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**Attitudes towards Multilingualism in the
Lower Primary Years at the
International School of Helsingborg**

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Abstract

This essay focuses on attitudes towards multilingualism within the Lower Primary Years classes at the International School of Helsingborg. It examines the existing opinions and attitudes of students and teachers in grades Kindergarten up to grade two. The main aim of this study investigates the attitudes and feelings that the students themselves have towards the linguistically wealthy environment that surrounds them. In addition to this, this study will also focus on how teachers' attitudes, beliefs and previously acquired knowledge influence the teaching methods used in the classes on a daily basis. Many educators see the difficulties in studying the views that young children may have towards their languages and this is certainly a challenge, however, even children of such young ages are able to reflect upon such matters if the approach is correct and age appropriate. All students and teachers participated in a survey which lays the foundation for this inquiry. This study also takes into consideration the International curriculum that guide this school and the effect this has on the school establishment as a whole. Results show that most of the target students have a positive approach towards multilingualism in general and that teachers at the International School of Helsingborg share this standpoint.

Keywords: Multilingualism, bilingualism, attitudes, internationalism.

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*The cry of the town like a siren's song,
wailing over the rooftops the whole night long.
Saw a shooting star like a diamond in the sky,
must have been your soul passing by.*

By Brandon Kordeck

Preface

My personal background has influenced the topic of this study and may be of some interest to the reader. I was born in former Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, in 1971 the third child to Olof and Ulla Axelsson. Both my parents were initially missionaries employed by the Lutheran Church and later based in Zimbabwe. I was raised in an environment of not only existing political difficulties but also of personal and family turmoil. I grew up speaking three languages which were Swedish, English and Shona (one of the native languages in Zimbabwe). These languages were spoken inconsistently and intertwined during the early years of my upbringing. My parents had in the beginning a one-person one-language approach but this method was not consistently followed through which may have caused me to speak an incomprehensible mix of all three languages by the age of three. Naturally, this “problem” sorted itself out with time and a year later I started to differentiate these languages in order to communicate successfully with people around me. Both my parents were educators and musicians and within a few years in Africa my father started studying ethnomusicology. This meant that much of my time was spent in the bush trailing behind my very tall, quite sturdy, in clogs, Dad, listening to the beat of drums and marimbas echo into the heavy dark skies of the African night. Growing up with the natural state being multilingual and multicultural obviously influenced the individual I am today. My beliefs, knowledge and attitudes are carried on and pass through me as I interact and communicate with people. Following in the foot steps of my Dad was an unconscious decision that has guided me towards a career within education and has ultimately lead me to the International School of Helsingborg where I currently teach the Kindergarten program.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Kindergarten class at the International School consists of 20 students between the ages of five to six years old representing a wide variety of nationalities, religious beliefs and languages. Having taught this grade level for the last three years I have encountered many difficulties but have also had the opportunity to become aware of the many hidden resources that working in a multicultural environment offers. As teachers our goal is for each child to develop and learn optimally and to be able to do this we must be prepared to meet each individual at their level of development in all areas including their linguistic growth. We all know that the acquisition of language skills is vital to a child's successful progress within cognitive and social areas as well as academic areas. Despite what language/s these children speak or do not speak they all still continue to grow and learn at all times and as childhood professionals we strive to ensure the continuous and holistic development of each individual student but as there is no correct way to ensure this and hopefully we all engage in self-evaluation of our methods and teaching ethics on a frequent basis. You might call this essay such an evaluation, a stepping stone to furthering the quest for knowledge and to refining teaching methods within a multilingual school setting.

The International School of Helsingborg follows two curriculum programs, one being the Swedish National Curriculum for Schools and the other being the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Curriculum. The school is a government run school that aims to offer education in English to children who move between countries for different reasons. The International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) exists in International schools worldwide making transitions between countries and schools easier for the students. The program is run in much the same way in all IBO schools around the globe enabling students and their families to feel that there are recognisable, consistent and coherent guidelines in the schools that they transfer in between. The IBO states very clearly that schools and teachers should strive to educate and help to foster students that are open-minded so that they may become true international citizens of the world. Defining what "being international" truly means is a reoccurring subject during our pedagogical meetings and the central idea to this is that it means the acceptance of cultures, individual beliefs and diversity of languages at the school and in the society. When creating language policies, whether it is the general English

language policy or the Swedish language policy or even the English as a second language policy, the school bases these on the philosophy of the IBO taking into account any national documentation on education within the host country. This provides teachers with a coherent policy which may then define the attitudes towards multiple languages used or identified in the schools. In order to fully grasp the aspect and focus of this essay further research will be done into the IBO curriculum and how this may or may not influence the teachers' attitudes towards bi-/multilingualism at the International School of Helsingborg.

1.2 Aim

Our aim as teachers is naturally to enable all students to develop and attain certain goals and skills preparing them for a productive and fulfilling life in the world. Teachers encounter many obstacles in ensuring this ambition, one of the most fundamental ones being the dimension of language learning and acquisition. The aim and focus of this essay is to investigate how young learners feel about languages and the use of different languages around them. Another aim of this study is to investigate whether the attitudes and personal beliefs of teachers regarding multilingualism affect the methods used in classrooms on a daily basis. This study will examine the teachers' as well as the students' attitudes towards multilingualism at The International School of Helsingborg.

1.3 Research Questions

- What are the attitudes of the children to their and other languages at school?
- What are the attitudes of the teachers towards the aspects of multilingualism in school?

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 A Multilingual World

The world we live in is rich in linguistic and cultural diversity. Country barriers which have otherwise restricted the spread of such treasures are now merely indistinguishable boundaries of confinement visible only on mapped outlines of borders. The movement of people has enabled a broadening awareness of different cultures and with that an increase in languages spoken in our neighbourhoods. How many of us are aware of the fact that there are, according to Edward (1994, p 1), approximately 5000 languages in this world and only 200 countries to accommodate them all? Multiple language use is present in every country of the world regardless of the fact that some countries are more or less classified as monolingual. The movement of people provides this bed of language extensions and brings linguistic and cultural diversity to our back doors. To most people multilingualism is a norm and natural state of life and not an exotically interesting however fleeting acquaintance as some monolingual individuals may assume. Truly monolingual countries are hard to find, meaning one nation that does not contain any linguistic minority languages. Sweden may appear to be a monolingual country but there are nevertheless minorities that in parts of the country that speak Finnish, Romani, Sami language, Yiddish and Meänkieli. Japan and Germany also appear to be monolingual nations although, Japan has three minority groups that together stand for a total of 0,7 % of the population that speak an alternative language. Germany has approximately four million immigrant workers who speak another language apart from German (Grosjean, 1982). A rather fitting statement concludes that “Bilingualism has been and is nearer to the normal situation than most people are willing to believe.” (E. Lewis, quoted by Grosjean, 1982, p 2). It seems that all monolingual countries in the world are undergoing the process of becoming multilingual realms in the near future and that multilingualism is evident to be more or less present in all monolingual countries.

Even though multilingualism is so widely spread only one quarter of all the countries in the world recognize multilingualism. Nonetheless many countries still have one dominant language or *lingua franca*, meaning one language that is more acknowledged than others in the wider sphere of society. Just a glance at the continent of Africa will prove that despite multiple indigenous languages spoken in a country, English may be the chosen official language. There are some countries that are officially bilingual or trilingual. Canada and

Finland are role models of official bilingualism and offer impartiality to two languages, Finland to Swedish as well as Finnish, and Canada to French along with English. Official trilingualism reigns in Belgium where Flemish, French and German are languages that dominate equally in society (Grosjean, 1982). Official bilingualism or multilingualism means also that the state or country usually recognizes the obligation to support and maintain the use, growth and development of a language. This standpoint is one of great importance to minorities not only in the form of embracing cultural heritage but also in that these minority languages are given the chance to survive rather than risk becoming extinct with time. Some languages in the world are used more widely than others, and for numerous reasons some languages are pushed to the brink of becoming forgotten and a mere historical fact. According to Bauer, Holmes and Warren (2006, p 125) English is accused of being the “killer” of many minority languages. To list some language fatalities due to the dominant use of English are a Celtic language Manx, once spoken by people from the Isle of Man and Cornish. Further, estimations show that almost 90% of Aboriginal native languages are already extinct and in the USA and Canada 80% of Native American languages have met the same fate. Colonization has most times been the driving force of language eradication and English-speaking nations have been the main colonizers. Economical factors have led these powerful English speaking countries to seek fortune in the form of land, and the evidence is undeniable when you take a glance around the continents of our globe. Africa and India, however, are examples where the annihilation of indigenous languages failed due to the fact that these nations hold such vast populations and English was thus simply added to their rich linguistic diversity. (Bauer, Holmes & Warren, 2006)

