LINGUISTIC ISSUES, LANGUAGE RIGHTS AND PLURILINGUISTIC EDUCATION: HOW HAVE THE FINNISH EDUCATIONAL POLICY REFORMS AFFECTED THE SWEDISH-SPEAKING FINNS?

by

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George Mason University
Fairfax, VA
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To my beloved mother, Susanne, who is my source of inspiration and whose support has been invaluable for the realization of this thesis.
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LINGUISTIC ISSUES, LANGUAGE RIGHTS AND PLURILINGUISTIC EDUCATION: HOW HAVE THE FINNISH EDUCATIONAL POLICY REFORMS AFFECTED THE SWEDISH-SPEAKING FINNS?

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George Mason University and University of Malta, 2017

Thesis Director: Dr. Stephen Calleya

Linguistic issues are likely to occur in countries with more than one official language. This is also the case in Finland, a country with two national languages (Finnish and Swedish). Even though Finland is a proponent of language rights and multilingualism, it experiences linguistic issues as its language climate has been deteriorating over the past decades. Hence, this study conducts a policy analysis of how the Finnish educational policy reforms of 1968, 2004, and 2012, have affected the Swedish-speaking Finns, to shed light on how Finland is doing when it comes to respecting and enforcing the language rights of its Swedish-speaking minority. The educational policies under study are all connected to the linguistic issue in Finland as they regulate the compulsory Swedish-language subject in Finnish-speaking schools. This thesis argues that education is key to mastering a language and Finland should promote educational policies that enforce a plurilingual education in the comprehensive school, in order to remain a
bilingual country. In addition, these types of educational policies create the possibility of a healthy language climate that allows for socio-cultural diversity in a multilingual society.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

As the world is becoming more and more globalized, people interact more with other languages and populations on a daily basis. Consequently, to prevent conflicts, the need for inter-cultural communication and understanding is bigger than ever. This is also the case in Finland, a bilingual country with two national languages, Finnish and Swedish. This Nordic country between Sweden and Russia is a proponent of multilingualism and is known to have one of the best education systems in the world. However, the increased diversity and immigration in Finnish society has not resulted in more tolerance, but on the contrary, the language climate in Finland has deteriorated. The growing tension between the Finnish-speaking majority and Swedish-speaking minority raises concern and Finland needs to work harder to deal with the growing intolerance and xenophobia affecting the minority. This was also pointed out in a report by the Council of Europe in 2016, which stated that Finland must improve the protection of its minorities. (Ministry of Justice 2016: 91) Hence, this study takes a look at the linguistic issue in Finland as measures to improve the country’s language climate are needed.

In this particular study, the linguistic issue in Finland refers to the debates about the compulsory Swedish-language subject in schools. As Finland is a bilingual country, Swedish is taught as a mandatory subject in Finnish-speaking schools, and Finnish is taught as a mandatory subject in Swedish-speaking schools. However, the Swedish
language in Finland is only spoken as a mother tongue by approximately 300,000 people who make up merely 5.6% of the population (Jungner 2004). Thus, many Finnish speakers do not see why it is necessary to study Swedish as it is spoken by such a small minority. This case is also particular from an international standpoint as it is rare, with a few exceptions like Canada and Spain (Catalonia), where a country’s minority language is to be a mandatory school subject for the linguistic majority (Geber 2010).

Why Finnish speakers need to study Swedish in school has to do with the region’s history. Prior to Finland’s independence in 1917, Swedish was the primary language in the region. When Finland became independent, both Swedish and Finnish were written into the constitution as the two official languages of the newborn nation. In the past decades there have been many heated debates about the compulsory Swedish in schools and this has affected the design of the recent educational policy reforms.

This changing trend in the design is why this study explores the educational policy reforms that are directly connected to the teaching of the compulsory Swedish-language subject in Finnish-speaking schools. These reforms were chosen for analysis because they deserve attention as they are having an impact on the language rights of the Swedish-speaking Finns. As Finland has two official or national languages, namely, Finnish and Swedish, it grants equal language rights to both language groups. These rights are guaranteed in the Finnish constitution and when being in a bilingual municipality, it is a constitutional right to receive services from state authorities and the public sector in both national languages (Ministry of Justice 2017). However, the Swedish speakers’ right to communicate in Swedish with authorities and in the use of
public service is met inadequately. Although, the current legislation about Finnish and Swedish is essentially timely, the shortcomings can be found mainly in the practical application. (Ministry of Justice 2017: 14-15) Moreover, there is a nationalist trend in Finland, that began with a political party called the True Finns, who tries to repress the rights of the Swedish-speaking minority (Furubacke, Richnau, Söderström 2016) and who would like to see that Swedish is no longer an official language in Finland. These issues demand attention as to preserve the language rights of the Swedish-speaking Finns.

There have been three major educational policy reforms in 1968, 2004 and 2012 that are directly connected to the linguistic issue in Finland. This study conducts a policy analysis of all three reforms to answer the research question: How have the Finnish educational policy reforms affected the Swedish-speaking Finns? The aim is to identify the reforms’ positive or negative effects on the Swedish-language group to see how the educational policy reforms have been contributing the language climate in Finland. Moreover, this is to examine the role educational policies play in maintaining peaceful social relations between a majority and a minority group in a country.

This thesis argues that it is a state’s duty to enforce its citizens’ language rights, especially if it is written in its constitution. Additionally, to ensure a healthy language climate in Finland it is important to promote intercultural understanding through education as this lays the ground for peaceful and harmonious relationships between two language groups. Peace education, or more specifically, intercultural education with a pedagogy of sociocultural diversity, are ways to improve the language climate in Finland by fostering a culture of Peace. Moreover, as education is key to mastering a language,
Finland should promote educational policies that enforce a plurilingual education in the comprehensive school. This creates the possibility for a healthy language climate that allows for socio-cultural diversity in a multilingual society.

The next chapter (chapter two) connects the topic, the linguistic issue in Finland, to the existing literature and explores previous research on the topic. Moreover, this chapter discusses the different theoretical concepts that are required to frame the study. The first main theoretical concept that this chapter discusses is that of language rights, and how they are considered to be a human right. Additionally, this section looks at how language rights are connected to culture and explores a couple of definitions. The last section discusses the state’s duty to enforce the language rights of its people when it has signed on to this type of framework. The second main theoretical concept of this study is social identity (including national identity). Hence, this section discusses social identity theories, the definitions of social identity, and how national identities are considered to be a type of social identity. The third main theoretical concept is peace education (including intercultural education and pedagogy of socio-cultural diversity). Thus, this section discusses these concepts as they explain the need for a plurilingual education. Finally, the second chapter ends with discussing educational policies and their role in society.

The third chapter gives an overview and a more detailed explanation of the case study to help the reader see the context in which the study is made. The fourth chapter discusses the study’s methodology and research methods, plus it lays out the study’s conceptual framework for conducting a policy analysis. Additionally, it discusses how the study’s data was collected and the limitations of the research methods. The fifth
chapter presents the data and conducts a policy analysis of the educational policy reforms of 1968, 2004, and 2012. The sixth chapter discusses the findings and looks at how they relate to the literature of the second chapter. Finally, the seventh chapter concludes with presenting the strengths and weaknesses of the study and ends with making a few recommendations.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Before presenting the specifics of the case study, this chapter discusses briefly a number of theoretical themes and concepts that are relevant to this study’s topic and research question. In order to facilitate the reader’s understanding of the phenomenon under study, the discussion in this chapter will revolve around issues of language rights (human rights), national identity (social identity), peace education (intercultural education, socio-cultural diversity) and educational policy.

As mentioned in the introduction, the main topic of this paper is the linguistic issue in the case of Finland. More specifically, the issue is about the Swedish language in Finland and why it is necessary for the Finnish-speaking majority to study this minority language in schools. This has sparked many debates throughout the years. Although Swedish is the other national language in Finland and has the same legal status as Finnish, the language rights of the Swedish-speaking Finns are often not met in practice. Thus, the linguistic issue is directly connected to the issue of language rights. Hence, this chapter discusses language rights and how they are considered to be part of our basic human rights according to international law.

The need to respect language rights has to do with social identity theories in the way that people have a need to speak their own language to support their identity. If this
need is not respected, the likelihood of a conflict increases. The tension that exists between the Finnish- and Swedish-speaking Finns in Finland requires a look at social identity theories as they can explain the formation of group identities, including the formation of national identities and the implications of this.

The last section discusses the concepts of peace education (including intercultural education and socio-cultural diversity) plus educational policy, to frame the research question “How have the educational policy reforms affected the Swedish-speaking Finns?”. These concepts are necessary to see if educational policies can have a positive impact on language rights and the relationship between different language groups in a country. Before discussing the different theoretical concepts, this chapter reviews the previous research on the linguistic issue in Finland to frame the research topic.

2.2 Previous research

There are numerous Finnish scholars who have analysed the linguistic issue in Finland. Erik Geber (2010) is one important scholar who has made historical analyses of this topic. In his work ”Den obligatoriska svenska i Finland / The compulsory Swedish in Finland” he clarifies the origin of and motivation for and against the compulsory teaching of the second national language in Finland, especially the teaching of Swedish in Finnish-language schools. His work is therefore about the background of the subject’s position in the curricula, a position that is also quite rare in international terms as mentioned previously in the introduction. When Geber wrote his historical analysis, the linguistic issue was very much debated due to the reform of the municipal and service
structure and the new regional administration of the state that demand that their employees master both national languages of Finland.

During this same time period when many reforms took place, another project, which works were compiled in a compendium called ”Makten att kombinera / The power to combine” (edited by Stefan Sjöblom and Siv Sandberg 2015), analysed the consequences which the reforms at the time would have on the Swedish-speaking parts of Finland and on the Swedish language in the administration. In chapter one of the compendium, another prominent scholar, Henrik Meinander, writes about the linguistic issue from a historical perspective; ”Språkfågan sedan 1863 / The linguistic issue since 1863” and goes back as far as 1863, before Finland’s independence, to illustrate the issue’s development through time. In chapter four of the compendium, Tom Gullberg discusses if the Swedish schools and educational institutions are the guarantors for everything that is Swedish in Finland: ”Den svenska grundläggande utbildningen – garanten för det svenska i Finland?”. His argument is that the existence and quality of the Swedish education in Finland is key for guaranteeing the long-term survival of the Finland-Swedish culture and identity.

Although, there are many works on the linguistic issue in Finland, there are not any scholarly works on this study’s research question: "How have the educational policy reforms affected the Swedish-speaking Finns?”. This case study aims to explore how educational policies can affect the language rights of a language group to see if policies can help to enforce these rights. Also, this study aims to see if there is a correlation between educational policies and the social relationships between different language groups in a country. The question is how one language group sees the Other and if educational policies can improve the relationship between the two groups.

As mentioned earlier, the language rights of the Swedish-speaking Finns are frequently not met in practice (as will be discussed in more detail in chapter five). To frame what is meant by language rights and to understand their implication, the following section discusses language rights in a human rights’ context, and looks at what is meant by language rights plus what is implied when a state adopts these rights.

2.3 Language rights

Before discussing language rights as a human right, it is necessary to look at what is meant by human rights. In international law, human rights are seen as universal and inherent to all human beings as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (United Nations General Assembly 1949). Meaning, they apply to everyone. Also, these rights are considered to be “the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world” (as stated in the preamble of the UDHR). For instance “[…] the right to life, liberty and security of person” (Article 3, UDHR) and “[…] the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law” (Article 6, UDHR) are just two examples of our
human rights. “According to Henkin, human rights are “universal,” in the dual sense that they are (i) widely recognized and “the only political-moral idea that has received universal acceptance” and (ii) that they impose external standards on states that “apply to all to whom they are relevant” across “geography or history, culture or ideology, political or economic system, or stages of societal development.” (as cited in Paz 2013: 162) These are examples of the types of principles and ideas which a human rights vocabulary consists of.

When scholars discuss linguistic claims or linguistic conflicts, it has become the norm to use a human rights vocabulary. Therefore, language rights are considered to be part of our human rights. Additionally, major international treaties and conventions have adopted a human rights vocabulary to deal with linguistic claims. (Paz 2013: 160) One example of this is Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which states that: “In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language.” (1976: 179). This provision seeks to protect the language, religion and cultural life of minorities in general, as there is the risk that minorities in democratic states are assimilated into the majority culture.

In general, most scholars see language as being closely linked to culture. Fernand de Varennes, who is one of the leading legal experts on language rights, explains that a minority’s language is key to the minority’s “social and cultural identity.” (as cited by Paz 2013: 160-161) Other scholars such as Susanna Mancini and Bruno de Witte have
similar perspectives and state that “the use of a particular language not only serves as a means of functional communication, but also expresses that person’s cultural identity as well as the cultural heritage developed by all previous speakers of the language.” (Mancini & de Witte 2008: 247) This demonstrates the importance of having the right to speak one’s own language as it is a way to express one’s own identity.

Similarly, the High Commissioner of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) claims that when it comes to National Minorities: “Language is one of the most fundamental components of human identity. Hence, respect for a person’s dignity is intimately connected with respect for the person’s identity and consequently for the person’s language.” (Oslo Recommendations 1998) This illustrates how “important legal instruments echo the notion that language is constitutive to culture” (Paz 2013: 161). In other words, the international community tends to agree that language is an inherent part of culture.

To continue the discussion on how language is seen to be linked to culture, Paz explains that the idea behind the “protection of the linguistic interests of minorities” has to do with supporting what most agree is “the preeminent human rights norm” (Steiner 1991: 1548, 1550) which is “the ideal of nurturing cultural diversity at large”. (Paz 2013: 161) According to this, cultural diversity is seen as a universal value that should be universally respected and protected.

The legal scholar, Bruno de Witte, stresses “the importance of linguistic rights to foster cultural diversity in the European Union context” (as cited by Paz 2013: 161). de Witte sees “the protection of linguistic rights” as being “naturally related to the protection
of linguistic diversity”. Hence, the protection of linguistic diversity is such an essential “part of the agenda of fundamental rights protection in the European Union.” (de Witte 2008: 109, 114) Finland is one of the EU member states who has committed itself to the protection of cultural diversity as will be discussed in more detail in chapter five.

There are no common accepted definitions of Language rights. Thus, as Douglas A. Kibbee puts it “the practical meaning of language rights has not yet been established anywhere” (Kibbee 1998). But generally, “the regulation of both human and state behaviour through law”, always seems to include “a linguistic aspect”, either “explicitly or implicitly”. Thus, “language rights are concerned with the rules that public institutions adopt with respect to language use in a variety of different domains.” According to Réaume, language rights usually refer to the “legal situation of speakers of non-dominant languages or where there is no single dominant language.” In the situation where “two or more languages are officially recognized, despite the use in legal norms of generic phrasing guaranteeing any person the right to use either or any official language, the purpose of these rights is to enable speakers of the minority language to use their own language rather than the majority language”. It is important to note that language rights also apply to “a language, which is dominant in the whole national territory” but “is in minority in a given region”. Consequently, language rights apply to everyone, including speakers of a dominant language in a country. However, their rights are usually “well guaranteed and enforced by social rules and practices, irrespectively of their rights being constitutionally or legally entrenched.” (as cited by Arzoz 2007: 4)
To add to this discussion, there are two kinds of legal protection when it comes to language rights: one, being “the regime of linguistic tolerance, which includes rights that protect speakers of minority languages from discrimination and assimilation”; and the other being “the regime of linguistic promotion, which includes certain ‘positive‘ rights to key public services, such as education, relationships with public power (government, courts, etc.) and public media, through the medium of minority languages.” (Arzoz 2007: 4-5) Furthermore, the state has different roles depending on if it has adopted rights in terms of linguistic tolerance or linguistic promotion.

When the state adopts linguistic tolerance, then the “language rights include the freedom to freely choose and to use one‘s language and to be free of interference in one‘s linguistic affairs and identity.” These rights are immediately applicable, thus, there is no need for the state to intervene for the individual to enjoy these rights. However, in some states “language rights may also include rights to receive all or some basic public services in a given language.” Depending on if the state has “[c]onstitutional or statutory provisions” when it comes to “dealing with these rights”, there are “different degrees of ‘enforceability‘, ranging from self-executing to programmatic provisions”. Generally, it is the case that “positive language rights tend to be drafted as programmatic provisions: they imply that the state is under a duty to act in order to make its citizens benefit from the rights constitutionally granted.” Thus, public authorities are required to be involved and tend to these laws. (Arzoz 2007: 7)

According to Paz there are “three functions in day-to-day life that generate language conflicts: (i) education, (ii) court proceedings, and (iii) communication with
public authorities” (Paz 2013: 170). Similarly, Arzoz claims that “the aspect of language rights that is most contested in democratic societies is not those instrumental rights generally recognized as human rights in international law, but the use and promotion of minority languages by public authorities” (Arzoz 2007: 12) Hence, why it is necessary for the state not to ignore its duty to promote these language rights. Thus, to stop or prevent language conflicts, a state needs to respect and enforce the promotion of language rights of its citizens.

