages
- European portfolio for children aged 3–6
- Library with books/audio/video recordings in a FLT
- Theatrical performances in a FL
- FL song contests Final tests with rewards
- Other (please, specify)
- Art contests on intercultural topics
- Meetings with foreigners

6. Have you got any plans concerning development of child motivation towards FL learning? If so, please describe them

7. What kind of lesson preparation do you expect from the FL teacher? (Mark max. 3 answers)
   - A detailed lesson plan and its realization
   - A huge variety of games, which use movement and physical activity
   - Using computer/interactive blackboards during the lesson
   - Fast reaction to boredom/flexibility
   - Personal involvement of the teacher (singing, using movement, vivid mimicry etc.)
   - Preparation of teaching aids (e.g. flashcards, paper props)
   - Teaching along the coursebook/worksheets
   - Using a FL exclusively
   - Frequent praising and rewarding the child
   - Controlling the group/maintaining discipline
   - Friendly approach to children (smile, touch, remarks etc.)
Appendix 4. A survey for FL teachers of very young learners

Część 1
W części pierwszej chciałabym uzyskać podstawowe informacje nt. sposobu organizacji nauczania języków obcych w przedszkolu, w którym Pan/i pracuje, jak też i na temat samej instytucji (Proszę postawić znak ‘V’ w wybranym miejscu lub odpowiedzieć na pytanie).

1. W jakiego rodzaju instytucji Pan/i pracuje?
   - Przedszkole publiczne (samorządowe)
   - Przedszkole niepubliczne (np. stowarzyszenia oświatowego itp.)
   - Przedszkole prywatne
   - Szkoła językowa dla dzieci (kursy)
   - Inne (jakie?) ____________________________

2. W jakim środowisku znajduje się szkoła/przedszkole, w którym Pan/i pracuje?
   - Wieś
   - Wieś blisko dużego miasta (do 30 km)
   - Małe miasto (do 100 000 mieszkańców)
   - Duże miasto

3. Jakiego języka obcego Pan/i uczy?
   ____________________________

4. Jak często odbywają się zajęcia języka obcego w przedszkolu?
   - 1 raz w tygodniu
   - 2 razy w tygodniu
   - 3 razy w tygodniu
   - Więcej razy (proszę podać, ile)? __________

5. Jak długie są to lekcje każdorazowo?
   - 30 min
   - 45 min
   - 60 min
   - Inne (proszę podać, jak długo) __________

6. Jak liczne są grupy językowe?
   (Proszę podać liczbę dzieci w grupie) __________

Część 2
W części 2 chciałabym się dowiedzieć, jakie jest Pana/Pani zdanie na temat efektywnej organizacji naucza-ania języków obcych.

1. Dlaczego Pana/Pani zdaniem dzieci powinny się uczyć języków obcych? (Proszę się uostosunkować do każdego stwierdzenia stawiając znak ‘v’ w odpowiedniej kolumnie)

   Im wcześniej rozpocznie się naukę języka obcego, tym lepsze przyniesie ona efekty w przyszłości
   □ □ □ □ □
| Rozwój motywacji do dalszej nauki języków w przyszłości | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Wsparcie rozwoju intelektualnego, emocjonalnego i społecznego | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Dziecko staje się bardziej otwarte i pewne siebie w kontaktach z innymi ludźmi, także obcokrajowcami | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Dzieci uczą się o świecie, innych krajach i kulturach, rozwijają zainteresowanie nimi | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Rozwój pamięci i innych operacji umysłowych (np. analizowania, szukania podobieństw itp.) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Wspomaganie rozwoju osobowości dziecka | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Nauka twórczego i krytycznego myślenia | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Dzieci uczą się wyrażać swoje uczucia i opinie słowem, ruchem, wyrazem plastycznym | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Dzieci przyzwyczają się do języka obcego, jego innego brzmienia, innych słów, gramatyki itp., uświadamiają sobie, że istnieją inne języki | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Dzieci mogą opanować język obcy łatwo, szybko i tak dobrze jak język ojczyzny | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Na zajęciach językowych, bardziej niż na innych, dzieci uczą się współpracy w grupie | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Dzieciom łatwiej przychodzi nauka języka obcego niż dorosłym | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Za wcześnie jest na naukę języka obcego, gdyż dzieci nie opanowały jeszcze dobrze j. polskiego | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