Why, you may ask, does it matter if we along the path of what we consider worldwide development might lose a couple of languages? Communication is not a problem for people of this planet today and as long as this prevails, why should we need to safeguard all 5000 languages? For the linguist it is of utmost importance that we preserve the languages of this world. How else will we be able to investigate the origins of languages and thus gain information about mankind’s development as well as the potential that the human brain may have? Our quest to understand ourselves drives this inquiry. Another aspect of preserving languages is that of maintaining cultural and historical heritage and within this the identity and the sense of belonging that all people naturally crave. This leads us into the obvious question: “What does language really mean to us?” As stated by Bauer, Holmes and Warren (2006), language and ethnicity are closely linked. More importantly, our self-esteem and

confidence are closely linked to our sense of identity and belonging. Our identity is linked to our family and near community and within this there lies a clear language bond. If any link of this chain is broken the outcome may be disastrous to the individual resulting in lifelong shortfall, loss of self-worth, character and pride. What we daily take for granted is just the tip of the ice-berg when it comes to reflecting on what our languages really mean to us. Fortunately, there are forces out there that have recognized this important fact and have taken matters a little bit further by campaigning worldwide for language revitalization. Linguists everywhere crusade for this cause. However, this cause would have no effect without the active participation of the people who speak these minority languages according to Huss, Camilleri and King (2003). This movement must naturally come from the people themselves but with the full support of their government and other official entities worldwide.

This support can be made known as possibilities to receive mother tongue instruction or even to offer education in the mother tongue. Documents and policies may need to change within the society and most importantly within authorized educational systems. Most of us are already exposed to foreign languages and many of us are able to communicate in various languages. Rather than the norm being that most people are monolingual, it is in fact the norm that most of us are multilingual individuals to varying degrees. Therefore, an awareness and acceptance of linguistic diversity must become the custom.

To conclude, I stress once again that bilingualism is present throughout all nations in varying patterns of distribution. Such labels as monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual reflect more the linguistic policies of the individual countries toward their language groups than the degree of individual bi- or multilingualism that is found in those nations (Grosjean, 1982, p 24).

The existing attitudes of languages generating problems and boundaries must be lifted and instead be replaced by feelings of open-mindedness and enlightenment creating a world of citizens that applaud cultural and linguistic diversity, leading to conservation of our histories and identities. The conclusion must be that preservation and revitalisation of languages must become evident and prioritized in our countries and even more so than ever within our educational systems.

2.2 The Multilingual Individual

Before embarking on the topic of multilingualism and bilingualism we must clarify some commonly used definitions as these are vital to the continued understanding of this study. According to Merriam-Webster's online thesaurus *bilingualism* is defined as "the ability to speak two languages, the frequent use, as by a community, of two languages and the political or institutional recognition of two languages" and *multilingualism* is defined as "using or ability to use several languages with equal fluency". This is merely one of several descriptions of these terms and while these will be used loosely throughout this study we will on occasion combine the definitions showing preference to the term *multilingualism*. There are naturally different levels of language aptitudes among individuals as stated by Bauer, Holmes and Warren (2006, p 205). There are those considered to be *simultaneous* or *successive* bilinguals, the first meaning that multiple languages have been acquired evenly during an individual's upbringing and the second meaning that one language entered the individual's life at a later stage. Moreover, successive bilingualism may be *additive* – one language is added to the first language, or *subtractive* – one language replaces another. The pool of dissecting definitions of bilingualism seems to be never ending and quite fascinating and we could quite easily allow ourselves to indulge in this. However, the focus of this study would then take a slight detour. How an individual becomes multilingual is a topic worth researching although it may have no great significance to our aim at the moment. Whether or not multi- or bilingualism is good for a person or detrimental to the potential of the human brain is also a valid question which is discussed briefly in Bauer, Holmes and Warren's book and is put forth quite eloquently, "does bilingualism rot the brain or can it be good for you?" (2006, p 203) While researchers pull both ways the fact still remains that multilingualism is present in the world today and the questions are rather: "how do we feel about it all and what will our actions be in regard to this?" The most unconstructive view about bilingualism is that these individuals seem to be seen as less intelligent. These attitudes are based on intelligence tests often carried out in a language in which the multilingual child has little knowledge. However, a study carried out in Wales some 90 years ago compared English speaking students to bilingual Welsh and English-speaking students and the results showed that the bilingual students scored quite similarly to their monolingual peers (Bauer, p 207). Another negative attitude towards bi-multilingualism lies within the use of *code-switching*, meaning "the mixing of languages or utterances" (Bauer, p 208). Switching and mixing languages is seen to be a sign of lesser intelligence, some may argue, or that the individual has no control over either of the languages spoken. Some bi- or multilingual communities surprisingly share this perception

although to the bilingual, it is a vital way of communicating. The differing position of bi- or multilingualism is that some studies show that these individuals seem to do better than average at divergent thinking. Where earlier claims led people to put emphasis on convergent thinking, i.e. intelligence tests where there is only one right answer, the emphasis now lies on divergent thinking, i.e. thinking in more creative and diverse ways. According to Bauer, Holmes and Warren there are studies that show that bilinguals have a “*metalinguistic awareness*”, an increased language awareness allowing them to cope easier with phonological concepts as well as other linguistic changes or variables (Bauer, 2006, p 210).

Even though the above section praises multilingualism we must not forget the importance of the mother tongue language, or in some cases, languages. The Merriam-Webster’s definition of *mother tongue* is, “one’s native language or a language from which another language derives”. The importance of the mother-tongue leads us into the inquiry of what language really is? All people have a language. Language is not only spoken but also refers to the written language and to reading. Body language is of course also a means of communication but it has its limits. With body language we can for example convey feelings of likes and dislikes but real information is harder to portray. Without language we would not be able to communicate with one another. There would be no letter writing, no telephones, no historical writings, no new inventions and no means of passing on a culture. Language is a vital and necessary link between humans in all societies. To analyze the surrounding world, to analyze oneself and to form a reality for ourselves is an important function of language. Language is socially conveyed and is therefore instrumental in our forming and relating of concepts, values and attitudes. When we communicate we give the receiver information about our personal frame of mind, our intentions and our perspective. Language allows an outlet for feelings, fantasy and emotions. This is extremely important for the human race as emotions are decision makers in life’s ongoing learning process. Language is also important for our cognitive development as we solve intellectual problems by means of language (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981). Language development probably starts already in our mother’s womb where the melody, intonation and rhythm of the language spoken leads to feelings of security and belonging. Parents, family members and society all help in the formation of an individuals’ language base. Society is a teacher not only of language but also of norms, values and attitudes i.e. what is deemed as acceptable in that specific environment. The child learns then to identify not only with family members but also with the near community of people where identity can either be built up or torn down. Considering this, it is imperative that educators

should engage in constant reflection and evaluation of what attitudes they themselves might portray and/or teach.

2.2.1 Education and multilingualism

The education system plays a fundamental part in promoting or demoting language diversity and maintenance. Children spend a large portion of their lives in school where they acquire not only academic skills but also social, emotional and communication skills. The social interaction with peers and teachers may influence the individual beliefs and attitudes of the students. Teachers and others play a significant part in shaping the students' attitudes towards the maintenance of their mother tongues, the acquisition of additional languages as well as the recognition of cultural and/or linguistic differences. Many schools differ in their approaches and policies regarding the acceptance of linguistic diversity. One standpoint, and the most common, is not to differentiate between majority and minority children and that minority children should receive education in the majority language from the start of their formal education. According to Grosjean (1982, p 208):

... this is the antithesis of what the school should be: a place where the child is made welcome and feels secure, where learning can be a constructive experience, and where teachers are supportive and expect the child to succeed.

The result of this viewpoint leads instead to students feeling insecure and insignificant making integration into school difficult and complex. These types of schools do not aid in creating cultural gathering forums where values and attitudes are shared in an open and tolerant climate, instead they tarnish any visions of worldwide peace and coexistence for the future. UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, proclaim the right of education in minority languages enabling children to feel a sense of power, identity and "nationhood" (UNESCO, 2003, p 2). While this utopian vision is not possible worldwide at the moment there is also an acknowledgement of the need to provide education in a language which allows people access to the global world of communication. Maintenance of the mother tongue language is vital to a child's continued success in and out of school. The Swedish National Agency for Education states that multilingual children have the right to develop all their languages at school. Most municipalities provide mother tongue instruction for children as this is a curriculum requirement as well as a right (Grundskolan kursplaner och betygskriterier 2000, 2002, p 37).