Moreover, the language rights dealing with linguistic protection/promotion and not merely linguistic tolerance are more of a “political process within each society”. This is the case as “[g]ranting language rights to individuals implies assuming duties on the part of the government, which has to provide the personnel to facilitate linguistic services in administration, education, justice” etc. All these are political matters, thus, “politics are essential in accommodating linguistic diversity, defining language rights and managing linguistic conflicts.” (Arzoz 2007: 15) Based on this, it is safe to suggest that government policies are important instruments for controlling and managing these political matters. This is discussed in more detail in the last section of this chapter. The next section discusses the importance of social identity theories and how language rights relate to national identity.

2.4 Social identity theories and National identity

As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, the need to respect language rights has to do with social identity theories in the way that these theories explain why people have a need to speak their own language. Essentially people need to speak their
own language as it is an important way to express and support their identity. If this need is not respected, the likelihood of a violent conflict increases. This section links language rights to the issue of social identity and national identity. Firstly, a brief discussion on the theories and concepts of social identity are required to frame this paper’s research question as they explain the formation and significance of minorities (social groups) within a nation. Additionally, these theories can help to explain why there is a tension between the Finnish- and Swedish-speaking Finns.

It is important to study social identity as it helps us to understand and interpret our social reality (Somers 1994). The scholars Ashmore, Capozza, Brown, Korostelina, Trepte and Wearing all discuss social identity theories and how it relates to conflict. These theories can explain why the growing divide between the Swedish and Finnish-speaking communities in Finland needs to be addressed to prevent violent conflicts.

In the last four decades, there has been an increasing interest among scholars from various disciplinary fields, to explore the concepts and the relationship between Self and Other when analysing the reasons for intergroup conflict (Ashmore et al 2001; Capozza and Brown 2000; Grosvenor 1999). The tension between the Finnish and Swedish-speaking Finns is based on this Self and Other concepts as their differences have created two separate subnational identities under the common national identity of being Finnish. With language being the number one factor dividing these two groups.

Moreover, it is possible that social identities are not only the basis for but can also aggravate intergroup conflict. As a result, this might make the identities more exclusive as the conflict further solidifies and rigidifies these identities. (Ashmore et al 2001)
Hence, why Ashmore et al (2001) stress the importance of ”addressing social identity questions” as they “might lead to tension reduction and positive transformation of the intergroup relational space.” (as cited by Gatsias 2016) To better understand these theories it is necessary to establish what is meant by social identity.

There are many different definitions of social identity. To name a few that are similar; Korostelina defines social identity as “a feeling of belonging to a social group, a strong connection with a category, and an important part of our mind that affects our social perceptions and behavior” (2007: 15). Tajfel, another scholar with a similar definition, defines social identity as “that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (Trepte 2006: 258-259). Together these two definitions suggest that social identities are malleable and adaptable to changes in time. Additionally, they play a significant role in shaping people’s behaviour and attitudes.

According to Wearing, theories of social identity try to explain how the social environment can form individuals’ identity and behaviour, thus the formation of a social identity is “contextual” (Wearing 2011). Hence, if the social environment changes, then so can the social identity. Moreover, social identity theories attempt to reveal the importance and functions of national identities, minorities, and other social groups. In this study the focus is placed on national identity as the case study is about Finnish- and Swedish-speaking Finns.
As mentioned previously, the national identity concept is part of social identity theories as it is generally seen as a type of social identity. Thus, social identity theories which explain how different groups of people form their attitudes and behaviour towards the “Other” or those who do not belong to a particular group (in-group), is also applied to the formation of national identities. National identity “is the product of a process through which groups of people come to perceive themselves as a distinct community with historical continuity, common culture, and common belief in a set of values and ideals”. A person is usually born in a social category, meaning from birth, the individual belongs to a certain social group (or national identity). However, it is also possible to choose to become a member of a certain social group, later in life. Time is also an important factor when it comes to identity building. The more an individual socializes within a certain social group, the more it feels attached both cognitively and emotionally to this particular group. "This fact illustrates the key role that educational institutions play in fostering certain forms of collective identities among children, as the latter grow older and socialize within given educational structures that systematically promote a dominant identity frame.” (Gatsias 2016) Hence, schools play an important role in shaping identities.

There are many definitions of nation and national identity. One way of defining nation is to see it as a “named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, a public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members” (Smith 1991: 14). When it comes to national identity, Herbert Kelman defines it as a human population who sees itself as “a
unique, identifiable entity with a claim to continuity over time, to unity across geographic
distance, and to the right to various forms of self-expression” (as cited in Korostelina

Another important concept which is connected to national identities is
nationalism. There are different types of nationalism. Hobsbawm (1990) identifies two
types: the mass civic-political nationalism, that is not based on ethnicity but rather on a
”sense of belongingness and loyalty to a political entity; and ethno-linguistic (ethnic)
nationalism, exclusive in nature, in which national identity is structured upon the notion
of ethnic ties and common descent” (As cited by Gatsias 2016). The national identity of
the Swedish-speaking Finns is structured upon the notion of a shared common language
and shared understanding of common ethnicity. Because of this, the national community
of the Swedish-speaking Finns is formed based on ethno-linguistic nationalism.
(Sundberg 1985: 15-16) The identity of the Finnish-speaking Finns is also based on
ethno-linguistic (ethnic) nationalism with a common language and ethnicity. On top of
this, the Finnish-speaking Finns and the Swedish-speaking Finns both identify with the
general Finnish identity which is based on civic and territorial ties. This unifies the two
different language communities in civic-political nationalism.

Group identities are formed through sociocultural discourses, social
representations, collective memory and myths. Additionally, institutional, linguistic and
symbolic relations have a constant impact on how the individual understands the Self,
his/her identity and agency (Ashmore et al 2001; Breakwell 1993; Somers 1994; Stets
and Burke 2000). National identities and other forms of collectivities are manipulated
through the use of “language and other semiotic systems” (De Cillia et al. 1999: 153). Thus, this suggests once more that language and culture play a significant role in shaping and reinforcing identities. Additionally, as stated by Ashmore et al (2001), Breakwell (1993), Somers (1994), Stets and Burke (2000), institutions such as the education system and schools are other important influencers.

Moreover, De Cillia et al. (1999) claim that “[c]ollective identity production is essentially a search for commonly accepted signifiers, which serve as a habitat for the creation and dissemination of shared understandings, emotional attitudes, behavioral predispositions, and normative orders.” An essential part of the collective identity production “[…] is reserved for the discursive strategies of assimilation, meant to create an understanding of intra-group sameness, and dissimilation, which aim at the construction of intergroup differences. It is through exposure to such a discourse that young members of collectivities get to develop a sense of intra-group uniformity and inter-group distinctiveness.” (as cited by Gatsias 2016) These types of Social identity theories give meaning to the social changes that are happening in Finland and to the dynamic that exists between the Finnish- and Swedish-speaking Finns.

It is through the process of assimilation and dissimilation that social identity theories can explain why two different language groups are able to dehumanize each other and become enemies. This becomes easier if the two groups do not interact and familiarise themselves with the ”Other’s” identity and culture. By learning about the Other, the Other becomes more human and it becomes easier to relate to and respect one and another. (Gatsias 2016) Hence, the importance of interaction and socialisation.
Additionally, as discussed in the section about language rights, language is inherently linked to culture. Moreover, linguists claim that learning the language early on facilitates the learning process considerably (The Economist 2001). Thus, in a country like Finland that has two national languages, it is important to learn the Other national language at a young age, as this facilitates the learning process and enables the understanding of the Other’s culture. By forming an intercultural understanding early on, it makes it easier for the two language groups to interact and socialise, which can prevent them from dehumanizing each other. This interaction coupled with Peace education in the form of Intercultural education can facilitate the creation of harmonious relationships between the two identity groups. The concepts of Peace education and Intercultural education are discussed in more detail in the next section.

2.5 Peace education and Educational policy

An important question is how education can foster good social relations between two language communities. Social identity theories suggest that education in a country can play a significant role in bridging the gap between language communities. This is the case as education in schools plays a role in shaping the student’s/ child’s present and future attitudes/ behaviour towards other groups of people (Ashmore et al 2001; Breakwell 1993; Somers 1994; Stets and Burke 2000). This section discusses what type of education is needed when the aim is to create a collective well-being for the whole society where the different communities can live together in harmony and peace.

When the purpose is to promote a society’s collective well-being it is necessary to strive towards positive peace, not merely negative peace which is an absence of direct
violence. By striving for positive peace, the needs of all members of society are equally addressed. (Galtung, 1969) A way of achieving this kind of peace is through Peace education. This type of education promotes values such as peace, justice and harmony and aims to tend to everyone’s socio-cultural and human needs (President’s Foundation for the Well-Being of Society 2017). This sounds fair in theory but can be seen as utopian as it is of course more difficult to achieve in practice. However, the different guidelines in Peace education are effective for preventing violent conflict (Bojan 2009) and thus deserve attention if the aim is to promote positive peace in a society. The prominent peace educator Maria Montessori claims that if the purpose is to create peaceful, democratic societies, the people need to be educated in ways that foster independent, critical thought, appreciation of diversity, and positive engagement (Harris 2008). The appreciation of diversity is essential in a world that is becoming more and more globalized.

With the rate of globalization, it has become part of our daily lives to have interactions with people from different cultural backgrounds. Thus, to maintain peaceful social relations it is necessary to respect these diverse cultures and identities. (President’s Foundation for the Well-Being of Society) A way of learning how to do this it to enhance the inter-cultural and interreligious understanding by promoting “awareness, knowledge and understanding of many aspects of other cultures, for the purpose of living together peacefully and harmoniously” (De Leo/UNESCO 2010). This study focuses on how to enhance the intercultural understanding between the Finnish- and Swedish-speaking
Finns. One way of doing this is through Intercultural education which is one of the many forms of Peace education.

Intercultural education or pedagogy is based on a European, international and global perspective. This type of perspective contributes to the understanding of one’s relationship to the rest of the world. (Holzbrecher et al. 2000: 395) One answer to the challenges of multiculturalism in society is to introduce the concept of Intercultural education in the education system (Bojan 2009: 93). Intercultural education is usually applied to the case of migrants but also to members of the majority society with the objective to develop “intercultural skill of individuals, thus contributing to prevention of conflicts, to education for peace, etc.” (Bojan 2009: 95). The objectives of Intercultural education differ depending on who the subjects are. For instance, the aim with migrants is to assimilate them “in order to integrate [them] as quick and as deep as possible within the society”. However, it is a bit different with national minorities as here the objective is “partial integration, up to the limits of keeping their own cultural and linguistic identity.” (Bojan 2009: 98)

Moreover, the minorities in a country “need a certain intercultural openness, and exchange” or else they risk to become isolated and this would make it more difficult for them to integrate into society. However, when minorities are open to intercultural exchanges, this poses the question if it could “lead to a stronger integration and thus to a quicker assimilation, losing as a consequence the very identity they had wanted to preserve.” (Bojan 2009: 102) Consequently, another question arises: “How can a balance be reached between enough and not too much interculturality?” This is an issue that
concerns the policy and educational policy field. (Bojan 2009: 103) As policies are often created to resolve existing problems in society and are there to improve the current situation, they are also seen as instruments to prevent or resolve conflict.

The concept of interculturality itself “supposes two interacting parts, and for being realised intercultural education needs reciprocal interest and openness of all involved/interacting parts.” (Bojan 2009: 103) According to Florentina Alexandru: “One of the main objectives of the intercultural education is the formation of a person who can manifest both the desire for self-knowledge and that of knowing the other, even though the external image of the other is different.” With the process of “[s]tarting from a “model of the difference”” a person is able to “learn that otherness is not a deficiency”. This is important as “[e]veryone has cultural particularities and a different knowledge base. These aspects can be positively used in the intercultural education, based on pedagogy of socio-cultural diversity that focusing on learner and its characteristics stimulates dialogue, decentration, plurality and emancipation.” (Alexandru 2012: 17)

Moreover, the promotion of a pedagogy of sociocultural diversity is to affirm multiculturalism by enforcing values such as “tolerance [and] non-discrimination based on any racial, religious, ethnic, political [or] sexual criteria” (Alexandru 2012: 19). Thus, the pedagogy of socio-cultural diversity falls under the category of intercultural education but is a bit different as it does not merely tolerate multiculturalism but it enforces it (Alexandru 2012).

The pedagogy of socio-cultural diversity “enrolls itself in seeking a logic of peace, which is meant to be one of the active links in the educational field. It claims to
take part, inside the school, to the collective creation of a cultural space accepting, inserting, and redrafting cultural significations from the members of various communities in contact with each other” (Perregaux, 1999: 123). By creating this cultural space it promotes a pluricultural society that is based on the principles of equality and acknowledgement. The pedagogy of socio-cultural diversity aims to develop knowledge and skills plus “attitudes which allow the individual subjected to education to participate” in an intercultural dialogue and in intercultural understanding. (Alexandru 2012: 21-22) According to Alexandru, there are ten key objectives that can be attributed to the pedagogy of socio-cultural diversity:

1. equality for all individuals, no matter their origin
2. respect towards diversity and difference
3. self-respect and acknowledgement of others
4. negotiation / patchwork type of identity
5. socio-cultural and linguistic self-reflection
6. experience of mutual learning
7. intercultural learning as social learning
8. plurilingual education
9. ability to maintain the dialogue in intercultural situations
10. understanding the overall intercultural situation.
For the purpose of this study, the focus will be put on the objective number eight listed above, namely the plurilinguistic education, as this objective facilitates to get to know the Other when knowing the Other’s language. Thus, bringing the Self and the Other, in terms of two different language groups, closer to each other.

Another proponent of multilingualism is the EU. The purpose of EU policy on multilingualism is to support linguistic diversity in Europe and to promote language learning. (Ministry of Justice 2017: 9-10) Article 3 of the Treaty on the European Union stipulates that the Union must respect the wealth and diversity of its cultures and languages and to ensure the conservation and development of Europe's cultural heritage. In addition, article 22 of the EU Charter on Fundamental Rights (2010/C 83/02) stipulates that the Union must respect the cultural, religious and linguistic diversity. (Ministry of Justice 2017: 10) This is vital considering the numerous languages in the EU.

To be more precise, the EU has 24 official languages and more than 60 regional languages or minority languages. Each and every EU country decides on its own to what extent it supports these languages and what legal status it is prepared to give to them. (Ministry of Justice 2017: 10) Finland’s take on the language rights of its minorities are also clearly stipulated in the Finnish constitution (Ch. 2, 17 §). In the case of Finland where there are two national languages, a plurilingual education is essential for maintaining a bilingual country. Hence, the importance of being required to study the other national language that is not one’s mother tongue in schools. As mentioned earlier, linguists claim that to learn a language at a young age facilitates the learning process (The Economist 2001). By learning a new language, it also introduces the student to the
culture that is attached to the language. By getting familiar with the culture, the child is more likely to interact with the people who speak that particular language and in the case of Finland, it could bring the Finnish-speaking Finns closer to the Swedish-speaking Finns, and, thus, improve the language climate in the country. This brings us to the question if educational policies can have a good impact on the social relationship between two language communities.

Before discussing educational policies, it is important to know what definitions this paper uses for ‘a policy’ and what is meant by a ‘policy orientation’. It turns out that there are numerous definitions for a policy. One definition by Wadi D. Haddad (1995: 18) is: a “policy is defined functionally to mean: An explicit or implicit single decision or group of decisions which may set out directives for guiding future decisions, initiate or retard action, or guide implementation of previous decisions.” Another definition by Manitoba’s “A Guide To Policy Development” (2003) is similar but stresses the government’s role: a “policy refers to those plans, positions and guidelines of government which influence decisions by government”. When combining Haddad’s definition together with the one by Manitoba, it gives a more complete picture of what a policy is. This paper employs this combined definition as Haddad’s definition highlights the functional aspect whereas Mantioba’s definition points out the government’s role. These two aspects are essential in understanding the policy process.

