

**THE ROLE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN THE
INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES INTO FINNISH SOCIETY**

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<p>Tiivistelmä – Abstract</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tehtävänä oli selvittää englannin kielen roolia pakolaisten kotoutumisessa Suomeen. Erityisesti huomiota kiinnitettiin englannin kielen merkitykseen kahdella kotoutumisen osa-alueella: koulutuksessa ja työelämässä. Lisäksi selvitettiin pakolaisten omia tavoitteita kotoutumiselle.</p> <p>Tutkimukseen osallistui kymmenen (10) täysi-ikäistä pakolaista kolmesta keski-suuresta kaupungista. Tutkimukseen osallistujat ovat yhtä poikkeusta lukuun ottamatta kaikki miehiä keski-ikänsä 33,4 vuotta. Enemmistö tutkittavista puhuu englantia parhaiten äidinkieltään jälkeen. Tutkimuksen aineisto koostuu teemahaastattelusta, jotka on analysoitu laadullisen sisällönanalyysin avulla.</p> <p>Tutkimustuloksista ilmenee että englannin kielellä on tärkeä rooli pakolaisten kotoutumisessa Suomeen. Englannin kielen merkitys nähtiin erityisen tärkeäksi koulutuksessa. Tutkimukseen osallistuneilla pakolaisilla on vahva koulutusorientaatio, vaikkakin vain harva heistä opiskeli haastatteluhetkellä. Tutkimukseen osallistuneet eivät usko, että he voivat suorittaa tutkinnon suomen kielellä, koska suomen kielen oppiminen on pitkä prosessi. Englannin kieli mahdollistaakin heille (korkeakoulu)tutkinnon saavuttamisen. Opiskelu englannin kielellä ei kuitenkaan ole mahdollista kaikilla koulutusaloilla, joten osa tutkittavista hakeutuu ensin toisen asteen opintoihin suomen kielellä, ja vasta sen jälkeen englanninkielisiin korkeakouluopintoihin.</p> <p>Suomen kielen rooli korostui vahvasti työelämässä. Vaikkakaan tutkittavat eivät vielä olleet työelämässä, he uskovat suomen kielen osaamattomuuden olevan suurin este töiden saannissa. Tutkittavat eivät nähneet englannin kielelle enää tarvetta Suomessa sen jälkeen kun suomen kielen taito on saavutettu ja opinnot englannin kielellä on saatu päätökseen. Englannin kieli on kuitenkin tutkittaville korvaamaton kotoutumisen alkuvaiheessa, kun suomen kielen taitoa ei vielä ole saavutettu. Tällöin englannin kieli mahdollistaa itsenäisyyden tulkeista ja aktiivisen osallistumisen yhteiskuntaan.</p> <p>Koulutuksen ja työllistymisen lisäksi perheenyhdistäminen sekä sosiaaliset kontaktit näyttävät kotoutumisen päätavoitteina. Kielitaidon saavuttaminen ja kulttuurinen kompetenssi sen sijaan voidaan tulkita toissijaisiksi tavoitteiksi.</p> <p>Koska tutkittavien tulevaisuuden suunnitelmat ovat avoimia, heidän on vaikea asettaa englannin ja suomen kieltä tärkeysjärjestykseen. Molempien kielten yhtäaikaista hallintaa koetaan vaikeaksi. Englannin kieli on nopeampi tai ainoa mahdollisuus koulutuksen saavuttamiseen. Englanninkielinen tutkinto on kuitenkin Suomen työmarkkinoilla hyödytön ilman suomen kielen taitoa, mutta välttämätön globaaleilla työmarkkinoilla.</p>	
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1. INTRODUCTION

When I came here, nobody speak [mother tongue] here but everybody knows something about English, so here it was pretty helpful.-- We speak in English, and everybody get, and sometimes they don't get me and they just bring somebody else and they speak--, English and we do things through, so it was fine, it was perfect for me. (Sebastian)

Language proficiency is essential in the integration of refugees. In the Finnish context, previous research has highlighted the importance of the Finnish language proficiency in refugees' integration (see Bergbom and Girgiani 2007, 66). In fact, language proficiency can be considered a means for achieving other resources and capital needed in integration, such as education and professional skills (see Valtonen 1999, 32; Forsander 2002, 186). Unfortunately, Finnish is a difficult language to learn; after integration training less than a half of adult immigrants had attained the general level in Finnish that has been deemed sufficient for study and work (Pälli and Latomaa 1997, 11).

In contrast to the previous research that has concentrated on the importance of the Finnish language in integration, the present study examines the role that the English language has in the integration of refugees into Finnish society. English can be considered as the most important foreign language in Finland and it has gained a central position in some settings in education and professional life (see Leppänen and Nikula 2007, 333, 343, 339). To my knowledge, the importance of the English language in integration has not been examined in the Finnish context. In addition, I have not been able to find international literature that examines the role of other languages besides the national language(s) of the destination country. Nonetheless, the importance of the English language in integration has also been noted, at least in passing, in non-English speaking countries. For example, Boyd (2001, 184) points out that in addition to Swedish, insufficient knowledge of English can be a reason behind denying immigrants employment in Sweden.

It is important to examine whether a language that the refugees are already proficient in upon their arrival to Finland could aid in their integration, especially since the Finnish

language is difficult to learn. It is of importance to examine the role of English in the integration of refugees specifically, since unlike in most industrialized societies, refugees make up a significantly larger group in Finland than do migrants coming for employment (see Forsander 2003, 56). In addition, integration is more difficult for refugees than for other migrants because of their experiences of forced migration (Forsander 2002, 180).

In this study I am interested in examining the significance of the English language in two areas of integration: work and education. The chosen areas derive from the official goals for integration (see The Act on the Integration of Immigrants and Reception of Asylum seekers 493/1999, § 2). I am also interested in the refugees' own goals and expectations for their integration. I aim to examine the role that English has in these areas of integration during the "official time for integration", that is, the first three years after refugees' arrival to Finland when they are clients of the immigrant services and possess operative integration plans.

For this study ten interviews have been conducted with refugees who are proficient in English. With one exception the participants are all male in their twenties, thirties and forties with the average age of 33.4. For most of the participants, English is the language spoken second best after their mother tongue. The interview guide has been used as a method of data collection and content analysis as a method for analysis.

In this research report I will first discuss the integration process in the context of Finnish society, and present education and work as indicators of integration. In addition, the status of English in Finland is considered. Following the theoretical section I will present the course of my own study and finally the results, as well as discussions and conclusions.

2. THE INTEGRATION PROCESS IN THE FINNISH CONTEXT

An essential goal of this study is to examine the role that the English language has in the integration of refugees into Finnish society. Thus it is important to examine the process and concept of integration in detail, as well as the context that the Finnish immigration policy provides for integration. In order to provide a contextual framework for integration, acculturation and its different outcome options are presented before examining the concept of integration in greater detail. However, before examining integration and the Finnish immigration policy in more detail, it is important to define the subjects of integration: refugees.

2.1 Defining refugees

According to the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention, a refugee is a person who is outside his or her country of residence and has well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality and membership of a social group or political opinion (UNHCR, 2007). Although the definition is the most widely accepted, it is also criticized, for example, for its Cold War origins and Eurocentric focus (see Chimni 2000, Sztucki 1999). Quota refugees have been defined as refugees by the refugee organization of United Nations (UNHCR) and they have been accepted to Finland within the refugee quota that has been verified in the State budget for each year (Finnish Immigration Service 2011). An asylum seeker can also gain refugee status if he or she has been granted the asylum (Liebkind 1994a, 10). Castles et al. (2001, 121) argue that due to the changes in the causes of forced migration, a single legal definition of a “refugee” has become inadequate. In consequence a number of categories and statuses have been developed in different EU countries for various “refugee-like” circumstances (see e.g. Joly et al. 1992).

Refugees usually come from developing countries, poor regions of slightly more developed countries, war zones or politically unstable areas (Forsander 2002, 179). As Forsander (2002, 179) emphasizes, the poor conditions in the countries of origin affect refugees' chances for education and work. In addition, physical and social integration is more difficult for refugees than for other migrants, as they are affected by negative refugee experiences (Forsander 2002, 180). For example, families might have been torn apart and refugee communities in countries of resettlement might be dysfunctional due to social, economical and ethnical conflicts of the country of origin (Forsander 2002, 180). In addition, the settlement process is affected by the constant worrying of close kin and friends in country of origin or in other locations of first asylum (Valtonen 2008, 13). Turton (2003, 7), however, cautions from seeing refugees as a homogenous group of people with common experiences and needs. Turton (2003, 7) emphasizes, that there is no uniform "refugee experience", there are only experiences of refugees. Refugees arriving to Finland have usually travelled through several countries or have resided in refugee camps (Forsander 2002, 181). There is a difference between taking a view hour's plane trip from country of origin and arriving from several years of impermanence and traumatizing experiences (Forsander 2002, 180). As the current study is interested in the experiences of refugees, it is important to understand how exactly refugees differ from other migrants.

Literature distinguishes refugees from other migrants by the fact that being a refugee is not based on voluntariness but experiences of persecution (Forsander 2002, 182). Traditional migration research distinguishes between push and pull factors: refugees' living conditions in their countries of origin push them to leave, instead of resettlement countries' "pull" factors providing a purpose and wish to migrate (Forsander 2002, 182; Kunz 1973, 131). Refugees have a very distinctive relationship with both the country of origin where they have been forced to flee from and the country of involuntary resettlement (Wahlbeck 1999, 8). In the words of Kunz (1973, 130): "It is the reluctance to uproot oneself, and the absence of positive original motivations to settle elsewhere, which characterizes all refugee decisions and distinguishes the refugee from the voluntary migrants".

In addition to distinct need and experiences of forced migrants, Turton (2003, 7) has identified the number of forced migrants as a reason behind distinguishing them from voluntary migrants. Unlike in most industrialized countries, refugees make up a significantly larger group in Finland than do immigrants coming for employment (Forsander 2003, 56). Finland has traditionally been an emigration country without need for outside labour force (Liebkind 1996, 199). Nevertheless, the number of labour-force immigrants is currently growing (Forsander 2003, 56). A third way to address the division is to focus on us, the dominant group, who has made the distinction. In words of Turton (2003, 8): “Forced migrants make a special claim on our concern. They require us to consider issues of membership, citizenship and democratic liberalism”. Forced migrants force us to decide what our responsibilities to the people in need are.

With caution refugees can be distinguished from other migrants and considered a special group of migrants. This is also done in the current study as the subjects of the study are specifically refugees. However, Castles et al. (2001, 122) argue that due to the changing nature of international migration, the boundaries between economic migrants and refugees have become somewhat blurred. Regardless of the distinct needs of refugees, these two groups also have characteristics in common because they are both newcomers (Castles et al. 2001, 122). In fact, the integration process and Integration Law also concerns other immigrants (Forsander and Ekholm 2001b, 111). The current study also recognizes the similarities of the two groups in presenting research that does not distinguish refugees from other migrants, but examines immigrants in general. For this reason, from time to time, I will also refer to immigrants. Immigrant is a general concept which includes all immigrants with different reasons for their mobility from one country to another (Finnish Immigration Service 2010).

2.2 Acculturation and acculturation strategies

Liebkind (1994a, 25) defines acculturation as cultural change that takes place when two cultures encounter each other. However, Redfield et al. (1936, 149) emphasize that acculturation is only one aspect of cultural change. They define acculturation in their classical definition as follows:

Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups. (Redfield et al. 1936, 149.)

Acculturation can trigger resistance to change in both groups, create new cultural forms distinctive from the cultures in contact or changes can be delayed by many years (Social Science Research Council 1954, 974). In principle two cultures that encounter each other could affect each other the same amount, however, in practice one of the cultures is more influential (Berry 1990, 206). The domination of one culture over the other leads to the distinction between dominant and non-dominant groups (Berry et al. 2002, 352).

Acculturation is most often viewed from the point of view of the immigrant, with emphasis on immigrant's adaptation to the dominant group (Valtonen 2008, 61). However, it is important to keep in mind that changes occur also in the dominant group, the receiving society (Valtonen 2008, 61). Furthermore, the adaptation of the individual is not a straightforward process, individuals can acculturate on some dimensions and refuse to acculturate on others (Valtonen 2008, 60). In other words, individuals can choose cultural retention, that is, not to give up valued aspects of their original culture. Cultural retention, however, does not necessarily take place as a reaction to experienced threat from a dominant culture (Gans 1999, 162–163). Research on acculturation has shifted away from unidimensional conceptualizations that suggest unidirectional change toward the mainstream society towards bidimensional models that recognize the possibility of ethnic groups to preserve their own culture in addition to adapting to the culture of the mainstream society (Liebkind 2009, 18). Berry (2008, 331) has presented in his bidimensional model different outcome options for acculturation. The model is greatly cited in Finland but it has been justly criticized of, for example, the static nature

of the concept of culture, and oversimplifying structures (see Forsander 2001, 36–37). It does, nonetheless, bring clarity to the division of concepts.

Berry's (2008, 331) acculturation model examines the relationship of the dominant group and the non-dominant group. Berry uses two variables of identity maintenance, the importance of cultural maintenance and contact and participation, together with links to dominant group to describe the acculturation process, and arrives to four acculturation outcomes: marginalisation, assimilation, separation and integration. In *assimilation* individuals have strong relations with the dominant group and do not retain their own cultural identity. In *separation* the situation is reversed, individuals place value to cultural retention, and at the same time avoid interaction with the dominant group. In *marginalisation*, in turn, there is lack of interest for cultural retention and little interest for having relations with the dominant group. In contrast, in *integration* cultural retention is valued along with daily interactions with the dominant group. It can be argued that integration as an acculturation strategy guarantees the best psychological outcomes (Liebkind 1994a, 26). However, acculturation can proceed at different phase in different areas of individual's life (Liebkind 1994b, 234).

Acculturation is often regarded as an antecedent of for other styles of settlement, for example, integration (Valtonen 2008, 61). This is also clearly visible from Berry's (2008) model for acculturation that presents the different styles of settlement as outcomes of acculturation. In contrast, Gans (1999, 162) argues that immigrants are free to acculturate regardless of the reception in the receiving society, whereas, integration, for example, is dependent on the receiving society's policy and practice measures to allow access to participation. Therefore, it is essential to examine the context of integration, that is, in the current study, Finnish immigration policies. However, it is of equal importance to first define the concept of integration properly.

2.3 Defining integration

Ekholm (1994, 1) argues that integration is most often defined as the immigrants' opportunity to maintain their own culture and language in addition to having equal opportunities in relation to the majority community. However, Castles et al. (2001, 114) emphasize that "There is no single, generally accepted definition, theory or model of immigrant and refugee integration. The concept continues to be hotly debated". In fact, meanings of integration vary from country to country, change over time, as well as depend on the interests, values and perspectives of the people concerned (Castles et al. 2001, 112). Researchers have either given up attempts to define the concept and take the concept as given, or develop their own definitions (Forsander 2001, 38). In the following different definitions for integration are presented.

Valtonen (1997, 22) has defined integration either as a process of participation in societal spheres or as an end product where immigrants are able to fully participate in society. Valtonen (1999, 4) has later pointed out that in general, integration can be seen as participation in the economical, political and societal aspects of society. Wahlbeck (1999, 14), on the other hand, defines integration as a part of the process where refugees become part of the social groups and institutions of society. According to Kamali (1999, 89), in turn, integration in its ideal characteristics is "a matter of active participation in the production and reproduction of social life and of possessing or gaining a sense of belonging and satisfaction". As Forsander (2001, 39) notes, it is common to most theories of integration that they emphasise the immigrants' increasing participation in society or becoming a part of a larger group. In other words, in integration immigrants move from the margins of society toward the centre by taking part in the norm governed activities of the dominant group (Forsander 2001, 39). Most often integration is seen as a process rather than a static state (Forsander 2001, 39).

Integration is a process that takes place at every level and every sector of society, and due to this broadness, the concept is hard to define (Castles et al. 2001, 113). Nevertheless, Castles et al. (2001, 113) argue that in a multicultural society integration

can be understood as a process where the whole population acquires civil, social, political, human and cultural rights. Castles et al. (2001, 115) also recognize that integration can be used in two contradictory ways: either normatively to imply a one-way process of adaption of immigrants into the dominant culture or to imply two-way process that involves change in values, norms and behaviour for both immigrants and the dominant group.

Regardless of the wide use of the concept of integration in immigration research, the problematisation of the concept has received less attention (Forsander 2001, 38). Some critique exists, however, and Ekholm (1994, 18) provides a summary of the main theoretical problems that have been addressed.

Firstly, research on integration posits that the dominant group is an entity to which the segment, non-dominant group, integrates (Ekholm 1994, 18). However, integration into the host society is not the only option for integration (Forsander 2001, 38–39). Breton (1964, 193), for example, presents three different directions for integration: integration into the host society, integration between different ethnic groups and integration within one's own ethnic group. In addition, it is questionable whether Finnish society can be considered as a social and cultural entity (Ekholm 1994, 17).