In addition to developing a student's skills in his/her own language, the purpose of the first language instruction is to help students build self-esteem and promote their development as bilingual individuals with dual cultural identity and competence. (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2004, Education for students of non-Swedish background and recognized minorities)

2.2.2 Mother tongue acquisition

The ability to communicate in our mother tongue language is important to our feelings of belonging and identity but how do we acquire our first language? The first stages of language learning are vocalized through crying, cooing and gurgling. Most children have begun to produce a few words by the age of one. At two years of age children are usually using approximately fifty different words and generally these words are used in two word sentences or utterances. During the first three years of life the developmental stages of first language acquisition follow a general pattern. The verbal skills of a child become more complex as the child continues to grow leading to some grammatical knowledge as well as cognitive development and awareness. Preschool children at the age of four are usually asking questions and are able to describe events and tell stories. During this time their ability to use their language is growing and they also start to develop metalinguistic awareness. These skills continue to expand during the years at school (Lightbrown 2006, p 1-9). There are different perspectives as to how a first language is developed. The first to be mentioned is the behaviouristic perspective – *say what I say* perspective. This theory declares that children learn to speak a language by imitation and positive feed-back. Imitation and practice are key words in the process of acquiring a language. The second is the innatist perspective – *it's all in your mind* perspective. Noam Chomsky is one of the revolutionary founders of this point of view. Chomsky states that children are biologically programmed for language and that the development of language is as natural as the biological development of the child. His theories are often linked to the idea that knowledge and skills are best learned at different intervals in life, so called *critical periods*. The last of the perspectives that will be mentioned is that of the interactionist – *learning from inside and out* perspective. The essential foundation in this theory is that children learn through the interactions with other people daily. Child psychologist Lev Vygotsky's observations in the beginning of the 1900's lead him to believe that children primarily learned and acquired language in social settings of all kinds (Lightbrown, 2006, p 20).

School is a natural meeting place for learning in social settings but do these three different perspectives influence the methods and approaches used in multilingual and multicultural classrooms? Classroom environments may focus on natural or instructional approaches to learning. During natural instruction methods language is not taught step by step and errors are not corrected immediately. In these classrooms the students are instead submerged in languages throughout the day and interactions occur with a number of different people daily. The students are forced to attempt to communicate even though their knowledge might be limited at that point. This environment calls for tolerance and acceptance from all parties involved. In structure based instruction classrooms language is presented in isolation from real life contexts and errors are pointed out (Lightbrown, 2006, p 109). These two approaches create two very different atmospheres in the classroom and these influence the inclusion or exclusion of the learners input and experiences which in turn affect the methods used by the teacher.

2.2.3 Second language acquisition

As educators we seek to understand the implications of the acquisition of the second/multiple language/s for our young learners. Many of our students acquire their second language as they start school, so their exposure to the new language is time-limited. We educators seek continuous updated information regarding the holistic development of our students including second language development which is essential to the planning and implementing of high-quality learning experiences for all. The question is, how do learners acquire a second language? Is it possible that students can acquire the same proficiency in the new language as in their first language? Most researchers state that acquisition of the second language does not really have to be that dissimilar to how we acquire our first language, the process is virtually the same.

In short, it seems that the language acquisition process is the same in its basic features and in its developmental sequence for the bilingual child and the monolingual child. The bilingual child has the additional task of distinguishing the two language systems, but there is no evidence that this requires special language processing devices. (McLaughlin, quoted by Grosjean, 1982 p. 182)

The most well known descriptions of second language acquisition are based on the theories of Stephen Krashen. One of the fundamental ideas of Krashen's theories is the separation of the *acquisition of a language* versus the *learning of a language*. The acquisition of a second

language comes about in a natural subconscious way, a process similar to how individuals acquire their first language/s. The learning of a second language is, on the other hand, a conscious practice whereby the learner is aware of the tuition of the language and is hopefully an active learner. Within the conscious learning period the student is constantly engaging or being coached to engage in self-editing, self-correcting and monitoring. The monitoring method requires a student to be focused, to have knowledge of the grammatical rules and structures that apply and to be issued sufficient time to learn. According to Krashen (1981, p. 15-16), an important factor to consider is whether the learner is an “over-user” or an “under-user” of the monitor method. An “over-user” will exploit and over-analyze learning strategies, they believe that they need to base every aspect on a rule and will not trust their language instinct or language sense. An “under-user” will disregard grammatical rules for some reason and might lay all their foundation for learning simply on what they pick-up during their learning experiences. Whether a student is an “under-user” or “over-user” of the monitor method is based on the individual’s sense of self, their self-image and confidence. This brings us on to another important aspect of learning a second language according to Krashen (1981), which is, whether the learner has an “aptitude” to learn and the affect of the learners “attitude” on the whole educational experience. According to the Merriam-Webster’s online dictionary, the definition of the word *aptitude* is “inclination, tendency, natural ability, capacity for learning and general suitability”. These characteristics are the groundwork for the meta-linguistic awareness of language that an individual may have. Having an aptitude for second language acquisition varies the rate at which an individual learns. A learner with a high aptitude for learning will also usually learn faster. The Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines *attitude* as “a mental position with regard to a fact or state, a feeling or emotion toward a fact or state”. In plain, the open-mindedness, motivation, confidence and feelings the learner has is significant in the growth of second language learning. Thus an individual with low self-image will lack confidence and may feel unmotivated or unable to learn a new system of language structure and will inevitably fail in their docile attempt to adapt into the second language socio-cultural environment at school or in society. The evidence clearly indicates that the acquisition and/or learning of a second language is complex and rests not only on the individual and his/her personality and talents but also on the knowledge that the teacher has on this subject.

2.3. The Guiding Curriculum

The International School of Helsingborg follows two curriculum documents. The first and foremost is the Swedish Curriculum for the compulsory school system abbreviated in Swedish as Lpo 94. The second is the International Baccalaureate Organization Programmes which is a curriculum for international schools worldwide. The Swedish compulsory school syllabus states the following goals to aim for regarding mother tongue:

The school in its teaching of mother tongue should aim to ensure that pupils:

- Develop their ability to understand and express themselves orally and in writing in the mother-tongue,
- Develop their ability to be able to read with profit and understand different kinds of texts in the mother-tongue,
- Acquire a knowledge of the structure of the language in order to be able to make comparisons between their mother-tongue and Swedish and thus develop their bilingualism,
- Acquire a knowledge of the history, traditions and social life in their culture of origin and the ability to make comparisons with Swedish conditions,
- Strengthen their self-esteem and identity, and acquire dual cultural affiliation,
- Establish good reading habits through reading literature or assimilate literature in other ways,
- Learn to become familiar with parts of their own cultural heritage, and be able to relate this to themselves and their own situation,
- Learn to use their mother tongue as an instrument for acquiring knowledge and thus develop a vocabulary and repertoire of concepts in different areas. (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2000)

The Swedish curriculum further states the importance of an international perspective within schools. The need to prepare students for a life in a global context creates learners that aim to develop an “understanding of cultural diversity” (Curriculum for the Compulsory School System, the Pre-School Class and the Leisure-time Centre. Lpo 94, 2006, p 6).

The International Baccalaureate Organization is divided into three sections: the Primary Years Programme (PYP), the Middle Years Programme (MYP) and the Diploma Programme (DP). The PYP programme acknowledges that “the learner constructs models of understanding based on personal experiences” (PYP – A basis for practice, 2002, p 4). The heart of the PYP program is to develop students who demonstrate the traits of the IBO Learner Profile. The Learner Profile represents the qualities needed to become a true international citizen in the world today and these too are integrated into the units. The learner profile aims to develop students that are:

- **Inquirers** – Their natural curiosity has been nurtured. They have acquired the skills necessary to conduct purposeful, constructive research. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives.
- **Thinkers** – They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to make sound decisions and to solve problems.
- **Communicators** – They receive and express ideas and information confidently in more than one language, including the language or mathematical symbols.
- **Risk-takers** – They approach unfamiliar situations without anxiety and have the confidence and independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are courageous and articulate in defending those things in which they believe.
- **Knowledgeable** – They have spent time in our schools exploring themes which have global relevance and importance. In so doing, they have acquired a critical mass of significant knowledge.
- **Principled** – They have a sound grasp of the principles of moral reasoning. They have integrity, honesty and a sense of fairness and justice.
- **Caring** – They show sensitivity towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a sense of personal commitment to action and service.
- **Open-minded** – They respect the views, values and traditions of other individuals and cultures and are accustomed to seeking and considering a range of points of view.
- **Well-balanced** – They understand the importance of physical and mental balance and personal well-being.
- **Reflective** – They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and analyse their personal strengths and weaknesses in a constructive manner. (Making the Primary Years Programme happen. 2005, p. 4)

The IBO Learner Attitudes are also an essential element of the program. These aim to promote positive attitudes towards people, the environment and towards learning. These attitudes are:

- **Appreciation** – appreciating the wonder and the beauty of the world and its people.
- **Commitment** – being committed to their learning, persevering and showing of self-discipline and responsibility.