In the mid-20th century the theoretical concept ‘policy orientation’ emerged as Harold D. Lasswell, an American political scientist, saw the need for a new rational way of thinking. This need arose after the Second World War when the dangerous era of the
Cold War began and the risk of nuclear war became a new and real security threat (Hudson & Lowe 2009: 5) Thus, the policy orientation (including the policy analysis and process) was a response to the Cold War era of uncertainty and “Lasswell’s motivation for creating a policy ‘orientation’ was the intelligent application of different disciplines to improve society and to defend democracy” (Hudson & Lowe 2009: 5-6) where “the ultimate goal is the realisation of human dignity in theory and practice” (direct quote from Lasswell as cited by Hudson & Lowe 2009: 6). In order to tackle the problems in society a policy analysis cannot merely be a social science discipline but needs to be an interdisciplinary one (Hudson & Lowe 2009: 5). Moreover, as Haddad puts it, “Policies, however, differ in terms of their scope, complexity, decision environment, range of choices, and decision criteria.” (Haddad 1995: 18) Thus, there is a wide range of different policies (including educational policies) as they apply to everything that needs improvement or management within the state system.

This paper focuses on educational policies and their potential to tackle problems in a democratic society, as well as their ability to improve the unity within a nation. Educational policies are concerned with shaping the education system in a country (Haddad 1995). When conducting a policy analysis of educational policies the aim is to evaluate and determine the success or failure of the policies in question (Haddad 1995). A policy analysis or evaluation investigates “the effectiveness of policy interventions, implementation and processes, and to determine their merit, worth, or value in terms of improving the social and economic conditions of different stakeholders.” (Her Majesty’s Treasury 2011) Kabeer (1994) claims that “policies play an important role in determining
the dynamics of power and distribution of roles and resources among the different people in educational institutions”. Consequently, to avoid problems in society, educational policies need “to be sensitive towards diversity of all forms such as culture, ethnicity, religion, region and so on and so forth”. (as cited by Musofer 2012)

In Finland, education is based on the basic principle that ”everyone must have equal access to high-quality education and training. The same educational opportunities should be available to all citizens, irrespective of their ethnic origin, age, wealth, or place of residence. The country’s educational policies are based on the lifelong learning principle: i.e., that individuals can always advance to a higher level of education, regardless of the choices they make in between.” (Ministry of Education and Culture 2017) This suggests that Finland is sensitive towards diversity when designing educational policies. According to the “Population Europe Resource Finder & Archive” (PERFAR) the main guiding principles of Finnish educational policies have been that of “inclusion and equal rights to education” ever since Finland became independent in 1917 (PERFAR 2014). However, the recent educational policy reforms regarding the compulsory Swedish language subject in Finnish-speaking schools suggest a changing trend that is not aligned with promoting a plurilingual education and a bilingual Finland. These reforms are having a negative effect on the language rights of the Swedish-speaking Finns. The implications of this will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters.
This second chapter discussed the main concepts of the study to give the theoretical framework. The following chapter (chapter 3) gives a brief overview of the case study to illustrate the context in which the study is made.
This chapter gives an overview of the case study to help the reader see the context in which the study is made. With the research topic being the linguistic issue in the case of Finland, this study explores the educational policy reforms that are directly connected to the teaching of the compulsory Swedish subject in Finnish-language schools. These reforms were chosen for the analysis because they deserve attention as they are having an impact on the language rights of the Swedish-speaking Finns. As Finland has two official or national languages, namely, Finnish and Swedish, it grants equal language rights to both language groups. These rights are guaranteed in the Finnish constitution as will be discussed in more detail in chapter five. Additionally, it is a constitutional right to receive services from bilingual municipalities and state authorities in both national languages (Ministry of Justice 2017). Despite its equal language status, Swedish is usually seen as the second national language as it is less spoken in Finland compared to Finnish (Ibid.).

The reasons for why Swedish is a national language in Finland, requires a brief look at Finland’s history.

It is estimated that there has been native Swedish-speaking people in what is now Finland for more than one thousand years. This is due to the fact that Finland was part of the Swedish kingdom between 1157 and 1809. Thus, for more than 650 years, Finland shared the same history as Sweden (Lindqvist 2013). In 1809, Finland became part of the
Russian Empire for little over a hundred years before its independence in 1917. During this time, both Swedish and Finnish were spoken along with Russian. However, the Russian language never penetrated the Finnish society and lost most of its presence as soon as Finland became independent (Geber 2010). The Swedish language and culture has got a long history in Finland as will be discussed in more detail in chapter five.

Initially, Swedish was the primary language, meaning it was the administrative and legal language. However, by 1918, Swedish became known as the second native language and in 1922, a Language Act was established which stated that Swedish and Finnish are national languages of equal status in Finland (Geber 2010, 9-12). Thus, for the past 200 years, the Swedish language in Finland has gradually lost its position from being the first language to that of being the second native language in public life (Koskenranta 2012: 13).

It is worth mentioning that the Swedish that is spoken in Finland is a bit different from the one spoken in Sweden. Although the Swedish in Finland and Sweden have the same structure and grammar, the Finland-Swedish way of speaking and its dialects differ from the standard Swedish spoken in Sweden (Ministry of Justice 2017: 14). This unique case, where the Swedish language seems to be the main factor differentiating the Swedish-speaking minority from the Finnish-speaking Finns, creates a special dynamic.

Before discussing the relationship between Finnish- and Swedish-speaking Finns it is necessary to identify and establish who is a Swedish-speaking Finn. This is not very complicated, as anyone who was born in Finland and who has Swedish as mother tongue, or has registered Swedish as their first language in Finland, is considered to be a
Swedish-speaking Finn (finlandssvensk/ suomenruotsalainen). If “language is constitutive to culture” (Paz 2013: 161) then by being a Swedish-speaking Finn the person is automatically part of the Finland-Swedish culture which is a sub-culture of Finland’s general culture.

Today, there are approximately 300,000 Swedish-speaking Finns in Finland who make up merely 5.6 % of the Finnish population (Jungner 2004). The official statement of Finland’s Ministry of Justice is that the Swedish-speaking Finns are an inseparable part of Finland (Ministry of Justice 2017: 14). Although this language minority is small it has played an important role in developing Finland’s history and culture. Many Swedish-speaking Finns, such as the famous composer Jean Sibelius, the author of Mumin, Tove Jansson, and the national poet of Finland, Johan Ludvig Runeberg, who wrote the lyrics to the Finnish National Anthem, have made important contributions to the cultural heritage of Finland (Lindqvist 2013). These are some examples which illustrate why the Swedish-speaking minority is inherently part of Finland’s cultural heritage and history.

The Ministry of Justice in Finland recognizes this and states that the Finland-Swedish culture and identity constitute an important part of Finland’s culture and identity. Also, that Finland has a special responsibility for the preservation of Finland-Swedish culture. In its activities, the authorities are required to safeguard the country's linguistic heritage and promote the use of both national languages. If circumstances so require, special measures should be taken to safeguard the cultural or social needs related to the national languages. Although it is a Swedish speakers’ right to communicate in Swedish with authorities and in the use of public service, this right is met inadequately in
practice. Thus, according to the Ministry of Justice, the authorities and the general public should pay more attention to these obligations. (Ministry of Justice 2017: 14-15)

Some of the practical applications regarding the inadequate use of the Swedish language include the lack of Swedish language skills in the work-life in Finland. There is a particular lack of personnel speaking Swedish in the public sector, but this is increasingly the case also in the private sector. In the private sector, it is argued that Swedish language skills are useful because Finland has a lot of trade with other Nordic countries. The Swedish language makes it easier to participate in the Nordic co-operation, enabling the full use of the other Nordic countries' educational programs, labour markets and cultures. (Ministry of Justice 2017: 15) This paper argues that to ensure that future employees in the government and public sector have sufficient Swedish language skills, it is necessary for the Finnish education system to promote educational policies that enforce a bilingual Finland.

Different debates about the linguistic issue in Finland have existed since the country became independent in 1917. To guarantee a bilingual Finland, there was an educational policy reform in 1968 which made it compulsory to study the other national language in school. As a result, the Swedish language became a compulsory subject in Finnish-language schools and vice versa.

In the last decades the language climate in Finland has become worse as there is more and more tension between the Finnish- and Swedish-language groups. One reason for this tension is that many do not see why Swedish should be a compulsory language subject in Finnish-speaking schools when the language is spoken by merely 5.6% of the
Finnish population. Many debates have been made about this and have had an effect on
government decisions and policies. Hence, this study makes a policy analysis of the three
educational policy reforms of 1968, 2004, and 2012, to establish how these reforms have
affected the Swedish-speaking Finns in terms of their language rights. When for example
the government and healthcare institutions cannot provide services in the Swedish
language it proves that the current system and structure in Finland cannot guarantee the
language rights of the Swedish-speaking Finns in practice. This is a form of structural
violence that leads to frustration and the buildup of tension in society.

This paper argues that to ensure a healthy language climate in Finland it is
important to promote intercultural understanding through education as this lays the
ground for peaceful and harmonious relationships between the two language groups as
discussed in the previous chapter. Peace education, or more specifically, intercultural
education with a pedagogy of socio-cultural diversity, are ways to improve the language
climate in Finland by fostering a culture of Peace. Moreover, as education is key to
mastering a language, Finland should promote educational policies that enforce a
plurilingual education (which is included in the pedagogy of socio-cultural diversity) in
the comprehensive school. This creates the possibility for a healthy language climate that
allows for socio-cultural diversity in a multilingual society.

This chapter gave an overview of the case study. The next chapter discusses the
study’s methodology and research methods.
CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH METHODS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter lays out the study’s research design, and explains the chosen methods plus what their strengths and weaknesses are. As a research method, this paper employs a policy analysis as it is the most relevant approach to answering the research question: “How have the educational policy reforms affected the Swedish-speaking Finns?” As for the epistemological perspective, the study takes an interpretivist stance by evaluating three educational policy reforms to establish their impact on the Swedish speaking community in Finland. The policy-level analysis aims to determine the success/strengths and weaknesses/failures of the policy reforms in regards to ensuring the language rights of the Swedish speaking Finns, and if the reforms have created conditions for a better language climate in Finland.

When doing a qualitative analysis, the aim is to answer the question how whereas when doing a quantitative analysis, one concentrates rather on how much and why (Kalaja, Alanen & Dufva (Ed.) 2011). As the research question is ”How have the Finnish educational policy reforms affected the Swedish-speaking Finns?”, this study employs a qualitative analysis. Although, this study makes a qualitative analysis it is based on postpositivist assumptions. It employs a scientific method and makes an evaluative analysis of a case study. According to Creswell, science research is based on a
postpositivist worldview. Moreover, the postpositivist assumptions tend to represent “the traditional form of research, and these assumptions hold true more for quantitative research than qualitative research.” (Creswell 2014: 6) Thus, this study is particular in the sense that it employ postpositivist assumptions which are part of the traditional way of doing research, but the research itself is a qualitative research. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the study makes an interpretivist stance when approaching the research question. This includes the use of “observational qualitative research methods” with “inductive deeper truth reasoning views” (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill 2007). In this study, a qualitative analysis will be made of both primary and secondary data that are relevant to the research question.

In theory, a democratic government should be transparent and should provide public and reliable information about its work and policies to its citizens. The Finnish government gives out annual reports about its policies and programs. These are considered as primary data. Additionally, the study looks at secondary data that consists of other authors’ analyses and newspaper articles about what is being studied. By looking at government policy reports about the Finnish education system and programs plus by analysing other authors’ analyses and newspaper articles on the educational policy reforms, this paper evaluates how the educational policy reforms have affected the Finland-Swedes.

The topic “the linguistic issue in Finland” was chosen because it is an issue that personally affects the researcher. This is the case as the researcher comes from Finland and thus, there is no need for cultural sensitivity. Moreover, as the study is a policy
analysis that is based on public government data and secondary data, there is no need for ethical considerations either. The research question: “How have the educational policy reforms affected the Swedish-speaking Finns?”, is a very personal question as the researcher herself identifies as a Swedish-speaking Finn. This facilitates the study as the researcher has experience and is familiar with the culture and identity group under study. However, when doing the analysis, the researcher needs to be careful not to perform researcher bias. To avoid this, a careful analysis is made of both the Finnish and Swedish language sources. The next section explains the study’s methodology and conceptual framework for the policy analysis.

4.2 Conceptual framework

The study’s conceptual framework for the policy analysis is based on the integrated model that was used in UNESCO’s booklet named “Education policy-planning process: an applied framework”. In the booklet the author Wadi D. Haddad, with the assistance of Terri Demsky, present a framework that covers the full policy-planning process. To be more specific, their framework for education policy analysis “covers the pre-policy decision activities, the decision process itself, and the post-decision planning activities” (Haddad 1995: 23). Thus, this framework is a conceptual model that facilitates the extraction and specification of identifiable elements in a case study (Haddad 1995: 23-24). The framework consists of seven different processes. “The first four [deal] with policy making, the fifth with planning and sixth and seventh with policy adjustment” (Haddad 1995: 24). Haddad and Demsky describe the seven processes as:
(i) analysis of the existing situation,
(ii) the generation of policy options,
(iii) evaluation of policy options,
(iv) making the policy decision,
(v) planning of policy implementation,
(vi) policy impact assessment, and
(vii) subsequent policy cycles.

The focus of this study will not be on the entire policy-planning process as merely three of the seven processes are required for answering the research question ”How have the educational policy reforms affected the Swedish-speaking Finns?” The three relevant processes are:

(i) analysis of the existing situation (prior to the reform), to help the reader understand why the reforms were introduced in the first place,
(vi) policy impact assessment, to evaluate how the policies have affected the Swedish-speaking Finns, and finally,
(vii) subsequent policy cycles (if there are any), to illustrate what policy strategies the government has in terms of the language issue in Finland.

All these three processes are slightly modified when applied to the case study so as to better address the research question, and will be explained in more detail in the
following sections. As the aim of this study is to understand the educational policy reforms and their effects on the Swedish-speaking Finns, it becomes irrelevant to analyse the decision process itself, thus, this study will ignore; (ii) the generation of policy options, (iii) evaluation of policy options, (iv) making the policy decision, and (v) planning of policy implementation, as these processes do not answer the research question. The next section explains the first process “analysis of the existing situation” which according to Haddad is the process before coming up with a new policy. However, for the purpose of this study, an analysis of the situation prior to the reform will be studied, meaning that the researcher looks at the past to understand why there was a reform in the first place.

*Analysis of the existing situation (prior to the reform)*

Before looking at the effects of a policy reform or change, one must understand how the situation was before the policy change took place. This way it becomes possible to compare the situation before with the situations after the policy change, and to see what consequences the policy change had on what is being studied, in this case, the effects on the Swedish-speaking Finns. As Haddad so well-articulated “A policy change is normally a response to a problem or set of problems in the sector, and must, therefore, start with an appreciation of the educational sector and its context” (Haddad 1995: 24). To be more complete in the policy analysis, it is necessary to look at the “social context, including political, economic, demographic, cultural, and social issues” as these are aspects that can “[…] affect the decision making and implementation processes of the education sector” (Haddad 1995: 24).
However, as this study does not analyse the decision making and implementation processes, an analysis of the social, political, economic, demographic, and cultural issues are still required to inform the reader of what issues contributed to the introduction of a policy change.

To better understand the laws, regulations and policies in a country it requires a careful analysis of the country background. The country's “location, geography, population, culture, and social stratification patterns”, all play a significant role and are elements that need to be included in an education policy analysis (Haddad 1995: 24-25). Moreover, all the elements that are part of a country’s general character complicate “the process of educational policy making” as so many factors need to be taken into consideration (Haddad 1995:25). Additionally, the fact that “different groups have different values about the role of education” (Haddad 1995:25) does not make it any easier. Thus, to please everyone and to come up with an appropriate educational policy is no easy task. In the case of Finland, this research looks at what elements of its background contributed to a policy change to illustrate why the educational policy was introduced.

To the extent that “education represents access to economic and political power, then different access or interest in education also means differential access to power.” (Haddad 1995: 25). Hence, the importance of equal opportunity to education so that everyone gets a chance to develop themselves to their full potential. In the case of Finland, everyone has the right to free basic education (stated in section 16 “Cultural rights” of the second chapter of the Finnish Constitution). This is necessary for
maintaining social justice and stability in a welfare state. According to Haddad, serious conflicts and struggles tend to emerge in countries where there is an increasingly unequal “distribution of access to goods and services” (Haddad 1995: 25). Therefore, to maintain positive peace within a country it is important for the state to support a structure that promotes justice and gives equal opportunities for all. For instance, in Finland, the state ensures free basic education, as mentioned previously, and free healthcare. Despite Finland being a welfare state, in practice, the country experiences shortcomings when it comes to guaranteeing the language rights of the Swedish-speaking Finns (Ministry of Justice 2017: 14-15).