Secondly, the concept of integration includes a normative assumption of a preferred societal order of the dominant group which is not questioned (Ekholm 1994, 18). In other words, it is implied that immigrants should change their values and behaviour to be accepted into society (Castles et al. 2001, 114). In contrast, the mark of an open democratic society is the existence of different lifestyles, values and values of the good (Castles et al. 2001, 114). In addition, there cannot be only one form of integration in a multicultural society that is characterized with different cultures, religions, classes and social behaviours (Castles et al. 2001, 114).

Thirdly, the concept does not focus on the changes that take place in the dominant group when the non-dominant group integrates. In consequence, research focusing on

the changes that take place in the dominant group is less common than research that focuses on the changes of the non-dominant group (Forsander 2001, 38–39).

Fourthly and lastly, when integration is defined inflexibly with Berry's acculturation model, integration is an either-or situation. However, in reality immigrants have to choose between different strategies in different situations (Ekholm 1994, 18). In consequence and due to the complexity of modern societies, integration may take place differently in various subsectors (Castles et al. 2001, 114–115). In fact, integration is most often segmented, that is, proceeds in a different phase in different areas of life (Martikainen and Tiilikainen 2007, 19). Another central factor that affects integration is transnationalism that refers to the process through which immigrants create and maintain relations with their countries of origin from their countries of resettlement (Tiilikainen 2005, 61). Transnationalism comprises of economic, social, religious and political ties between the countries (Tiilikainen 2005, 61). Moreover, immigrant families are increasingly transnational; more and more people belong to several societies at the same time (Levitt 2004). Castles and Miller (2009, 32), however, caution that not all migrants are transmigrants. The key defining aspect of transnationalism is its centrality and regularity in a person's life. Transnational relationships are most often a resource for the immigrants, but they can, however, also be a burden (Tiilikainen 2007, 267).

These theoretical problems associated with the concept of integration could possibly be avoided in research, Ekholm (1994, 18) suggests, by defining integration as accurately as possible. Nevertheless, many researchers have decided to use other terms instead of integration (Castles et al. 2001, 115). For example, assimilation, adaptation, incorporation, inclusion, exclusion, insertion, settlement, denizenship and citizenship are terms that are used to replace integration (Castles et al. 2001, 116–119).

In conclusion, as there is no generally accepted definition of integration, it is important to examine the different shades of the concept and acknowledge its shortcomings. Despite the shortcoming the concept of integration is used in this study as it continues to be the most widely used term in literature. The current study is interested in the

refugees' own understanding of integration, and therefore does not define integration strictly beforehand. However, the interview questions are formulated based on the understanding of integration as a process, rather than an end product. In addition, as only refugees are interviewed, the study ignores the possible effects to the dominant group. Furthermore, as the study also compares the official goals of the government and refugees' personal ambitions for integration, the official definition, presented in the following section, is utilized.

2.4 Finland's immigration policies

It is not only researchers that shape the conceptualizations of integration. Integration has become politicised, and it has come to represent a policy goal in countries receiving immigrants (Valtonen 1997, 22). In fact, integration varies from one nation-state to another even in the EU (Castles et al. 2001, 124). Thus it is important to examine the context that Finland's immigration policies provide for integration.

Traditionally Finland has been an emigration country, and not an immigration country (Liebkind 1996, 199). As Liebkind (1996, 199) points out, Finland's immigration policies have been extremely restrictive for a long period of time. When other European countries, including the Nordic countries, were accepting hundreds of thousands of immigrants and refugees in the 1970s and 1980s, Finland accepted a minimum amount of immigrants (Liebkind 1996, 199). A significant change in the refugee resettlement took place in 1986 when Finland accepted its first 100 quota refugees (Räty 2002, 133). Thereafter, the annual quota of refugees has increased, being 200 in 1989 (Räty 2002, 133), and 750 since the year 2001 (Finnish Immigration Service 2011). The refugee quota has been defined in the Aliens Act (301/2004, §90–92).

2.4.1 Integration and multiculturalism

Multiculturalism has been the leading theme in immigration policies since the year 1990 (Ylänkö 2000, 68). Ikäläinen et al. (2003, 9) define multiculturalism as the equal coexistence of different cultures. Parekh (2006, 219), however, reminds that a multicultural society needs a broadly shared culture in order to sustain the society. As a multicultural society involves several cultures, the shared culture has to grow out of their diversity, as well as respect and nurture the diversity (Parekh 2006, 219). Ylänkö (2000, 49–50), on the other hand, notes that multiculturalism can also be used to mean political programs. In multicultural political programs governments have the goal of taking into consideration the needs of different cultures and ensuring their rights, in order to ensure equality and to prevent conflict (Ylänkö 2000, 49–50).

Integration according to the ideology of multiculturalism is contradictory as it tries to combine universalism emphasizing equality and pluralism advocating cultural diversity of minorities (Ikäläinen et al. 2003, 27). Paradoxically, immigrants are simultaneously expected to adapt and maintain their own culture (Ikäläinen et al. 2003, 27). Parekh (2006, 197), on the other hand, reminds that there is nothing wrong with assimilation as long as it is freely chosen by the immigrants.

2.4.2 Finnish immigration policy

Mannila (2009, 221–222) argues that the Finnish immigration policy can be described with three characteristics. Firstly, the policy includes a strong sentiment of offering ethnic Finnish a home country, which has led to ethnic favouritism in the policy. Secondly, in comparison to most countries, the Finnish immigration policy has focused on humanitarian migration: resettlement of refugees and asylum seekers. Thirdly, high share of immigrants have come to Finland for reasons of family reunifications and marriage.

The Finnish immigration policy programme that was completed in 1997 has for a long time concentrated on refugee policy. According to the programme, Finland aims to

promote integration by taking into consideration the prevailing economic development and social situation. In addition, Finland is committed to the reception of refugees, although efficient integration of all immigrants into Finnish society and labour market is the goal of the policy. Nevertheless, the programme designed services solely for refugees, and as the amount of other immigrant grew in the 1990s, the services were insufficient. (Räty 2002, 134.)

A new immigration policy programme was established in 2006 and it emphasizes work-based immigration to replace labour shortage caused by retirement (Suokonautio 2008, 36). The programme seems to value work-based immigrants over other immigrants, especially those who are already clients of the employment office (Suokonautio 2008, 37–38). Suokonautio (2008, 39) argues that immigrants' professional skills and prerequisites for learning cannot be predicted directly from the grounds of the residence permit.

Immigration policy can be further divided into different sub-sectors of, for example, refugee policy and integration policy. The refugee policy is based on international obligations that Finland has agreed to (Forsander 2000, 171). The policy is first and foremost international and humanitarian policy that should not be affected by, for example, labour policy (Forsander 2000, 172). The integration policy, on the other hand, comprises of measures designed to encourage the active participation of immigrants (Forsander 2000, 173). Such measures are, for example, language courses and other action designed to improve education and work opportunities. The Act on the Integration of Immigrants and Reception of Asylum seekers 493/1999 (the Integration Law) defines the content of the integration policy (Forsander 2000, 173).

The Integration Law was adopted in 1999 and an amendment to the Law entered force in January 2006 (Act 1269/2006). The Law defines integration as follows:

- 1) *integration* means the personal development of immigrants, aimed at participation in working life and society while preserving their own language and culture; and

2) integration also means the measures taken and resources and services provided by the authorities to promote and support such integration, and consideration for the needs of immigrants in planning and providing other public services and measures; (1215/2005)

The objective of the Law (493/1999, § 2), in turn, is to:

Promote the integration, equality and freedom of choice of immigrants through measures which help them to acquire the essential knowledge and skills they need to function in a society, and to ensure the essential livelihood and welfare of asylum seekers by arranging for their reception.

Mikola (2009, 14) notes that the integration law is in part outdated. It is for the most part still sufficient for humanitarian migration, but not, however, for other migration (Mikola 2009, 14). In fact, a reform of the integration law has been approved at the end of year 2010 and it enters force on 1.9.2011 (Ministry of the Interior 2011). The reform takes into consideration all immigrants that are estimated to stay in Finland the minimum of one year, regardless of their reasons for migration (see Ministry of the Interior 2011).

2.4.3 Integration in practice

Although integration is set as a policy goal in several countries, this does not mean that there is an aspiration or capacity to fulfil the goal (Liebkind 1994a, 83). In fact, Wahlbeck (1999, 81) argues that although Finnish government papers are based on a liberal pluralist ideas, the policy recommendations remain universalist. In other words, in their practical work the Finnish authorities do not take into account cultural differences, although the official policies are multicultural (Wahlbeck 1999, 81). Wahlbeck (1999, 81) also argues that Finnish resettlement policy is based on unrealistic expectations of a quick integration or even assimilation of refugees.

In practice refugee resettlement is based on the voluntariness of the municipalities, who receive a certain state subsidy for the task (Räty 2002, 135). However, once the municipalities accept refugees, they are obliged to develop an integration programme, which states the practical measures of integration used by the municipality (Räty 2002, 135). In addition, individual integration plans are designed for the immigrants in

cooperation with the immigrant, unemployment office and representative of the municipality (Mikkonen 2005, 55). In the integration plan, immigrants' language and educational needs are assessed and a pathway for working life is constructed (Räty 2002, 145). Integration training usually starts with Finnish or Swedish language courses and information about Finnish society (Räty 2002, 145). Integration plans have mainly been designed for the working-age immigrants, however, it has been realized that also, for example, housewives, teenagers and the elderly are in need of an integration plan (Mikkonen 2005, 55).

The Integration Law also emphasizes immigrants' own responsibility to take part in the integration process (Suokonautio 2008, 41). A refusal to take part in the integrative activities, that is, not to integrate, is sanctioned (Forsander 2001, 43) by reducing or withdrawing the integration assistance (Räty 2002, 146). Thus, in order to receive the integration assistance, immigrants are obliged to follow the integration plan, and when they do, they are entitled to integration assistance for only three years, and in some well-grounded cases for five years (Act on the Integration of Immigrants and Reception of Asylum Seekers 493/1999, § 11).

In conclusion, multiculturalism advocating the equal coexistence of different cultures is the leading theme in the Finnish immigration policies (Ikäläinen 2003, 9). Nevertheless, in practice Finnish authorities do not take into consideration cultural differences (Wahlbeck 1999, 81). In fact, Finnish immigration policy is based on unrealistic expectations of quick integration (Wahlbeck 1999, 81). Expectations of quick integration can also be seen from the emphasis of the policy that has in the recent years shifted away from humanitarian migration to emphasize work-based immigration (Suokonautio 2008, 36).

3. EDUCATION, WORK AND LANGUAGE SKILLS IN INTEGRATION

This chapter presents education and work as aspects of integration and language skills as a means for achieving them. The purpose is to provide an understanding of immigrants' educational opportunities within the integration training and after it, as well as to examine and explain the labour market status of immigrants. In other words, the purpose is to view the concrete possibilities that immigrants have for achieving integration through education and work. However, it is important first to examine different divisions of integration and the role of education, work and language skills within them.

Regardless of the fact that the concept of integration is broad and no shared practice for measuring it has been reached, integration can be divided into different aspects to clarify the concept. However, it has to be remembered that integration is more than the sum of its parts. In addition, the aspects or areas of integration are by no means separate from each other but affect each other in the same way as do areas of life. Because there is no shared practice, researchers use the indicators that are most practical for their research. (Manninen 2001, 3–4.)

Based on a review of European literature Spencer and Cooper (2006, 10) have concluded that an increasing interest in measuring progress has led to attempts to identify indicators of integration in order to quantify change. Most research has concentrated on measurement in key fields of integration, which include education and language (Spencer and Cooper 2006, 10). In addition, immigrants' labour market status is a reasonably well researched area (Castles et al. 2001, 143). Atfield et al. (2007, 13) acknowledge that many studies focus on the organizational aspects of integration, while in their own study they emphasize the importance of integration as a subjective process. The emphasis of the current study is also the subjective experiences of the refugees.

Ekholm (1994, 18) has divided integration into structural integration and internal integration within the ethnic community. The goal of structural integration is the

economic, social and political participation of the immigrants in society by taking into account their own cultural and ethnic background. Ekholm (1994, 18) sees employment and education as part of economic integration and language skills as part of social integration. Forsander (2002, 52), on the other hand, combines education, work and language skills under one concept: human capital, which is one form of capital/resource that provides explanations for the labour market status of immigrants.

Ager and Strang (2008, 169–184), on the other hand, provide an extensive framework for understanding integration. The results of this study are discussed in the context of the framework as it provides an overall understanding of the different aspects of integration, including education and work and refugees' personal ambitions for their integration. Ager and Strang (2008, 169–184) have divided integration into four different domains: markers and means, social connection, facilitators, and foundation (see Figure 1). They have included employment and education along with housing and health into markers and means of integration that are indicative of successful integration. Language knowledge, on the other hand, is a facilitator of integration together with cultural knowledge and safety and stability. In addition to facilitators, social connection can be considered as “connective tissue” between foundational domain of rights and citizenship and domain of markers and means. Social connection can be further divided into social bridges, social bonds and social links. Social bridges are formed to host communities, social bonds to “like-ethnic groups” and social links to structures of the state.



Figure 1. A Conceptual Framework Defining Core Domains of Integration (Ager and Strang 2008, 170)

3.1 Immigrants' educational possibilities

Finland's educational policy designed for immigrants follows the general principles of Finnish immigration policy: immigrants are entitled to the same rights as the rest of the population albeit they are expected to contribute to their integration (Latomaa and Nuolijärvi 2005, 162). In the following adult immigrants' possibilities for education are examined, as adult immigrants are the subjects of the current study.

In comparison to the whole population, immigrants are over-represented in the groups of both the poorly and the well-educated (Forsander 2002, 229). As Forsander (2002, 229) continues, the educational level of immigrants differs greatly according to the immigrant group in question. Most poorly educated immigrants come from developing countries (Forsander 2002, 230). Thus, it is no surprise that a great proportion of refugees are unschooled (Forsander 2002, 148). In their study Pohjanpää et al. (2003, 146) concluded that approximately every fourth or fifth refugee does not have a certificate from primary school. In addition, immigrants' chances of being admitted to institutions of higher education are considerably lower compared to the rest of the population (National Board

of Education 2009). In contrast, immigrant pupils are as represented as the rest of the population in vocational schooling (National Board of Education 2009). Moreover, immigrants, especially young immigrants and refugees, have a strong educational orientation (Forsander 2002, 230).

Immigrants within the age limits of compulsory education have the right to the same basic education as do the rest of the population (Ministry of Education and Culture 2010). In contrast, there is merely an aspiration to secure adult immigrants' education needed for the labour market, further training and maintenance of professional skills (Ministry of Education and Culture 2010). Further, the aim is to take foreign qualifications and studies, as well as work experience into consideration in designing adult education. There is also an attempt to increase the number of immigrant students in higher education institutions by developing student admission, language studies and public relations (Ministry of Education and Culture 2010). Tuition is also available in English (Ministry of Education and Culture 2010).

3.1.1 Integration training for adult immigrants

The first curricula for adult immigrant education were drawn up at the beginning of the 1990s (Latomaa and Nuolijärvi 2005, 165). The objectives have been redefined in recommendations given in 1997, 2001 (Latomaa and Nuolijärvi 2005, 165) and the latest in 2007 (National Board of Education 2007). The purpose of the recommendations has been to provide nation-wide objectives for the integration training of immigrants and to unify the structure of education in various parts of Finland (Latomaa and Nuolijärvi 2005, 165). The emphasis in the latest recommendation is on acquiring Finnish language skills, and integrating skills needed in everyday life as well as societal, cultural and work-related skills into the language teaching (National Board of Education 2007, 5). The aim is to provide adult immigrants with skills to help them to survive in the everyday life in the new surroundings, to cope in the working life and to apply for further education (National Board of Education 2007, 10). The central objective is for the immigrants to acquire sufficient language skills during the integration period, as well

as to guide the immigrants in getting overseas qualifications recognized and applying for possible further education (National Board of Education 2007, 10). Latomaa and Nuolijärvi (2005, 165) note that according to the 2001 recommendation for adult immigrant education, the objectives should be achieved in approximately one year time. The current recommendation of 2007 states that the studies can be situated over a longer period of time, although the maximum of study credits has only risen by 5 credits, from 40 to 45 (National Board of Education 2007, 5, 14).

The integration training for adult immigrants has been subjected to criticism. Latomaa (2002, 68) argues that there are not enough language courses and queues for the courses are very long. In addition, Pälli and Latomaa (1997, 11) have investigated how proficient immigrants actually are in the Finnish language after one year of language training. Pälli and Latomaa (1997, 11) argue that less than a half of the immigrants attained the general level in Finnish that has been deemed sufficient by the National Board of Education for study and work in Finland in Finnish. In other words, alarmingly, for more than a half of immigrants the readiness for work and study is insufficient after the integration training.