2. Jakie efekty w nauce języka obcego może według Pana/Pani osiągnąć dziecko przedszkolne? (Proszę odnieść się do każdego stwierdzenia poprzez postawienie znaku ‘V’ w odpowiedniej kolumnie)

| Opanuje bardzo dobrze wymowę języka obcego | Tak | Nie | Nie wiem/ To zależy |
| Będzie rozumiało sens rozmowy, w której uczestniczy | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Będzie rozumieć sens prostych poleceń | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Będzie potrafić domyślać się znaczeń słów z kontekstu, np. w grze komputerowej, kreskówce | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Będzie się porozumiewać na poziomie pojedynczych słów i wyuczonych zwrotów (np. powitanie, pożegnanie) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Po 2–3 latach nauki dziecko będzie samodzielnie tworzyć zdania w języku obcym | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
Po 3–4 latach nauki będzie się w stanie swobodnie komunikować w języku obcym

Zacznając naukę języka obcego wcześnie, w wieku nastoletnim/dorosłości dziecko będzie pośugiwać się tym językiem tak dobrze, jak jego rodzimi użytkownicy

Zacznając naukę języka obcego wcześnie, opanuje większy zakres słownictwa niż dzieci zaczynające naukę później

Będzie znało kilka tekstów w języku obcym (np. piosenek, wierszyków, tekstu przedstawienia)

Będzie umiało prowadzić proste rozmowy w języku obcym

Będzie rozumieć ogólny sens czytanej książeczki, oglądanej bajki itp. i nie będzie się zniechęcać brakiem rozumienia

Będzie odgrywało scenki z lekcji języka obcego, używając wyczułych zwrotów

Będzie spontanicznie wtrącać słowa obcojęzyczne w potoczną mowę ojczystą

3. Które z poniższych elementów mają największy wpływ na efektywne nauczanie języka obcego? (Proszę wybrać i zaznaczyć 5 odpowiedzi w kolejności 1 – najważniejsze, 5 – najmniej ważne)

□ Małe grupy (do 10 osób)
□ Przyjemna atmosfera w czasie zajęć (zabawy, brak stresu)
□ Profesjonalizm nauczyciela
□ Prowadzenie zajęć wyłącznie w języku obcym
□ Wystrój i urządzenie sali
□ Duża częstotliwość zajęć (min 3 razy w tygodniu)
□ Regularne ocenianie/testowanie
□ Powtórki materiału z zajęć z rodzicami w domu
□ Nagradzanie dzieci i chwalenie
□ Kontakty z obcokrajowcami, wyjazdy zagraniczne
□ Duża ilość atrakcyjnych materiałów dydaktycznych, tj. obrazki, gry językowe
□ Dodatkowy kontakt z językiem poprzez nagrania audio/video, Internet
□ Inne, proszę wymienić____________________________________________________

4. Które ze wspominanych elementów w pkt. 4 realizuje Pan/i na swoich lekcjach? (Proszę wymienić)

____________________________________________________________________________________

5. Czy i w jaki sposób zachęta Pan/i rodziców dzieci do dodatkowej pracy z dzieckiem nad materiałem lekcyjnym? (Proszę krótko opisać)

_________________________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________________
6. Które z poniższych elementów/wydarzeń są wprowadzane/organizowane na Pana/Pani lekcjach?

☐ Klub europejski/lekcje europejskie Europejski Dzień Języków
☐ Przedstawienia teatralne w języku obcym Portfolio Językowe dla dzieci 3–6 lub 6–10 lat
☐ Konkursy piosenki obcojęzycznej Sprawdziany końcowe z nagrodami
☐ Biblioteczka z książeczkami/nagraniami audio/video w językach obcych
☐ Konkursy prac plastycznych o tematyce interkulturowej (porównanie kultury polskiej i obcej)
☐ Spotkania z obcokrajowcami/rówieśnikami z innych krajów
☐ Inne (jakie? proszę wymienić) _________________________________________________________

7. Czy planuje Pan/i wprowadzić jakieś inne pomysły w celu rozwijania motywacji do nauki języków obcych na lekcjach? Jeśli tak, to jakie?
_________________________________________________________________________________________

Część 3

Informacje demograficzne. W części tej chciałabym poznać kilka informacji na temat Pana/i doświadczenia zawodowego i znajomości języków obcych.