To analyse the political environment helps to understand “the national decisionmaking process, the comparative value of education, and the role that education must play in the socio-political process”. According to Haddad, it is important to distinguish between “the priorities of the national political elite relative to development”, and the priorities “of the educational elite relative to education”, as they are often different. In other words, it is common that the head of the ministry of education has different plans compared to the political elite by whom he or she was appointed. Moreover, it is usual in many countries that the education sector has considerable autonomy. Furthermore, it is often the case that the political and educational sectors have different or not very similar objectives. (Haddad 1995: 25) In the case of Finland, it is worth examining the relationship between the political and educational sectors to understand the extent to which the former dictates and controls the latter.
Another relevant aspect is “the institutional structure of the political sector” as it “has implications for educational development” (Haddad 1995: 25). Thus, another important variable to include in the analysis of the political context is the different political parties’ values and preferences, as they too influence the policy process (Haddad 1995: 25). However, this study will only look at the political parties in Finland who were responsible for the policy change in question. This can be done by examining what type of government ruled during the time that the educational policy was introduced.

When doing an analysis of the economic context it is necessary to look at the macroeconomic and human resources situation (Haddad 1995: 28). In the case of Finland, the study will make a qualitative analysis of what the trends were in the various sectors, and what the country’s financial resources were, to understand what was required from the education sector for the well-being of the economy, and what the education sector could expect “in terms of general infrastructure and financial resources” (Haddad 1995: 28).

According to Haddad, “variables such as demographic shifts, urbanization, and migration, coupled with the likely growth in various sectors of the economy, will have a significant impact on labour markets and consequently on needs for education and skill training” (Haddad 1995: 28). By looking at these variables it explains once more why there was a policy change in Finland, and how the labour markets looked like plus what the perceived needs for education and skill training were.

Moreover, the level of economic development determines “the capacity of the educational system to build schools and to expand”. Thus, an analysis of the economic
infrastructure and “the range of possible taxation by the government” can explain the educational expenditures. Finally, to analyse “the economic growth rate” at the time can explain what the needed skills or what the slack resources were and how education was prioritized. As Haddad claims that “as the rate of growth increases, more funds are often made available to education; by the same token, as it decreases, allocations to education are among the first [to get] cut”. (Haddad 1995: 28) Thus, a qualitative analysis of the economic context in Finland is necessary to understand why the policy was introduced.

When analysing the education sector it is necessary to identify and understand what “the major sectoral issues” are in the country (Haddad 1995: 28). Haddad formulates six categories under which the major sectoral issues can be explored:

(i) access to educational opportunities;
(ii) equity in the distribution of educational services;
(iii) structure of the education system;
(iv) internal efficiency;
(v) external efficiency; and
(vi) institutional arrangements for the management of the sector.

This paper will not describe the above mentioned categories in more detail. As for a full description plus for an explanation of what types of analytic techniques that can be used for these categories, see the work of Haddad and Demsky (1994), Kemmerer (1994),

Haddad suggests that the “evolutionary nature” of the above issues should be taken into account when analysing the education sector. By doing this, one looks at how the “issues in the development of the educational system” have changed over a period of time. The issues do tend to change over time as “[t]he meeting of one educational need or solution of one problem frequently creates another”. To illustrate this, Haddad gives the example of when there is an “expansion of the system and the provision of new facilities”, this expansion can “lead to issues about the quality of the education provided and the capacity of the educational administration to handle a larger educational system”. (Haddad 1995: 29) In the case of Finland, the study will identify the major sectoral issues in the country to see which of the issues did have or are still having an impact on the Swedish-speaking Finns.

Moreover, by analysing “education across time” there is a tendency to see how the system can “oscillate between objectives which are somewhat incompatible”. Additionally, to study the past helps to understand why the policy was needed or advocated for at one particular time. (Haddad 1995: 29) Thus, by looking at the historical context of the education sector in Finland it can shed light on why the educational policy reform happened in the first place. The next section discusses the first of the two policy adjustment processes that deals with the impact of the policy.
Policy impact assessment

The policy impact assessment is the main focus of this study as it answers the research question by evaluating the effects of the policy reform on the Swedish-speaking Finns. A policy can be assessed when it has been active or put “in place long enough to produce results”. To be able to assess the policy’s impact there needs to be a continuous measurement of the policy output. However, the analyst needs to be vigilant as “premature attempts at assessment can misstate the effectiveness of the policy”. According to Haddad, the final assessment should be delayed “until a number of teaching cycles have transpired to separate the effect of the content of the policy change from the excitement which often accompanies implementing a new initiative for the first time”. Although, he stresses that “the sooner accurate assessment takes place, the sooner policy-makers can know if their initiatives are working as anticipated or if adjustments in policy design or policy implementation are required”. (Haddad 1995: 37)

As mentioned before, the aim with analysing the policy reforms in the case of Finland is to identify their positive or negative effects on the Swedish-speaking Finns. It is important to keep in mind the time period so that the assessment of the effects is not premature. However, this study bases its analysis on secondary data where the collected data consists of a wide range of findings from research that was produced by both government institutions and recognised scholars. Moreover, the policies under study have been chosen based on their visible effects on the Swedish-speaking Finns. In other words, the policies are classified as mature if they have been implemented long enough to demonstrate their long-term effects.
If the policy outcome is assessed to be lacking then “it is necessary to determine whether the policy itself is inadequate, or whether poor implementation is at fault”. Haddad suggests that “[h]uman capital inadequacies, under-funding, or inadequate economic stimulus during the implementation stage are among the many possible causes of failure of a well designed policy”. (Haddad 1995: 37-38) If however, the implementation is proved to be good “then it is necessary to re-examine the policy decision and to determine what adjustments or what new policies should be substituted for the original choice”. After these stages, a new policy planning and implementation process can take place. As Haddad points out, it is important to note that “[g]iven the rapid pace of contemporary change and the intimate links between the educational system and the rest of society, even successfully conceived and implemented initiatives require adjustments over time”. (Haddad 1995: 37-38) Thus, the policy cycle is a never ending process that needs to constantly adapt to the changing needs of society.

Both the policy impact assessment and the policy evaluation stage employ the same criteria. Haddad proposes the following nine questions to guide the analyst when doing an impact assessment (Haddad 1995: 38):

1. What have been the actual impacts of the policies in question?
2. Are these impacts desirable given the changes that were hoped for?
3. Are the changes affordable?
4. Did costs prevent their full implementation?
5. Did cost over-runs make it unthinkable to implement them over a longer term or on a wider basis?

6. Can the policy be lived with politically and socially?

7. Are the impacts feasible?

8. Were full impacts accomplished?

9. Would exceptional efforts be required to replicate these impacts in other circumstances?

When applying the above mentioned questions to the case study of Finland, the questions will be adapted to inform and answer the research question. The next section deals with the second and last policy adjustment process, namely the subsequent policy cycles.

*Subsequent policy cycles*

The last stage in the policy cycle is to analyse the need for a subsequent policy cycle. As Haddad claims: “[i]f a policy initiative is carried out systematically, the process of policy design, planning, implementation, impact assessment, and re-design will become iterative, and, in theory, infinitely so”. In practice, the policy cycle is not systematic as the results from a policy analysis are rarely used for improving the policy, but more so to produce sufficient reasons for putting an end to the policy initiative. “Later in the country's history, when policy change is once again needed in the educational area under discussion, a policy process often begins de novo and may duplicate much of the analysis, derivation of alternative options, evaluation, and planning carried out earlier.”
(Haddad 1995: 38-39) There is also the cost aspect in terms of time and money when policy analysts sometimes duplicate previous analyses when starting the policy process from scratch.

According to Haddad a policy process should never be concluded. For an ideal policy process the implementation and policy outcomes are followed by a policy impact assessment which in turn should lead to a new policy cycle if needed. (Haddad 1995: 38-39) To give a more complete picture of the impact of the educational policy reforms in Finland, the study summarizes the Finnish government’s current plans and measures regarding the linguistic issue to illustrate the new policy cycles that are or are going to affect the Swedish-speaking Finns.

4.3 Data collection

The data collection consists of policy reports, legislation, books and studies that have been made on the linguistic issue and that inform the question: how have the educational policy reforms affected the Swedish-speaking Finns in Finland. Thus, multiple primary and secondary sources are used that are relevant to the case study, to evaluate the impact of the educational policies. It is typical for a qualitative researcher to use multiple sources of data and then to “review all of the data, make sense of it, and organize it into categories or themes that cut across all of the data sources.”(Creswell 2014: 175). This is done systematically to find relevant themes that can answer and inform the research question. There are sufficient available data that can give a complete answer to the research question. The policy reports are primary data sources from different Finnish institutions such as the Ministry of Justice, the State Council and the
Ministry of Education and Culture. Whereas the legislation data is from the Ministry of Justice in Finland.

Additionally, to add to the data, there is an analysis of newspaper articles and the media debates that have been going on regarding the linguistic issue, to see the effects of the policies. By doing this, the data consists of secondary sources to answer how the educational policy reforms have affected the Swedish-speaking community. When analysing the media it is important to keep in mind that media “reports are interpretations and not necessarily facts, and as with any inference from observation there is always the possibility that the inference is mistaken” (Höglund & Öbert 2011: 51). Thus, there is a need for vigilance when choosing the newspaper articles or news reports as what is written on the linguistic issue and how the policy reforms have affected the Swedish-speaking Finns might not always be true, plus it can be biased, depending on who wrote or reported on the issue. To ensure a more unbiased analysis, this study explores both Finnish and Swedish newspaper articles to get a better overview of the language debate.

This research study reviews documents as a data collection technique. Another common thing for a qualitative researcher is to make an inductive data analysis, meaning, to build “patterns, categories, and themes from the bottom up, by organizing the data into increasingly more abstract units of information. This inductive process illustrates working back and forth between the themes and the database until the researchers have established a comprehensive set of themes.” (Creswell 2014: 175)

As for the data analysis, descriptive and exploratory analyses are made. A descriptive analysis describes the primary characteristics of the data and an exploratory
analysis searches the data for unknown relationships. (Creswell 2014) The aim is to explore if there is a relationship between the educational policy reforms and the tension between the two language groups.

4.4 Limitations of Research method

The data collection was made during a time period of one month which is not a very long period. Thus, for a more extensive research a longer time period is needed. The results from this study are particular as they apply to only one case study which makes it difficult to generalise the findings. Moreover, as the researcher of this study does not engage with people, it is not possible to know how the Swedish-speaking Finns internalize the effects of the educational policy reforms.

4.5 Researcher bias

This section presents the researcher’s personal reflections on how she approached the topic of the study. Being a supporter of human rights (including language rights) and peace education, the researcher evaluated the effects of the educational policy reforms as positive when they were aligned with her normative beliefs, and evaluated the effects as negative when they did not promote the mentioned values. Moreover, the researcher’s personal background has coloured her analysis. Being a Swedish-speaking Finn who’s own language rights have been violated in practice, motivated her to delve more into the topic. Her own experience of the matter was confirmed through her analysis as the Ministry of Justice have evidence to state that the language rights of the Swedish-speaking Finns are often not met in practice. However, what came as a surprise was that so much as 50% of Swedish speakers compared to only 20% of Finnish speakers
experience harassment and/or discrimination due to their language. This indicates that Finland needs to take serious measures to improve the language climate in its society.

This chapter (chapter 4) discussed the study’s methodology and research methods. The following chapter presents the collected data and conducts a policy analysis of the Finnish educational policy reforms of 1968, 2004, and 2012.
CHAPTER FIVE: DATA PRESENTATION AND POLICY ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter makes a policy analysis of the three educational policy reforms that took place in 1968, 2004, and 2012, to answer the research question: "How have the educational policy reforms affected the Swedish-speaking Finns?". It is worth noting that all three reforms are linked to the linguistic issue in Finland, and that this study makes a policy analysis of the educational policy reforms regarding the compulsory Swedish language subject in Finnish-speaking schools. As discussed in the previous chapter, to give a complete picture of the case study and to answer the research question, the following three processes are required: A. Analysis of the existing situation (prior to the reform), to help the reader understand why the reforms were introduced in the first place; B. Policy impact assessment, to evaluate how the policies have affected the Swedish-speaking Finns; C. Subsequent policy cycles (if there are any), to illustrate what policy strategies the government has in terms of the language issue in Finland.

Firstly, this study analyses the educational policy reform that took place in 1968 and which introduced the compulsory Swedish language subject into The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (grundskoleutbildningen). Secondly, this study analyses the educational policy reform that took place in 2004. This reform resulted in that the Swedish language subject was no longer compulsory in the matriculation examination
(studentexamen) of the Finnish-speaking schools’ general upper secondary education. Finally, this study makes an analysis of the reform that took place in 2012 called ”the hour allocation reform/ timfördelningsreformen”, which made the organization of the language subjects more versatile, but did not increase the compulsory minimum amount of two weekly hours of Swedish in the comprehensive school (grundskolan).

This chapter analyses each of the three policies by going through the three processes: A, B, and C, to establish the impact they have had on the Swedish-speaking Finns. However, for the reforms of 2004 and 2012, the processes A. (Analysis of the existing situation prior to the reform) and B. (Policy impact assessment) have been fused together under the same headline to better serve the research question. Moreover, a special emphasis has been put on the most common debates regarding the compulsory Swedish school subject to better illustrate why the reforms of 2004 and 2012 took place.

5.2 Policy reform of 1968

As mentioned above in the introduction, the policy reform of 1968 introduced the compulsory Swedish language subject into The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (grundskoleutbildningen). The next section analyses the situation prior to the reform to help the reader understand why the reform was introduced. For a complete analysis, the “social context, including political, economic, demographic, cultural, and social issues” (Haddad 1995: 24) are examined. These issues are identified in the following section where the study makes an analysis of Finland’s country background, its political and economic context, plus its education sector.
Analysis of the existing situation prior to the reform of 1968

To better understand the laws, regulations and policies in Finland it requires a careful analysis of the country background, its political and economic context plus its education sector. This section looks at what elements contributed to the policy reform of 1968.

The Finnish constitution states that Finland participates in international cooperation to secure peace and to support human rights (Chapter 1: Section 1). Section 17 of the second chapter of the Finnish constitution refers to the citizens’ language rights. This section states that the two national languages in Finland are Finnish and Swedish. The laws regarding the national languages guarantee that an individual has the right to trial and other authorities in his or her own mother tongue, be it Finnish or Swedish. Moreover, in the Finnish constitution, the public authorities are obliged to equally meet the cultural and social needs of the country’s Finnish- and Swedish-speaking population. (Constitution of Finland 731/1999) To understand why these language rights exist in the first place it requires a brief look at the historical context.

Between the 1100s and 1809, the region that is today Finland was part of the Swedish kingdom. Thus, during this time, Swedish was the administrative and legal language. (Ministry of Justice 2006: 11-12) Swedish was also the language of instruction in grammar schools until the turn of the 19th century. Geber points out that during that time, Swedish was considered to be an important language and was the primary language in most schools. (Geber 2010: 27) When Finland became part of Russia in 1809, Swedish remained the administrative language. However, during the Russian period, Finnish was
gradually taken into use in public life, and university circles consciously worked towards making Finnish the second official language in the region. (Ministry of Justice 2006: 11-12)

According to Geber, the attitudes to the linguistic issue in Finland originated from the national romantic dream of a Finnish nation with its own language. This could be seen in the 19th century, when one began to strengthen and develop the Finnish language and its status. Starting from 1863 this could also be seen in public documents, i.e. laws and public announcements. (Geber 2010: 10) Additionally, many Swedish-speaking families swapped their home language to Finnish to speed up the process (Ministry of Justice 2006: 11-12). This process was very successful as Finland became independent in 1917. By 1918, Finnish was so widely spoken that Swedish became known as the second native language in public life.

In 1921, a Compulsory Education Act was established. This act guaranteed a six-year basic education for all Finnish children who were between seven and 13 years old. As a result, all municipalities in Finland (even the smallest and most remote ones) were included in this elementary school network. (Lampinen 2003: 45) The aim with this act was to ensure an equity in the distribution of educational services and a facilitated access to educational opportunities. This reform can be seen as successful as “In the mid-1930s, around 90% of seven- to 15-year-olds were attending school” (Statistics Finland 2007). Shortly after the establishment of the Compulsory Education Act in 1921, a Language Act was established in 1922. This act stated that Swedish and Finnish are national
languages of equal status in Finland (Geber 2010: 9-12). This was to further secure both national languages.