In addition to integration training, preparatory classes aim to integrate immigrants into mainstream education at different educational levels. The aim is to provide students with language skills and other skills needed in forthcoming studies (Kapanen and Kantosalu 2009, 5). Preparatory classes are a common practice in basic education and in vocational training, and their use has been discussed in connection to the upper secondary school and universities of applied sciences (Keskisuomalainen 2010).

In conclusion, immigrants, and especially refugees, are over-represented in the group of the poorly educated (Forsander 2002, 148, 229). The integration training for adult immigrants does not provide adequate readiness for studies nor employment in the Finnish language (Pälli and Latomaa 1997, 11). Moreover, immigrants' educational opportunities are being restricted since integration assistance is not available for those immigrants who start studying towards a degree in Finland (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2005,

40–41). In contrast, refugees continuing studies that they have started before arriving to Finland are granted integration assistance (Act on the Integration of Immigrants and Reception of Asylum Seekers 493/1999, § 12, § 11b). Thus, those lucky enough to have started studies in their home countries are better off also in Finland. As Alitolppa-Niitamo (2005, 41) points out, many immigrants are hesitant to take student loans as there are no guarantees for employment after education. Nevertheless, especially young immigrants and refugees have a strong educational orientation (Forsander 2002, 230). Education can be considered as a pathway to integration into the labour market, and it assist in the acquisition of language skills and occupational skills (Spencer and Cooper 2006, 30). The relationship between education and work opportunities is discussed more closely in the following section.

3.2 Immigrants in the labour market

In Finland work is a strong indicator of integration. It is not only an indicator of financial independence but also indication of social acceptance (Forsander 2001, 42). As Forsander (2002, 9) notes elsewhere, in Finnish society an individual's status is defined through his or her labour market status, especially in the case of immigrants' status in society. As a consequence, the employment of immigrants is a significant factor in integration into the society (Forsander and Ekholm 2001a, 59). In Finland, and other industrialised societies, employment of immigrants is considerably more difficult compared to that of majority population (Forsander and Ekholm 2001a, 59) and immigrants' jobs correspond to their education less often than Finnish persons' (Vartia et al. 2007, 85).

The retirement of Finnish post-war baby boom generation is anticipated to create a labour market shortage in the near future and immigrant labour force can be seen as one possible solution for the labour shortage (Vartia et al. 2007, 17). In fact, the aim of the Government Policy Programme for Employment is to increase work-based immigration as it currently comprises only 10 per cent of all immigration (Vartia et al. 2007, 17).

However, as Vartia et al. (2007, 17) remind, labour force can also be increased by improving the employment of those approximately 100 000 immigrants already residing in Finland. The employment of immigrants residing in Finland is important also because especially highly educated immigrants might have a low threshold to move out of Finland (Jaakkola 2000, 126–127). To continue, 87 per cent of the immigrants residing in Finland have an excellent or good working capacity and the working capacity of unemployed immigrants is even higher than that of unemployed Finnish persons (Holm et al. 2008, 4). How can the 20 per cent unemployment rate of immigrants (Holm et al. 2008, 5) and over 50 per cent unemployment rate of refugees (Pohjanpää et al. (2003, 19) be explained?

In terms of labour market, immigrants can be divided into two groups: (1) labour-force immigrants, who immigrate because of work, and (2) non-labour force immigrants, for example refugees, who immigrate to Finland for reasons other than employment (Forsander and Ekholm 2001a, 60). Unlike in other industrial countries, in Finland the latter group makes up a significantly larger group than the labour-force immigrants (Forsander 2003, 56) and the problems of employment also concentrate to this group (Forsander and Ekholm 2001a, 60). To explain immigrants' and refugees' labour market status, research concentrates mainly on their resources, although structural issues are also discussed.

3.2.1 Explaining the labour market status

Immigrants' and refugees' labour market status cannot be explained with one single factor, instead, there are many factors in operation (Forsander 2002, 281). Here I will discuss the benefits and drawbacks of immigrant background in recruitment, segmentation on the basis of work contract, age, immigration age and reason for migration.

Immigrants themselves see the Finnish language demands, the negative attitudes of employers, and their difference (culture, accent, foreign name, complexion etc.) and lack

of appreciation of foreign degree or work experience as the greatest challenges in recruitment (Vartia et al. 2007, 46). However, they also see benefits, which include language skills and cultural knowledge, positive attitude to work and to customers, difference as a benefit (positive influence to work atmosphere, internationality etc.), as well as education and work experience from their home country (Vartia et al. 2007, 46). Employers, on the other hand, acknowledge the Finnish language demands and attitudes of employers and work communities as challenges in the recruitment of immigrants (Vartia et al. 2007, 62). In a study by Söderqvist (2006, 285) over a half of employers reported no obstacles in recruitment, as they do not see a need for immigrant workers. In line with this, Jaakkola (2000, 122) notes that it seems that immigrant background itself brings nothing new or worthwhile to the company, unless the company operates directly with immigrants. To sum up, immigrants are recruited despite their immigrant background not because of it (Forsander and Ekholm 2001a, 65).

Forsander (2002, 2003) examines immigrants' segmentation into different groups on the basis of their labour market career during their resettlement in Finland. The factors that best explain the labour market career are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Background factors of the labor market career types (Forsander 2003, 64).

Labor market career	Background factors of the labor market career
Stable labor market career	Certificate from Finland Age under 38 years Origin Asian or Western
Unstable labor market career	Certificate from Finland Origin Asian or Western Immigrated 1989 or 1990 University- or primary-level education
Marginal position in labor market	Origin in refugee-sending or African country Age over 49 years Male Immigration year 1993
Outside the labor market	Vocational education Age under 38 years Origin in refugee-sending country

Only five percent of working-age immigrants are in the stable labour market career (Forsander 2003, 62). Interestingly, those with a better labour market career (stable or unstable) have a certificate from Finland. As Forsander (2003, 66) argues, education from Finland is significant for the immigrants' working career as it helps immigrants in the Finnish labour market. A possible explanation could be the human capital mismatch, which Forsander (2002, 54) presents: human capital, including education, can be considered to be somewhat local as it produces the best capital in the country where it is acquired. In contrast, Joronen (2005, 77) does not find as strong a connection between labour market status and education acquired in Finland as does Forsander (2002, 2003). However, Joronen (2005, 69) also acknowledges that a Finnish degree guarantees the most stable position in the labour market, although foreign education is more valuable than mere general education. To sum up, education seems to have a quite direct impact on the labour market status of immigrants in Finland.

Forsander (2003, 66) argues that younger immigrants are in a better position in the labour market compared to members of older generations. Joronen (2005, 65), on the other hand, argues that young immigrants at the beginning of their working careers are usually in a more unstable labour market status than older immigrants. In addition to age, immigration age is also an important factor for immigrants labour market career (Haapakorpi 2004, 76). Immigrants who have moved to Finland as children or youngsters and have completed the Finnish school system are in a better position than immigrants that immigrated in their adult years (Haapakorpi 2004, 76–77).

Another strong variable in Forsander's (2003, 66) study is the immigration year. In addition to positive effects of longer time spend in Finland, differences between immigration vintages can also explain the difference (Forsander 2003, 66). The economic situation in time of resettlement is a decisive factor. In fact, Knocke (2000, 362) argues that labour market conditions are more decisive than immigrants' background factors in explaining whether immigrants are integrated, segregated or discriminated against in the labour market. As Knocke (2000, 374) continues, only in economic boom has immigrants' integration into the labour market been successful.

In Forsander's (2003, 65) study, the labour market status was also strongly explained by the origin-variable. As Forsander (2003, 65–66) argues, immigrants from Western countries have the strongest position in the labour market and refugees the weakest. The poor labour market status of refugees can be explained by refugees' poor educational level, and the large number of children as well as students among refugees (Forsander 2002, 177, 179). Alitolppa-Niitamo et al. (2005, 58) remind that many years after arriving to Finland some refugees dream of going back to their country of origin, which might affect their motivation to integrate into the resettlement country. Forsander (2002, 179) also argues that the refugee background is an explaining factor in refugees' poor labour market status. Refugees usually come from developing countries, poor regions of slightly more developed countries, war zones or politically unstable areas. In consequence, due to lack of social structure, refugees' chances for education and work might have been threatened. The unstable conditions of refugees' country of origin also travel with them to resettlement countries. Quite often a refugee community cannot operate as an integrated community because of social, economical and ethnical conflicts of the country of origin. Therefore, refugees cannot take an advantage of community networks to improve their socio-economic status. The distance between cultures of country of origin and resettlement country also has an impact on immigrants' employment; refugees' culture is usually quite distant from that of the resettlement country.

In conclusion, the issue is whether immigrants ever attain equal incomes with the rest of the population (Friedberg 2000, 222). As Forsander (2003, 69) explains:

The unstable labour market status of the majority of immigrants means that they are extremely vulnerable to the labour market effects of economic trends and to structural changes in production. ---. Immigrants are over represented among the segment of people who are the last to be hired and the first to be let go, at the mercy of economic highs and lows. The immigrants' labour market position reveals to us that they are trapped in the margins of Finnish society: they are not fully included but not completely excluded either.

One important factor explaining the poor labour market status of immigrants is their poor language skills. However, as will be shown in the following section, in addition to the Finnish language, the English language also has a role to play in education and work opportunities.

3.3 Language skills as a prerequisite for education and work

A degree of shared language with the majority population is one of the most important factors in the integration of immigrants (Bergbom and Giorgiani 2007, 66). Language proficiency is also a prerequisite for achieving other resources and capital needed in integration (Valtonen 1999, 32). In fact, professional skills and education are valuable only after language skills enable their use (Forsander 2002, 186).

Joronen (2005, 75) emphasizes that insufficient Finnish language skills could be one factor that delay applying for education. For example, in vocational studies language proficiency is expected from the beginning of the studies (Joronen 2005, 18). Valtonen (1999, 31) also points out that refugees are often denied access to higher education, because the entrance exams emphasize fluency in the written Finnish language. In addition, insufficient language skills are the most common reason behind the interruption of studies (Manninen 2001, 19).

Language proficiency is especially important and essential in the working life (Forsander 2002, 185). It appears to have quite a direct influence on survival in the labour market as well as on immigrants' socio-economic status (Forsander 2002, 185–186). The position of the Finnish language as a language of work for immigrants is overwhelming, even though versatile language skills are also appreciated (Tarnanen and Suni 2005, 14). The proficiency in the English language can be considered self-evident cultural, social and at times even economic capital (Leppänen and Nikula 2008b, 424). Therefore, lack of the English proficiency can affect negatively educational and work opportunities (Leppänen and Nikula 2008b, 424). In addition, a national survey revealed that 78.5 per cent of Finns believe that in 20 years time English language proficiency is essential for immigrants (Leppänen et al. 2009, 138).

For most immigrants Finnish is a second language after their mother tongue (Tarnanen and Suni 2005, 12). Learning a new language is affected by, for example, the immigrants' educational background, previous studies in foreign languages,

appreciations and motivation (Vartia et al. 2007, 67). In addition, learning a new language can be affected by the cultural distance of one's mother tongue (Vartia et al. 2007, 67). As a consequence, the refugees' situation can be seen as disadvantageous: a great proportion of refugees are unschooled (Forsander 2002, 148), their culture is usually quite distant from that of the resettlement country (Forsander 2002, 179), and they might also lack motivation to learn a new language, since Alitolppa-Niitamo (2005, 58) argues that refugees typically dream of going back to their home countries many years after resettlement. Language skills are a part of immigrants and refugees well-being, even a prerequisite for it (Tarnanen and Suni 2005, 9). During the past few years, there has been an ongoing discussion in Finland about how to better support the learning of Finnish as a second language and how to better utilize immigrants' prior language skills as part of their professional skills in the labour market (Tarnanen and Suni 2005, 13).

In conclusion, immigrant students are poorly represented in Finland's educational system after the primary school-level (Latomaa and Nuolijärvi 2005, 165) and they are over-represented in the margins of the labour market and also outside the labour force (Forsander 2003, 65–66). Language proficiency, especially in the Finnish language, can be seen as a prerequisite for employment and education (Forsander 2002, 186). However, the command of the official language of the country is not always a prerequisite or requirement for employment (Forsander 2002, 189–190) or for education. Especially for refugees who are in a disadvantageous starting point in learning a new language, prior proficiency in the English language could be a considerable asset in education and working life.

4. THE STATUS OF ENGLISH IN FINLAND

Finland is a country where English is viewed as the most important foreign language, and as such, it has been gaining ground and visibility for the past forty years in Finland (Leppänen and Nikula 2007, 334). The spread of English in Finland is a part of global increase in the use of English (Leppänen and Nikula 2008a, 12). The importance of English has been growing worldwide, as a first, second and foreign language (Leppänen and Nikula 2007, 333).

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an understanding of the status that English has worldwide and in Finland. Moreover, the chapter will provide a closer examination of the possibilities that there are for immigrants to study and work in the English language. Unfortunately, teaching in a foreign language in Finland is an area with little research (Takala et al. 1998, 169) and foreign language use in the Finnish professional life also requires more research (Virkkula 2008, 417).

4.1 English as a global language

In order for a language to achieve a global status it has to develop a special role that is recognized in every country, also in countries where the language does not have a native language status (Crystal 1997, 3–4). In these countries the special status can be achieved either through the status of an official language of the country that is used, for example, in government or the education system, or through the status of a priority language in country's foreign language teaching (Crystal 1997, 4). Graddol (2006, 64) notes that the number of second language users of a language has become a more significant indicator of global importance than the number and wealth of its native speakers. According to the criteria, English is a global language that is most widely taught as a foreign language in over a hundred countries, and it is a language used by more people than any other language (Crystal 1997, 5–6). The need for a single lingua franca, a global language, has

also been attested in the contexts of international bodies, such as the United Nations and the EU, and especially in academic and business communities (Crystal 1997, 12–13).

Although Graddol (2006, 3) recognizes the several decades increase in the use of English, he predicts that the global dominance of the English language may fade in the foreseeable future due to complex international, economic, technological and cultural changes. However, at present, extensive curriculum reforms are taking place in many countries as improving national proficiency in English now forms a key part of educational strategies (Graddol 2006, 70). In addition, global higher education institutions in non-English speaking countries are trying to attract international students and teachers by offering courses in English (Graddol 2006, 80). The traditional English as a foreign language teaching is declining as many countries regard English as a component of basic education in their aspirations to bilingualism (Graddol 2006, 102). However, according to Graddol (2006, 118), this generates an even greater need for other languages.

Regardless or because of the global status of English, the personal, organisational and national advantage that English has offered will start to diminish as English becomes a near-universal basic skill (Graddol 2006, 15). The competitive advantage is only held where English is in short supply. Graddol (2006, 122) sums up the new baseline: “without English you are not even in the race”. English will no longer be enough, not to the native speakers and not to the second language speakers of English (Graddol 2006, 118). As Graddol (2006, 118) notes, even immigrants to English-speaking countries may have to learn another language in addition to English to be able to live and work alongside other ethnic minorities. Nevertheless, at present, learning English brings benefits that rise as more of the world speaks English (Graddol 2006, 122).

4.2 English in Finland

From a linguistic point of view, Finland differs in a number of perspectives from the other Nordic countries (Taavitsainen and Pahta 2003, 4). As Taavitsainen and Pahta point out, in contrast to its Nordic neighbours, Finland is a bilingual country with Finnish and Swedish as domestic languages (and Sámi and Romany as minority languages). As an agglutinative Finno-Ugric language Finnish also differs considerably from the Indo-European languages of the other Nordic countries (Taavitsainen and Pahta 2003, 4). Because of these issues and the growing internationalisation, Finland has paid extra attention to its language education policy (Numminen and Piri 1998, 7), including foreign language teaching.

Today the English language can be considered the most important foreign language in Finland (Leppänen and Nikula 2007, 333, 339). However, from the 1960s to 1980s English was a foreign language that was studied and used solely to enable contact with foreigners (Leppänen and Nikula 2008a, 16). In the 1990s English gained importance as a language of international communication (Leppänen and Nikula 2008a, 19). The importance of language proficiency was marked with Finland joining the EU in 1995 (Sinkkonen 1998, 50). As Leppänen and Nikula (2008a, 19) suggest, the English language education gained more ground in the 1990s with the establishment of 10 International Baccalaureate (IB)-schools and the possibility to study in English at the primary and secondary levels. The amount of university level teaching in English has also increased (Taavitsainen and Pahta 2003, 8). In addition, the role of English has increased in the working life, media and science (Latomaa and Nuolijärvi 2005, 125)

In the 2000s the status of English has been further strengthened by economic and cultural globalization and the development of communications industry and information technology industry (Leppänen and Nikula 2008a, 19). As Alatalo (2006, 35) notes, in the era of interculturalisation as a norm in communication, English is a globally shared language and used as a lingua franca, especially in professional communication. However, a large-scale national survey on Finns' uses of, attitudes to and perceptions of English conducted in 2007 revealed that English is also present in the everyday lives of

almost every Finn in some form as, for example, 85 per cent of Finns have studied at least some English, 90 per cent speak it to some degree and 80 per cent report countering English in their surroundings (Leppänen et al. 2009, 148). English is used the most in the contexts of free time, work and education (Leppänen et al. 2009, 93). English is found most important in higher education and similarly in professional fields that require high levels of education (Leppänen et al. 2009, 50). Interestingly, at least in some contexts, English is gaining the status of a second language rather than a foreign language (Leppänen and Nikula 2008b, 426). Moreover, 90 per cent of the participants in the study by Leppänen et al. (2009, 131) believe that the influence of English in Finland will further grow in the next twenty years.