- **Confidence** – feeling confident in their ability as learners, having the courage to take risks, applying what they have learned and making appropriate decisions and choices.
- **Cooperation** – cooperating, collaborating and leading or following as the situation demands.
- **Creativity** – being creative and imaginative in their thinking and in their approach to problems and dilemmas.
- **Curiosity** – being curious about the nature of learning and of the world, its people and cultures.
- **Empathy** – imaginatively projecting themselves into another’s situation, in order to understand his/her thoughts reasoning and emotions.
- **Enthusiasm** – enjoying learning.
- **Independence** – thinking and acting independently, making their own judgements based on reasoned principles and being able to defend their judgements.
- **Integrity** – having the integrity and firm sense of fairness and honesty.
- **Respect** – respecting themselves, others and the world around them.
- **Tolerance** – feeling sensitivity towards the differences and diversity in the world and being responsive to the needs of others. (Making the Primary Years Programme happen. 2005, p. 35)

While the PYP recognizes the traditional subject areas such as language, mathematics, social studies, arts, science and technology, personal, social and physical education the programme also rests upon the use of units/themes of inquiry. The PYP promotes inquiry as an approach to learning and each school has a Programme of Inquiry that follows a basic outline. The transdisciplinary themes of the Programme of inquiry are:

1. Who we are
2. Where we are in place and time
3. How we express ourselves
4. How the world works
5. How we organize ourselves
6. Sharing the planet.

Within these themes each grade level starting at Kindergarten up to grade five is required to complete six units per year, Preschool is required to complete four units per year. The units fall under one of the above transdisciplinary headings. Each unit within one transdisciplinary theme builds to some extent on the previous one allowing a consistent and continuous growth of knowledge. Each theme has clear lines of inquiry/goals as well as allowing student initiated questions and investigations. Most core subjects are merged into the units to ensure a more holistic approach to learning and knowledge acquisition. Key concepts are used to initiate and aid in the direction of the unit questions and investigations. These key concepts are:

- Form – What is it like?
- Function – How does it work?
- Causation – Why is it like it is?
- Change – How is it changing?
- Connection – How is it connected to other things?
- Perspective – What are the points of view?
- Responsibility – What is our responsibility?

2.3.1 The Programme of Inquiry

The following is an example of a section of a programme of inquiry:

	Who we are <i>An inquiry into the nature of the self, of our beliefs and values, of personal, physical, mental, social and spiritual health; of our families, friends, communities and cultures; of our rights and responsibilities; of what it means to be human.</i>	Where we are in place and time <i>An exploration of our orientation in place and time: of our personal histories; of history and geography from local and global perspectives; of our homes and journeys; of the discoveries, explorations and migrations of human kind; of the contributions of individuals and civilizations.</i>	How we express ourselves <i>An exploration of the ways in which we discover and express our nature, ideas, feelings, beliefs, and values through language and the arts.</i>
Kindergarten	Friends <u>Central Idea</u> People need friends. <i>An Inquiry into:</i> 1. How friends are similar and different 2. How we make and	Houses <u>Central Idea</u> Culture, the environment and available resources influence the houses people build. <i>An Inquiry into:</i> 1. The building of houses	Just Imagine <u>Central Idea</u> People tell stories in a variety of ways. <i>An Inquiry into:</i> 1. What a story is 2. Why people tell stories

	<p>keep friends</p> <p>3. Why we need friends</p> <p><i>Subject Focus:</i> Social Studies PSE</p> <p><i>Concept:</i> Connection Responsibility</p>	<p>2. Different kinds of houses</p> <p>3. How houses have changed over time</p> <p><i>Subject Focus:</i> History Social studies</p> <p><i>Concept:</i> Change Causation</p>	<p>3. Different types and purposes of stories</p> <p>4. Different ways stories are told: drama, puppetry, music, and dance</p> <p><i>Subject Focus:</i> Language Arts</p> <p><i>Concept:</i> Function Perspective</p>
Grade 1	<p>Cultures <u>Central Idea</u> Culture is a way of life.</p> <p><i>An Inquiry into:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Our personal culture 2. Our host country's culture 3. 3.Commonalities between cultures <p><i>Subject Focus:</i> PSE Social Studies</p> <p><i>Concept:</i> Form Reflection</p>	<p>My Town <u>Central Idea</u> All towns have a purpose.</p> <p><i>An Inquiry into:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Features 2. History 3. Geographical location <p><i>Subject Focus:</i> Social Studies</p> <p><i>Concept:</i> Function Change</p>	<p>Drama <u>Central Idea</u> Through acting, people express feelings and bring stories to life.</p> <p><i>An Inquiry into:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dramatic movements 2. Intonation 3. Pitch <p><i>Subject Focus:</i> Language</p> <p><i>Concept :</i> Perspective Function</p>
Grade 2	<p>Health <u>Central Idea</u> Choices help us maintain and improve our health and well-being.</p> <p><i>An Inquiry into:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exercise 2. Nutrition 3. Personal hygiene and routines <p><i>Subject Focus:</i> Science PSE</p> <p><i>Concept</i> Responsibility Causation</p>	<p>Inventions <u>Central Idea</u> Inventions from individuals have over time made significant contributions to society.</p> <p><i>An Inquiry into:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inventions 2. Inventors 3. How inventions impact society <p><i>Subject Focus:</i> Science Social Studies</p> <p><i>Concept</i> Function</p>	<p>Illustrations <u>Central Idea</u> Feelings, values and beliefs can be expressed in different ways using illustrations.</p> <p><i>An Inquiry into:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Styles of Illustration 2. Illustrators 3. Feelings/ values/ beliefs expressed in illustrations <p><i>Subject Focus:</i> Arts Language</p> <p><i>Concept</i> Perspective</p>

Table 1. (International School of Helsingborg, Program of Inquiry, 2008 p. 3)

This PYP model may provide an easier overview of parts of this programme:

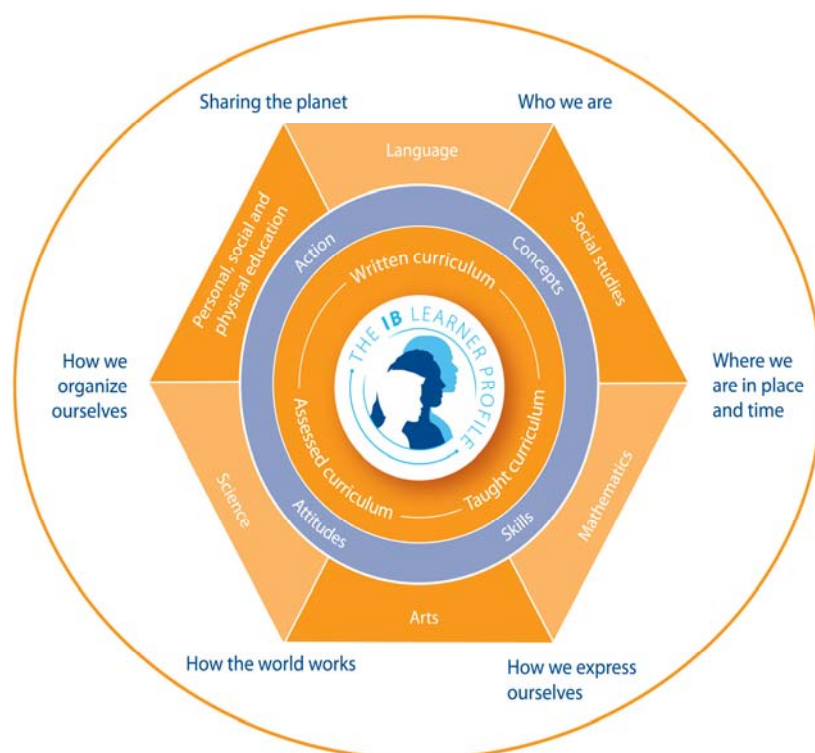


Table 2 (*Making the Primary Years Programme happen, 2005 p. 5*)

The transdisciplinary themes open the door to an awareness of international-mindedness which is a core value within the PYP. The commonality of people and the multiple perspectives of people is a concept that students are consciously exposed to within the classroom through the set units as well as through the overall philosophy.