The Language Act (423/2003) (språklagen / kielilaki) was thus established with the purpose of ensuring the basic constitutional right of each person to use their own language (either Finnish or Swedish) in courts and other authorities. The aim of the law was and still is to ensure that everyone's right to fair trial and good governance is independent of the language, and that the linguistic rights of the individual are realised without his or her particular request for it. (Ministry of Justice 2017: 9) Judicially speaking, Finnish and Swedish hold the same legal status as they are considered to be the official languages of Finland (Geber 2010: 9-12). Hence, Swedish is not a minority language in Finland, and the Swedish-speaking Finns do not hold minority rights but the same rights as the Finnish-speaking Finns. However, for the past 200 years, the Swedish language in Finland has gradually lost its position of being the first language to that of being the second native language in public life (Koskenranta 2012: 13). This makes the Swedish-speaking Finns are a minority in demographic terms. It is worth noting that when this paper discusses the Swedish-speaking Finns as a language/linguistic minority or a national minority it refers to this language group only in demographic not judicial terms.

When it comes to the Swedish speakers’ nationality in Finland, the term “finlandssvensk” meaning a ”Swedish-speaking Finn” appeared only decades after Finland’s independence. During the 1920s and 1930s the term ”Finlands svenska nationalitet /Finland’s Swedish nationality” was regularly used by spokespersons for their
own language group and sometimes also by representatives of the state authority when it came to certifying their reconciliatory stance in the language issue. The state authority did not officially acknowledge the existence of two nationalities in Finland, as the term "nationality" does not appear anywhere in the language legislation. Another collective categorization of the country's Swedish speakers, which has also been avoided in the legislation, is "minority" because it is incompatible with the principle that Swedish is one of the country's two national languages. (Meinander 2015: 12) Thus, as mentioned previously, the linguistic issue regarding the status of the Swedish language in Finland is not about minority rights as long as Swedish remains a national language in the Finnish constitution.

Already during the 1930s, a small group of Finnish parliamentarians suggested that it should be either optional to study Swedish or that it should be removed from the schedule (Geber 2010: 10-11, 53-54). In spite of this, the Swedish language maintained its position as the primary language in schools (Koskenranta 2012).

The linguistic issue in Finland grew worse up until the Second World War, as the requirements which favoured a Finnish-speaking Finland grew stronger. The events during the war, however, calmed the language climate in Finland and brought the two language groups closer together. This was due to the Swedish-language group’s equal and faithful participation in the war against the Soviet Union. This was perceived by both language groups as a definitive confirmation that the country's Swedish speakers were also patriotic in action and therefore deserved their language rights. (Meinander 2015:}
14) In this case, the fact of having an external enemy, united the two language groups in Finland.

An early expression of this reconciliation, after the Second World War, was a committee report that was handed over to the Finnish government in December 1944. According to the report there were many important reasons to put an end to the long language dispute and to admit that the country's legislation on language rights worked well, despite some weaknesses. Friction was mainly due to prejudices and misunderstandings that could be bridged by a generous regulation of language relations, thus making the "Svenska Finlands folkting", an organisation working for the rights and in the interest of the Swedish language group, unnecessary and superfluous. The report also noted another source of dissatisfaction, namely the term "finländare" was seen as problematic. The term was adopted in the 1910s and was a Swedish word for describing the special nationality of a Finn who speaks Swedish. This term was problematic as it was different compared to the other Swedish word "finnar" that was used for the Finnish-speaking population. This distinction fed the suspicion that the Swedish-language group did not feel associated with the country's majority population on a national level. Therefore, the recommendation was to avoid the term "finländare" in the future. (Meinander 2015: 14) However, interestingly, the Committee had no objections to the use of the term "finlandssvensk/ the Swedish word for a Swedish-speaking Finn" when it wanted to emphasize the language group's "autonoma ställning som nationalitet" "autonomous position as a nationality" (Kommittébetänkande No 1 1945: 94–95, 144–147).
In practice, these linguistic recommendations had no effect. On the contrary, the two concepts finlandssvensk/finländare would in the next decades become public concepts among the Swedish-speakers without causing any considerable irritation among the Finnish-speaking population. The report therefore acted mainly as a signal that there was a political consensus that the time was ripe for settling the linguistic issue and to create a peaceful language climate, plus that the Swedish and Finnish speakers belonged to the same nationality. Consequently, to maintain this peace, the state authority made sure that the evacuated population from Karelia who spoke Finnish were not placed in regions that would disturb the language conditions of the Swedish-speaking countryside. Moreover, there was an expansion of the number of Swedish-language professors at the country's bilingual higher education schools. (Meinander 2015: 14)

As most countries in Europe, Finland experienced “rapid industrialisation and structural changes” during the years following the end of World War II. Because of the baby boom that happened after the war, the number of children attending primary schools in Finland increased rapidly between 1950 and 1960. (PERFAR 2014) During this time, the regulations that were enacted in 1957 and 1958, added two years of civic school to primary school (Statistics Finland 2007). This changed the education system so that after the children had completed primary education (the six-year basic education) at the age of 11 or 12 (Aho, Pitkänen & Sahlberg 2006: 32), they needed to continue their education either in secondary school (grammar school) or in civic school. The children could apply for admission to one of these two educational tracks already in fourth grade. The children who went to secondary school got the exams needed for entry into university. The choice
between the two educational tracks depended on if the children had the necessary grades for being admitted to secondary school and if the parents allowed and could afford it. (Statistics Finland 2007) On top of this, there was the option to go to vocational schools as a few institutions existed that provided vocational training (Aho, Pitkänen & Sahlberg 2006: 28). In the mid 1950s there was 34,000 pupils enrolled in the secondary schools. As the general welfare in Finland increased rapidly, more families could afford to send their children to secondary school. So in the beginning of the 1960s, the number of pupils enrolled rose to 215,000. The fact that the enrolment number had increased more than six times in just five years proves that more and more families wanted their children to receive higher levels of education. (PERFAR 2014)

The turning point in the debate about the position of the Swedish language subject in Finnish schools took place in the 1960s when one began to question the necessity for the general public to study Swedish. After the Second World War, English had gradually gained the position of a world language, and this influenced decision makers' thoughts on what should be taught in the basic education (grundskolan) (Geber 2010).

It is important to note that while the language issue/conflict had created mischief in society, it greatly facilitated the ideological consolidation of the country's Swedish-speaking population, which resulted in that the language group, despite the group’s internal social and regional differences, began to truly perceive itself as a collective community, which, in addition to the language, was also united by a number of cultural traditions and institutions. The reinforced sense of community was reflected in the fact
that since the 1950s the language group began to call itself in linguistic terms as "finlandssvenskar", and in national terms as "finländare". (Meinander 2015: 15)

Another concrete effort on the part of the State authority and Parliament to settle the linguistic issue was the reform of 1968. This reform, the Basic Education Act (grundskolereformen), introduced the Swedish language as a compulsory language subject for all pupils in the comprehensive school. (Meinander 2015: 16) The starting point for this decision was to ensure that the population in Finland had sufficient basic language skills in Swedish, as this was required by civil servants (Palviainen 2011: 39). This was also the first time that the position of the Swedish language subject was debated in an official context (Ministry of Justice 2006: 48). Thus, before this decision was made there had been lively political discussion about the sensible nature of this obligation. However, it was apparent that the opponents had questioned it primarily with reference to the economic viability of municipalities and the students' limited ability to learn several languages at the same time. (Meinander 2015: 16)

The decisive argument for the obligatory Swedish in schools also totally lacked the pathos that characterized the language debate of the pre-war period which was about freedom of choice. The Minister of Education, Johannes Virolainen, emphasized that if the two languages (Finnish and Swedish) were not mandatory at school, all children and young people would not be able to advance equally in the new school system. Thus, the post-war argument minimized the freedom of choice in order to ensure equal opportunity to education. (Meinander 2015: 16) Particularly, the rural children would be content with
only one language if the second language was not mandatory and thus have an inferior advantage compared to the others (Väistö 2012: 26–28).

So despite the linguistic issue and the debates in Finland, the fact that the Finnish constitution states that its supports human rights and that there are two national languages (Finnish and Swedish), plus the fact that there is a Language Act (språklagen / kielilaki) to further support the language rights of the Finnish- and Swedish-speaking Finns in the country, shows that, legally speaking, Finland supports human rights, and more specifically, the language rights of its people. However, to guarantee these rights, it is imperative that the Finnish government works on enforcing them in practice. The next section analyses what impacts the policy reform of 1968 has had on the Swedish-speaking Finns.

*Impact assessment of the policy reform of 1968*

The policy impact assessment is the main focus of this study as it answers the research question by evaluating the effects of the policy reform on the Swedish-speaking Finns. A policy can be assessed when it has been active or put “in place long enough to produce results” (Haddad 1995: 37). This is the case with the reform of 1968 as it has had some visible effects on the situation of the Swedish-speakers. As mentioned before, the aim with analysing the policy reforms in the case of Finland is to identify their positive or negative effects on the Swedish-speaking Finns.

In the early 1970s, before the reform of 1968, fewer and fewer children attended civic schools and approximately 60% of the children were enrolled in secondary schools (grammar schools) (Aho, Pitkänen & Sahlberg 2006: 33). This proved that the
educational system was not balanced and that it needed a reform. The observation of this trend started in the late 1950s and the establishment of a nine-year, universally free municipal comprehensive school was suggested as a solution to the problematic trend. As a result, this nine-grade comprehensive school was established and was part of the educational reform that was enacted in 1968. (PERFAR 2014) This reform took almost a decade and a half to implement and by 1981-1982, all children were attending a nine-grade comprehensive school (Lehtisalo & Raivola 1999: 133; Statistics Finland 2007).

The nine year comprehensive education was revised several times starting from 1968 and its final reform took place in 1998 and was called the Basic Education Act (Lag om grundläggande utbildning / Perusopetuslaki) (Mercator 2013: 9-10). It has not been revised since. The final reform in 1998 eliminated the lower and upper stages of the comprehensive school. Additionally, this act gave the parents the possibility to choose themselves the comprehensive school for their children instead of having the local authority assign one. (PERFAR 2014) Still to this day, the basic education is compulsory for children in Finland between the age of 7 and 16 (Mercator 2013: 9-10).

After the reform of 1968, the public debates continued about having Swedish as a compulsory language subject in school. However, as the state authorities and the parliament made efforts to settle the language issue, it resulted in that the issue became less dramatic and confrontational. Consequently, this had a less positive effect on bilingual families where couples came from both language groups. These types of families, where one partner was a Finnish speaker and the other a Swedish speaker, had become more common in Finland. However, the home language in these families ended
up being Finnish for the most part and since the majority of their children were put in Finnish-speaking schools, this also contributed to fewer people in Finland who actively spoke and studied in Swedish. This trend was mainly due to the psychologists, linguists and school teachers at the time who believed that children and adolescents who grew up in bilingual or bilingual environments were at risk of becoming "semi-lingual", that is, they never learned one language properly and therefore risked having a hard time being successful later in life. (Meinander 2015: 16) As a result, this kind of belief was not contributing to the promotion of a bilingual Finland.

As mentioned previously, the purpose of implementing Swedish as a compulsory language subject was to ensure that there were sufficient language skills in Finland to meet the language rights that were stipulated in the Language Act. However, since the 1970s, the position of the Swedish language as a school subject has constantly weakened in terms of weekly hours. Between 1968 and 1975, the Swedish language lessons had a duration of 10.5 hours per week. Between 1977 and 1993, the number of weekly hours decreased to 9. (GLGU 2004) Additionally, a significant change in the number of weekly hours took place in 1993 as the number of weekly hours was reduced to 6 in the hour allocation reform (timfördelningen) (Pohjala 2010: 3). Thus, there has been a constant reduction of the number of hours dedicated to studying Swedish in Finnish-speaking schools. As a result it becomes more difficult for the Finnish-speakers’ to obtain active language skills in Swedish. This in turn is having a negative effect on the Swedish-speakers’ language rights when Finnish-speakers who would like to work in the government or public sector later in life are not able to provide services in Swedish.
Although Swedish was studied in the "folkskolan" (folk school) and "läroverket" (Grammar school) in the past, Swedish is the only school subject that raises constant debates about its usefulness. The term "tvångsvenska" meaning "compulsory Swedish", was a word launched by the press in the early seventies, and has become extremely present in the media in Finland. (Koskenranta 2012: 17) Wallin (2010) notes that Helsingin Sanomat, a popular Finnish newspaper, started writing the term "compulsory Swedish" without quotation marks in the late 2000s, meaning that the term has consolidated its position in everyday life and that when Swedish as a school subject is mentioned, it is always thought of as a coercion and compulsion.

Moreover, Swedish is the only school subject that society and the general public describe as a compulsion, as one does not talk about "compulsory mathematics", "compulsory music" or "compulsory English". Many see it as unnecessary to have Swedish as a compulsory subject because it is not considered as a useful language for the majority of the population. (Koskenranta 2012: 17) Geber argues that the increased immigration and Russia's greater influence in eastern Finland have also caused the people to question the necessity of having Swedish as a compulsory school subject and beginning to see Russian as a possible alternative to Swedish (Geber 2010: 54). However, such a survey has not been conducted, with a sufficiently large selection of the population, which would support claims that the majority of the population in Finland would not benefit from learning Swedish (Koskenranta 2012: 17).

At the start of the 1960s, the education system was centrally governed. However, starting from the 1980s and especially during the 1990s, a decentralisation trend began
which gave more decision authority to the municipalities and schools. (Aho, Pitkänen & Sahlberg 2006: 24) By 1993, there was a financing reform which changed the system so that the municipalities became in charge of organising most of the education (Lampinen 2003: 84). During the same year, schools could start specialising in different fields as the new national curriculum enabled the municipalities and schools to decide more for themselves on how the curriculum should be (Silvennoinen et al. 2002: 67). Still, the highest authority on education in Finland is the Ministry of Education (Undervisningsministeriet / Opetusministeriö). It regulates many things such as ”which subjects are taught and which competences the teacher must have” plus it ”controls the universities through yearly negotiations.” (Mercator 2013: 13) Thus, there is still a central authority that has a general control over the education system in Finland.

The question of having Swedish as a compulsory subject in school was debated in a public context on two other occasions. One being in the reform of the school curriculum in 1990, and another, during the reform of the matriculation examination in 2004 (Geber 2010: 7-8). The next section looks at the ten most common arguments and counterarguments that exist in the debate about having Swedish as a compulsory language subject in schools. Although there are some convincing counterarguments to the arguments against the compulsory subject, the debate about the linguistic issue lead to the reform of 2004 where the Swedish language subject was changed from compulsory to optional in the matriculation examination of the general upper secondary education.
Arguments for and against the compulsory Swedish

According to Folktinget (2017), the assertions about getting rid of the compulsory Swedish in schools are not convincing. One argument is that the language requirements in Finland are the toughest in the world as all students need to know at least two languages on top of their mother tongue. The counterargument to this is that in Belgium, Luxembourg and Switzerland, the requirement is that all students must be able to speak at least two languages in addition to their mother tongue. This is also the EU’s official goal, "Mother tongue plus two". According to the Euro-barometer on Multilingualism in 2012, the Netherlands, Denmark, Luxembourg, the three Baltic countries (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), Slovenia and Malta reached this goal. Finland was not part of the countries who achieved the target. (Folktinget 2017) This suggests that Finland is not able to meet its language requirements. Additionally, by reducing the time dedicated to studying Swedish will not result in better language skills.

Another argument against the compulsory Swedish language subject is that the individual’s learning ability is limited because of the time that is devoted to the compulsory Swedish. This results in practice to thin knowledge of foreign languages and more limited choices. The counterargument is that there is no evidence that multilingual children learn a language at the expense of another. On the contrary, bilingualism helps the child to think creatively and flexibly. A report produced by the European Commission, Study on the Contribution of Multilingualism to Creativity, shows that early bilingualism or multilingualism leads to better performance and creative thinking, facilitates problem solving, and at the same time leads to better schooling. In the long
term, bilingualism gives the child a broader access to thoughts and experiences and opens doors for more versatile social contacts. An article in the newspaper the Time Magazine (July 29, 2013) refers to several scientific studies confirming that bilingualism provides both linguistic, creative and social benefits. Moreover, language proficiency in the work-life facilitates contacts across language and country borders and increases understanding between different cultures. (as cited by Folktinget 2017) Hence, multilingualism is important for facilitating inter-cultural communications and understanding.