4.3 English as a language of education in Finland

As foreign language proficiency is regarded important in Finland, it is also emphasized in all the fields of education (Leppänen et al. 2009, 47). The reasons for the introduction of bilingual education in Finland are, to mention a few, the promising work of immersion teaching and IB system, as well as several large-scale surveys emphasising the need to improve the quality of language skills throughout the population (Marsh et al. 1996, 10). The aim of this section is to present the possibilities that there are to study in the English language in the Finnish educational system. However, Forsander (2002, 185) reminds that although it is possible to study by using only the English language, it can be assumed that some of the human and social capital that is valuable in the labour market is not attained and thus employment is more difficult.

Teaching non-language subjects through the foreign language, that is, content and language integrated learning (CLIL), has gained popularity in Finland (Lehti et al., 293). Especially year 1996 was a time of growing popularity for CLIL teaching as the Basic Education Act had allowed teaching also in other languages than the domestic and minority languages (Lehti et al. 2006, 294). In 1996 four to eight per cent of primary schools, more than 14 per cent of secondary schools, and almost 24 per cent of upper

secondary schools offered teaching in a foreign language (Nikula and Marsh 1996, 25, 27, 32). The English language was by far the most popular foreign language in teaching (Nikula and Marsh 1996, 35). Nevertheless, as Nikula and Marsh (1996, 71) point out, foreign language teaching in Finland is on a relatively small scale as it most often concerns only some of the pupils in the schools and a small proportion of their tuition. By the year 2005 the amount of CLIL teaching had dropped considerably on all school levels as compared to the 1996 study (Lehti et al. 2006, 299). Nevertheless, the schools that do offer CLIL teaching have expanded the teaching to cover more subjects (Lehti et al. 2006, 311). In line with the 1996 study, also in the year 2005, the English language is the most popular foreign language in teaching. In fact, in the schools that offer CLIL teaching there are students who cannot study in the Finnish language (Opetushallitus 2001, 109). Unfortunately, both of the studies concluded that the CLIL teaching is concentrated to the major cities with best the resources. (Nikula and Marsh 1996, 35, 71; Lehti et al. 2006, 311.) Thus, it is questionable how accessible the schools that offer teaching in the English language are to immigrants and refugees.

Foreign language teaching and learning have solidified their position in vocational education in the 1990s (Kantelinen 1998, 103). All vocational degrees include studies in the second domestic language and one foreign language (Väyrynen et al. 1998, 19). English as a foreign language can be included in nearly all vocational qualifications (Väyrynen et al. 1998, 48). To continue, there are 139 institutions in Finland that offer some form of bilingual education with the English language as the most common language choice (Marsh et al. 1996, 23, 127). However, the scope of bilingual education varies from broad institutional applications to more specific interests (Marsh et al. 1996, 131). All in all, teaching study modules in a foreign language in vocational education is quite uncommon (Väyrynen et al. 1998, 191). Nevertheless, the importance of language proficiency in professional life will continue to grow in the future (Väyrynen et al. 1998, 200).

Finnish higher education differs considerably from general education and vocational education in the amount of teaching offered in English. In the 21st century, the Finnish

institutions of higher education have begun to stress in their internationalization the recruitment of foreign degree students (Garam 2009, 4). In fact, there are 275 qualifications offered in the English language in the Finnish higher education institutions, most centred in the Southern Finland (Garam 2009, 17, 19). From these qualifications 181 are offered in universities and 94 in universities of applied sciences. Universities of applied sciences offer mainly Bachelor's degree programmes, whereas, universities centre on Master's degree programmes (Garam 2009, 17). Most of the qualifications are offered in the fields of Economics, Business and Administration, and Engineering and Technology (Garam 2009, 18). The objective of the English language programmes is not, however, to recruit students into the Finnish labour market (Garam 2009, 81). As Garam (2009, 81) continues, only one fifth of the study programmes aim to integrate students primarily into the Finnish labour market. Only less than a half of the programmes aim to integrate students either to the Finnish labour market or also to the international labour market. Thus, the motive for establishing the programmes is to provide the (general) labour market with skilful labour (Garam 2009, 81).

4.4 English as the most important foreign language in the working life

Due to globalisation and internationalisation, the English language has become a visible part of business life in Finland (Virkkula 2008, 382). In fact, approximately 78 per cent of Finns in working life report countering English in their work place (Leppänen et al. 2009, 52). In line with this, 80 per cent of Finns think that the working population has to be proficient in the English language (Leppänen et al. 2009, 65).

English is by far the most important foreign language in business context: a study by Airola (2004, 61), for example, found that 96.7 per cent of corporations in her study need English. English can be used in business life as a lingua franca or an intracultural means of communication (internal company language) (Leppänen and Nikula 2007, 339). In fact, there are contexts in Finnish business communication where there has been a shift towards using English either as a result of conscious company policy or a

practical grassroots level decision to find an effective way to communicate (Leppänen and Nikula 2007, 348). The use of English in interactions with non-Finnish speaking colleagues and customers is simply a fact of life (Leppänen and Nikula 2007, 350). In Finland, there are also English enclaves that enable work in the English language without any knowledge of the Finnish language. Examples of this are universities and corporations that have adopted English as the working language. However, without any command of Finnish, professional mobility is limited to the English enclaves. On the other hand, English enclaves usually have a global market. (Forsander 2002, 189–190.)

English is also needed in the smallest enterprises without any international operations (Huhta 1999, 62; Airola 2004, 61). The need for foreign language skills depends on employees' educational background (Huhta 1999, 104–105). Employees with university background need more foreign language skills in higher variety of situations than employees with university of applied sciences and vocational background (Huhta 1999, 104–105). As Huhta (1999, 97) continues, regardless of the educational background, employees need mostly oral skills, then reading, while writing is needed least often. However, the need for writing is highest for employees with university background (Huhta 1999, 97). In contrast, in a study by Airola (2004, 62) reading skills were needed more than oral skills. Airola (2004, 62) explains that the difference between her study and the study by Huhta (1999) is caused by the different sample of enterprises: most enterprises in Huhta's study practised foreign trade, whereas enterprises in Airola's study were of varying backgrounds.

The need for English language skills will increase in the future in all fields (Airola 2004, 61). In fact, in many fields English proficiency is a necessity for obtaining work (Virkkula 2008, 383) and thus a valued professional asset and in some situations a source of power (Leppänen and Nikula 2007, 350). Language skills are an essential part of professional competence (Virkkula 2008, 414). Even though the English language is an essential part of international communication, Finnish will also maintain its importance in international enterprises and the significance of other languages should

not be underestimated (Virkkula 2008, 416). In fact, the importance of other foreign languages is estimated to increase in the future (Huhta 1999, 154).

Regardless of the importance of English in the working life, it seems that in the case of immigrants the command of languages other than Finnish do not have much significance for the employers (Jaakkola 2000, 124). Similarly Holm et al. (2008, 33) revealed that 71 per cent of immigrants with good command and 65 per cent with adequate command of English were employed, but less than 50 per cent of immigrants with poor Finnish skills were employed. On the other hand, over 78 per cent of respondents in Leppänen et al. (2009, 138) study predicted that English language proficiency is a necessity for immigrants in twenty years.

To conclude, the importance of the English language in education and working life cannot be disputed. However, the need for the English language depends largely on the level of education and similarly of the required educational background of a profession (Leppänen et al. 2009, 50). In short, the higher the school level, the greater are the opportunities to study in the English language (see Nikula and Marsh 1996; Opetushallitus 2001; Väyrynen et al. 1998; Garam 2009). To continue, the Finnish labour market requires English proficiency (see Virkkula 2008), but in the case of immigrants only takes into consideration the Finnish proficiency (Jaakkola 2000, 124). It seems that English proficiency is an asset for those immigrants and refugees who are also proficient in the Finnish language. However, in some cases, English proficiency alone can enable study and work opportunities.

5. RESEARCH DESIGN

5.1 Focus of the study and the research question

The purpose of this study is to examine *the role that the command of English has in the integration of refugees into Finnish society*. More specifically, I examine the significance of the English language in two areas of integration: work and education. The chosen areas derive from the official goals for integration. I am also interested in the refugees' own goals and expectations for their integration. I do not claim that the chosen aspects of integration represent the concept of integration as a whole. I merely aim to examine the role that English has in these areas of integration during the first three years after the refugees' arrival to Finland, since during this time the refugees are clients of the immigrant services.

5.2 Data collection and the participants of the study

The data consists of ten interviews conducted with refugees who speak English. I wanted to interview clients of immigrant services, because the task of immigrant services is to aid the integration of refugees in the three years that they are clients of the immigrant services (Immigrant services, 2009). Thus, it seems that the state expects immigrants to integrate during those three years. In other words, I wanted to interview refugees who are supposedly in the middle of the integration process. In addition, another criterion for the selection of participants was that they speak English well enough to take part in an interview conducted in English. The data collection was done in two stages: four interviews were conducted originally for my Bachelor's thesis in the winter of 2009 and the last six interviews specifically for this Master's thesis in the spring of 2010.

I began the first phase of the data collection in winter 2009 by asking the immigrant services whether they could help me to find participants for the Bachelor's thesis. My original plan was that the social worker of each refugee would ask for preliminary

consent for the interview. However, due to time limitations this was possible with only two participants. After I had been granted the research permit, I was given the contact information for the other two participants.

My original idea was that the interviews would take place in the premises of the immigrant services, although Eskola and Vastamäki (2001, 27–28) suggest that interviews should not be conducted in places that might feel too official. However, I believe that the premises of the immigrant services do not feel too official for the refugees, since my experience as a social worker is that the refugees do not consider the workers of the immigrant services merely as state official. The relationship has warmth to it. In the end, only two of the interviews took place in the immigrant services. Two of the interviews took place in the homes of the participants, because either it was not possible to conduct the interview during office hours, or coming to immigrant services would have been too much trouble for the participant.

The second phase of the data collection in the spring of 2010 was a challenge evidently because I did not have any relationship with the officials who I asked to help me in finding participants. I contacted immigrant services from three different cities, in addition to the city contacted in the first phase, because I wanted to guarantee confidentiality for the participants. Two of the immigrant services sent my contact letter (see Appendix 1) to potential participants, who could choose whether or not to contact me. As I did not get many contacts, and immigrant services in the third city could not help me, I also contacted an adult education service and an immigrant advice centre, one employment office and two multicultural centres. However, in the end, I reached all of the six additional participants with the help of the two immigrant services. I believe that the response rate was modest because the participants were contacted via mail, without personal contact. In addition, some refugees might be proficient in spoken English but have more modest talents in written language. In addition, some officials were reluctant to help to find the participants. Five of the last six participants were interviewed in the premises of immigrants services, one, however, preferred to be interviewed in a multicultural centre.

All in all, the ten interviews were conducted in three different medium size cities. The participants are quota refugees that have been in Finland for up to three years. Most of them have been in Finland for approximately two years, three of them less than a year and one for three years. The countries of origin of the participants are Burma or Myanmar, Iraq, Cuba, Liberia and Democratic Republic of Congo. With one exception the participants are all male. I doubt that a significantly greater proportion of refugees are male, since, for example, UNHCR has a special category for women at risk – cases that also Finland takes into consideration. However, it is possible that a greater proportion of male refugees is proficient in the English language. Nevertheless, I will not differentiate the participants according to gender in the analysis. The participants are in their twenties, thirties and forties with the average age of 33.4. For most of the participants, English is the language spoken second best after their mother tongue. To protect confidentiality, I will not disclose the mother tongues of the participants, since I am not aware how well some of them are presented in Finland. The languages spoken by each individual participant range from 3 to 7 with the average of 4.9 languages. The participants have mainly acquired their extensive language proficiency after leaving their countries of origin, and before arriving to Finland; that is in the second countries (see Turtiainen 2009, 329).

The subjects in the study can be considered a special group of refugees, because of their good command of English. However, one can hardly identify a normal or conventional group of refugees as they are a heterogeneous group of people. Nevertheless, I believe that refugees with a command of the English language do not represent the majority as the officials that I contacted informed me that they do not have many refugee clients that are proficient in the English language. Of course, this can also be due to lack of knowledge of the language skills of the refugees. In any case, the results represent only refugees with a command of English during their first three years in Finland.

5.3 The interview guide as the method for data collection

The idea of an interview is simple: when we want to know what another person is thinking and what are his/her motives for action, we can ask him/her (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2002, 74). In my study I was interested in hearing the voices of the refugees, and I believe that an interview is better suited for the purpose than, for example, a questionnaire. This is because, as Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2002, 75) note, the interview allows follow-up and clarification. In addition, I was not sure of the participants' level of understanding in written English. I interviewed refugees in English, because I was interested in their use of English. However, conducting interviews in a foreign language of both the interviewee and the interpreter can cause problems. In particular, the interviewee might not be able to express himself fully in a foreign language. Nevertheless, in all probability English is the only shared language, since the refugees have been in Finland the maximum of three years. Using interpreters would have been another option. However, I ruled it out because, as Patton (2002, 392) points out, when interpreters are used, the interviewer cannot be sure whose perceptions are presented: the interviewees' or the interpreters'. The interpreter might offer summaries and explanations of the perceptions of the interviewee (Patton 2002, 392). In addition, using interpreters would have been rather costly.

I chose to use the quite popular data collection method in qualitative research in Finland: "teemahaastattelu", that is, a "theme interview". A theme interview is a semi-structured interview (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2002, 77), which Patton (2002, 343–344) terms "the interview guide". I will use the term interview guide as a synonym for theme interview. An interview guide provides a list of questions or subject areas that are to be explored with each person interviewed (Patton 2002, 343). In other words, the interviewer can ask questions spontaneously within the context of particular subject area (Patton 2002, 343).

I used the interview guide as the method of data collection, because I did not want to limit the answers of the participants too much. Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2000, 48) and Eskola and Suoranta (1998, 87) argue that the interview guide does not have

prefabricated questions and only the themes or subject areas are decided in advance. In contrast, Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2002, 77) and Patton (2002, 344) argue that it is a matter of taste whether all participants should be asked the same questions, in the same form and in a same order. Depending on the openness of the interview guide, the questions can be quite intuitive or quite strictly decided beforehand (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2002, 78). In fact, the interview guide can take any shape and form between nearly unstructured interviews and structured interviews (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2002, 77). In addition, the extent of the themes varies from one interview to another (Eskola and Suoranta 1998, 87). Patton (2002, 344) also argues that the interviewer is not expected to deviate from the chosen subject areas into totally new subjects. However, new topics, which are important for the respondent, might still emerge during the interview (Patton 2002, 344).

In the ten conducted interviews, I had four different themes or subject areas: the use of English, the use of Finnish, the relationship between the English and the Finnish language and the refugees' own goals and expectations for their integration. I did not form themes of education and work that would have perhaps more directly corresponded to my research question, since my previous work experience in immigrant services and the research in the area did not lead me to expect that most of the participants would have had experiences of working or studying toward a degree in Finland. However, these areas were covered in the interview questions. Based on the experiences of the first four interviews conducted originally for the Bachelor's thesis in winter 2009, I decided to clarify the structure of the interviews, and in the last six interviews, I presented the four themes under three time periods: before arrival to Finland, during the first year in Finland and at the present time.

In addition to themes, I had also formed specific questions to help me carry out the interview (see Appendix 2). They were asked in a random order and form. It is possible that I did not ask all the questions from each participant, since the questions were only suggestive, and the aim was to cover all the themes. The themes were explored with each participant although the extent to which each theme was discussed varied from one

interview to the other. This can also be seen from the duration of the interviews: the longest interview lasted an hour and 25 minutes and the shortest 27 minutes. In addition, I could not cover all the timelines with the last six interviewees since three of the participants had been in Finland for less than a year. Altogether I have approximately seven hours and twenty minutes of recorded interviews. In discussing the results, in order to protect the confidentiality of the participants, they are referred to with the following fictitious English male names: Adam, Benjamin, Charles, Christian, Christopher, Daniel, Ewan, Michael, Oliver and Sebastian. In addition, if the citations threaten the confidentiality, the participants are referred to as John Doe. The citations themselves have been revised by dividing the spoken text into logical sentences in order to enhance readability.