The PYP aims to develop international sensitivity through the key questions derived from the concepts and through the content of the written curriculum, such as the requirement that all students receive instruction in a language other than the language of instruction of the school, starting by the age of 7 at the latest. One of the goals of exposing children to languages other than their mother tongue is to provide an insight into and an appreciation of other cultures, and an awareness of other perspectives (The Primary Years Programme, 2002, p 11).

The IBO Programme standards and practices provides a set of criteria not unlike the Swedish Lpo 94 which further define the goals set for all IBO schools, at all levels, to work towards. This document contains four different sections, these are:

- A. The Philosophy
- B. The Organization
- C. The Curriculum
- D. The Student.

Within each section there are a set number of standards which enable schools to measure their success in the programme. This document is a base for a self-study which each school is required to complete approximately every five years in preparation for the programme evaluation process and inspection. Standard A2 encompasses the promotion of international-mindedness in the school community. This standard poses the following common practices:

1. The school values and makes productive use of the diversity of cultures and perspectives that exist in the school and in the local, national and global communities to enhance learning.
2. The school expects and promotes a commitment to international understanding and responsible citizenship on the part of the adults in the school community.
3. The school encourages learning that fosters responsible citizenship and international-mindedness.
4. The school encourages student learning that strengthens the student's own cultural identity and celebrates and fosters understanding of different cultures.
5. The school provides students with opportunities for learning about issues that have local, national and global significance, leading to an understanding of human commonalities.
6. The school develops a climate of open communication and careful expression of ideas, attitudes and feelings.
7. The school provides resources that offer access to different cultures, perspectives and languages.
8. The school provides a safe, secure and stimulating environment based on understanding and respect.
9. The school attaches importance to language learning through the development of each student's mother tongue and the acquisition of other languages, including the host country language.
10. The school supports members of its community for whom the school's language of instruction is not their mother tongue.
11. Where possible, the school ensures access to global information and recognizes the potential for wider communication through the availability and use of appropriate information and communication technologies (ICT).

12. The school takes advantage of the international network of IB schools teaching the same programme through e-mail or personal exchanges and attendance at conferences and workshops (Programme Standards and practices, 2005, p 3).

All these documents aid in providing schools with their own language policies. A language policy is an action plan stating the schools goals and direction regarding language development. There are guidelines to assist in creating such a policy; these are that the school must:

- recognize that, since language is central to learning, all teachers are, in practice, language teachers with responsibilities in facilitating communication
- outline how students are to learn at least one language in addition to their mother tongue
- describe how the development and maintenance of the mother tongue for all learners is to be supported
- ensure that there are practices in place to provide inclusion and equity of access to the IB programme(s) offered by the school for all learners, including those who are learning in a language other than their mother tongue (the document *Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB programmes* provides further details on these practices and should be read when a language policy is being compiled).
- describe how the language of the host country is to be promoted
- recognize that administrators, teachers, librarians and other school staff will require professional development in the fields of language learning and teaching, and on how to make sure the language policy becomes a working document
- consider what resources and practices are to be used to involve parents in planning their children's language profile and development (Guidelines for developing a school language policy, 2006, p 1).

In closing, the IB programmes provide a solid basis for practice within international schools around the world, the aim being to educate true international-minded citizens. These curriculum goals coincide with the Swedish curriculum goals and together these documents provide a sea of knowledge, resources and guidelines ensuring the high quality of education that the international schools in Sweden can provide.

3. Empirical Framework

3.1 Informants

Since the International School of Helsingborg has such linguistic diversity among students and teachers I chose to target this issue and study the attitudes that this variety creates among the younger grades levels. The International School of Helsingborg is the only one in Sweden that offers all three IBO programmes, i.e. the Primary Years Programme, the Middle Years Programme and the Diploma Programme. The school offers education to children from 3-19 years old. The current student number is in total approximately 400 students with a faculty of approximately 50 teachers. The number of students in the Primary Years Programme totals approximately 160. This study includes children from the Kindergarten class, grade one and grade two, totalling 58 students who were planned to participate in this study. These children range from the age of 5-9 years old. The variety of nationalities among the students is widespread and this will be evident in the results of this study. There are 1-2 teachers and classrooms assistants in each grade level totalling the number of teacher participants to five. Most of the teachers have a diverse cultural background and have taught abroad for an average of 2-3 years.

3.2 Choice of method and procedure

In order to obtain relevant and precise information, I have chosen to create a survey which uses symbols and a layout that the students are familiar with already. All students at the International School of Helsingborg are encouraged and required to reflect on their learning every term. With the intention of making this process easier for the younger students, the school uses a reflection form with stoplight and face expression symbols. These stoplight symbols symbolize three different attitudes towards a piece of work chosen by the student. The first symbol is a green happy face, the second a yellow neutral face expression and the third is a red unhappy face. These symbols correspond to different levels of achievement such as *excellent*, *ok* or *not so good* work. Once a symbol has been circled the student is asked why they chose that symbol and how this may influence their continued work in class. The student may write down their feelings or may dictate their reflection to the teacher. The reflection form is attached to the piece of work chosen and kept in the student portfolio in order to show development throughout the years spent at school. As this reflection process is introduced in Preschool when the children are three years old, they are quite familiar with this method by

the time they start in Kindergarten as five or six year olds. The format of the existing reflections was used however the questions were adjusted to suit the line of inquiry of this study. The familiarity of the survey format was hoped to make the gathering of evidence easier and more understandable to students as well as staff.

In order to gather information about the attitudes towards multilingualism I chose to use surveys. Using a survey method to collect information seemed to be the best and most effective way of investigating the area of this study. The students direct feed-back was easier to compile using such an approach and the time set aside for this survey ensured that all students present filled in and answered all the questions. The student surveys were conducted in the classrooms without the class teachers present but with the assistance of classroom assistants and substitutes. As these are all children that have previously attended my Kindergarten class, or are currently enrolled in my class, I have the advantage of knowing the children on a more personal level. This facilitated a more relaxed atmosphere during the survey sessions as well enabling me to before hand assess what I felt to be the best approach to the survey for each class. The teacher surveys were placed in the teachers' pigeon holes and teachers were asked to fill them in at their convenience. There were no prior discussions held in either case and the questions in the survey were not disclosed ahead of time. As the Kindergarten teacher, I chose not to participate in the teacher survey as I had concerns regarding the true authenticity of my responses.

3.3 Strategies

As mentioned above I chose what I deemed to be the best approaches to introducing and answering this survey with each class. I conducted a short and concise introduction to this study in order to inform the students of my aims and intentions. A short discussion was held in order to describe and define the used terminology in the survey and any questions or queries that the students had were voiced at this time. Throughout the survey activity there was an open climate allowing students to talk about and reflect on their answers. An emphasis was placed on the necessity of truthful and genuine answers. The directions regarding the questions remained basically the same however the group sizes were different in each grade level. This was merely aimed at making sure that all the students fully understood the questions and were able to answer them fairly with no or little influence from their peers. The survey in grade two was conducted in half class groups, in grade one the survey was conducted in groups of five and in kindergarten in pairs.

3.4 The Student Survey

The first four survey questions require students to write their answer or draw flags to represent their answer. All children were able to draw the flags needed for these answers without teacher guidance. Questions 5-9 required students to reflect, choose and circle the symbol that coincided with their thoughts. Lastly, question 10 called for students to write or yet again draw flags to represent their answers. Some students needed support in this last question and world atlases with country flags were available as well as simplified drawings on the class white board. The student survey results were converted to percentages to allow for combining results as well as to facilitate a quick and uncomplicated overview of the results for the reader.










3.5 The Teacher Survey

Three teachers and two classroom assistants participated in this survey. Two of these teachers are monolingual individuals all others are bi- or multilingual. All of the teachers have approximately ten years of teaching experience each. The two classroom assistants have some experience assisting children with special needs. Survey questions 1-4 are general questions about the classes that the teachers teach. Questions 5-9 regard feelings toward different language aspects and are identical to questions 5-9 in the student survey. The colour coded symbols were not used in this survey instead short statements were available for the participants to circle. Question 10 is also identical to the student survey. The remaining questions 11-16 are questions pertaining to the school programme and curriculum insights. As stated previously, I did not participate in this survey as my answers may unconsciously have been influenced by the research done prior to this study and authenticity could not be guaranteed.