1. Jaki jest Pana/Pani staż pracy w zawodzie nauczyciela?
________________

2. Jaki jest Pana/Pani staż pracy w przedszkolu?
____________________

3. Jaki jest Pana/Pani wiek?

☐ Poniżej 25 lat  ☐ Pomiędzy 26–30 lat  ☐ Pomiędzy 31–35 lat  ☐ Pomiędzy 36–40 lat
☐ Pomiędzy 41–45 lat  ☐ Pomiędzy 46–50 lat  ☐ Powyżej 50 lat

4. Jakie jest Pana/Pani wykształcenie?

☐ Średnie  ☐ Licencjackie  ☐ Wyższe magisterskie

5. Jakie są Pana/Pani uprawnienia do nauczania języka obcego?

☐ Studia filologiczne  ☐ Studia podyplomowe z zakresu dydaktyki j. obcego
☐ Egzamin CPE  ☐ Egzamin CAE  ☐ Egzamin FCE  ☐ Inne (jakie?)________________________

6. Czy kiedykolwiek brał/a Pan/i udział w kursie dydaktyki nauczania języków obcych dzieci?

☐ Tak  ☐ Nie

7. Czy zamierza się Pan/i wyspecjalizować w nauczaniu dzieci i z tą grupa wiekową wiąże Pan/i przyszłość zawodową?

☐ Tak  ☐ Nie  ☐ Nie wiem
Appendix 4a. An English translation of the questionnaire for FL teachers of very young learners

Part 1
In part 1 I would like to find out basic information about the way of organizing teaching FLs in the kindergarten you teach (Please tick ‘X’ in an appropriate answer or provide a reply where required).

1. **What type of kindergarten do you work for?**
   - [ ] Public kindergarten
   - [ ] Private kindergarten
   - [ ] Non-public kindergarten
   - [ ] Language school
   - [ ] Other (please, specify) ________

2. **Where is the kindergarten located?**
   - [ ] Village
   - [ ] Suburban village (up to 30 km)
   - [ ] Town
   - [ ] City

3. **What foreign language do you teach?**
   _________________

4. **How often are the lessons held in the kindergarten?**
   - [ ] Once a week
   - [ ] 2 times a week
   - [ ] 3 times a week
   - [ ] More often (How many times?) ________

5. **How long are the lessons?**
   - [ ] 30 min
   - [ ] 45 min
   - [ ] 60 min
   - [ ] Other (please, specify) ________

6. **How many children are there in the group?**
   (Please, give the number) ________

Part 2
In part 2 I would like to find out about your opinion on effective organization of foreign languages to children.

1. **Why in your opinion should children learn foreign languages?** (Please refer to each statement by ticking an appropriate column)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>I agree definitely</th>
<th>I agree partly</th>
<th>I don't know</th>
<th>I don't agree entirely</th>
<th>I definitely don't agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The earlier one starts FLL, the better results it will bring in the future</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Development of motivation for further FLL in the future

Supporting child emotional, social and intellectual development

The child becomes more open and self-confident in contacts with others/foreigners

Children learn about foreign cultures and countries and develop interest in them

Development of memory and other cognitive operations (e.g. analysing, finding similarities and differences etc.)