Before presenting the method of analysis, ethical issues dealing mainly with informed consent, the choice of research topic and confidentiality are discussed in the following section.

5.4 Ethical considerations

Traditionally ethical considerations in interviewing have dealt with informed consent, protection from harm and confidentiality (Fontana and Frey 1994, 372). Informed consent means obtaining the voluntary participation of the subject after s/he has been carefully and truthfully informed about the research (Kvale 1996, 112). In addition, as Kvale suggests, the subject can at any point of the study withdraw from the study. Protection of harm indicates to physical, emotional and any other kind of harm to the subjects (Fontana and Frey 1994, 372). Confidentiality, on the other hand, means protecting the privacy of the subject by changing their identifying features in reporting of interviews (Kvale 1996, 114).

In my study, before each interview, I explained the purpose of the study and asked for the participants' consent in writing (see Appendix 1). I stressed that they could choose

not to answer questions and they could withdraw their consent altogether at any point of the interview. This was important for the participants, as one of them commented: “It depends to me”. Nevertheless, I cannot be completely sure of whether the consents of the participants were fully voluntary. I got in touch with the participants through officials working with refugees. One of them told me afterwards that she had encouraged one participant to take part in the study. In addition, another official had to send out my contact letter more than once, and I got most contacts after she had included her name in the contact letter. Thus, the authority of the official might have been a reason behind giving consent to the study. To continue, one official from a multi-cultural centre had stressed to possible participants that they do not need to take part for his sake. I did not get any contacts from there. In addition, when conducting the first four interviews, I had previously worked at the immigrant services as a social worker. I did not, however, interview any of my own clients. Miles and Huberman (1994, 291) point out that weak consent usually leads to poor data. In this respect it seems that I did get “a strong consent” from most of the participants. However, one participant answered several questions with “I don’t know”, which could be interpreted as “I don’t want to answer” or “I don’t understand the question”. We did have some language barriers in the interview.

Clarkeburn and Mustajoki (2007, 53) point out that the choice of research topic in itself includes ethical decisions. I was most concerned of the possibility of the study doing harm to the participants. As Patton (2002, 405) points out, interviews are interventions. The interviewer nor the interviewee cannot know in advance the possible impacts of the interviewing experience. I tried to choose my topic of study in a way that I would not have to ask about the possible difficult experiences of the participants. Nevertheless, there were some questions that the participants did not want to answer. One of the participants, for example, did not want to answer the question “Do you miss back home?”. He said that he does not want to think about it, he wants to forget it. For some of the other participants the question was also difficult to answer. In addition, some participants also shared difficult discrimination experiences, although I did not ask about them. Thus it seems, without intention, I evoked negative memories in the participants.

I have also pondered the issue of confidentiality and the issue of when all the identifiable information has been removed. Because of confidentiality, I have conducted the study in three different, unrevealed, cities. I have not disclosed the exact age of the participants or their study places. In addition, I have not differentiated the participants according to gender. I also considered whether to reveal the home countries of the participants. I decided to include the countries of origin, since quota refugees in Finland come from a limited set of countries that are chosen politically. Thus, there are quite a few refugees from each country. However, I have not included the mother tongues of the participants, since, for example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Myanmar there is a considerable number of languages, and I do not know how well they are represented in Finland.

Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2000, 96) note that the interviewer should not take the position of an authority in the interview. Instead, the interview should be a conversation-like and relaxed situation. I wondered how my work experience as a social worker in the immigrant services would affect the first four interviews as the interviewees were clients of the immigrant services where I worked. Regardless of my background and the fact that most of the interviews took place in the immigrant services, the atmosphere of the interviews was in my opinion relaxed and conversation-like. As a small thank you for taking part in the study, I gave each participant a chocolate bar.

5.5 Analysing the data with the help of content analysis

The purpose of qualitative analysis is to clarify the data and to produce new information on the topic under investigation. The aim is to clarify the data through summarizing it without losing essential information (Eskola and Suoranta 1998, 138). Patton (2002, 453) argues that qualitative analysis, and especially content analysis, is inductive in the early stages in discovering themes and categories from the data. In this study the analysis followed mainly the theory-bound approach, where the units of analysis are inductively

chosen from the data, although theory guides the analysis (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2002, 98). All in all, the presence of previous knowledge can be identified from the analysis, although the aim is to produce novel ideas (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2002, 98). In this study, the theory-bound approach can be recognized from the formulation of the research question, which is based on previous knowledge of the importance of work, education and language skills in integration, and from the analysis that is based on both, the theory and the research question. In addition, all of the themes of this study are based on the previous knowledge presented in the theoretical section.

Before the analysis, I transcribed the material into written text. Kvale (1996, 169) points out that the nature of the interview material and the purpose of the investigation affect the amount and form of transcribing. I transcribed the first four interviews perhaps in too much detail by marking, for example, lengths of pauses and overlapping speech, although the purpose of the study was to examine what was said, and not how it was said. Thus, the last six interviews were transcribed in a less detailed manner in summer 2010. Altogether I have 144 pages of transcribed text.

I chose content analysis as the method of analysis. "Content analysis has its own approach to analyzing data that stems largely from how the object of analysis, content, is conceived" (Krippendorff 2004, 18). In my analysis I followed the US tradition of content analysis presented by Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2002, 102–121). Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2002, 110) also present Miles and Huberman's (1984, 21–22, 1994, 10–11) generic view of the three concurrent flows of activity in qualitative analysis in the terms of content analysis: (1) reduction of the data; (2) clustering/grouping of the data and (3) abstraction as a means of formulating theoretical categories. Titscher et al. (2000, 58) note that in content analysis it is important to specify the unit of analysis, that is, the smallest component of text in which categories are examined. I defined the unit of analysis semantically and examined units of meaning, that is, expressions.

I started my analysis by reading through the transcriptions several times and making preliminary notes to the material. Strauss and Corbin (1998, 223) term this action open

coding. I proceeded with the analysis by searching for expressions that corresponded to the research question and colour coded the expressions. I listed the expressions in a reduced form and counted their occurrences (see e.g. Eskola and Suoranta 1998, 165–166; Miles and Huberman 1994, 252). (For example, “I don’t speak Finnish, I find it very difficult. Sometime I feel very limited” → Participant feels that proficiency in Finnish would enable active participation in the society.)

The next step was to cluster the expressions. In clustering the coded expressions are examined for similarities and differences in order to form categories (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2002, 112). Clustering is already part of abstraction where the lists of categories are grouped under higher order headings and theoretical names and conclusions are formed (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2002, 114). In other words, if the data allows, sub-categories, generic categories, main categories and finally themes are created and given theoretical names. (For example: sub-category: no need for interpreters → generic category: independence → main category: positive aspects of English → theme: the English language.) However, sometimes there were less categories and the analysis reached the theme in a more straightforward manner. (For example: sub-category: value of Finnish is limited to Finland → main category: negative aspects of Finnish → theme: the Finnish language.) In addition, at times the division into four different categories was insufficient and a fifth category was needed. (For example: sub-category of sub-category: work → sub-category: livelihood/orientation → generic category: primary goals for integration → main category: refugees’ ambitions for integration → theme: integration.) For a comprehensive list of categories see Appendix 3.

All in all, four different albeit interconnected headings or themes were formed: the English language, the Finnish language, the relationship between the English and the Finnish language, as well as integration. All of the themes consist of two main categories and of several generic categories. In the following chapters, the English and the Finnish languages are discussed from the point of view of their positive and negative aspects. The relationship of the two languages can be seen either as tension or as

collaboration, with emphasis on the former. In discussing integration refugees' own ambitions are examined, as well as factors influencing their integration.

6. THE POSITIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

The refugees in this study have all learned English prior to their arrival to Finland. For most of them the use of English in their home countries has been limited to the English classes in school. Only few have studied or worked using the English language in their home countries. However, for these participants English has been an equivalent of better life.

It [English]¹ made me things easier in the past.--² My country is a pretty hard country, is you know, you have to make yourself understand if you have your English, then you get better things. And, you know, if the person is culture person, you can get better things and easier than other people. (Sebastian)

High proficiency in English has mainly been acquired after departing the home country and before arriving to Finland. In these second countries most of the participants have communicated in the English language, in addition to using the language in their work or studies. Thus, proficiency in English has had a strong impact on the daily lives of the participants in the second countries.

I used English, when I left my country, I used it lot of, a lot of times. It was also like my mother tongue when I was in different countries. (Benjamin)

I think, on the place I was, because of my English, I get better jobs and I get more money and I make more friendships and it was nice. (Sebastian)

In conclusion, even before arrival to Finland, the English language has been a source of independence, an asset and a status symbol, as it also is in Finland as the following analysis will suggest. In addition, emotions associated to the language are discussed, as well as the negative aspects of English.

¹ The square brackets [] are used to mark accretion made by the writer to a citation. The square brackets are also used to mark replacement of a word in order to protect confidentiality.

² The symbol combination --. is used to mark omitted text, either to enhance readability or in order to protect confidentiality.

6.1 Independence

Upon arrival to Finland and during the first year, all of the participants used mainly English in Finland as they were only starting to learn the Finnish language. The English language can be seen as a sign of independence as the participants are less reliant on interpreters and the immigrant services.

Because of English I have much of help. I no need to wait for interpreter. Some other people from [home country] to come here. They cannot do anything to themselves, they have to hospital they have to wait for interpreter, everything, everything they have to wait for interpreter. I have, so far I have no need to do this thing, I can go myself everything freely, I have no need to much more to the social people. (Michael)

The English language is especially important for independence, when interpretation in the refugees' mother tongue is not available in Finland or is rarely available in a specific city. In addition, if the native language is rare or poorly represented in Finland, there are also no dictionaries to help with the communication and language learning.

Three of the participants have not had the possibility for interpretation in their mother tongue, and for one participant the interpreter has rarely been available. Thus, one participant would have to rely on interpretation in a language he speaks the second best, English. He, however, prefers to speak for himself. Another participant relies on interpretation in a language he speaks the third best, and feels that he is not always understood. Surprisingly, he is, after his mother tongue, most proficient in the English language. Nevertheless, he has never been offered interpretation in English. He would also prefer to speak for himself, but his social worker, for example, is not proficient in the English language. For the third participant that has not got access to interpretation in his mother tongue, the situation is less problematic. He has access to interpretation in the language he is most proficient in. In his home country his mother tongue has been oppressed, and thus he is most proficient in the official language of his home country.

Most of the participants used interpreters only a couple of times shortly after their arrival to Finland. They do not use interpreters simply because they do not have to, they can manage with the English language, as the following example illustrates: "Not that much.

I used, I don't even remember when I used interpreter here in Finland.--I use English without interpreter" (Adam). However, some have decided not to use interpreters because the interpretation has been problematic. The participants have either felt that they have not been fully understood because of the mediation process or the mediator has taken too great a role.

I want express myself. Sometime I want to tell what actually I mean, and then if I say in [language of translation], at a time I came, I am not understanding what he is telling the social worker. Whether is it the exact words I presented to him or he has changed it. I was not understanding. So I actually I was not satisfied when he is interpreting my word, but I would like to talk to her direct so that she can know or he can know what actually mean, I want. (Christopher)

I once had an interview,--, and there were times when I was trying to ask questions and the interpreter did not even translate it, and he was rather answering my questions.--I realize and I stop using the interpreter. (Christian)

Nevertheless, some participants still prefer to use interpreters, especially in important or linguistically challenging situations.

Yeah, we need, if I have to do something important here, like some kind of police, I do want a interpreter, because I wanna get everything that they say there, I don't want any mistakes with those things. (Sebastian)

The participants, who do not have the option of interpretation in their mother tongue, have to rely on their English language proficiency even in problematic situations. Fortunately, for all of them English is a language that they speak best after their mother tongue. Thus, the English language is a valuable asset especially for these participants.

6.2 Asset

In addition to enabling independence from interpreters, the English language can be seen as an asset: it is an important means of communication and provides better educational and working possibilities either in Finland or abroad.

English is an important means of communication especially upon arrival to Finland as it enables communication without mediators.

When I came here, nobody speak [mother tongue] here but everybody knows something about English, so here it was pretty helpful.-- We speak in English, and everybody get, and sometimes they don't get me and they just bring somebody else and they speak--, English and we do things through, so it was fine, it was perfect for me. (Sebastian)

In addition, English is not only needed in communication with Finnish people. The participants of the study have friends from many different nationalities and languages with whom they communicate in English.

But when you don't have English language, only your own--, language, very difficult to communicate with other peoples. So I think English language, you can keep continuing, you can communicate with other people from all of countries. (Daniel)

The English language is especially important for those participants who aim for higher education, since the English language can be seen as a prerequisite for universities. Most of the participants feel that they cannot get a degree in the Finnish language.

I don't believe that can get any degree in Finnish language. I don't actually believe in that, and if only I want the high education I have to go back to English. (Christopher)

However, studies in English are not an option in all educational fields. One participant has a degree from his home country in engineering. To equalize the degree in Finland, he needs additional studies, and wants to continue with the studies to the Master's level. He would have preferred to study in the English language, but it is not possible. As it would take many years even to begin studies in the Finnish language, he has decided to utilize his other area of expertise, graphic design, with the help of English. He might even start his own business.

The age of the refugees might be a factor in deciding the language of the studies. Learning the Finnish language well enough for higher education might take too long for a person in his forties, but not for a person in his twenties. For the youngest participant, in his early twenties, studies in the Finnish language are an option. He is currently completing comprehensive school in the Finnish language and considers studies either in vocational school or high school.

For most of the participants their future plans are undecided. Many ponder over the possibility of working abroad after finishing studies in Finland. Thus, for the possible future abroad, English and its maintenance are highly important.

After professional schools, I would like also to join university, and in university I would like to learn in English.--. Because some time I don't know if my life will be in Finland, maybe I'll move to another country. Then if I go like for example in England or in France, around the world, I have to use English. That why I want to learn in English and also need Finnish. (Adam)

Even though English is important especially for future life abroad, it also has value in Finland as it provides a better status.

6.3 Status symbol

While the English language is a key to greater independence, an asset in communication and a potential gateway to education, it is also a source of status. Those proficient in the English language seem to be one group "Us here, all the English" (Christopher), and those who are not proficient in the language form their counter-part: "So it is unfortunately if you cannot speak English.--. They find it very difficult."(Christopher).

To aggravate, the English speaking group has been better off before coming to Finland, and in Finland they continue to be more independent, more capable: they have better chances in life.

People are coming, they don't speak at all English. They are from French speaking or they have never been to school, they have never been at university maybe at so on, you know. When you ask about them they are crying a lot, because they say: oh my god what I'm going to be again to I mean to school, cause Finnish language is a long way to go. So if could not speak English I could be here around without doing nothing. (Benjamin)

Most participants did not make such a strong distinction between the English speaking and those without English proficiency. However, most did acknowledge the difference, and for most participants the English language is still important and helpful in Finland.

6.4 Emotions

The English language is associated with different set of emotions, mostly positive. Although I did not inquire about the participants' emotional connection to English, half of them had emotional responses when they were talking about the English language. These responses reveal the importance of English. The intensity of the responses is surprising, since the English language is not the mother tongue of any of the participants. Nevertheless, English is even compared to the mother tongue. In addition, English is described with intense vocabulary choices, such as treasure, love, mother tongue and favourite language.

My English is, because, it's been my treasure. (Sebastian)

I love English,--, I like my English, I like the way I speak, I like the way I learn English. (Sebastian)

English here in Finland is like my mother tongue, cause here everything, everyone who can speak English, we can understand, when I speak English. So it's like my first language here in Finland. (Benjamin)

My favourite language is the is English. (Michael)

The English language is also associated with negative emotions. However, negative emotions can mediate positive attitudes towards English. For example, in a sense, fear of losing English can be seen to mediate positive attitude towards English as it stresses the importance of English. However, fear, itself, is most often a negative emotion.

Sometime I'm worried that I will loss my English, how to say, similar like my mother language, mother tongue. Now I don't use much, I now some words I forgot, even English. (Michael)

Without English I would be sad, I cannot speak no other language [that is useful in Finland]. (Christopher)

I still am afraid to lose my English but I know, in some point I will have to lose, I will have to let it go, so I can get on, because it's getting me problem with this. (Sebastian)

The strong emotional connection to the English language might be associated with learning English mostly outside of school, when English has had a strong impact on the participants' daily living. Three out of the five participants who showed emotional

responses had learned English mostly outside of school. However, four of these five participants had used English extensively in the second countries. Thus, perhaps the emotional connection is associated with the strong practical importance that English has had or still has in the participants' lives.

6.5 All that glitters is not gold – the negative aspects of English

Although the English language has mostly positive associations, it does also bear certain negative aspects that are closely connected to Finnish society. The greatest disadvantages of English are difficulties in communication and hindrance in learning the Finnish language.