4. Results

4.1 Results of the Student Survey

	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2
1. Number of languages spoken:	15% of the class are monolingual 55% of the class are bilingual 30% of the class are multilingual	0% of the class are monolingual 38% of the class are bilingual 62% of the class are multilingual	25% of the class are monolingual 50% of the class are bilingual 25% of the class are multilingual
2. Number of languages spoken at home:	65% speak one language at home 35% speak two languages at home	46% speak one language at home 46% speak two languages at home 8% speak three languages at home	88% speak one language at home 12% speak two languages at home
3. Languages spoken at school:	100% speak only English at school	62% speak only English at school 38% speak two languages at school	56% speak only English at school 44% speak two languages at school
4. Languages spoken with friends:	45% speak only one language with their friends 55% speak two or more languages with their friends	38% speak only one language with their friends 46% speak two languages with their friends 16% speak three languages with their friends	75% speak only one language with their friends 25% speak two languages with their friends

	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2
5. Mother tongue feelings:	   65% 5% 30%	   100%	   88% 12%
6. Feelings toward the second language:	45% 35% 5% (15% have no second language)	92% 8%	69% 25% 6%
7. Feelings towards learning a new language:	70% 15% 15%	92% 8%	81% 6% 13%
8. Feelings towards hearing a language spoken that they understand:	80% 20%	75% 17% 8%	75% 25%
9. Feelings towards hearing a language that they do not understand:	15% 30% 55%	8% 33% 58%	19% 25% 56%

10. Most popular languages in Kindergarten:

Swedish 30%, English 25%, German 15%, Dutch 10%, French 5%, Italian 5%, Chinese 5%, Tamil 5%. (These children all chose their mother tongue.)

Most popular languages in Grade one:

Swedish 42%, English 34%, Arabic 18%, French 17%, German 17%. (Some students chose 2 languages.)

Most popular languages in Grade two:

English 56%, Swedish 50%, French 6%, Dutch 6%, Italian 6%, Portuguese 6%, Chinese 6%. (Some students chose 2 languages. Some children chose different languages than the ones they already speak.)

4.2 Results of the Teacher Survey

	Kindergarten staff	Grade 1 staff	Grade 2 staff
1. Total students in each grade.	20	20	18
2. Total nationalities in each grade.	14	10	8
3. Total languages represented in each grade.	10	8	5

4. Languages that staff are fluent in:

Kindergarten teacher:	Swedish
Kindergarten assistant:	Swedish, English and German
Grade one teacher:	English
Grade one assistant:	Swedish, English and Italian
Grade two teacher:	English and Spanish

	Good	Ok	Not so good
5. Mother tongue feelings:	4 teachers/assistants	1 teachers/assistants	
6. Feelings toward the second language:	4 teachers/assistants	1 teachers/assistants	

7. Feelings towards learning a new language:	2 teachers/assistants	3 teachers/assistants	
8. Feelings towards hearing a language spoken that they understand:	5 teachers/assistants		
9. Feelings towards hearing a language that they do not understand:	1 teachers/assistants	2 teachers/assistants	2 teachers/assistants

<p>10. Most popular languages among staff are: German, English, Swedish, Spanish, Italian, Turkish, Swahili.</p>
<p>11. Does the multilingual aspect influence the way you teach? 4 teachers/assistants answered YES, 1 answered NO.</p>
<p>12. If your answer was YES to the previous question please explain how this influences the way you teach. Four of the five teachers/assistants answered that they used more visual aids and when speaking in class and used simplified terminology and vocabulary. All stated that they monitored students and checked if they really understood, sometimes this was done by using the students' mother tongue language. One stated that she often reflected on students understanding and kept observations of students' abilities and difficulties on post-its.</p>
<p>13. What attitudes towards multilingualism would you hope to extend to your students? One teacher stated the possibilities that this gives an individual educational- and career wise. Other responses were; open-mindedness, understanding, tolerance, respect, independence, curiosity, appreciation and knowledge.</p>
<p>14. Are you aware of any curriculum guidelines, standards or policies toward multilingualism at your school? 1 teacher/assistant answered YES, 4 answered NO.</p>
<p>15. If you answered YES to the previous question please state which these guidelines etc. are in short. The requirement for grade one students to learn Swedish and the promotion of international</p>

mindedness encompassing linguistic diversity.

16. Does your school show support in this area? And if so, in what ways?

The provision of trained Swedish teachers and Swedish as an Additional language teacher. Also the possibility to receive mother tongue instruction, parent involvement in theme days (e.g. International day) and displays in different languages.

5. Analysis

The findings of this study will be presented in the section to follow. The methods used in this study have, I felt, been adequate for the content and extent of this essay. This exploration of the results of the student survey as well as the teacher survey will be compiled, combined and compared later in this chapter.

5.1 Analysis of the Student Survey

In the student survey questions one through five investigate the scope of languages spoken at home, at school and in social settings with friends and peers for students in grades Kindergarten to grade two. The results show that most children in these grades are bi/multilingual. The Kindergarten class have an average of 85% multilingual individuals, grade one 100% multilingual students and in grade two 75% of the students speak more than one language. The numbers fall slightly in question two, when asked how many languages are spoken in the home. Most children speak one language within the boundaries of their home. Grade one results however show a balance in the results where slightly more than 50% of the children speak more than one language at home.

When asked which languages are used at school 100% of the Kindergarten students state English, 62% in grade one state the same and 56% in grade two. This outcome is curious and I speculate whether this has to do with the fact that teachers in the early years are quite consistent in their English language communication with the children during class time. One theory could be that it is thought that the best way to acquire a new language is to totally immerse the children in it at an early age. Furthermore, because for most children this is their first formal school year, within international perspectives, there is a clear strategy and approach to second language learning in Kindergarten. In order for the children to be successfully assimilated and in order to fully optimize comprehension and learning in future years at school it is imperative that they acquire a good English language foundation. The slow decline of these numbers in grade one and two may support the hypothesis that English language skills are, most times, focused on in Kindergarten and as the children enter grade one the need for this scheme is not required to the same extent as most children are fluent in the language of instruction by then. Early intervention of language instruction is given in Kindergarten and children entering school at this level with English as a second language

(ESL) are given the opportunity to meet an ESL teacher daily. The ESL teacher and Kindergarten class teacher meet weekly to discuss and plan instruction. At times the ESL teacher will be in the class leading or participating in instruction and activities and at times children are pulled out in groups for instruction. An additional rationale could also be the introduction of Swedish instruction as of year one. The introduction of Swedish is a curriculum requirement from the Primary Years Program which states that "... such as the requirement that all students receive instruction in a language other than the language of instruction of the school, starting by the age of 7 at the latest. One of the goals of exposing children to languages other than their mother tongue is to provide an insight into and an appreciation of other cultures, and an awareness of other perspectives" (The Primary Years Programme, 2002, p 11). The students become aware that there is a focus on more than one language at school. Swedish instruction is provided at two levels, one for proficient Swedish speakers and one for Swedish as second language (SSL) students. The aim of the Swedish program is for all students to enter into the proficiency program at some point during their years in primary school. The proficient students receive instruction in their home classrooms whereas the SSL students are pulled out for instruction in groups of varying levels and sizes. It is not uncommon that several grade levels meet in SSL. This promotion of Swedish language is also supported by the schools language policy document which gives guidelines of how best to learn the language of the host country based on the PYP curriculum as well as the Swedish Lpo-94 curriculum.

Question four asks for languages spoken with friends and the results are varying in the different grade levels. Grade two shows that 75% of students speak one language with their friends, in Kindergarten and grade one the numbers are even with almost half of the children speaking one language with their friends and half using two or more languages when socializing with friends. This result may be due to the fact that as children grow older seeking their identity, they become more aware of their differences and they may be at a level where social acceptance is vital to their happiness. Students of this age may feel the need to be the same as everyone else and are not mature enough to stand for diversity.

It would naturally be of great interest to compare these numbers to Swedish government schools in the area. Do we achieve the same results? Do we have the same intervention strategies for students in need of additional language instruction?