A third argument is that the compulsory Swedish is a waste of the nation's resources. This is not the case as the compulsory education in Swedish and Finnish is natural as the country has two national languages. The right to one’s own language is a fundamental right in the same way as the right to, for example, social security. It is therefore important to have sufficient language resources in the country. Bilingualism also constitutes the statement that Finland is part of the Nordic region. The Nordic region is Finland’s most important social and cultural reference group and its largest trading partner. To have language skills in both national languages is an investment, not a cost to the nation. (Folktinget 2017)

A fourth argument is that the Swedish language subject takes up valuable time that students could use for studying a language that is more useful in the rest of the world. An important counterargument to this is that since the second national language became voluntary in the 2005 matriculation examination (studentexamen) (because of the educational policy reform of 2004), the number of Finnish-speaking students who pick Swedish in the matriculation examination has decreased drastically. However, it has not
led to increased studies in other languages. On the contrary, the number of upper secondary education students studying German and French has been reduced by half between 2001 and 2009. The same trend applies to Russian. In 2001, 66% of upper secondary school students studied three or more languages. In 2009, only 53.5% studied at least three languages. (Folktinget 2017) This indicates that the implementation of the policy reform of 2004, did not result in Finnish students studying more foreign languages instead of Swedish. However, before the reform, one did not know that by making Swedish optional in the matriculation examination, it would result in fewer students studying fewer languages. In this regard the reform had a general negative effect on everyone.

A fifth argument is that one can manage well with only English in the Nordic countries, thus there is no need for having Swedish as a compulsory subject. The counterargument to this is that Swedish language skills open doors and provide clear benefits when interacting with Nordic countries. Although the primary language in many Nordic companies is English, Swedish is still widely used within the businesses and companies. A survey shows that Finnish companies manage 63 percent of their communications in Swedish with parent, sister companies or subsidiaries in Sweden, despite the fact that English is the "official" language. In the increasingly integrated economic cooperation between Finland and other Nordic countries, there is a short supply of Swedish-speaking workers. Moreover, a lack of Swedish language skills can lead to misunderstandings, exclusion and missed job opportunities. (Folktinget 2017)
A sixth argument is that Finland is the only country in the world where one has to study a language that is spoken by a minority. The counterargument to this is that Swedish is not a minority language, but it is one of Finland's two equivalent national languages. In addition to Finland, there are several other countries in Europe with two or more national languages, or official languages as they are sometimes called. Belgium, Luxembourg, Ireland and Switzerland are examples of similar cases. In all these countries, it is compulsory to study the country's other official language, at a national level. In Belgium, which has three official languages, everyone studies one of the other two national languages already in the first grade. Also in Ireland, everyone needs to study Irish starting from grade one even though there are only 70,000 who speak Irish daily. In Switzerland, one of the other three national languages is mandatory, and in Luxembourg everybody goes to school in all three official languages; Luxembourgish, German and French. In addition to this, there are several EU countries where the minority language is a mandatory school subject at a regional level. This includes Spain (with the regions of Catalonia, the Basque Country, Galicia, Valencia and the Balearic Islands), Great Britain (mainly Wales) and Italy (Trentino-South Tyrol and Valle d'Aosta). In total, there are over 20 million inhabitants in these regions, which have compulsory lessons in the less-spoken language. (Folktinget 2017)

A seventh argument is that the study results in the Swedish language subject are so bad that they are of no use and thus it is totally unnecessary to study Swedish. The counterargument to this is that it is true that the study results in Swedish have deteriorated recently. The level of knowledge in B-Swedish as other native language in
the comprehensive school is weak or at best passable. The girls’ level is significantly higher than the boys’ level of knowledge in Swedish. In the matriculation examinations, the knowledge level in B-Swedish has dropped remarkably, and the score limits have been significantly lowered both in the upper and the lower end of the assessment scale. The level of knowledge is related to the amount of study and depends on whether the students receive sufficient high-quality education and if they use it actively and in the long term. One reason for the low level of knowledge in B-Swedish is that the language is only studied for 228 hours in the comprehensive school. And it is rare that Swedish is offered as an A-language. In the working group initiative "Funktionell svenska – utgångspunkter för att utveckla undervisningen i svenska som det andra inhemska språket / Functional Swedish - starting points for developing the teaching in Swedish as the second native language", a series of measures are introduced to improve the teaching in Swedish as the other native language and, thus, also the study results. (Folktinget 2017)

An eight argument is that in Eastern Finland one does not need Swedish, instead one should study Russian to be able to serve Russian tourists. The counterargument is that this is an issue of equality. Children in the sixth grade cannot know in what part of Finland they will live in the future, nor if they will need Swedish-language skills. Thus, without Swedish-language skills, their options will be fewer. At both polytechnic universities and universities, you need language skills in both Finnish and Swedish, and government services and many municipal services also require language skills in the two national languages. If the demand is big enough among students, the possibility already
exists for municipalities in eastern Finland to offer Russian as an optional language subject. (Folktinget 2017)

A final argument is that it is unfair that everyone should study Swedish in order for a small minority to receive service in their own language. The counterargument to this is similar to the one for the sixth argument which is that the teaching in Swedish and Finnish applies to the linguistic equality between two language groups. Additionally, by knowing both native languages, it gives individuals an equal opportunity to become successful in the country. (Folktinget 2017)

Palviainen questions whether the criticism of compulsory Swedish is in fact about the obligation to study languages in general (Palviainen 2011: 62). According to a new network, the criticism of compulsory Swedish is about the pursuit of democracy in language politics (Kielipolitiikka 2012). However, it can be said that to learn a language is never unnecessary. Being able to speak languages helps the process to learn new languages. It is a fact that English is the most common language spoken in much of the world and also in Finnish society as a whole. (Koskenranta 2012: 19) English was chosen by 95% of all Finnish-speaking students as first foreign language (A1) starting in grade three, while only 1% chose Swedish (Palviainen 2011: 49). However, this does not mean that it is sufficient to know only English (Koskenranta 2012: 19). The government on the other hand, did respond to the heated debates about the compulsory Swedish, by revising the issue and introducing the policy reform of 2004, hoping that the revisions could improve the language climate in Finland. The next section analyses this subsequent policy cycle.
5.3 Subsequent policy cycle: Policy reform of 2004

This policy analysis suggests that the educational policy reform of 2004 can be seen as a subsequent policy cycle to the reform of 1968 as it regulates the same issue, namely the compulsory Swedish language subject. Although the reform of 1968 has not been abolished, the reform of 2004 introduced some changes to the requirements of studying Swedish in schools. These changes made the Swedish language subject optional for Finnish speakers in the matriculation examination (studentexamen). As a result, the subject was no longer compulsory in the final exam of the general upper secondary education. The following section looks at how the policy reform of 2004 has impacted the Swedish-speaking Finns.

Impact assessment of the policy reform of 2004

In 2004, when the above mentioned educational policy reform took place, the Language Act was also revised to specify how the language rights should be applied in the case when a municipality is monolingual or bilingual. Finland consists of 313 municipalities. Out of these, 49 are bilingual or only Swedish-speaking municipalities. More specifically, 16 municipalities are Swedish-speaking and all of these are located in Åland (an island between the mainland of Sweden and Finland). The 33 municipalities that are bilingual are located in Ostrobothnia, Turunmaa/ Åboland and Nyland/ Uusimaa. (Ministry of Justice 2016: 11) In bilingual municipalities, the individual has the full right to use his or her own language, both with government and municipal authorities. However, in monolingual municipalities, where either Finnish or Swedish is the majority language, municipal authorities are obliged to provide service only in the majority language.
language. It is also worth noting that the Language Act obliges only government authorities to provide services in Swedish whereas there are no statutory requirements for the private sector, such as Banks, insurance companies and private medical services, to provide services in Swedish. (Palviainen 2011: 22) Sundell (2011: 9) claims that Finland remains a bilingual country so long as there are enough citizens who can master both Finnish and Swedish.

According to Sundell, the compulsory Swedish language subject is a complicated issue. It is problematic as there is no legal link that connects it with that of guaranteeing the same language rights for both the Swedish and Finnish speakers as stated in the Finnish constitution. (Sundell 2011: 8) Similarly, Geber claims that the Language Act does not state that everyone needs to study the country’s other national language in school. Nor does it say that all the public employees need to know Swedish. It only states that citizens in bilingual districts and in court have the right to be served and settle their cases in Finnish or Swedish, and that the social services and institutions in bilingual district should be organized so that they are able to respect this right. (Geber 2010: 55) Thus, no laws in Finland state that one needs to study the country’s other national language.

On paper, Finland is an active proponent of multilingualism. As Finland became part of the EU in 1995, this section looks at how Finland works together with the EU to promote multilingualism. Finland has committed itself to the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities (2/1998). In Finland, the Convention entered into force in 1998. (Ministry of Justice 2017: 10-11) This engagement back in 1998 can be
seen as positive but when compared to the educational policy reform of 2004, seems to indicate that Finland was not following the EU Framework and was not supporting its own values of ensuring a bilingual Finland. Consequently, a decade later, Finland submitted its fourth report on the implementation of the Framework Convention in December 2014 and the Advisory Committee of the Council of Europe visited Finland in October 2015 (Ministry of Justice 2017: 10-11). The Advisory Committee monitoring the implementation of the Convention mentions the national language strategy in its follow-up report (ACFC/OP/IV (2016) 002). One of the Committee's explicit recommendations concerns the completion and implementation of the National Language Strategy Action Plan. The Committee emphasizes in its recommendation that the Swedish language skills and the Swedish language's visibility and presence in education, administration, working life and society in general will be ensured through the implementation of the action plan. (Ministry of Justice 2017: 10-11) This shows both Finland’s and EU’s attempt to protect and preserve the Swedish language in Finland.

Moreover, Finland has also committed itself to the Council of Europe's Charter on Regional and Minority Languages. In Finland, the Statute entered into force in 1998. (Ministry of Justice 2017: 11) This charter has the same aim as the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities, which is to protect national minorities (Council of Europe 2017). Once more, the educational policy reform of 2004 was also contradicting this Charter as the reform resulted in fewer Finnish-speakers being able to speak Swedish. Although, Swedish is not a minority language in Finland, it is still the less spoken national language that needs protection and promotion for it to continue
to be actively spoken in Finland, and for it to maintain its current legal status in the Finnish constitution. In addition, if the language rights of the Swedish-speaking Finns are not enforced then there is the risk that this national minority gets assimilated into the majority Finnish culture.

To continue the discussion on multilingualism, the basic or compulsory education in Finland emphasizes the importance of language skills, which means that each student studies at least two languages, in addition to the mother tongue. More importantly, one of the two foreign languages must be the second national language of Finland (Ministry of Justice 2006: 48). The foreign language subjects in Finland are organised into A and B categories. According to PERFAR ”A1-language starts at the lower stage of the comprehensive school” whereas “The B1-language starts in the upper stage of the comprehensive school. Both of the languages (A1 or B1) are obligatory to all students.” (PERFAR 2014) The Finnish-speaking children in Finland usually start to study Swedish as a B1 language (second foreign language) in seventh grade. In some cities and schools it is possible to study Swedish already in third grade, as an A1 language (first foreign language), but students usually choose English instead of Swedish. Over the past few years, just over one percent of the third grade cohorts have chosen to study Swedish as a A1 language (Pohjala 2010: 2). It is more common that students start to study Swedish in fourth or fifth grade, as an A2 language. In 2007, the number of people who chose Swedish as A2 language was merely 7.5% of the year's cohort (Pohjala 2010: 2). However, most students, over 90% of the cohorts, start to study Swedish as B1 in the seventh grade. (Koskenranta 2012) The number of weekly hours varies according to the
chosen course. The B1 course has only 6 weekly hours whereas the A1 has 16 (GLGU 2004). This change in the education system is likely to reduce the number of Finnish-speaking Finns who can work for the authorities in both national languages. Moreover, especially in monolingual municipalities where only Finnish is spoken, it is more likely that students choose English instead of Swedish as a second language because of today’s globalisation.

Swedish is a compulsory school subject not only in the comprehensive school but also in higher education such as in the vocational schools, general upper secondary education, universities and polytechnic universities. (Koskenranta 2012) The private education providers in Finland are licensed by the Finnish government. The laws and national core curricula that apply to public schools, also apply to private schools (Ministry of Education and Culture 2014). In the basic vocational education and at the institute level there has been a requirement for Swedish-language skills since the 19th century, and the teaching in it was relatively extensive until 1978 (Geber 2010: 45). In today's vocational school, the compulsory studies in Swedish consist of (at least) one study week which corresponds to 20-30 teaching hours. The general upper secondary education includes five compulsory courses in Swedish. Hence, there is a big contrast between the general upper secondary education and the vocational studies. Palviainen (2011: 40) points out that the number of hours has not only decreased in the comprehensive school but also in the general upper secondary education. In the 1980s there were seven compulsory courses in Swedish, thus two more compared to the current five. (Koskenranta 2012) This trend is having a negative effect on the language rights of
the Swedish-speaking Finns as it is less likely that the future state employees are able to
provide services in Swedish.

After the reform of 2004, Finnish-speaking students were studying fewer foreign
languages (Folktinget 2017) as mentioned previously. In this sense the reform did not
have a positive effect in terms of promoting multilingualism. The debates about when and
how to study Swedish in schools continued. However, as the government saw the effects
of the reform of 2004 it began to see again a need to regulate the compulsory Swedish in
schools as the recent studies showed that multilingualism was beneficial and the
arguments for studying Swedish made sense.

The arguments for studying Swedish are many. This section goes through the
most common ones to illustrate why the reform of 2012 took place. Some of the
arguments here are similar to the ones presented in the impact assessment of the policy
reform of 1968, but are still summed up here below to give a complete picture of the pro-
arguments.

Firstly, one important argument is that Finland is a bilingual country with two
official languages, Finnish and Swedish, as stated in the Finnish constitution and the
Language Act. Thus, it is imperative to study both languages in schools. (Folktinget
2017, Pohjala 2010: 1) Moreover, by studying Swedish one gets to know Finland’s
history and culture. Hence, Swedish is part of the general education (allmänbildningen).
Another reason for studying Swedish is that it is an easy, simple and user-friendly
language plus that it becomes easier to learn other languages such as French, German,
Spanish and English. (Folktinget 2017) In addition, with Swedish-language skills one is
able to interact, communicate and cooperate with Swedish-speaking Finns in their own language (Folktinget 2017, Pohjala 2010: 1). This facilitates the relationship between the two language communities if each language group can speak the other language group’s native language.

Furthermore, all pupils should be given the same right and opportunities to continue their studies after the comprehensive school (grundskolan). (Folktinget 2017) By not studying Swedish their future chances for admission to higher education are reduced. This is the case as language studies are part of all higher educations (högskoleexamina) and therefore you must have a certain language level already when you intend to go to higher education (Juurakko-Paavola & Palviainen 2011: 10-11). The Swedish language subject is a compulsory part of studies at universities as well as at polytechnic universities (yrkeshögskola) (Juurakko-Paavola & Palviainen 2011: 10-11). Also, the advantage of having sufficient language skills in Swedish, gives the opportunity to study at the following Swedish-speaking higher education schools; vocational schools, Åbo Akademi (university), and Svenska handelshögskolan (a Business school in Finland) (Folktinget 2017). By having more options, it increases a student’s chances of being admitted into higher education.

More importantly, everyone should be given equal opportunities to receiving government and municipality services in Swedish when required (Folktinget 2017). This is why language skills in the second national language is a requirement for those working in the government and municipal services. Also, Swedish is often required in the private sector too (Ministry of Education and Culture 2012: 17-21) as some companies want to
be able to serve their customers in their own language. Although, in practice, there are not that many people who can work in Swedish. Hence, Swedish language skills are a merit in the labour market in Finland (Folktinget 2017). Having language skills in an additional language can play a crucial role when looking for work (Språktivoli 2012). The network ”Svenska nu” (2012) describes the language skills needed in work-life, as a design of different sized Lego blocks. You need several blocks to build a high and stable language pyramid. The biggest block at the bottom consists of native language skills (or mother tongue skills), on top of that block comes the block of the other national language (first foreign language), and the following block is the second foreign language. At the top comes at least one block of other foreign languages, preferably several. Each block improves one's chances in labour markets.

