

Agnieszka Steur

## Education in the mother tongue in the opinion of Polish families and teachers living in the Netherlands

This dissertation examines the role of mother-tongue education among Polish families living in the Netherlands and its impact on the cultural identity of Polish diaspora children. Based on surveys and interviews with parents, teachers, and children, the study explores the reasons for the low participation in Polish language education and identifies key challenges, such as limited access to Polish schools, pressure toward assimilation, and differences between Polish and Dutch educational systems. The theoretical foundation relies on the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (the influence of language on perception) and Pierre Bourdieu's theory (language as a tool of symbolic power). Findings indicate that mother-tongue education has a positive impact on the intellectual and emotional development of children but requires institutional and community support. The dissertation offers practical recommendations for Polish schools, teachers, and parents to better support bilingualism and the cultural identity of the young Polish diaspora.