Most of the participants reported that in addition to the benefits of English, it is also a disadvantage in communication. Regardless of the participants' high proficiency in English, they are still reliant on the language skills of the person they are communicating with. In addition, not all Finnish people are willing to use the English language, albeit they are proficient in it.

English speaking Finland sometime find it difficult, cause some time people can't, they can't answer you, if you if you speak with somebody, they can't answer you. Some old people will tell you I don't understand what you're saying, and some young people if they don't understand they keep quiet. They don't talk to you. (Christopher)

Yeah I ready say most of the Finns speak English here in this country, most of them, I would say 90 per cent speak English, but probably maybe sixty percent shy. (Christopher)

Two of the participants were especially surprised by the low proficiency of English of the emergency medical personnel and the medical personnel in general.

When I was a newly--, I call emergency 112, they doesn't speak English, it's very hard to communicate. And then I was been to hospital, the doctors they don't speak English. That's very surprising for me, even they become a doctor, how they can't speak English? Without English how they will? Maybe they don't wanna speak. Maybe some of them know English but they afraid to speak, because they might not speak or something wrong, afraid. But doctors should speak English. (Michael).

In addition, many participants reported that when meeting officials their choice of language depends on the language skills of the officials. During their first year in Finland, most of the participants used English with most of the officials. However, some also reported using Finnish, for example, in the social office or in the employment office. In fact, many participants mentioned that in the employment office they are encouraged or even forced to speak Finnish. In addition, during the past year and the present time, their use of English has declined. In fact, at the time of the interview, many participants felt that they can also manage with Finnish in most situations. One participant felt that English is only needed in Finland because of the poor Finnish language skills.

In Finland if you can speak good Finnish, then why you will need the English? And specially that a lot of people here don't speak English. (Ewan)

Majority of the participants felt that the English language is a hindrance as it slows down the learning of Finnish, and for the majority Finnish is the most important language in Finland. This issue, and other negative aspects of English that are closely related to the relationship of the English and the Finnish languages are discussed later on, when the relationship of the two languages is being examined. However, before examining the relationship, the Finnish language is discussed.

7. THE NEGATIVE FINNISH LANGUAGE

The Finnish language is associated with considerably fewer positive aspects than the English language. However, it has to be taken into account that the participants have less experience in using Finnish than in using English. In fact, during the interviews, the Finnish language was discussed in a less detailed manner than the English language. Nevertheless, in addition to seeing Finnish negatively as a roundabout to livelihood, the participants still consider Finnish important in Finland as it is the native language, a means of building the Finnish identity and gaining a full membership of Finnish society.

7.1 Roundabout to livelihood

Regardless of the language background of the participants, who have knowledge in four to five languages on the average, all of them find learning the Finnish language a struggle. As can be expected, a vast majority of the participants had not learnt Finnish before coming to Finland. However, one participant had learned a little Finnish from a teacher in a second country. Regardless of the novelty of the Finnish language, the participants have faced similar language learning situations previously in their lives. Thus, one might expect that learning Finnish would not be as challenging as it is.

Some participants do not distinguish what it is that makes the Finnish language difficult to learn or “one of difficult languages around the world” (Benjamin). However, for other participants the Finnish language is difficult to learn because it is unlike any other language that they have encountered. The grammar and the differences in written and spoken languages are extremely difficult.

The pronunciation and the grammar here in Finland is very difficult, and we are studying the grammar exactly and trying to puhu in suomen kieli. Trying to puhu in grammar, but we are shock when the people are, there is another kieli, language, is puhekieli. Puhekieli is different. (Daniel)

In contrast, there is one participant who finds the grammar easy but the vocabulary challenging, and yet another participant who prefers the spoken language.

It seems that for some reason or another, the Finnish language is very difficult and time consuming to learn. In contrast, two of the participants are confident that they will learn the language quickly. Nevertheless, the emotions that are associated with Finnish mainly reflect the compulsory nature of learning the language. The Finnish language can even be seen as an enemy that has to be beaten.

The difficulty part of Finland, the language, is very difficult. So you have to, when will you part through this language is a real challenge. So if you don't stand toughly, if the language push you, your whole life you have to push the language and pass. (Christopher)

Most of the participants have quite clear guidelines for their lives, even though specific future plans might still be indecisive. The participants want to get ahead in their lives, and for this ambition Finnish is a hindrance, as it takes a long time to master the language.

I have spent two years, I'm going to three years just learning language. In case I will have been in universities learning some English, I will have said last, next year will be my final degree and then I've follow another degree. But up to now language language language language. (Christopher)

None of the participants dispute the importance of Finnish for their lives in Finland. However, the participants are very conscious of the fact that the advantages of the Finnish proficiency are limited to Finland.

In Finland that Finnish language is very important than English language, but if you leave Finland if you go to another country, you have leave Finnish language. (Daniel)

It is far from self-evident that the participants will build their lives in Finland. Thus it is not surprising that they consider the negative and positive aspects of Finnish. The following discusses the advantages of the Finnish language.

7.2 The silver lining

All of the participants stress the importance of Finnish in Finland, even those who plan to study or are studying in the English language. In fact, a vast majority of participants find Finnish more important than English in Finland.

The Finnish language is the only important language here in Finland. --. I think the any other language, even more than English. (Christopher)

One participant even stresses the importance of Finnish in Finland over the importance of his mother tongue.

In Finland Finnish language is more important than the other language, even than the [mother tongue] I think because [mother tongue] we are using only in our home, but still Finnish language more important. (Daniel)

The importance of the Finnish language stems from its position as the native language, as a means of building a Finnish identity and gaining a full membership of Finnish society.

Finnish is the most important because this is the local language, and I live in this country and I am Finnish now nearly. (Charles)

In Finland Finnish is most important for my residential and for getting job. (Michael)

Yeas but I don't speak Finnish, I find it very difficult. Sometime I feel very limited. (Christopher)

The Finnish language can be considered an asset in Finland. It provides a shared language for communication and better working opportunities. The Finnish language is an important means of communication in Finland as the participants have encountered problems when communicating in English. The use of Finnish has, naturally, increased as the proficiency in Finnish has improved. At the present time, many participants use Finnish when meeting with officials, as well as during their free time. One participant even says that he uses Finnish everywhere. In contrast, in the social office most refugees mostly use the English language as their social workers are proficient in it. Only few participants are not able to use English because of the poor language skills of

the social workers. Surprisingly, one participant has been denied the chance to use his Finnish language, as the social worker repeatedly reserves an interpreter. Nevertheless, a majority of the participants find their knowledge in the Finnish language extremely helpful albeit they are not confident about their Finnish language skills.

Now I have half Finnish, half. It's a long way but for now I have half.--. I have half which can help me to survive in Finland. (Adam)

The Finnish language proficiency is an asset especially in the labour market. However, as the Finnish language takes a long time to learn, it is not a preferable option for future studies for most participants. Nevertheless, not all participants have the option to study in the English language. For example, participants who aim for the vocational school have to study in Finnish. Even those who plan to study in the English language have to face the demands of Finnish proficiency in the labour market.

Of course Finnish is important is, if I don't get the Finnish, I never gonna get a job.--. I like to work--, and here, I can't do that because I don't have the language. Even the most remote work, the baddest work, you need the suomi. (Sebastian)

The participants perhaps do not emphasize the positive aspects of the Finnish language, since they have not achieved them yet. They are not proficient in Finnish and thus do not have personal experience of the advantages of the Finnish proficiency. Only one participant is confident with his Finnish language skills, and another is confident about achieving the language proficiency in the near future. Thus, the participants do not have personal experience of high proficiency in the Finnish language and its benefits. However, one participant feels that he lacks the status that the Finnish language proficiency provides especially for those refugees who came to Finland without English proficiency slowing down the learning of Finnish. These refugees already are proficient in Finnish.

There's a lot of people who came together here, and now they speak Finnish. They already know, before me, because they don't have any language to use here in Finland. (Adam)

As the above citation implies, the relationship of the Finnish and the English language is a complicated issue, each language affects the other. The relationship will be discussed in the next chapter from the point of view of collaboration and tension.

8. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ENGLISH AND THE FINNISH LANGUAGES

The relationship between the English and Finnish languages can roughly be divided into tension and collaboration. In the interviews, tension between the languages achieves considerably more attention than collaboration. In fact, it seems that for collaboration to take place, one of the languages, quite often the Finnish language, has to be granted the status of a main language in usage, as well as in importance. In contrast, if both of the languages are viewed as important or equal, their coexistence can be described as tension in most cases.

8.1 Tension between the languages

Tension in the relationship of the languages arises from contradictory roles of the languages and contradictory demands of the labour market. As has been established, the English language is mostly viewed positively as it is important both in Finland and abroad. However, the importance of the Finnish language in Finland is not disputed either, quite the contrary. The participants feel that it is difficult to master both languages. Learning Finnish basically means losing English whereas, in turn, using English slows down the learning of Finnish.

I feel like I'm losing my [mother tongue] and sometime I feel I'm losing the English, because I don't speak too much English the way I used to speak, and even with the people who speak English in here, they don't speak like, --, freely. (Sebastian)

I think if I do not know my English, I think I already know some suomi, like good suomi. Because, for example, I am the class, we made the suomi, everybody speak in suomi, but when we get out of the class, I we just start to speak in English. So and then I'm not practicing my suomi. I'm not practicing what I learn,--, and I think is, if I don't have my English, then I would have to push myself to get the suomi. (Sebastian)

Thus, it seems that when the participants learn and use Finnish, this is time away from using the English language, and, in consequence, their English proficiency deteriorates. In a similar manner, the extensive use of English, to some degree, prevents learning and

using the Finnish language. In addition, half of the participants feel that the English language complicates the learning of the Finnish language as the languages are very different from one another. Nevertheless, the main reason behind the tension between the languages seems to be the undecided future plans of most participants. Some of the participants are afraid to lose their English because it might be important for their future, whether for their near future, if they want to study for a higher academic degree in the English language, or for their distant future, if they want to work and live abroad.

Of course the English is important in this world I live. English is need. If I am fortunate, because Finland is very less of job, if I get any fortunate to get a job from abroad, I have to use English. Also being in Finland, thing is need English. (Michael)

Nevertheless, there are also some participants who have firmly decided to build their lives in Finland.

In the future actually for me, I really want to do my whole life here.--. Maybe in the future, I don't know, I may visit some area to come back, but I believe see, I'm going to do my whole life. If you compare Finland to other country, actually I love the country. I like Finland, all the situations I like it, more especially time of educational system. (Christopher)

Nonetheless, many participants are contradictory in their statements about the future. In one moment they are firmly set in building their lives in Finland while in another they consider living abroad. In consequence, the demands of the labour market are problematic for the participants as the English language is a prerequisite for the global labour market, but not sufficient for the domestic labour market. Yet, a degree obtained in Finland, whether studied in English or Finnish, is welcomed in the global labour market. In contrast, a degree from Finland in English without proficiency in Finnish is most often worthless in Finland.

Cause when you have a degree from here you are welcome where ever. (Benjamin)

I don't know any job area here in Finland that you use English. (Christopher)

You go to school for better future and if you only get the knowledge in English without Finnish language, is useless in Finland. I can have problem a lot because you don't speak the language. (Christopher)

Here, I can't do that [work] because I don't have the language. Even the most remote work the baddest work, you need the suomi. (Sebastian)

Thus, the contradictory demands of the labour market propose a problem for those participants who are undecided about their future country of residence. Surprisingly, even for those participants who have decided to build their lives in Finland, the choice of language in Finland is not self-evident. Although the importance of Finnish is acknowledged and stressed, some emphasize the importance of studies and thus resort to the English language.

If you speak the language well, sometime without high education you get good job.--The Finnish language is more important here in Finland, but sometime for me I'm just thinking of, I believe see I have the ability of learning, I have the brain, I have the smartness. I believe see, I can get job and go back to school. (Christopher)

The participants' future goals are discussed in greater detail when examining the theme of integration. However, the collaboration of the English and Finnish languages is discussed in the following.

8.2 Collaboration of the languages

The collaboration of the languages most often demands one more powerful, dominant language. However, nearly half of the participants also emphasize the importance of communication over distinguishing what language to use. In other words, they prefer to mix the languages when communicating.

When the relationship between the English and the Finnish languages is seen as collaboration, the Finnish language is most often granted the status of the main language. Nevertheless, the importance of the English language is by no means disputed. The English language is seen as a language that is important in Finland and helpful in learning the Finnish language. The English language is a shared language that aids in learning Finnish as it enables inquiries into the Finnish language. It is a language of teaching in official and unofficial settings.

I ask people what is this in Finnish language?--. How did you say this? What is the name this? So I have to use some language and ask the teacher.--. Because I speak English, it was easier for me to understand Finnish. Because most of the people I met, the teachers, some of them were shy. But I would talk to the person just what I want, one word. Please what is the meaning of this in Finnish language and then he or she will say it in Finnish language, and then I will understand, okay this mean this. But if I will not speak English at all, and they cannot understand my mother tongue. (Christopher)

Nevertheless, one participant questions the importance of English after the Finnish language proficiency has been gained.

In Finland if you can speak good Finnish, then why you will need the English? and specially that a lot of people here don't speak English. (Ewan)

In fact, most of the participants do not associate the importance of English to a life in Finland after gaining proficiency in Finnish. English is seen as important only for studies and for a life abroad. Thus, when there is collaboration between the languages, the English language is clearly the subordinate language. It is needed only for difficult or challenging situations. Only one participant considered the possibility of English as his main language in Finland. In that scenario the English language would be a language of work in a setting of entrepreneurship.

Genuine and equal collaboration between the languages can be seen in the comments of nearly half of the participants that emphasize the ease of communication. These participants use the language that is most convenient for the communication. The participants therefore switch between the English and the Finnish language.

I know many words in Finnish. I can also mix in Finnish if I met some people who doesn't understand English. So I have to mix. It's my home work, my work. So I have to make him understand what I mean. (Adam)

Most participants also mixed the languages during the interview. Mostly the mixing was occasional, however, some participants relied on mixing quite heavily from time to time.

No because you know that my daughter now in the päiväkoti so I have to speak my omakieli, so we are only speaking [äidin] kieli and we are studying here [äidin] kieli in our home. Because I think in the päiväkoti and the school, he should learn suomen kieli. (John Doe)

In addition to mixing the languages, the participants emphasize the importance of nonverbal communication for communication.

Even if you don't know the words exactly, you can use even the sign.--.You can use hand talk. (Adam)

Language is the, use it for communicate between people, so you can use anything even you can speak a do something do make the [mimics chicken]. --. I don't I think they not understand English, so I need chicken. No understand chicken, so I tell I need like this [mimicking chicken]. (Charles)

As has been demonstrated, the relationship of the English and Finnish languages is a complicated one. Nevertheless, in reality these two languages do not interact only with each other. As stated, the participants speak 4.9 languages on the average, and some of the participants are able to use all the languages that they speak in Finland, some more often than others. Nevertheless, the English and the Finnish languages also have a role to play in the integration of refugees. Integration will be discussed more closely in the following.

9. INTEGRATION

The theme of integration is approached by discussing the factors that influence integration, as well as by examining the refugees' personal ambitions for integration. It is essential to examine the refugees' personal ambitions for integration, since the refugees are the subjects of their integration. They are the ones who ultimately decide how and where to integrate. The factors that influence integration are varied, as are also the personal ambitions. The presented factors do not form a unity that affects the integration of each participant. Instead, each factor influences the integration of at least one participant, if not more. Moreover, the refugees' personal ambitions reveal that there is no universal and generally accepted route to integration; each participant has his own goals and ambitions that for some parts overlap with the goals and ambitions of others.

In addition to examining the factors that affect integration and participants' personal goals for integration, the purpose of this chapter is to present language skills in the broader context of integration. As will be shown, language skills are not primary goals in the participants' integration. Rather, language skills can be considered as secondary goals, means in fulfilling the primary goals of integration.

9.1 Factors influencing integration

As stated, the factors that influence integration are varied but they can roughly be divided into factors related to society and factors related to sense of belonging.

9.1.1 Society

All of the participants had a rather positive imaginary of Finland prior to their arrival. Many participants praised the good educational system and advanced technology in Finland. In general, the social welfare system in Finland was well known and highly

appreciated. However, most of all the participants were anxious to be in a peaceful country, to have their freedom and human rights.

I mostly expect of my freedom, because I didn't have any freedom at all in [home continent]. So I just expect to have my human right. I don't have the right to remain in [home country]. I don't have the right to remain in [second country]. So I'm like not belonging to any country. So it's very difficult it's very difficult to live like that way.
(Christian)

Best thing, I have place, country, I can live peacefully, that is the very great thing for me. In [second country] I staying without, how to say, legal permission, and that is, for me is not as a same life, but Finland is much better for me now. I feel, I like to be here now.
(Michael)

The participants differ more in their accounts of what was disappointing about Finland when they first arrived. For some, Finland was disappointing because it could not provide family and friends. Others had thought that Finland would be an English-speaking country, and yet others were disappointed in the high unemployment rate and substantial taxation. Most of the participants, however, were disappointed in the weather in Finland. The darkness and the coldness of winter are found extremely difficult to adapt to. In fact, some participants leave the house during the winter only if they are forced to.