Moreover, Finland is part of the Nordic region, thus with Swedish one can communicate with other Nordic countries (Folktinget 2017, Pohjala 2010: 1) as mentioned previously. This is possible as Swedish is very similar to Danish and Norwegian. Furthermore, Sweden is the third most important trading partner in Finland and to maintain close cooperation with Sweden, you need both Swedish-language skills and some knowledge about the Swedish culture (Pohjala 2010). In addition, when being able to speak Swedish it becomes easier to get a job in Sweden and Norway as well as in Denmark. Also, it gives opportunities to study at the universities in Sweden, and the Swedish language opens up the doors to the Nordic cultural and entertainment life. (Folktinget 2017)
Finally, it is argued that you need good international relations with other countries to be part of the modern world. And to achieve this one needs languages. (Koskenranta 2012: 17) In the report of the Ministry of Education and Culture it is stated that "versatile languages and communication skills are of great importance when looking at the individual's ability to act as a full member of society in different areas of life, such as at work, at school, in hobbies and in civilian activities" (Ministry of Education and Culture 2012: 9). All these arguments were part of the debate when the new policy "timfördehningsreformen/ the hour allocation reform” of 2012 was introduced. The next section analyses this subsequent policy cycle.

5.4 Subsequent policy cycle: Policy reform of 2012

The fourth time that the position of the Swedish language was on the news was when Henna Virkkunen was the Minister of Education (2007-2011) and when the planned ”timfördehningsreformen/ hour allocation reform” was taking place. This reform was about introducing the Swedish language subject one year earlier in Finnish-speaking schools, i.e. so that instead of beginning in seventh grade, Finnish-speaking children would begin to study Swedish already in the sixth grade. However, her struggle to introduce the compulsory subject in the sixth grade was not realized because of the Center party's resistance and the upcoming parliamentary elections. As a result, the issue of placing the Swedish language subject earlier in the Finnish-speaking schools was submitted to the new government. It was only one and a half years later, on the 28th of June, 2012, that the government decided on the ”timfördehningsreformen/ the hour allocation reform”. The new reform included renewals in the language program. It
became more versatile by offering the organizers of the language subjects to arrange teaching in A2 and B2 languages using special support from the state. The teaching of B1 languages would start in the sixth grade (Ministry of Education and Culture, pressmeddelande 2012). Even though the Swedish language classes were introduced earlier as an option, the number of weekly hours remained two (Koskenranta 2012). The next section analyses what impacts the policy reform of 2012 had on the Swedish-speaking Finns.

*Impact assessment of the policy reform of 2012*

Even though the new reform in 2012 made language subjects more versatile by offering the organizers of the language subjects to arrange teaching in A2 and B2 languages, it did not change the number of weekly hours which would remain two, as mentioned earlier. The impact of this, as Tuokko (2008) reports, was that teachers believed that two weekly hours of the Swedish language subject would not be sufficient for obtaining active language skills (meaning to be able to speak and write in Swedish). (as cited by Koskenranta 2012) Although, the aim of this reform was to facilitate the learning process by giving the option to place the Swedish language subject one year earlier in primary schools, it was argued to be insufficient as Tuokko reported, and would not lead to better conditions for guaranteeing better language skills. This is also not likely to improve the service conditions in Swedish which affects the language rights of the Swedish-speaking Finns.

What was more alarming was that according to the study called the “language barometer/ Språkbarometern” (a study used by the Ministry of Justice), that has mapped
the quality of linguistic service in the minority language in bilingual municipalities since 2004, the language climate in Finland has been deteriorating between 2004 and 2012. This study, called Språkbarometern, examined how well the local language minorities (Swedish speakers and Finnish speakers) get service in their own language and how they experience the relations between the language groups. Moreover, this study looked at how the local residents themselves perceived the linguistic service and language climate in their municipality. (Ministry of Justice 2016: 3)

As a result of this study, the Ministry of Justice became better aware of the shortcomings that are happening in practice, in terms of meeting the language rights of the Swedish-speaking Finns. Thus, the Ministry of Justice stresses that healthcare and social services in Swedish is important and should be strengthened. (Ministry of Justice 2016: 92-93)

According to the Ministry of Justice, human beings are particularly vulnerable and usually reliant on expressing themselves in their own language in healthcare and medical situations. It can be difficult to find the correct words in another language when the time is short. When patients meet with healthcare professionals it is important that the patient, who is more exposed, is allowed to speak his or her own language. All residents in bilingual municipalities are not bilingual and everyone is entitled to receive care in their own language. Even bilingual people may have difficulty communicating in the second language in difficult situations. Based on the study “språkbarometern”, there seems to be some shortcomings in the Swedish-language service in social and healthcare, as well as in the rescue service. The Ministry of Justice finds this very worrying. In
addition, since 2004 the situation has gradually deteriorated. Thus, the Ministry stresses the importance of taking into consideration the service in Swedish when the social welfare and healthcare sectors are reformed. It is already significantly worse in most places compared to the service in Finnish and there is no room for further deterioration. (Ministry of Justice 2016: 92-93)

Moreover, there are major differences in language testimonials for the emergency centre, rescue service and police. Finnish speakers give high marks - Swedish speakers give low marks. It is worrying that the difference between the assessment of service in Swedish and Finnish for government services, such as the emergency centre, rescue service and the police is so great. Swedish speakers feel that there is also a great deal of concern about access to hospital care, elderly care and other social and health services in Swedish. (Ministry of Justice 2016: 88) Below are some open comments about government services, and the emergency center from those who have answered the Language Barometer survey:

"I have called 112 twice, and when I explained what happened, I then got to know that the respondent did not understand any Swedish ... the person could not even understand the address in Swedish."

"When I was in contact with the Emergency Centre 112, I started in Swedish but they wanted me to switch to Finnish",

"Why do they only speak Finnish when one calls the emergency centre? I experienced this when I called there and spoke Swedish. I got the reply täällä puhutaan suomea
[meaning “here we speak Finnish” in Finnish], but I then continued with Swedish and they hung up on me. Is that called service?”,

"When it comes to calling 112, I always end up speaking Finnish. When someone is in need, the most important thing is to get the information through”,

"When I was at the police and I tried to speak Swedish they asked: Do you speak English? So I then said that I do also speak Finnish”,

"The Emergency Centre should be able to manage the Swedish language! In the case of emergency, one should be able to speak one’s native language without having to ask for permission” (Ministry of Justice 2016: 72-73)

Furthermore, many Swedish speakers express concern about the fact that the officials in municipalities do not have Swedish language skills and believe that there should be tougher demands on the language skills of public servants. A lot of people used the opportunity to write open comments in the Language Barometer survey to justify this. Below are some examples:

"I think that if you accept a post where one is expected to serve a bilingual population one should have at least some basic skills in the other language”,

"Encourage officials and personnel to dare to use the customer’s language even if one is uncertain. Practice improves your skill and gives an increased self-esteem.”,

"There should be a language skill criteria in the employment process.” "Local officials in the municipalities should become aware of our language rights.”,
"It seems either like the officials are not aware that they need to be able to speak Swedish or that they do not bother." (Ministry of Justice 2016: 64)

Even in the case of civil servants' services in municipalities, libraries, municipal sports facilities, municipal cultural and music services, technical issues and local traffic companies, there is a noticeable difference between how citizens experience the service in Swedish and Finnish. Finnish speakers are more pleased with the linguistic service for all these services compared to the Swedish speakers. (Ministry of Justice 2016: 88)

According to the study språkbarometern there is a relationship between the minority's percentage share in a bilingual municipality and the level of satisfaction in linguistic services. Where the minority's percentage share is greater, one is also more satisfied with the service in one’s own language. This is also confirmed by previous language barometer surveys. Swedish-speaking respondents expressed a deep concern about the lack of hospital care and other social and healthcare services in Swedish. There is also a connection between the minority's share and how often you try to get service in your own language. The relationship is stronger for Swedish-speakers, which means that the minority's share plays a greater role in the service in Swedish than for the service in Finnish. Where Swedish-speakers make up a small proportion, the linguistic service is judged to be poorer and as a result the Swedish-speakers do not often demand service in Swedish. Where the Swedish speakers make up a larger share of the municipality's population, the service in Swedish is also better and as a result there is also a greater demand for service in Swedish. (Ministry of Justice 2016: 87) This suggests that if the
Swedish speakers make up a very small percentage of the population in the bilingual municipality, the conditions for their language rights are poor. Additionally, it becomes more difficult for them to actively enjoy their language rights if they do not show a demand for it. Thus it is not only the state’s but also the Swedish speaker’s duty to demand that the language rights are respected.

On top of all these shortcomings, almost every other Swedish speaker compared to every fifth Finnish speaker experience harassment and/or discrimination due to their language. In the study, the Swedish-speakers have in general a more negative experience of the language climate compared to the Finnish-speakers – the perceptions of the Swedish-speakers are that the attitude towards other language groups has deteriorated in Finland, they feel that the relationship between Finnish and Swedish speakers in the municipality has deteriorated, and that they are more often subject to discrimination/harassment due to their own language. (Ministry of Justice 2016: 86) To illustrate this, a couple of reactions from the study ”språkbarometern” are presented below:

"My wife has been assaulted several times in the bus when she spoke Swedish."

"On several occasions when being in a tram or a bus with a group of Swedish-speakers, other passengers started to insult us."

"My sister (80 years) and I (75 years) can never speak Swedish in peace, as there is always someone on the bus, in the cafe etc. screaming ”hurrit” (a very insulting word for a Swedish-speaker), painukaa helvettiin / Ruotsiin (fuck off to hell/ Sweden), etc."

(Ministry of Justice 2016: 33)
Consequently, there is a need to work on improving the language climate in Finland, and to ensure the language rights of both language communities, to prevent violent conflicts from occurring. The next section looks at the state’s current strategy when it comes to ensuring a bilingual Finland and enforcing the language rights of the Swedish speakers.

The state’s current national language strategy

To give a more complete picture of the impact of the educational policy reforms in Finland, this section summarizes the Finnish government’s current plans and measures regarding the linguistic issue to illustrate the new policy cycles that are or are going to affect the Swedish-speaking Finns.

The current Prime Minister Sipilä's Government Program (2015-2019) states that Finland is an open and international country that is rich in language and culture. It also states that Finland has a rich language and cultural heritage, and that the country defends a bilingual Finland in accordance with the Constitution and the country’s values. At a practical level, the goals of the government program are to increase language studies and make them more versatile, and to focus on language teaching as an integration method. The government has committed itself to ensuring language rights in all projects in accordance with the Constitution. In particular, in major administrative reforms, attention should be paid to the non-deterioration of language rights and opportunities for service in one’s mother tongue. (Ministry of Justice 2017: 12) Although, Finland is committed to
enforcing the language rights of the Swedish-speaking Finns, this is not necessarily the case in practice as this study showed.

The Ministry of Justice in Finland recognises the fact that the state authorities are not respecting the language rights of the Swedish-speaking Finns when they are not able to provide services in both national languages in the bilingual municipalities. This is connected to the importance of studying both official languages in schools or else this trend of not having state employees who can provide services in both Finnish and Swedish will continue to grow and as a result this will fuel the divide between the two language communities. This type of discrimination goes against the Council Directive 2000/43/EC of EU’s legislation where it aims to combat discrimination against groups such as ethnic and national minorities. In this regard, the Finnish government is violating both the EU legislation and the Finnish legislation. As mentioned previously, the Finnish government has got an Action Plan for enforcing its two national languages. The Ministry of Justice claims that the government is aware of the shortcomings in practice. However, some improvements have been made and there are initiatives to improve the current situation where the language rights of the Swedish-speaking Finns are not being enforced in practice. (Ministry of Justice 2017) This Action Plan is the State council’s first national language strategy which was approved in December 2012 and is called “Handlingsplan för nationalspråksstrategin / Kansalliskielistrategian toimintasuunnitelma (Action Plan for the national language strategy)”. The strategy’s aim is to ensure two viable national languages and to help the authorities to respect and enforce the language rights that are stipulated in the Language Act. (Ministry of Justice 2017: 4) The aim is
also to ensure that both languages, Swedish and Finnish, are used properly by the authorities to create a language friendly atmosphere in society (Ministry of Justice 2017: 7). The strategy consists of eight sub areas with both short and long term measures:

1. To promote visibility and awareness of the two national languages
2. To ensure that both languages are included in the plans for the future
3. Data system
4. Culture: audiovisual services
5. Good language skills
6. Health and security
7. Healthcare
8. The State’s recruitment process

(Ministry of Justice 2017: 4)

The language strategy aims to improve the language skills not only at school levels but also at professional levels for government employees such as the police, emergency aid, social and healthcare institutions etc. (Ministry of Justice 2017: 4). This strategy is a good initiative but its success can only be determined once its implementation is done and the effects begin to appear.

5.5 Conclusion

One of the aims of this study was to see if there is a connection between the educational policy reforms under study and the relationship between the two language
groups. This study suggests that the educational policies do affect the relationship between the parties in question. Although, this study did not analyse to what extent these two correlate with each other. However, it is certain that the two recent policy reforms (2004 and 2012) have not contributed to improving the relationship as the study språkbarometern suggests that the language climate has been deteriorating since 2004. To what extent the policies correlate with the language climate is not determined in this study but it is safe to say that their effects have not contributed to better language skills in Finland. The trend of reducing the number of hours of the compulsory Swedish plus the deteriorating language climate, are having a negative effect on the language rights of the Swedish-speaking Finns. Thus, there is a serious need to reconsider what types of educational policies are needed in terms of regulating the Swedish school subject for Finnish-speakers.

One way of improving the intercultural interaction and communication between the two language groups is for the state to promote educational policies that enforce multilingualism and embraces the Swedish language as one of the national languages not only in theory but also in practice. In light of the research question ”How have the educational policy reforms affected the Swedish-speaking Finns?”; this study suggests that the policy reform of 1968 was a good initiative to ensure the language rights of this language group as it would support and facilitate the need for government and public services in Swedish. As there are 33 bilingual municipalities in Finland, the state has a duty to ensure the language rights of the Swedish speakers in these municipalities.
The reform of 2004 is not facilitating the language conditions of the Swedish speakers as it reduces the number of Finnish speakers who have sufficient language skills in Swedish.

Finally, the reform of 2012, where the language studies became more versatile as more options were implemented, did not change the minimum of two weekly hours of Swedish. This is also not improving the conditions for meeting the language rights of the Swedish speakers as teachers argue that two weekly hours are not sufficient for Finnish speakers to obtain active language skills in Swedish. Thus, the two educational policy reforms of 2004 and 2012 are not enforcing the language rights of the Swedish speakers, and if the current trend continues, Finland could cease to exist as a bilingual nation and Swedish could become a minority language in judicial terms.

This chapter conducted a policy analysis of the educational policy reforms of 1968, 2004, and 2012. The following chapter discusses the findings from above in more detail and connects them with the literature presented in the second chapter.
CHAPTER SIX: SYNTHESIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the implications of the findings from the policy analysis. As discussed in chapter two, there are two kinds of legal protection when it comes to language rights: one, being “the regime of linguistic tolerance, which includes rights that protect speakers of minority languages from discrimination and assimilation”; and the other being “the regime of linguistic promotion, which includes certain ‘positive‘ rights to key public services, such as education, relationships with public power (government, courts, etc.) and public media, through the medium of minority languages.” (Arzoz 2007: 4-5) In the case of Finland, the language rights of the Swedish-speaking Finns “include the freedom to freely choose and to use one’s language and to be free of interference in one’s linguistic affairs and identity.” (Arzoz 2007: 7) These rights are immediately applicable, thus, there is no need for the state to intervene for the individual to enjoy these rights as long as these rights are not being discriminated against. Additionally, the Swedish-speaking Finns enjoy positive rights.

According to Arzoz, “positive language rights tend to be drafted as programmatic provisions: they imply that the state is under a duty to act in order to make its citizens benefit from the rights constitutionally granted” (Arzoz 2007: 7). As Finland has constitutional provisions for their language rights, the state has a duty to enforce these
rights. These include receiving public and government services in Swedish in bilingual municipalities.

According to Paz there are “three functions in day-to-day life that generate language conflicts: (i) education, (ii) court proceedings, and (iii) communication with public authorities” (Paz 2013: 170). Similarly, Arzoz claims that “the aspect of language rights that is most contested in democratic societies is not those instrumental rights generally recognized as human rights in international law, but the use and promotion of minority languages by public authorities” (Arzoz 2007: 12) In the case of Finland, education and communication with public authorities are a source of tension in society. This can be seen in the public debate about how to deal with the compulsory Swedish in education and the public authorities’ shortcomings when it comes to providing service in Swedish. These “functions in day-to-day life” (Paz 2013: 170) contribute to the deterioration of the language climate. Hence, it is necessary for the state not to ignore its duty to promote the Swedish speakers’ language rights as it is a way to stop or prevent language conflicts.