Aiding development of child personality

Development of critical and creative thinking

Children learn to express their feelings and opinions by words, movement, artwork

Children become used to a FL; its sound, other words, grammar etc.; become aware of the existence of other languages

Children can learn a foreign language as quickly and easily as the mother tongue

In FL classes children learn cooperating with others

Children learn FLs easier than adults

It is too early for FLL, since children did not learn Polish well yet

2. What FLL outcomes can a kindergarten child obtain? Refer to each statement by ticking an appropriate box)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The child:</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>I don't know/depends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Will have very good pronunciation in a FL.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will understand a general sense of a conversation s/he participates in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will understand simple commands</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will be able to infer meaning from context of a cartoon, computer game etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will communicate using single words and memorized chunks (e.g. greetings)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 2–3 years will create his own sentences in a FL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 3–4 years will be able to communicate in a FL freely</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In adolescence will be able to use a FL like native speakers
Will learn more vocabulary than children starting FLL later
Will know a few texts in a FL by heart (e.g. songs, poems, drama parts)
Will be able to conduct simple talks in a FL
Will understand a general story of a storybook, cartoon etc.
Will act out scenes from a FL class using memorized chunks
Will spontaneously insert FL words in Polish talk

3. Which of the following elements have the greatest impact on effective FL teaching of very young learners? (You can choose more than one answer)
- Small groups (up to 10 persons)
- Pleasant stress-free atmosphere
- Teacher professionalism
- Speaking only in a FL
- Pleasant interior/decorations
- High frequency of classes (min. 3 times a week)
- Regular assessment/testing
- Reviewing class material with parents at home
- Rewarding children/praising
- Contacts with foreigners/travelling abroad
- Huge amount of teaching aids
- Additional contact with a FL through audio/video recordings, Internet
- Other (please, specify) ______________________________________________________________

4. Which of the elements specified in point 3 do you realize in your own lessons? Please specify
____________________________________________________________________________________

5. Do you encourage children’s parents to additional FL practice? How?
____________________________________________________________________________________

6. Which of the following elements/events are introduced in your FL lessons?
- European club/lessons
- European Day of Languages
- Theatrical performances in a FL
- Language Portfolio for children aged 3–6 or 6–10
- FL song contests
- Final tests/exams with rewards
Library with FL books, audio/video recordings
Art contests on intercultural topics
Meetings with foreigners
Other (please, specify)

Part 3
Demographic information. In this part I would like to obtain some information on your teaching qualifications and experience.

1. How long have you been working as a teacher?

2. How long have you been teaching kindergarten children?

3. What’s your age?
   - Below 25
   - Between 26–30
   - Between 31–35
   - Between 36–40
   - Between 41–45
   - Between 46–50
   - Above 50

4. What is your level of education?
   - Secondary
   - Bachelor’s degree
   - Master’s degree

5. What are your FL teaching qualifications?
   - Philological studies
   - Postgraduate studies in FL didactics
   - CPE exam
   - CAE exam
   - FCE exam
   - Other (please, specify)

6. Have you ever had a course in teaching FLs to young learners?
   - Yes
   - No

7. Do you aim to specialize in teaching kindergarten children?
   - Yes
   - No
   - I don’t know

   Please, justify your decision
Streszczenie

W dobie globalizacji, a co za tym idzie zwiększonej mobilności człowieka, znajomość języków obcych i ogólny wysoki poziom wykształcenia wydają się być jednymi z koniecznych warunków, by osiągnąć wysoki status zawodowy i materialny. Znajomość języków obcych, a w szczególności języka angielskiego odgrywającego rolę języka międzynarodowego, jawi się więc jako swojego rodzaju kapitał, umożliwiający zdobycie innego rodzaju korzyści (kapitałów, w myśl teorii społecznej reprodukcji Bourdieu). Nic więc dziwnego, że wielu rodziców chce, by ich dzieci uczyły się języków obcych od bardzo wczesnego wieku, nawet przed obowiązkową nauką szkolną, traktując ten tzw. „wczesny start językowy” jako swoistą inwestycję w przyszłość dziecka. Często rodzice spodziewają się, że sam młody wiek uczącego się dziecka zagwarantuje mu w przyszłości kompetencję obcojęzyczną równą jego rodzimym użytkownikom, a więc dziecko stanie się dwu- a nawet wielojęzyczne. W odpowiedzi na te aspiracje edukacyjne rodziców, którzy są świadomi wagi nauki języków obcych od najmłodszych lat, pojawia się na rynku bogata oferta edukacyjna w zakresie kształcenia języków obcych dzieci. Dzieci mogą się uczyć wielu różnorodnych języków już od najmłodszych lat (np. od 3 miesięcy życia w szkołach Helen Doron), jednakże jest to oferta płatna, a więc skierowana głównie do rodziców bardziej zamożnych i chcących inwestować w edukację swojego dziecka. Zjawisko to pokazuje, że różnice w dostępie do pewnych form edukacyjnych pojawiają się już bardzo wcześnie i uwidaczniają się już na progu edukacji szkolnej.