Adapting to the Finnish culture has also been challenging for the participants. As the participants come from collective cultures, adapting to the individualistic culture that does not place emphasis on wide social networks has been especially challenging, as well as getting used to the perceived coldness and shyness of Finns that make us hard to approach.

Social network was really hard for me to adapt, -- ,cause there is Finnish--, like they live these kind of individual life.--. Is like there is not much social network surrounding them.--. So for me, like me, who are there in big families, like auntie, uncles.--.Was different.
(Benjamin)

People here they are not so friendly.--. If I met somebody on the street, they're not gonna speak to me or anything.--.They just, oh my god, and they keep going.--.Because it's not the same. In my country you are in any place and you start to speak to somebody and next day you will see again, because you just made, you become friends. Is more simple, but here is not. People are cold, and I don't know, fear, they have, afraid to something. I don't know what, and they don't like too much friends. (Ewan)

In addition, for young participants, the drinking culture of the young people has been an obstacle in making Finnish friends.

I try to get Finnish friends, but I end up in a party, and they drink a lot, and I realize oh no.
(Christian)

For some of the participants, adjusting to the Finnish culture means making unwelcomed adjustments to themselves.

I think I have to get the culture. I have to know how to behave like suomi. I don't wanna change myself, but I think in some point I will have to make some adjustments to myself.
(Sebastian)

However, other participants do not see the cohabitation of two cultures as a problem, but, instead, as an issue that needs to be recognized. In addition, one participant views the relationship of the two cultures from a more general point of view where different cultures cannot be put in order of superiority.

It [having two cultures] is a matter which is need to be recognized. Not problem, but need to be recognized. (Ewan)

Cause I knew that there is no better culture than other. Every culture is better to the own people. My culture is better, because I belong that culture. Your culture, Finnish culture, is better, because you belong to that culture. And my culture no good than, no better than yours. And yours no better than mine. I have to adapt this culture. (Benjamin)

Adaptation to the Finnish culture, or more specifically, sense of belonging, will be discussed more closely in the following.

9.1.2 Sense of belonging

The experiences of refugees are present when the participants ponder over the concept of home and their future plans. In the interview questions, the concept of home was taken as self-explanatory and used, inconsistently, to refer both to the house in which the participants lived in their birth countries as well as to the house where they currently live in Finland. The terms home or home country were also used to refer to the birth country in general. Some of the participants justly problematized the use of the concept.

Which home? (Adam)

I don't have a home. A land to stay in [birth country]. (Oliver)

Yet, most of the participants have a place to call home, for most of them home represents their birth countries, while for some home is Finland.

I think about home, that's the time when I find, anytime I find things difficult I think about home. I still have that imagination. (Christopher)

My home country is Finnish. (Michael)

Nevertheless, the participants differ in their plans to return to the home country, birth country. Some of the participants are willing to go back if the situation permits, others are uncertain about their plans, while yet others have decided never to return.

If there is chance to go back I will, definitely I will. Definitely I will go. (Christian)

I don't hope to go back to my home country, from things I left, because I didn't get anything comfortable better for my country. Everything is negative. So that's why I don't have any dream to go back, even is to visit. (Michael)

However, as the situation in the home countries of the participants is extremely problematic, the participants cannot make definite plans. In addition, as it will take a long time for the situation to improve in their countries of origin, the second generation, that is, their children, might have already settled in Finland.

Situation there is, need a long time, and when the situation there will be okay, I think my daughter will not accept back, you know because this is start life here. (John Doe)

Nevertheless, as has been previously discussed, the participants also ponder over the possibility of living abroad. Thus, the choice is not only between Finland and the country of origin. The openness or uncertainty of the future might also affect the sense of belonging to Finland. Another affecting factor is most likely the short time spent in Finland. Less than a half of the participants consider themselves Finnish. Some of the participants associate the sense of Finnishness with getting the citizenship. One participant also feels that because of his different cultural background, he can never be truly Finnish.

I am Finnish now. Finland is my first country not second country. (Charles)

But because of situation current situation how I see, I'm getting, I'm integrating in this Finnish society. I think even near future. (Benjamin)

We still have our own culture and our own traditions. So and some of them not meet with the Finnish cultures. So even if you, even if I will feel I am Finnish, I cannot be hundred per cent a Finnish man. (Ewan)

Sense of Finnishness might also be affected by the level of proficiency in Finnish. The two participants that are confident about learning the Finnish language quickly also consider themselves Finnish. However, there are also participants who are not confident in their Finnish language skills and nevertheless consider themselves Finnish. Language skills are also mentioned in connection to feeling at home in Finland.

Sometimes not always [I feel at home in Finland], when I feel I found myself that I think that our problem is language, and the melt, and the sociality, and -- how we can make Finnish people accept us. We trying to be close, but I don't know till now maybe when some of them accept us, but many of them not. (Daniel)

Nevertheless, central to feeling at home in Finland seems to be the presence of family. Most of the participants are missing some members of their family, if not all. Thus, it is not surprising that only minority of participants feel at home in Finland or are starting to feel at home. In addition to presence of family and language skills, acceptance by Finnish people is mentioned.

Yes, now I feel at home, but only I have now problems, I don't have any, how to say, member of family. (Michael)

Not bit, this is way way way out of my home, you know, like some people say, you just drive home when your heart, but it's not enough. I wish I can be with my mom, my brothers, and everything, my grandma, and things like that. Those are the people who make you feel like home. But they are not here, we are separated. (Sebastian)

All but one of the participants are missing some members of their family in Finland. One of the participants considers his instrument of music, his guitar, as his family. If the situation is viewed from the Western conception of the nuclear family, six of the participants are missing their family. Thus, three of the participants have their nuclear family in Finland. However, it has to be stressed that for the participants family is much more than just the nuclear family. Furthermore, three of the participants have no family

at all in Finland. Family is highly important for the participants and most of the participants actively miss their family and feel alone without their family.

I don't have like my family with me and things like that because those are the things who really support you and those are the people who really gonna give you strength to go on, and so I do have some friends here, but I feel alone and everything, and I wish I can have my family here. (Ewan)

I don't have any, how to say, member of family member, someone to take care of me, or any, I feel fall sick or something, nobody to give me a class of water, and sometime my weekend is very boring, nobody to call me, nobody to talk, so that is very sad for me sometimes. (Michael)

In addition to family, the participants value friendships. Family and friends have been a resource to survive the difficult past. Unfortunately, half of the participants do not have many friends in Finland. The participants feel that it is especially difficult to get Finnish friends.

Even when we have this bad things in my country, you have fun things, because you have your friends, you had your family. And anything can be a party, but here you don't have anybody and here people are they just like cold persons.--. Because I think there is too much foreigners here, and sometimes I think suomi person they think, --, this foreigners they just come here to mess with us.--. So I just don't try to, don't try myself to make so hard, you know, to make friendship, I don't push it. I just wait and let people come. (Ewan)

Some of the participants have found Finnish friends through multicultural centres. These friends are persons who have reported their wish to get immigrant friends to the multicultural centre.

If you are interested in immigrant friendship, there is a lot of form here filled by immigrants, they want a friend, friends. Then if you are interested say yeah, I want immigrant friends.--. So that how we get friends here. No other friends, just sit down, no other place to go. (Christopher)

The importance of such official means of getting friends is important as friends are a resource that helps to adapt to the novel situation in a new country. Fortunately, half of the participants have friends, and some even report having many friends from many different nationalities, including Finland.

Where ever you go you need friends, who know the situation of the country. Who can help you out to adapt the situation. Even here I have many friends which help me to build my life to the situation in Finland. (Adam)

Moreover, education, work and language skills are important factors influencing integration. They, however, have not been discussed in this context, as they are discussed in detail in the following, where the participants' personal ambitions for their integration are examined.

9.2 Personal ambitions for integration

The ambitions that the participants have for their integration can be divided into primary goals and secondary goals. Primary goals are those that are emphasized, whereas secondary goals are mentioned in passing.

9.2.1 Education and work

One of the primary goals of the participants is work and education. Along these dimensions the participants can, quite evenly, be divided into two groups. Four of the participants have education as a strong ambition for their integration. In fact, for three out of four participants, education seems to be more of an orientation, a goal itself, than a means of livelihood.

My plan is, I really want education first. Yeah, I want to do everything possible to have education. If only I can have education, I will be satisfied. I don't think for now money satisfy me. my target is no money, --, is education. (Christopher)

There are something I want to achieve, like I have to maintain my study. I have to follow also my ambitions.--. My ambitions is: I need to be engineer. (Adam)

In addition, the fourth participant has worked extensively in his home country in a profession that demands high education. In Finland he is willing to start his studies even from the beginning to be able to equalize or regain his educational status, and to be able to practise his profession in Finland. It seems that for the four participants high education and the status it brings might be as important as practicing the desired profession.

There are five or six participants who have work as one of their primary targets for integration. Similarly to education, there are two participants for whom work seems to be an orientation, rather than a means of earning livelihood.

I'm the kind of person who have been working his whole life.--. I'm not that kind of person to sit there, just sit there to wait. I don't like to be like that, you know. I like to work. I like to work hard, because I have been working hard all my life, because that's the way I am.
(Sebastian)

However, for three of the participants work seems to be primarily a means of livelihood. For example, one participant had two professions in his home country, one that demanded high education and another that he had self-learned. To practice the previously mentioned profession and to get the degree equalized in Finland would have demanded extensive further studies. Thus, he has decided to practice the latter profession in Finland, in which the quality of the work speaks for itself. The sixth participant does not fit this category as neatly as the others do. He talks passionately about his work, but on the other hand he states that "I must work to live" (Charles). When asked directly about the personal meaning of integration to him, he emphasizes the importance of family and culture.

9.2.2 Social contacts, language and culture

Even though nearly all of the participants have work or education, or both, as their primary goals for integration, all of the participants have also other ambitions for their integration. Half of the participants emphasize the importance of new social contacts for their integration, family and friends. In addition, in the course of the interviews, most participants have emphasized the importance of friends and family, although they have not mentioned them in connection to integration.

I stay there and I make my plans there and I start to do this integration, how do you say, and I've been trying here to do that, but I think I, it's not so simple. --. I think I need more friends, or I need more people to speak. You know, things like that. (Sebastian)

I hope I join, I'm married with Finnish lady. She understand me and she can, I can make her happy. I can support her and she's the last dream to, have children, make children.
(Charles)

In addition to new social contacts, family is also mentioned in connection to family reunification. Family reunification is specifically mentioned by two participants, although most participants miss their families. This can probably be explained by the tight regulations that the Finnish government has on family reunification. For example, the Western conception of the nuclear family applies. In fact, for one of those two participants who report family reunification as a goal for integration, work is a mean of realizing the goal, not the help of the government.

I have to work, and so I can get the money and bring them [family] in. (Sebastian)

Language and culture are secondary goals that are most often mentioned in passing, not as primary goals for integration. Language, especially, can be seen as a means of achieving other ambitions, such as work, education and new social contacts. However, some participants also emphasize language and culture.

You really really wanna get integration, you have to get the culture, you have to get the language, and you have to feel like one. (Sebastian)

9.2.3 Personal meaning of integration

Although the participants have shared goals for their integration, they differ in their ambitions. In the words of one participant:

You are in good integration when you say that,--, you have the vision or the goal, the aims which you have in that country. (Benjamin)

Thus, integration is an individual, personal process. It is therefore also important to view how the participants have explained the term integration. The participants, however, differ greatly in their ability to vocalize how they understand the term. For some the term was unfamiliar, but others gave in-depth answers. A common explanation in many answers was that the term refers to adaptation to being Finnish, feeling like one, being a part of Finnish society.

Integrations? Integration. I think it's to adapt being a Finnish. (Christian)

I think my own understanding of integration is that moving to other countries and not only moving but adapting the system of the other people, and other communities, society. And adopting the, they have to, they integrate to the society when introduce a lot of new life and restart your life. (Christopher)

I think integration is like, is really to see yourself that you are integrating, you are one of a society. So if these days, not now, I'm one of Finnish society, but there is some things which the other Finnish people get which I don't get.--.They speak very good Finnish and I'm not good in Finnish. Yeah, I can't, it's not easy for me to get what I want if I don't speak Finnish fluently. That's really one things about which I have to go that I can feel that I'm in good integration. And also you can say that you got, you are in good integration, when you say that.--. you have the vision, or the goal, the aims which you have in that country or which you have in this in Finland. You reach them or you get them. So my a vision is are still going on. (Benjamin)

Some of the participants believe that they are currently not even at the beginning of the integration process. For some integration is a process that begins when you achieve something concrete: a study place or good proficiency in the Finnish language. However, others demand higher accomplishments, such as employment, before they consider themselves to be at the beginning of the integration process.

I believe I not done anything in terms of integration,--, because in Finland you will enjoy your integrations or refugee life, if you speak the language well and you are working, but on the other hand for me, particular. I believe see if I'm going to school and interacting with the Finnish friends, I will enjoy more of my life.--.So as long as I am not working, I am not going to school, not absolutely not. I have not do anything yet. So for now my goals my target is to go to back to school. (Christopher)

I'm studying, I need to find job and so on. Maybe after find job I will say that: oh maybe I'm integrating, my integration is getting better. (John Doe)

However, for others, the integration process begins after they have personally decided to build their lives in a specific place, in Finland. Integration can begin from the smallest of gesture: wearing pyjamas.

After twenty eight years, I take pyjama here, I never take pyjama, only I sleep in my trouser and all life,--, because I sleep every time in railway station, or street or in with a friend, so I never change my dress. So here I take photo and I put to my friend, they too much happy, that in the end, ultimately [name of the participant] Finland, he take pyjama. (Charles)

The integration or integration process and factors affecting it are by no means simple or easily explained. Thus in the following, and the final chapter, the main results of this section are further discussed. In addition, conclusions are drawn.

10. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

10.1 Future full of possibilities and languages

The aim of this study was to examine the role that the English language has in the integration of refugees into Finnish society. More specifically, I examined the significance of the English language in two areas of integration: work and education. These are also the official goals of the government for refugees' integration. Special attention was paid to the English language, the Finnish language, and their relationship. In addition, in examining integration, factors affecting integration and participants' personal ambition for their integration were taken into consideration.

The results of this study indicate that the English language has an important role in the integration of those refugees who are proficient in the English language. However, the study does not dispute the importance of the Finnish language in Finland. In fact, the relationship of the two languages is complicated in the areas of education and work. Nevertheless, the official goals for integration, education and work, are not the only goals that the refugees have for their integration. The results are discussed in the context of the framework that Ager and Strang (2008, 169–184) have provided for understanding integration. However, as the model does not discuss education and work in connection to language skills, discussion deviates from the framework in these respects. However, the model does provide an understanding of the position of education and work, and the other personal ambitions of the participants, in the wider context of integration.

Ager and Strang (2008, 169–184) have divided integration into four different domains: markers and means, social connection, facilitators, and foundation (see Figure 1 in chapter three). Similar to the goals of the government, Ager and Strang (2008, 169) note that education and work are widely seen as indicative of successful integration, as “markers” of integration. However, Ager and Strang (2008, 169) remind that it is problematic to view achievement in the domain purely as an indicator of successful

integration. Rather, these achievements also serve as a means of supporting integration. Similarly, for some of the refugees in the current study the integration process only begins when they have achieved something concrete, for example a study place, employment or proficiency in the Finnish language. They feel that before these concrete accomplishments they are not even at the beginning of integration. Ager and Strang (2008, 169) have also included housing and health in the domain of markers and means. Housing as a marker or a mean of integration is perhaps not as contested in the Finnish context and health is only mentioned in passing by the participants of the current study.

Education. Previous research has highlighted the importance of shared language with the majority population in the integration of immigrants (Bergbom and Giorgiani 2007, 66). Language proficiency has been considered as a prerequisite for achieving other resources and capital, such as education, needed in integration (Valtonen 1999, 32). In contrast to previous research, in addition to the Finnish language, the findings of this study also consider the English language as a means of achieving educational capital.

Immigrants', especially refugees, chances of being admitted to institutions of higher education are considerably lower compared to the rest of the population (National Board of Education 2009; Forsander 2002, 177, 179). Joronen (2005, 75) notes that insufficient language skills can be a factor that delays applying for education. In fact, after their integration training, less than half of adult immigrants had attained the general level in Finnish that has been deemed sufficient for study and work (Pälli and Latomaa 1997, 11). Not surprisingly, therefore, most of the refugees of the current study do not believe that they can complete a degree in the Finnish language.

