

Identification Processes of a Linguistic and Cultural Minority:

A Study on the Swedish Minority of Finland

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Abstract

The status of the Finnish-Swedish minority has been a continuous debate in Finland. In order to see the future development of the minority in Helsinki, it is crucial to understand the present situation in relation to young bilinguals' identification processes. Therefore, this study aims to explore the identification processes of the Swedish minority of Finland. Specifically, the goal is to investigate the factors that influence whether or not young bilinguals in Helsinki identify with the Finnish-Swedish minority. The study also aims to answer how their linguistic and cultural identities affect their identification with the Finnish-Swedish minority, as well as what their attitudes are toward the Finnish-Swedish minority itself.

A qualitative and inductive method was chosen in order to answer the research questions. Ethnographic interviews were conducted with five participants. A textual analysis was conducted in five stages. More specifically, the data was analysed by a thematic analysis to identify broad themes and patterns. The results showed patterns in the participants' linguistic and cultural identities in relation to their linguistic backgrounds and experiences. Stereotypes and nationalism were also important themes in regard to attitudes toward the Finnish-Swedish minority. Moreover, both essentialist and fluid perspectives emerged in relation to culture.

The factors that influence whether or not young bilinguals in Helsinki identify with the Finnish-Swedish minority are concluded as linguistic backgrounds and the language in which they attended school. Moreover, the attitudes held by the young bilinguals toward the minority itself influence their own identification. The final factor is context, as this study found that the participants' identities are fluid and shift depending on situations and social interactions.

Keywords: linguistic minority, identity, linguistic identity, cultural identity, stereotypes, nationalism

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Introduction

The context of this study is the Finnish-Swedish linguistic minority of Finland. In this introduction, the context will be explained as well as the background, such as the history of Finland. The problem definition will be introduced as well as this paper's research questions. Finally, the social and scientific relevance of this study will be explained, and a content overview will be given.

Context

The minority language of Swedish has been one of the official languages in Finland since 1919 along with Finnish, which is spoken by the grand majority of the population (Ahola, 2018). The Swedish speakers of Finland constituted 5.2%, or 287 954 people, of total 5,525,292 inhabitants at the end of 2019 (Statistics Finland, 2020). Moreover, there are monolingual and bilingual communes in Finland, depending on the demographical situation, in which inhabitants have the right to use their mother tongue language in their communication with the authorities. Communes in which 8% of the inhabitants, or 3,000 people, have Swedish as their mother tongue are considered bilingual (Ahola, 2018). In total, there are 311 communes in Finland, of which 49 are bilingual or Swedish speaking. The Åland Islands is the only place where there are official monolingual Swedish speaking communes (Ahola, 2018).

The geographical focus for this thesis is the capital region of Helsinki, which is in a bilingual commune where inhabitants are legally allowed to use Finnish or Swedish for official matters. In addition, the Swedish cultural influence remains strong as can be seen by the wide range of, for example, Swedish magazines, radio, music, artists, theatre, literature (Ahola, 2018). The capital region of Helsinki is the most populous municipality in Finland with a total population of 1,316,757 people in 2021 (World Population Review, 2021). Out of these,

Swedish is spoken by 5.9%, or 77,689 people, in Helsinki in 2021 (World Population Review, 2021).

History of Finland

The complex history of Finland has contributed to an interesting current linguistic landscape. Before Finland's independence in 1917, the land belonged to Sweden for approximately 700 years, whereafter Russia made Finland an autonomous Grand Duchy in 1809. This means that Finland was an autonomous part of the Russian Empire, which also was the predecessor state of modern Finland.