The next section, questions five to nine, of the student survey asks students to reflect on how they feel about their mother-tongue, their second language and how they feel about other languages heard in their surroundings. Results show that a substantial number of students are content with their first language however 30% of students in Kindergarten are not at ease with their mother-tongue language. This number is concerning but also quite intriguing and I wonder how this could be? Is it possible that for some individuals the strategies for English instruction in Kindergarten may be too overwhelming or confusing? This is a question that will go unanswered as it is impossible to find an absolute truth here. Further research is required maybe in the form of yearly reflections of this kind for the Lower Primary Years classes. Should this feature be reoccurring in the Kindergarten class in years to come then the school may need to investigate strategies and procedures and make necessary changes. In grade one 100% of the students like their mother-tongue, this is the perfect model and what we should strive for in all classes and for all students. Students were asked how they felt about their second language and most state that they feel good or ok about it with the highest scores in grade one, yet again. What might be the factor in grade one causing such superior results? This class if we recall, is a class of only bi-/multilingual students, none in the class are monolingual. Could this constellation of individuals have an impact on the results? Could this class be more tight-knit because of their diversity than the e.g. the Kindergarten class? Might the fact that everyone is in the “same boat”, equal backgrounds, be one reason that the class seems more compatible and attuned with their differences? Could the classroom teacher’s attitudes, values and methods be an explanation to this phenomenon? The results of the teacher survey may shed some light on these questions. An interesting fact was that most children had a positive attitude to learning yet an additional language; their scores ranged from 70% to 92% with grade one, yet again, having the highest number. Questions eight and nine ask students to reflect on how they feel about hearing a language spoken that they understand and hearing a language spoken that they did not understand. All classes have virtually the same opinion and results show that they all prefer to be able to understand a spoken language and about half don’t mind if they hear a language spoken that they don’t understand. For young learners this is an interesting fact that half of them actually accept the fact that languages spoken might not be comprehensible to them, which may also show that there is a beginning understanding of tolerance to other cultures and languages. This falls in line with the IBO attitude attributes where acceptance and sensitivity towards the differences and diversity in the world is a common and conscious goal at the school.

The last question in the student survey requires students to indicate which languages they like the most. In all three classes Swedish and English scored the highest. Although many of the Kindergarten students did not feel comfortable with their mother-tongue they all chose their mother-tongue as one of their favourites apart from English and Swedish. Most students in grade one chose two favourite languages which may be because they are all bi-/multilingual individuals and students in grade two sometimes chose languages they did not speak but were interested in learning. None of the students in grade two spoke/speak Portuguese or Chinese however some stated that they had travelled to countries where these languages were spoken and therefore they became interested in them. Also, this class consists of approx. 75% boys and most were/are interested in football which is why Portuguese was chosen as they were thought to have a strong football team and this was a subject of great significance to the students.

To conclude the results of the student survey it must be said that schools play a significant role in the promotion or demotion of languages, cultures and identities. These students seem motivated to learn languages, first, second as well as additional languages. This motivation goes hand in hand with their attitudes towards the linguistic diverse surrounding that they live in. The attitudes that most seem to have are those of open-mindedness, tolerance, acceptance, respect, curiosity and appreciation. These attitudes influence the way in which learning languages is approached and this in turn influences the general classroom atmosphere and the method in which learning is conducted. Although this study is limited to one school and a mere total of 58 students there are significant indications of the direction of the students' attitudes towards multilingualism. Whether the students' positive attitudes stem from the general school climate, the teachers' attitudes and methods or their family and friends is inconclusive and may well be a combination of the above, overall it must be said that students within the Primary Years at the International School are positively inclined towards language diversity. This quality is necessary in order to survive in a global perspective. The world is evolving and individuals who have multilingual and multicultural knowledge and awareness as a resource will have a clear advantage in life and choices become limitless as the world becomes their stage. The fostering of students with clear and confident identities that are cross-cultural and international will be what the market calls for in the near future. These students will influence the world and our aspiration is that they truly become international citizens of the world.

5.2 Analysis of the Teacher Survey

Five teachers/assistants in grades Kindergarten to grade two responded to the teacher survey. The first three questions of the survey were purely fact specific questions asking for total number of student in each grade, total number of nationalities represented in each grade and total number of native languages spoken in the classes. The Kindergarten class had 14 different nationalities and 10 different languages represented in a class of 20 students. Out of a total of 20 students in grade one; there are 10 different nationalities and 8 different languages spoken. In grade two there are 8 different nationalities and 5 different languages spoken out of a class of 18 students. These numbers show that the Kindergarten has the most diverse class amongst the three. In regards to the information found in the Kindergarten class, I wonder whether this diversity may be connected to the student survey response to question five, which stated that 30% of these students did not feel alright with their mother-tongue language?

Question four asked teachers/assistants to state the languages that they spoke fluently. The two teachers/assistants in Kindergarten speak, between them, 3 different languages, English, Swedish and German. Grade one teachers/assistants speak English, Swedish and Italian and the teacher in grade two is fluent in English and Spanish. In each grade level there are several languages represented and linking all the grades together, this brings us to a total of 5 different languages spoken amongst the staff.

In questions five to nine of this survey, teachers/assistants were asked the same questions as the students. These questions pertained to how the staff members in question felt about their mother-tongue, how they felt about their second languages and how they felt when hearing a foreign language that they did understand verses one they did not understand. The results in general had similarities to the response that the students gave. All teachers/assistants felt good about their native languages, and likewise about their second languages. All the teachers were at ease with hearing a language spoken that they understood but views differed in the last question nine. Almost half of the teachers/assistants did not feel alright about hearing a language spoken that they did not comprehend. This perspective was shared by the students in the lower grades. Might it just be within our human instinct to react this way to a foreign and incomprehensible language? Or may this be a question and a value worth investigating further? Is this a trait that we should seek to change? If so, why?

Teachers/assistants shared similar views and aspirations as the students did in response to question ten regarding their favourite languages. Most participants chose their mother-tongue language/s and some added a wish to learn new languages. The desire to learn something new is an admirable trait and one that should be encouraged in schools everywhere and amongst employees in all places.

The last 7 questions relate to connections made to the school curriculum, the common understanding of the goals and the significance of this for the teachers/assistants. Four out of five expressed that the multicultural environment influenced the teaching methods used. Many stated that they used visual aids, simplified language and terminology as well as monitored the students understanding frequently. Another method used was that of explaining the lesson objective to the students in their mother-tongue when needed. Teachers/assistants continued to declare that the attitudes they wanted to project to their students regarding multilingualism would be those of open-mindedness, tolerance, respect, independence, curiosity, appreciation and knowledge. These statements show a clear alignment to the PYP curriculum outlines where these attitudes are named as specific traits that students should strive to feel and believe. Question 14 asks if the participants are aware of any curriculum guidelines or policies regarding multilingualism. Only one teacher was aware of these documents. This finding is disturbing as all staff should be aware of vital school documents, guidelines, criteria and agreements that exist. However, in this case there might be circumstances that explain this discovery. All four of the remaining teachers/assistants are new to the school and the IBO program. All of these employees have been at the school for almost a year and have not yet been given the opportunity to undergo training in the IBO philosophy and PYP programme. It is the norm that all staff, after completing a year of teaching at the school, are sent to an intense 3-4 day introduction course in understanding the PYP programme as well as implementation of the programme. These courses are available abroad and are costly which is why the school offers the education to only those who decide to stay on and are truly interested in continuous development of the school. Another advantage to trialing a year within an IBO school is so that the teacher may have some pre-existent knowledge which may influence the structure of the course and how much the teacher can absorb. Having some experience of the programme will lead the teacher into asking the “right” kind of questions and consequently, will optimize learning for the teacher. Interestingly, the teacher who was aware of the school guidelines was the grade one teacher. So I query if this teachers knowledge of all parts of the written curriculum have influenced the

classroom learning situations? May this be one of the reasons why the grade one students showed such remarkable results in some areas of the student survey? This teacher was aware of the requirement for students to learn Swedish, the conscious promotion of internationalism as well as the guidelines need to encourage linguistic diversity. She continued to explain that the school offers support in these areas by providing trained ESL, SSL and Swedish teachers, by providing mother-tongue instruction, by inclusion of parents involvement in school, by posting displays in several different languages around the school and by theme days such as International day, UN day and Peace day often involving the whole school as well as the parent body.