For the refugees of the current study the English language is a means of achieving an academic degree. Similar to previous research (see Forsander 2002, 230), the participants have a strong educational orientation. Nearly half of the refugees have education as their goal for integration. In fact, for some education can be considered as an orientation, a goal itself, rather than a means of earning a livelihood. Especially older refugees feel that learning the Finnish language would take too long a time. In fact,

previous research shows that immigrants who have moved to Finland as children or youngsters and have completed the Finnish school system are in a better labour market position in their adult years than are immigrants who have migrated in their adult years (Haapakorpi 2004, 76–77). Thus, especially for refugees who arrive to Finland during their adult years, English proficiency can be a considerable asset in enabling fast, or only, route to education and thus to a better future labour market position. However, as studies in the English language are not offered in every field of study, some of the participants have been forced to apply for vocational studies in the Finnish language. Nevertheless, most of the refugees that have applied for upper secondary education in Finnish plan to continue their studies in the English language in higher education institutions.

It is surprising that the possibilities of English as a language of education for immigrants and refugees have achieved little attention in the integration literature, since there are 275 qualifications offered in the English language in the Finnish higher education institutions (Garam 2009, 17, 19). Furthermore, the current study reveals that refugees proficient in the English language are not encouraged or even informed of their options to study in English, not to mention aiding in the practical issues. This can, however, be due to lack of knowledge of refugees' language skills that some of the participants reported. This is of concern, since the language skills of the refugees are not taken into consideration when designing the integration plans. Although there are attempts to increase the number of immigrant and refugee students in higher education institutions by developing student admission, language studies and public relations (Ministry of Education and Culture 2010), the government also obstructs higher education studies by denying integration assistance from immigrants studying towards a degree (Alitolppa-Niitamo et al. 2005, 40–41). Thus, if refugees would be able to start studying toward a degree, in Finnish or in English, during their first three years in Finland, they are punished by denying the integration assistance. However, refugees continuing studies that they have started before arriving to Finland are granted integration assistance (Act on the Integration of Immigrants and Reception of Asylum Seekers 493/1999, § 12, § 11b). Thus, those lucky enough to have started studies in their home countries are better

off also in Finland. Some of the participants of the current study had uncompleted studies from their home countries, they, however, had decided to start studies in different field of study. As the participants did not discuss how they planned to achieve the goal of education in practice, it is possible that the participants do not know about the denial of integration assistance. It would be a shame if financial matters delayed the fulfilment of their ambitions.

Higher education studies also raise concerns. Jaakkola (2000, 126–127) is concerned that highly educated immigrants have a low threshold to move out of Finland. In line with this, in the current study, most of the refugees do not have far-reaching future plans and they are uncertain about their future country of residence. Some also raise concerns about the employment situation in Finland. Studies in the English language in higher education institutions in Finland might provide a risk to move abroad after graduating. Not only do the refugees obtain a valuable degree and face challenging employment situation in Finland, but the objective of the English language programmes is not even to recruit students into the Finnish labour market, rather to the general labour market (Garam 2009, 81). Thus, in their higher education studies, the refugees are not even guided to participate in the Finnish labour market. Forsander (2002, 185) also cautions that if studies are carried out in English, it can be assumed that some of the human and social capital that is valuable in the labour market is not attained, and thus employment is more difficult. However, the refugees of the current study are motivated to learn Finnish even if they would complete their studies in English. Thus, it is possible to start studying toward a degree in English shortly after arriving to Finland, and at the same time achieve the Finnish language proficiency. In the best case scenario, upon graduation the refugees have acquired the needed human and social capital along with the Finnish language proficiency, and are integrated into the Finnish labour market. In the worst case scenario, on the other hand, the refugees do not gain the Finnish language proficiency, and after graduation cannot integrate into the Finnish labour market. Regardless, the Finnish degree completed in English opens doors at least to global labour market, if not to the English enclaves in Finland. To sum up, for the refugees, the

English language provides a faster route to education and opens doors to, at least, the global labour market.

Work. Language proficiency is especially important and essential in the working life (Forsander 2002, 185). It appears to have quite a direct influence on survival in the labour market and on immigrants' socio-economic status (Forsander 2002, 185–186). The position of the Finnish language as a language of work for immigrants is overwhelming (Tarnanen and Suni 2005, 14).

In fact, the refugees of the current study also believe that their greatest obstacle in entering the Finnish labour market will be their lack of Finnish language proficiency. However, as the refugees have been in Finland maximum of three years, in practice they do not have much experience of the Finnish labour market. Therefore, it does indeed seem that the Finnish resettlement policy has unrealistic expectations of fast integration of refugees, as Wahlbeck (1999, 81) suggests. Unfortunately, as most of the participants of the current study have not participated in the labour market, the connection of language and work cannot be discussed in depth.

The Finnish language is not the only needed language in the labour market. In fact, proficiency in the English language can be considered as self-evident cultural, social and at time economic capital (Leppänen and Nikula 2008b, 424). In many fields English can even be seen as a necessity for obtaining work (Virkkula 2008, 383). Thus, refugees with English proficiency seem to be in a better position in the labour market. However, the refugees of the current study are unaware of the benefits of English in the Finnish labour market. Although the importance of English in the labour market is repeatedly emphasized to the Finnish people, it is not mentioned to the refugees. Most of the participants of this study do not associate the importance of English to a life in Finland after gaining proficiency in Finnish. English is seen important only for studies and for a life abroad. As the importance of English is not enclosed to the refugees, they are placed in an unequal position compared to the Finnish people. The withdrawal of information might derive from the misconception that refugees are unschooled and lack language

proficiency. The participants of this study, refugees who are proficient in the English language, are a special group of refugees due to their proficiency in English. However, due to lack of research knowledge, I do not know whether refugees proficient in the English language comprise a fractional minority or a significant minority. Nevertheless, refugees' learning abilities, whether proficient in the English language or not, should not be underestimated. In fact, since at least the refugees of the current study were struggling to learn the Finnish language, perhaps the English language is easier to learn.

Regardless of the importance of English in the Finnish labour market, it seems that in the case of immigrants and refugees, the command of other languages besides Finnish do not have much significance for the employers (Jaakkola 2000, 124). Thus, it seems that to be able to benefit from the English proficiency in the Finnish labour market, it is essential for the refugees to master the Finnish language. The refugees of the current study also believe that the Finnish language is a necessity in all fields of work. Nevertheless, in Finland there are also English enclaves that do not demand any knowledge in the Finnish language, for example universities and corporations that have adopted English as the working language. (Leppänen and Nikula 2007, 350). However, one can wonder where exactly would the refugees integrate if they only used English in a country where English is not the official language.

Personal ambitions for integration. Although the official goals for integration, education and work, are also strong personal ambitions for the participants' integration, they are by no means the only ambitions or goals. The refugees of the current study emphasise new social contacts as primary goals for their integration, and language together with culture as secondary goals of integration. In Ager and Strang's (2008, 169–184) model these ambitions are placed into connective tissue between the markers and means domain of integration (education, work) and foundational domain of integration.

Ager and Strang's (2008, 173–177) conceptual framework depicts rights and citizenship as the foundation for integration. In addition to rights, citizenship is also associated with responsibilities. The Finnish integration policy encourages active participation by offering language courses and other action designed to improve education and work

opportunities (Forsander 2000, 173). However, the Integration Law also emphasizes immigrants' responsibility to take part in the integration process (Suokonautio 2008, 41). The refugees of the current study have a strong personal motivation to integrate into Finnish society. In addition, they associate sense of Finnishness with getting the citizenship. For them, it is important that the Finnish government treats them in an equal manner compared to actual citizens. However, being treated in an equal manner is not enough for being a citizen. The refugees must have everything that the Finnish people have, including the language.

Ager and Strang have placed safety and stability into facilitators of integration. However, based on the emphasis that the refugees of the current study place on safety and freedom, I would place safety and stability in the foundation of integration. All of the refugees expected most of all their freedom and safety in Finland, nothing else was of equal importance.

Ager and Strang (2008) have identified two sets of "connective tissue" between the foundation domain of rights and citizenship, and the markers and means domain of education and employment. Social connection has a fundamental role in aiding the process of integration at a local level. The refugees of the current study also emphasize the importance of family and new social contacts in integration. However, some of the refugees do not have their family in Finland. For them transnational attachment seems to be hard, since they actively miss their families. However, as the refugees are able to keep in contact with their families, the transnational relationships can also be a resource, as Tiilikainen (2007, 267) suggests. Nevertheless, as the families are not in Finland, the importance of new social contacts is stressed. In contrast to Ager and Strang's conceptual framework, the refugees of the current study view social contacts as primary goals for their integration, not merely as aiding the integration. However, social contacts are also viewed as an asset in learning the Finnish language. Similarly to the current study, Ager and Strang (2008) also connect sense of belonging to social contacts. The refugees of the current study do not feel at home in Finland without their families, they feel alone. In addition to social bonds with "like-ethnic groups" and social bridges to

host communities, Ager and Strang (2008) see individual connections, social links, to structures of the state important. They emphasize government services as important social links for refugees. In fact, the refugees of the current study also emphasized their independence to access services without being dependent on interpreters. Because of their English language proficiency, the refugees have barely used interpreters and have thus been able to access the services of the society easily, and become active, independent participants of society.

Language and cultural knowledge is another set of “connective tissue” that Ager and Strang deem important in “removing” barriers to integration. Previous research has emphasized the importance of the Finnish knowledge for immigrants’ integration into Finland, however, the current study also places emphasize on the English language. Both of the languages can be seen through Ager and Strang’s terms as facilitators of integration. Surprisingly, language proficiency is not a primary goal for integration. Nevertheless, in addition to viewing language proficiency as facilitator of integration, it can also be consider as a secondary goal, important mean in achieving the primary goals. The secondary nature of language proficiency indicates that language alone is not enough, rather, it is a mean to achieving something more valuable, the primary goals. Nevertheless, the importance of language proficiency should not be underestimated. Both the English and the Finnish languages play an essential role in sense of belonging, social connections, and of course in education and work. Moreover, the English language is an important human capital (see Forsander 2002, 52) in Finland as it enables wider social networks, access to society’s services and enables active participation in the society.

In conclusion, as the refugees’ future plans are undecided or full of possibilities, it is difficult to decide which language is more important for the future. Moreover, the refugees feel that it is challenging to master both English and Finnish. Yet, the English language is a faster, and for some only, route to education. However, a degree from Finland in English without proficiency in Finnish is most often worthless in Finland. In contrast, the global labour market welcomes the Finnish degree but demands command

of English. Therefore, studies in English in Finland can, at best, aid integration if Finnish proficiency is also gained. However, there is a risk that the Finnish language proficiency is not obtained, which would lead to a very limited labour market in Finland, and to a greater risk of joining the global labour market. This study has only taken into consideration the English and the Finnish languages, however, in reality the language situation is more complicated as the refugees are proficient to some degree in three to seven languages. The equation is even more complicated when refugees' transnational relationships, longing to their country of origin, and lack of belonging to Finland are taken into consideration. The refugees have to make a choice between Finland, their country of origin, as well as life abroad. Moreover, each of these options encloses different language demands.

10.2 Evaluation of the study and recommendations for future work

The purpose of this study was to examine the role that the English language has in the integration of refugees into Finnish society, especially in the areas of education and work. As was partly expected, the "official time" of three years for integration when the refugees are clients of the immigrants services and possess operative integration plans, is not enough for integration to be completed. Thus the research questions could not be fully answered. The participants were only applying for studies and employment was a somewhat distant plan. In addition, the results of this study could not be compared to previous research of the role of the English language, since no such research was discovered. Nevertheless, the study provides novel information on the importance of the English language in the beginning of refugees' integration into Finland. In addition, the study is interested in the refugees' own goals and understanding of their integration, a view point that is often forgotten.

I hope that the results of this study could provide new insights into the work of immigrant services, integration training and in designing the integration plans. Moreover, the language skills of the refugees should be carefully examined, and the English

proficiency and the possibilities it can provide for especially education should be taken into consideration in designing the integration plans. I also hope that the study could help refugees proficient in English to realize and utilize their language potential.

Even though this study has provided novel information, it has its limitations. For this study only ten refugees were interviewed. Thus generalizations cannot be drawn from the results, not even to represent English-speaking refugees. Although all the participants have the English language proficiency in common and can thus be considered a special group of refugees, they are, nonetheless, a heterogeneous group of people with age distribution between early twenties to late forties and differing countries of origin, educational and language background. It has to be also taken into consideration that the sample only included one female participant. In addition, the representativeness of the sample cannot be determined as research knowledge is scarce. In all likelihood refugees proficient in English comprise a minority of all refugees, however, is it a fractional minority or a significant minority? What are the characteristics of the group? As the size of the sample was modest, the study cannot be expected to provide in-depth understanding of the phenomenon.

The need for future work is evident merely because of the lack of research knowledge. The role of the English language in integration of refugees needs more extensive research to provide wider understanding of the phenomenon. In addition, it would be interesting to examine the role that the English language has when refugees have been in Finland for a longer period of time, when they have had proper time to integrate, and have experiences of education and employment in Finland. Furthermore, it would be interesting to examine the role of other languages, not just English and Finnish, in integration and their relationship to the English language. Moreover, it would be worthwhile to examine how the positive effects of English can be reinforced and the negative ones minimized. This might also be of interest to the government in their goal of fast integration.

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APPENDIX 1: Contact letter/consent form

Dear recipient,

My name is Inka Jalava and I am a student of social work and English language in the University of Jyväskylä. I am doing a small research as part of my studies, pro gradu thesis, of the role of the English language in integration of refugees into Finnish society. The purpose of the study is to gain information on how knowledge of English affects refugees' integration into Finnish society.

I would like to interview you of your experiences in using English and Finnish in Finland. The language of the interview would be English and the interview is confidential. The interview would take place in the immigrant services in --- during May, however, another time is also possible. I would do my best to try to find a time that best suits you. The interview would not take more than an hour of your time.

If you are interested in participating in the study, please contact me by e-mail: ---, or by phone: ---. I am also happy to give more information.

Best regards,

Inka Jalava

Consent of the interviewee

I give my consent to the interview and for the use of the interview material in researcher's pro gradu thesis. The interview material is confidential and the identity of the interviewee cannot be recognized. I can withdraw by consent at any point of the interview.

Date and signature

APPENDIX 2: Interview outline

Background information:

- Gender
- Age
- Education
 - In home country/ other countries
 - In Finland
- Profession – occupation and what kind of work have you done previously?
For how long have you been in the work life?
 - In home country/ other countries
 - In Finland
- Home country and ethnic background
- Countries of residence- In which countries have you lived in?
- Time of arrival to Finland- When did you arrive to Finland?
- Did you come to Finland as Quota refugee or asylum seeker? (Did you come straight to Jyväskylä or some other city or to a reception centre?)
- Family – Members of your family
 - In Finland
 - In home country/ other countries
- Language background
 - Mother tongue?
 - Languages spoken?
 - Could you put them in an order from the language spoken best to the language you speak the least?
 - (- How would you rate your knowledge in them? (excellent, good, satisfactory, basics)

Before arrival to Finland/ During the first year in Finland/At the present time

• The use of English

- When did you use English? (home, free time, in contact with officials, at work)
- If you didn't use English, what language did you use?
- In what kind of situations did you use interpreters? (Only in contact with officials?)
- Did you use interpreters of your mother tongue?
- Did you use interpreters of English?
- Did you use English without interpreters?
- Did knowing Finnish help you in everyday life?
- Have would you rate your knowledge in English?
- Did you think learning more English would be important for your life?

• The use of Finnish

- When did you use Finnish? (home, free time, in contact with officials, at work)
- Did you use Finnish in contact with officials? If you did, were interpreters present?
- Did you think learning Finnish is easy or difficult or something in the middle?
- How would you rate your knowledge in Finnish?
- Did knowing Finnish help you in everyday life?
- Did you think learning more Finnish is important for your life?

• The relationship between the English and the Finnish language

- What do you think was the role of English in your life? Did knowing English help you in Finland? Did it make things difficult?
- Do you feel that knowing English affected your learning/using Finnish? Made it easier or more difficult or didn't affect it at all?
- What language was most important for you in Finland?

- What was the role of Finnish compared to other languages you speak? Were there any languages you spoke less than Finnish?

• **Refugees' own goals and expectations for their integration**

- What were your expectations about Finland before you came here?
- What has been good about Finland and have there been disappointments?
- What kind of country is Finland compared to your home country/ other countries where you have lived?
- How have the English and Finnish languages helped or not helped your adjustment to Finland?
- How do you spend your free time in here? With whom?
- Do you have friends in Finland? Of what nationality are they and what language do you use with each other?
- Do you have experiences of working or studying in Finland?
- What do you think are the greatest challenges in finding work/ education in Finland?
- Do you miss back to your home country? Are you planning on going back?
- Do you feel at home here?
- Do you consider yourself Finnish? Do you want to settle here?
- What kind of future plans do you have?
- When you think of your current life situation and the future, what is the importance of the English and the Finnish languages?
- What does the word integration mean to you? What is its meaning to you?

APPENDIX 3: Categories of analysis

(See the following pages)