The Swedish presence in what we call Finland today is considered to have begun during immigration across the Baltic Sea at the beginning of the 1100's. The Swedish immigrants settled predominantly along the coastal areas of Ostrobothnia and Nyland (Uusimaa in Finnish), where the strongest Swedish presence remains still today. This includes the capital region of Helsinki, which is in Nyland. Although Finnish had always been used in parallel with Swedish during the Swedish rule, the languages held different statuses and were used in different ways. Swedish was the main administrative language, meaning it was used by society's leaders, even after 1809 when Finland became a part of the Russian Empire, whereas Finnish was used predominantly in religious contexts. (Östlund, 2019)

During the mid-1800's, a Finnish nationalism was introduced by the Fennoman movement (Östlund, 2019). Its goal was to raise the status of the Finnish language and culture from peasant status to a national language and national culture, and to replace the administrative language from Swedish to Finnish (Östlund, 2019). During this time of the Grand Duchy of Finland, Finnish was spoken by 85% of the population and Swedish by 15%. As a reaction to the success of the Fennoman movement and the Russian influence that increased along with tsar Aleksandr III in 1881, the Svecoman movement was created at the

end of the 1800's, which was a pro-Swedish nationalist movement with the goal to preserve the Swedish language (Östlund, 2019).

The Russian revolution that started in February of 1917 led to major uncertainty about whether Finland still belonged to the Russian Empire since the tsar had abdicated. This led to Finland declaring independence in December of 1917 as the Russian influence intensified. Thereafter, a civil war broke out at the beginning of 1918 between White Finland and Red Finland during the transition from a Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire to an independent state, within the context of World War I, and the Russian revolution. The white side consisted of the conservative middle-class and the Finnish senate, whereas the red side consisted of the social democratic working class. Although the white and red sides predominantly comprised Finnish citizens, the white side received support from Swedish volunteers and the German army, and the red side from Russian soldiers. The white side won the war in May of 1918, which meant that the Russian military left Finland. (Fellman & Zilliacus-Korsström, 2018)

The Role of Swedish Today

As a result of the strengthened position of Finnish during the beginning of the 20th century, Swedish became a clear minority language in Finland despite Finnish language laws that guarantee a Swedish educational system and rights for the Swedish-speaking population (Myllylä, 2019). In general, students attend either Finnish-speaking or Swedish-speaking schools. Depending on which you attend, you need to study the other national language even if you would never use this language outside of school (Myllylä, 2019). The need and motivation for Finnish speakers to learn Swedish is far smaller since they rarely interact with Swedish speakers (Myllylä, 2019). Similarly, many of those who live in communes where Swedish is the majority language do not need to use Finnish in their everyday lives, which hampers their will to learn Finnish (Myllylä, 2019). However, the minority language speakers

tend to have a greater need to learn the majority language, which tends to make the minority speakers bilingual in Swedish and Finnish (Myllylä, 2019). According to the Finnish National Agency for Education, the language studies that children take part in at school contribute to the development of their identity in relation to their linguistic and cultural background (2021a). Similarly, history studies are also meant to contribute to students' identity development in relation to their linguistic competences (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2021b). Linguistic identity affects an individual's motivation to maintain their language skills in a specific language (Myllylä, 2019). If one identifies with the Swedish minority, or as Finnish-Swedish, there is a bigger likelihood that one wants to spend time with other Finnish-Swedish people and use Swedish in different situations (Myllylä, 2019). Therefore, the bilingual generation's linguistic choices are of great importance for the Finnish-Swedish population's future and for Swedish in Finland (Myllylä, 2019).

The number of bilingual communes where both Swedish and Finnish are used in contact with authorities has drastically decreased during the beginning of the 21st century (Ahola, 2018). Nevertheless, the status of Swedish has remained relatively stable, and the Finnish-Swedish culture is still strong (Ahola, 2018). It is difficult to predict what will happen with the status of Swedish in Finland in the future i.e., if it will remain an officially bilingual country or not considering the recent trends (Ahola, 2018).

This study will focus on the capital region of Helsinki since it is a bilingual commune where Swedish and Finnish are present in official contexts, however, to different extents. In order to get a glimpse of what the future holds for the Swedish minority, the focus is on bilingual young adults who live in Helsinki. It is important to explore these individuals' linguistic identities considering their bilingual competences in Swedish and Finnish as well as their cultural identities. As suggested by Myllylä (2019), young adults' linguistic choices will

have a major impact on the future of the Finnish-Swedish population and on the minority language of Swedish, as well as on attitudes toward the minority itself.