In conclusion, the teacher survey gives a positive outlook on the multicultural and multi-linguistic school environment. The inclusion and allowance to use different languages within the class setting is one that communicates that the child is truly accepted and lays the emphasis on learning. This attitude sends a message of affirmation and increases the students feelings of self-worth, confidence and most importantly their identity is seen and welcomed. The teachers seem to look at language diversity as a resources rather than a problem. The most concerning result was that a majority of teachers were not aware of school policies and documentation regarding multilingualism and this is one area that should be looked into further. This can be done by asking the same teachers/assistant to participate in a similar survey at the end of their second year at the International School of Helsingborg. A solution must however be looked into and the school may need to consider offering more support, monitoring and mentoring to new teachers arriving at the school in the form of a clear set induction programme. Furthermore, some of the results may be connected to the student survey results but there is no way that this theory can be confirmed, these theories can only be created. Investigations of this kind are never really conclusive and true answers will always elude us, nonetheless we all learn by searching and inquiring leading to improvements and development.

6. Discussion

Living with more than one language is the standard these days. In this world that is constantly changing *globalization* is a term that is becoming more evident and present. *Globalization* means, according to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary, “to make global, to make worldwide in scope or application”. The mobility of people enables a worldwide spread of cultures, resources and languages. The consequence of this fact is that schools in many countries are becoming more diverse as students come from all corners of the world and seek education in the host country. I dare say, that many schools and communities see this phenomenon as a growing “problem” rather than a fact, a norm and/or a resource. Most schools have guidelines and plans as how to assimilate these foreigners consequently confining or dissolving the so called *problem*. Many students receive little or no support in the form of receiving mother-tongue instruction or adequate second language instruction. The lack of cultural acceptance may cause these students to lose their sense of self, their identity and may also contribute to failure in academic areas. All this can be avoided if educators build on children’s experiences and create forums that endorse linguistic diversity and multiculturalism. A society that helps to educate linguistically diverse students can only benefit from this as these students take their place in the working market in the future.

If I only speak one language, I can help my country as only one man. If I can use two languages, I can help as two men. But if I can use all nine languages, then I can work as nine men. (Village Elder from Eritrea, <http://homepage.ntlworld.com/vivian.c/SLA/SLAQuotes.htm>)

Educators should actively seek to increase their knowledge about language development, the importance of mother-tongue and internationalism. Only with acquired knowledge can we hope to improve the methods used in schools today. Becoming well-informed of the educational development of children with various language and cultural backgrounds will help teachers to recognize strategies and methods that will aid in interpreting and assessing students progress in school. Another, as important aspect to change, is the values and attitudes that teachers may have towards multilingualism. I am without a doubt that some teachers feel that they expose themselves and their students to multilingualism or multiculturalism through theme work or theme days but is this not a just emphasizing the differences rather than learning to appreciate the similarities of mankind? Our change of attitudes needs to come

from within ourselves, I believe. Understanding why language and cultures matter and what your individual view point is will bring awareness of what it means to others. This realization demands conscious actions that will acknowledge students diversity and cause view points and perspectives to change. The teachers now become role models and attitudes of students develop in the same direction. The attitudes that students have toward their schools, classrooms and teachers greatly impact the learning atmosphere in every subject area including language learning. (Krashen, 1981 p.23).

During this study evidence has shown that young learners, in Kindergarten to grade two at the International School of Helsingborg, generally have positive attitudes towards the linguistically diverse environment that surrounds them. Teachers at the school share the same conviction. The school provides a programme that embraces linguistic and cultural variety and a common goal exists to promote this feature. Curriculum goals and guidelines all exist at the school in order to articulate an agreement that the educators have created stating the importance of students' identity, heritage and language/s and ensuring a holistic development in all these areas. As the International School of Helsingborg has a clear language policy based on IBO as well as the Swedish Education curriculum, most teachers at the school actively work to fulfil this vision of creating an international community of learners. Teachers at the school use varying methods to establish this atmosphere of linguistic and language development. The provision of English as a Second language teachers (ESL), of Swedish as a second language teachers, of mother-tongue instruction offered by the municipality all help the students develop their languages and thus their identities and self-worth. Other methods that promote multilingualism used at the school are; the provision of library books in various languages, the possibility to conduct research in the mother-tongue however presentation are in English, displays where students work is shown in different languages, theme days etc. The school also invites parents to play an active part in the education process. Parents may serve as teacher aids in classrooms or be asked to bring their expertise in an area to the school and show it in a class.

To summarize the inquiry of this study, the conclusion must be that the world as we know it is and has changed. Multilingualism and multiculturalism is evident in every society and in every school and rather than closing our eyes to it we must learn to acknowledge it and celebrate it.

7. Summary

The results of this study correlate well with the theoretical framework of this essay. In order to refine strategies and teaching methods we must become proactive in our multi-linguistic schools today. Coherent and articulate policies must become the backbone to these strategies providing teachers with goals and aims in regards to promoting linguistic diversity among students. The dimensions of language learning and acquisition are colossal, therefore educators everywhere must empower themselves with knowledge in this area. Schools today are becoming more multicultural settings and this brings linguistic wealth and resources into our classrooms. We are in fact undergoing a process whereby many more individuals around the world are becoming multilingual. This fact is becoming the norm and to re-quote E. Lewis by Grosjean (1982, p. 2) “Bilingualism has been and is nearer to the normal situation than most people are willing to believe”. Our countries may in fact be in the process of undergoing changes similar to those in which occurred in Africa and India, whereby more languages are added to the linguistic diversity of societies.

It is vital to the survival of our cultures and identities that we work actively to conserve all languages. Students at schools today must and should be given the opportunities to develop their mother-tongue as numerous studies have shown this to be fundamental to the growth of an individual’s self-image. Creating atmospheres of acceptance and tolerance will aid in the revitalization of languages which otherwise risk becoming extinct. The active preservation of linguistic diversity in educational systems will bring about an atmosphere of open-mindedness, appreciation, respect, tolerance and caring, which are some of the attitudes and traits that the PYP program aims to extend in all IBO schools around the globe. As the results of the student survey has shown, these attitudes are embedded in the beliefs of the students in grades Kindergarten to grade two. Language is an essential link between humans and societies. Language connects us to other people and gives us a channel to ventilate emotions, feelings and thoughts. The attitudes that we portray in these forums help to either build up or tear down an individual’s sense of self, their confidence and their heritages and identities. As students spend a large part of their lives at school it is therefore essential that we aim to create “a place where the child is made welcome and feels secure, where learning can be a constructive experience and where teachers are supportive and expect the child to succeed.” (Grosjean, 1982, p. 208).

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9. Appendix

9.1 Student Survey – Attitudes towards Languages

Name	
Date	
Class	

1. These are the languages I speak.	<i>Draw the appropriate flags or write</i>
2. I speak this language at home.	<i>Draw the appropriate flags or write</i>
3. I speak this language at school.	<i>Draw the appropriate flags or write</i>
4. I speak this language with my friends.	<i>Draw the appropriate flags or write</i>
5. How I feel about my mother tongue language.	<p><i>Circle the appropriate face</i></p> 
6. How I feel about my second language.	
7. How I feel about learning a new language.	
8. How I feel about hearing a language that I understand.	
9. How I feel about hearing a language that I do not understand.	
10. The language/languages I like the most is/are:	<i>Draw the appropriate flags or write</i>

9.2 Teacher Survey – Attitudes towards Languages

<i>Name</i>	
<i>Date</i>	
<i>Class</i>	

1. How many students do you have in your class?	
2. How many different nationalities are represented in your class?	
3. How many different languages are represented in your class?	
4. How many languages do you speak fluently? (Please name them.)	
5. How I feel about my mother tongue language.	<i>Good</i> <i>Ok</i> <i>Not so good</i>
6. How I feel about my second language.	<i>Good</i> <i>Ok</i> <i>Not so good</i>
7. How I feel about learning a new language.	<i>Good</i> <i>Ok</i> <i>Not so good</i>
8. How I feel about hearing a language that I understand.	<i>Good</i> <i>Ok</i> <i>Not so good</i>
9. How I feel about hearing a language that I do not understand.	<i>Good</i> <i>Ok</i> <i>Not so good</i>
10. The language/languages I like the most is/are:	
11. Does the bi/multilingual aspect in your classroom influence the way you teach?	<i>Yes</i> <i>No</i>
12. If your answer to the previous question was “yes” please explain how this influences the way you teach?	
13. What attitudes towards bi/multilingualism would you hope to extend to your students? (<i>IBO Attitudes & Profiles</i>)	
14. Are you aware of any curriculum guidelines, standards or policies towards bi/multilingualism at your school?	<i>Yes</i> <i>No</i>
15. If you answered “yes” to the previous question please state which these guidelines are in short.	
16. Does your school show support in this area? And if so, in what ways?	