Wczesny start językowy jest również jednym z priorytetów polityki językowej Unii Europejskiej. Założeniem tzw. strategii barcelońskiej jest, by każde dziecko miało możliwość nauki przynajmniej dwóch języków obcych od wczesnego dzieciństwa. Celem tak wczesnego nauczania języków jest ogólne rozbudzenie zainteresowania i motywacji do nauki języków obcych, a w konsekwencji kształtowania postaw plurilingualizmu i międzykulturowości. Stara zasada „im wcześniej dziecko będzie się uczyć języków obcych tym lepiej”, nabiera tu nowego wymiaru. Oznacza to, że tym więcej języków dziecko będzie się w stanie nauczyć
w ciągu swojego życia. Mimo że nauczanie języków obcych na poziomie przed-
szkolnym w Polsce pozostaje całkowicie w gestii rodziców, którzy zazwyczaj za-
tę naukę płacą, istnieje nadzieja, że aspiracje rodziców, które już uczyniły tę
naukę powszechną, staną się przyczynkiem do dalszego kształtowania polityki
edukacyjnej w tym zakresie i np. dalszego obniżania wieku obowiązkowej nauki
języka obcego.

Niniejsza praca przedstawia problem wczesnego startu językowego w odnie-
sieniu do dzieci przedszkolnych z kilku perspektyw:

- Z perspektywy polityki edukacyjnej Unii Europejskiej, według której wcze-
sne rozpoczynanie nauki języka obcego jest jednym ze sposobów osiągnięcia
plurilingualizmu językowego (tj. znajomości kilku [choć w różnym stopniu]
języków obcych przez jedną osobę), osiągnięcie którego wydaje się być ko-
niecznym atrybutem każdego obywatela zjednoczonej Europy (Rozdział I),

- Z perspektywy socjologiczno-pedagogicznej, pokazującej, jak język może być
traktowany jako narzędzie awansu społecznego, forma kapitału kulturowego,
in którego przekazywaniu oraz rozbudzaniu aspiracji edukacyjnych (w tym do
nauki języków obcych) istotną rolę pełni rodzina dziecka (Rozdział II),

- Z perspektywy dydaktycznej, pokazującej, co tak naprawdę małe dziecko
może osiągnąć ucząc się języka obcego w warunkach naturalnych (czyli
w sytuacji naturalnej dwu/wielojęzyczności) i nie naturalnych (w klasie)
w zakresie rozwoju językowego, poznawczego i afektywnego. Podkreśla się, że
osiągnięcia dziecka w nauce języka obcego nie zależą od samego wieku roz-
poczynania nauki, ale od jej intensywności, czyli od ilości kontaktu z językiem
obcym (Rozdział III).

Część empiryczna pracy przedstawia wyniki badań sondażowych (kwestio-
nariuszy, wywiadów) wśród trzech grup badanych: rodziców, dyrektorów przed-
szkoł oraz nauczycieli języków obcych prowadzących zajęcia w przedszkolach.
Dodatkowo przedstawiono kilka studiów przypadków dzieci w kontekście działań
edukacyjnych i aspiracji ich rodziców.

Wyniki badań ilościowych i jakościowych prowadzonych wśród rodziców po-
twierdzają ogólne założenia, że aspiracje edukacyjne rodziców w stosunku do
ich dzieci są determinowane poziomem wykształcenia rodziców, ich własną
znajomością i korzystaniem z języków obcych. Płeć dziecka nie ma znaczenia
w odniesieniu do bieżących oczekiwań co do osiągnięć dziecka, jednakże wyższe
oczekiwanie (aspiracje) rodzice zdają się mieć w stosunku do dziewczynek niż
do chłopców.