When granting language rights to individuals, the state “has to provide the personnel to facilitate linguistic services in administration, education, [and] justice” (Arzoz 2007: 15). Thus, language rights which deal with this type of linguistic protection/promotion and not merely linguistic tolerance are considered to be a “political process within each society”. As a result it is politics that have to deal with the accommodation of “linguistic diversity, defining language rights and managing linguistic
conflicts.” (Arzoz 2007: 15) Consequently, educational policies and other policies become an essential instrument for controlling and managing these political matters.

The general framework for Finnish educational policies is based on the basic principle that ”everyone must have equal access to high-quality education and training. The same educational opportunities should be available to all citizens, irrespective of their ethnic origin, age, wealth, or place of residence. The country’s educational policies are based on the lifelong learning principle: i.e., that individuals can always advance to a higher level of education, regardless of the choices they make in between.” (Ministry of Education and Culture 2017) This suggests that Finland is sensitive towards diversity when designing educational policies. However, the findings of this study suggest that the recent educational policy reforms regarding the compulsory Swedish language subject in Finnish-speaking schools are not aligned with promoting a plurilingual education and a bilingual Finland. Thus, these policies have not proven to be sensitive towards diversity.

When analysing the research question ”How have the educational policy reforms affected the Swedish-speaking Finns?”, the findings suggest that the policy reform of 1968 was a good initiative to ensure the language rights of the Swedish speakers. The aim with making Swedish a compulsory subject in schools was to enable Finnish speakers to have the ability to communicate with Swedish speakers and to guarantee that future Finnish-speaking employees in the public and government sectors would be able to provide services in Swedish. As long as there are bilingual municipalities in Finland, currently there are 33, the Language Act states that the state has a duty to ensure the language rights of the Swedish speakers living in these municipalities. Despite this
educational policy there are still serious shortcomings when it comes to meeting the language rights of the Swedish-speaking Finns.

Thus, when the reform of 2004 made the Swedish language subject optional in the matriculation examination, it resulted in fewer Finnish speakers who had sufficient language skills in Swedish. As a result, this did not improve the language conditions for meeting the language rights of the Swedish-speaking Finns.

Finally, the reform of 2012, where the language studies became more versatile as more options were implemented, did not change the minimum of two weekly hours of Swedish. As teachers argue that two weekly hours are not sufficient for Finnish speakers to obtain active language skills in Swedish, this reform did not contribute to enforcing a bilingual nation.

If Finland continues the trend of designing educational policies like the ones in 2004 and 2012, which are having a negative effect on the language rights of the Swedish-speaking Finns, it will become difficult to remain a bilingual nation and Swedish could become a minority language in judicial terms. This would drastically change the living conditions for the Swedish-speaking Finns, as by having minority rights the state’s duty would change from enforcing and promoting the rights of this language group to merely tolerating them as an ethnic minority.

This past trend in the last two decades where Finland has been introducing educational policy reforms which are not improving the language climate nor are they enforcing the language rights of the Swedish-speaking Finns, is worrying. Finland’s official documents recognize that the language rights of the Swedish-speaking Finns are
often not met in practice and, thus, Finland has set up strategies to improve the situation. Although the Finnish state has strategies for improving the conditions for a bilingual country, it has not introduced new reforms that could correct the ones introduced in 2004 and 2012. As a result, this study suggests that Finland is not taking serious measures to guarantee the language rights of the Swedish speakers in the future.

Moreover, the findings of this study suggest that educational policies can influence the relationship between two language groups. However, the two recent policy reforms (2004 and 2012) have not contributed to improving the relationship between the Finnish and Swedish speakers. Although, the study språkbarometern claims the language climate in Finland has been deteriorating since 2004, it is worth noting that this study did not analyse to what extent the policies correlate with the language climate. However, the findings suggest that the policies have not contributed to promoting better Swedish language skills in Finland and this has a negative effect on the relationship between the two language groups. This negative effect is linked to social identity theories.

As discussed in chapter two, it is through the process of assimilation and dissimilation that two different language groups are able to dehumanize each other. Eventually, this can lead to the two groups disliking each other to the point of becoming enemies. This process becomes easier if the two groups do not interact and familiarise themselves with the "Other’s” identity and culture. To be able to interact, it is necessary to know each other’s languages. By learning about the Other, the Other becomes more human and it becomes easier to relate to and respect one and another (Gatsias 2016). Hence, the importance of interaction and socialisation through the means of languages.
Additionally, language is inherently linked to culture. The process of learning a new language is greatly facilitated by learning the language at an early age (The Economist 2001). Thus, in a country like Finland that has two national languages, it is important to learn the Other national language at a young age, as this facilitates the learning process and enables the understanding of the Other’s culture. By forming an intercultural understanding early on, it makes it easier for the two language groups to interact and socialise, which can prevent them from dehumanizing each other. This interaction can facilitate the creation of harmonious relationships between the two identity groups.

As social identity theories suggest, education can play a role in bridging the gap between language communities. This is the case as education in schools plays a role in shaping the student’s/child’s present and future attitudes/behaviour towards other groups of people (Ashmore et al 2001; Breakwell 1993; Somers 1994; Stets and Burke 2000).

Moreover, Finland strives towards being a welfare state. To maintain a welfare state it is necessary to promote a society’s collective well-being, in other words Finland strives towards positive peace. By striving for positive peace, the needs of all members of society are equally addressed (Galtung 1969). A way of achieving this kind of peace is through Peace education. This type of education promotes values such as peace, justice and harmony and aims to tend to everyone’s socio-cultural and human needs (President’s Foundation for the Well-Being of Society 2017). Finland considers education to be of the utmost importance, and Finland’s main guiding principles for its educational policies
have been that of “inclusion and equal rights to education” ever since its independence in 1917 (PERFAR 2014).

However, the trend of reducing the number of hours dedicated to studying Swedish is having a negative effect on the language rights of the Swedish-speaking Finns. Thus, there is a serious need to reconsider what types of educational policies are needed in terms of regulating the Swedish school subject for Finnish-speakers.

This study suggest that a way of improving the intercultural interaction and communication between the two language groups is for the state to promote educational policies that enforce multilingualism and embraces the Swedish language as one of the national languages not only in theory but also in practice.

When discussing intercultural education in the case of Finland the objective is not full integration, but partial integration of the Swedish-speaking Finns, as the aim is to protect and keep the group’s “own cultural and linguistic identity” (Bojan 2009: 98). Moreover, minorities in a country “need a certain intercultural openness, and exchange” to not become isolated and have difficulties in becoming part of society (Bojan 2009: 102). This is a complex issue as although they need be open to intercultural exchanges, this poses the question if it could “lead to a stronger integration and thus to a quicker assimilation, losing as a consequence the very identity they had wanted to preserve.” (Bojan 2009: 102) Consequently, Bojan poses the question: “How can a balance be reached between enough and not too much interculturality?” (Bojan 2009: 103) The ideal would be to find a just balance for interculturality where the Finnish-speaking majority would study Swedish and have courses in schools that inform them about the Swedish-
speaking minority. While the Swedish-speaking minority, had the right balance between integration and the preserving of their own culture and identity in order to avoid assimilation. These types of issues are dealt with in the policy and educational policy field (Bojan 2009: 103), as policies are for resolving existing problems in society and for improving the current situation.

Thus, in the case of Finland it is important that Finnish speakers meet the Swedish speakers half way by studying Swedish in school, or else the Swedish speakers are at risk of acculturation if their language rights cannot be enforced in practice. The worst case scenario could be a loss of the Swedish language in Finland if no measures are taken to stop this process from happening. The concept of interculturality itself “supposes two interacting parts, and for being realised intercultural education needs reciprocal interest and openness of all involved/interacting parts” (Bojan 2009: 103). Hence, the importance of involving the Finnish speakers when working to create intercultural openness, and exchange.

According to Alexandru: “One of the main objectives of the intercultural education is the formation of a person who can manifest both the desire for self-knowledge and that of knowing the other, even though the external image of the other is different.” With the process of “[s]tarting from a “model of the difference”” a person is able to “learn that otherness is not a deficiency”. This is important as “[e]veryone has cultural particularities and a different knowledge base. These aspects can be positively used in […] intercultural education, based on [a] pedagogy of socio-cultural diversity” that focuses on creating a learning experience with “characteristics [that] stimulate[s]
dialogue, decentration, plurality and emancipation.” (Alexandru 2012: 17) Moreover, the promotion of a pedagogy of socio-cultural diversity is to affirm multiculturalism by enforcing values such as “tolerance [and] non-discrimination based on any racial, religious, ethnic, political [or] sexual criteria” (Alexandru 2012: 19). Thus, the aim of the pedagogy of socio-cultural diversity is to develop knowledge and skills plus “attitudes which allow the individual subjected to education to participate” in an intercultural dialogue and inter-cultural understanding. (Alexandru 2012: 21-22) This way it facilitates the creation of harmonious relationships between different social groups in society.

One of the key objectives of the pedagogy of socio-cultural diversity is plurilingual education (Alexandru 2012: 21-22). As it is a way to help bridge the gap between two different identity groups. In the case of Finland where there are two national languages, a plurilingual education is essential for maintaining a bilingual country. Hence, the importance of being required to study the other national language that is not one’s mother tongue in schools. By learning a new language, it also introduces the student to the culture that is attached to the language. By getting familiar with the culture, the child is more likely to interact with the people who speak that particular language, and in the case of Finland it could bring the Finnish-speaking Finns closer to the Swedish-speaking Finns, and, thus, improve the language climate in the country.

Moreover, as language is connected to culture, learning a language enables the learner to connect with the culture that is connected to the language which makes it easier to understand the Other or the language group in question. This reduces stereotypes about the Other, as discussed previously, which could lead to more constructive social relations
and this in turn could reduce the tension between the two language communities. Hence, the importance of promoting multilingualism as this facilitates inter-cultural communication and understanding. Thus, it is imperative that the education system functions in such a way that the population in Finland gets to master both national languages.

In terms of creating harmonious social relations between the Finnish- and Swedish-speaking Finns, the Swedish language subject cannot be optional in Finnish-speaking schools, because this would complicate the intercultural education and the pedagogy of sociocultural diversity, as the Finnish-speaking students are unlikely to choose Swedish as a school subject. This assumption is based on the current trend where fewer Finnish speakers are studying Swedish since it became optional in the matriculation examination. The more the Finnish-speaking Finns take distance from the Swedish language (including the Finland-Swedish culture, traditions and the Swedish-speaking Finns) the bigger the divide between the two language communities is likely to become. Thus, to enforce the values of sociocultural diversity, Finland needs to promote a plurilingual education that applies to both Finnish and Swedish speakers, as this is an essential part of guaranteeing a healthy language climate in the country. The state’s current trend of designing educational policies which do not result in the promotion of better language skills and multilingualism makes it more difficult to meet the language rights of the Swedish-speaking Finns.
This chapter discussed the implications of the findings. The following chapter concludes by discussing some of the strengths and weaknesses of the study and ends with giving a few recommendations.
CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS

This chapter discusses the strengths and weaknesses of the study and sums up what Finland should do in terms of improving the conditions for meeting the language rights of the Swedish-speaking Finns. The educational policy reforms in this case study were selected because sufficient data exists and sufficient time has elapsed to be able to discuss their impact on the Swedish-speaking Finns. When Haddad applied his policy framework to the cases of Peru, Jordan, Thailand, and Burkina Faso, his framework turned out to be generic and not limited in applicability despite these places’ considerable differences in geographical, economic, pedagogical, and political aspects (Haddad 1995: 15). Additionally, his framework allows for a comprehensive analysis. Hence, his conceptual framework was seen as an appropriate guideline for this study’s policy analysis.

However, this study used only the parts of Haddad’s framework that contributed to answering the research question “How have the educational policy reforms affected the Swedish-speaking Finns?” Hence, the study employed only three processes which helped to inform the research question. One of these processes was the process called policy impact assessment which was the main focus of this study. With this process, the study analysed the three policy reforms (1968, 2004 and 2012) to see how they have contributed to the success or failure of guaranteeing the language rights of the Swedish-speaking Finns. The elements that were considered successful are those that create
conditions for peaceful coexistence of both language groups and where the Swedish language rights are enforced.

Governments throughout Finland’s history have introduced their educational policies in the country and contributed with specific educational policy reforms that were aligned with the political climate at the time. The various governments have had different approaches to the language issue of having Swedish as a national language and what it entails. And have supported the Swedish language rights to a varying degree. Although, this study did not delve into this as much as the focus was on the educational policy reforms’ impact on the Swedish-speaking Finns. However, the above mentioned issues deserve more attention and future research as the political context is an important factor that influences policy reforms. In the case of Finland, this study could have explored the political context in more detail to establish which particular political party had a decisive influence on the educational policy reform in question.

The policy analysis of this case study should be of value to anyone who is interested or responsible for education in a country with two or more national languages, and who strives to create a harmonious language climate between different national language groups where the respective language rights are respected and enforced. Additionally, the methodology of the framework and the conclusions of the case study should help in the analysis of current educational policies that aim to create beneficial social relations between different language groups by taking into account the social needs of all groups. This is necessary when striving for positive peace in a multilingual society or country.
As Haddad points out, “educational development is extraordinarily complicated because it involves and affects a large number of beneficiaries and providers, as well as political figures, all of whom have a stake in the process and the outcome.” Thus, it is imperative that policy changes are not “introduced lightly” and that they are not “abandoned without careful examination.” (Haddad (UNESCO) 1995: 88-90) In the case of Finland, the Swedish language group did suffer from the educational policy reforms of 2004 and 2012, as these reforms had a negative impact on their language rights.

Although Finland has signed on to the human rights framework and has made language rights part of its constitution since 1922, it is still struggling to enforce the language rights of the Swedish-speaking Finns in practice. In the last two decades, serious changes have been made at the educational policy level concerning the compulsory Swedish in Finnish-speaking schools, if this trend continues; it can prove to be devastating for the Swedish-speaking Finns.

In 2014, the compulsory Swedish was under serious debate again and the Parliament had to decide on its future. Many people like af Hälsström-Reijonen feared that if the Parliament had made the subject optional, it would have had serious effects on many other areas. For instance, it would become impossible to guarantee the language rights of the Swedish-speaking Finns in practice. As a result, questions such as rewriting the Constitution and the Language Act would become a reality. The Nordic cooperation and the Finnish trade would also suffer as a result of this change. Moreover, it would go against EU’s target that all citizens should know two foreign languages on top of their first language (1+2 languages). Also, questions such as what would happen to the equal
rights and equal opportunity for students in Finland? And finally, whose agenda is favoured by making the Swedish language subject optional in schools? (af Hällström-Reijonen 2014) Luckily, the Parliament did not make the subject optional.

However, as there is a growing intolerance and xenophobia affecting the minorities in Finland (Ministry of Justice 2016: 91). There is the risk that the compulsory Swedish is soon brought to the Parliament’s attention again. When that day comes, there are no guarantees that the subject will remain compulsory in schools.

According to the Ministry of Justice, Finland needs to work harder to deal with the growing intolerance and xenophobia affecting its minorities. This was also pointed out in a report by the Council of Europe in 2016, which stated that Finland must improve the protection of its minorities. Short and long term measures are needed to reverse the trend. Even at the municipal level, it is time to put in concrete measures to improve the language climate at the municipal level. The municipalities should realize their ability to influence the language climate and work actively to improve attitudes toward minority languages (demographically speaking) in the municipality. This can also have positive effects on the language climate nationally. It requires courage, awareness and that the elected representatives and officials are active in this regard. Thus, the language climate needs improvement not only in society but also with politicians, and with authorities. (Ministry of Justice 2016: 91) As mentioned in chapter five, the Ministry of Justice does have a plan to improve the language climate in Finland, called the “Action Plan for the national language strategy”, but its success can only be determined in the future, once the effects begin to show. This thesis argues that it is paramount that Swedish remains a
compulsory subject in Finnish-speaking schools, or else it becomes impossible to guarantee the language rights of the Swedish-speaking Finns and Finland can no longer be a bilingual country.

To conclude, a way to avoid the above from happening is to make sure that future educational policies promote a plurilingual education. Where for instance, the Swedish language is introduced sooner in Finnish-speaking schools and where the focus is on creating better inter-cultural understanding and better attitudes towards the Swedish language. This study suggests that educational policies that are well implemented can be a valuable tool for creating a better society. Thus, educational policies and their ability to shape society deserve some more scholarly research and attention.
REFERENCES


BIOGRAPHY

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