Również znajomość języków obcych przez rodziców przekłada się na bardziej
realistyczne oczekiwanie co do bieżących osiągnięć dziecka (brak oczekiwań co
do szybkiej płynności w JO) oraz świadomość większej konieczności nauki kilku
języków obcych (choć nie koniecznie jednocześnie). Rodzice ci stosują również bardziej różnorodne strategie nauczania/ćwiczenia z dzieckiem języka obcego. Z kolei rodzice nieznający języków obcych lub znający je słabo, są bardziej skłonni oczekiwać większych efektów od instytucji nauczającej języka.

Badania prowadzone wśród nauczycieli języków obcych pokazały, że w większości posiadają one zadowalające kwalifikacje do nauczania języków obcych u dzieci pod względem formalnym (tj. dyplomy studiów filologicznych/pedagogicznych, kursy z dydaktyki języków obcych dzieci). Mało jednak stosują świadomych zabiegów zwiększających motywację do nauki języków obcych.

Badania prowadzone wśród dyrektorów przedszkoli pokazały ogólnie dość niski status nauczania języków obcych w przedszkolach. Zarówno w placówkach prywatnych, jak i państwowych, język obcy (najczęściej angielski) jest prowadzony na wyraźne życzenie rodziców. Zadań to w przedszkolach państwowych najczęściej jest powierzane zewnętrznym firmom językowym; dyrektor nie wnu-ka więc w formę i sposób prowadzenia zajęć. Pod tym względem nieco lepszy nadzór jest w przedszkolach prywatnych, gdzie dyrektor bezpośrednio zatrudnia i hospituje nauczyciela prowadzącego zajęcia językowe (nawet jeśli jest on zatrudniony przez firmę zewnętrzną). Dyrektorzy słabo są zainteresowani poszczególnymi aspektami nauczania (tj. dyplomy studiów filologicznych/pedagogicznych, kursy z dydaktyki języków obcych dzieci). Nielicznymi wyjątkami są przedszkola posiadające profil językowy (jednak jest ich stosunkowo mało, w Krakowie ok. 10), gdzie przyjmuje się nauczycieli obcokrajowców w ramach asystentury Comeniusa.

Fakty te pokazują, że jakość nauczania języków obcych na poziomie przedszkolnym znacznie by się poprawiła, gdyby nauczanie języków obcych u dzieci stanowiło obowiązkowy element programu nauczania. Stanowić to może przesłankę do dalszego kształtowania polityki edukacyjnej w kraju.
The dissertation describes the relationship between teaching English as a foreign language and parental educational aspirations. The choice of this topic has been dictated by the recent linguistic, cultural and demographic changes prompted by globalization and international mobility. Exploring this theme is extremely important educationally due to the communication goals of foreign language learning one wants to obtain. Also bearing in mind current recommendations of the Council of Europe, which suggest introducing at least minimal contact with foreign languages at pre-primary level, examination of this topic is socially valid, as due to its informative value it can lend itself to further language education policy planning in Poland.

Prof. Ewa Piechurska-Kuciel, Opole University, Poland

The monograph will be a fascinating and educational read for all people involved in language education policy planning in Poland, teacher training institutions, and what is of great importance, parents seeking guidelines how to realize their aspirations in reference to foreign language education of their children. [...] It is an interesting, well-written book, rich in empirical evidence and bibliographical data. It is one of the first known works on foreign language education to pre-primary learners, describing factors which bear importance on the success of this endeavour.

Prof. Danuta Gabryś-Barker, University of Silesia, Poland

Joanna Rokita-Jaśkow, PhD, graduated with an MA degree from the English Department of the Jagiellonian University. Currently she works as an assistant professor (adiunkt) at the Pedagogical University of Cracow, where she also obtained her PhD in linguistics in 2005. From the beginning of her academic career she has been specializing in foreign language teaching methodology and reflective teacher education.

Her main research interests concern psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic aspects of child second/foreign language acquisition, with a particular focus on pre-primary learners. She has delivered over 30 papers on international conferences and is an author of over 30 articles and 2 other books on this topic: Lexical acquisition in early L2 development (2007) and Moje dziecko uczy się języka obcego [My child learns a foreign language] (2010).