Problem Definition

The status of the Finnish-Swedish minority has been a continuous debate in Finland, and during the last few years the language climate has become increasingly strained (Kovero, 2012). In order to see the development of the social status of the Swedish language in Helsinki in the future, it is important to understand the present view of young bilinguals in relation to their identification with the Finnish-Swedish minority. Moreover, it is crucial to see how the young bilinguals identify linguistically and culturally as well as their attitudes toward the Finnish-Swedish minority itself.

1.3 Research Questions

Based on the problem definition presented above, the following main research question was created:

RQ: What factors influence whether or not young bilinguals in Helsinki identify with the Finnish-Swedish minority?

In order to answer the research question, two sub-questions were created:

SQ1: How do the linguistic and cultural identities of the young bilinguals affect their identification with the Finnish-Swedish minority?

SQ2: What are the attitudes of the young bilinguals toward the Finnish-Swedish minority itself?

Social and Scientific Relevance

Due to the decreasing number of people in the Swedish minority, the question about how the current situation is and where we are heading surfaces. In order to see where the society in Helsinki is heading, we need to explore how young bilinguals feel about their identity. This insight will help to build an overview of the current status of the Swedish minority in Helsinki and suggest a glimpse of what the future holds.

In a broader sense, this study will contribute to the literature of linguistic identity for a linguistic minority living within a linguistic majority. In an increasingly culturally complex world, cultural identity has become mutually important as it can help to decide the direction in which the world develops. By this, it is meant that the culture(s) with which one identifies may also decide other personal views that in turn impact society. Therefore, this study will also contribute to the work of cultural identity. In addition, it will add to the greater academic work of intercultural communication.

Overview

Following this introduction, the literature review will introduce the main academic sources used for this study. Then, the methodology and the method will be explained. Thereafter, the results will be presented after which the discussion will discuss the key findings with the sources in the literature review. Finally, the main conclusion will be explained as well as the limitations to this study and suggestions for future research.

Literature Review

The literature review will introduce previous academic work on the topics in this study. Identification processes such as linguistic identity and cultural identity will be explained. Thereafter, the Finnish-Swedish identity will be introduced with the help of prior studies on the subject. Finally, nationalism as well as bilingualism with respect to linguistic minority populations will be presented.

Identification Processes

Social and Individual Concepts

Identity tends to answer questions related to who you think you are and who other people see you as (Henning-Lindblom, 2012). Moreover, it is about how one perceives oneself and identifies oneself, as well as which groups or people one identifies with (Henning-Lindblom, 2012). An individual's identity is a complex concept and is constituted by a personal and a social part (Kim, 2007). According to the psychologist Erik Erikson, the process of identity development is when the two identities of the individual and the group are merged into one (Kim, 2007, p. 240). The personal part is about which personal qualities an individual assigns themselves, or is assigned by others (Henning-Lindblom, 2012). The social identity is constituted by the aspects of an individual's own self-perception, which are derived from the social categories that the individual views themselves as belonging to and the emotional meaning that this belonging has to the individual (Henning-Lindblom, 2012). This social category of identity constitutes the ethnic group to which they view themselves as belonging (Henning-Lindblom, 2012). Everyone belongs to at least one ethnic group; however, ethnic group membership is seemingly more often associated with minorities than to majorities (Henning-Lindblom, 2012). Although various components such as biological, geographic, linguistic, cultural or religious characteristics are often brought forward when identifying an

ethnic group, a common origin is a central criterion for an ethnic identity (Henning-Lindblom, 2012). The complete social identity is created by all of the social categories that an individual belongs to, for example age, mother tongue, and ethnicity among others (Henning-Lindblom, 2012). Therefore, the individual has a repertoire of multiple identities that contribute to their self-perception, which are more or less visible or important to the individual in different contexts (Bodenhausen, 2010).

Linguistic Identity

The relationship between language and identity has been a central concern in the field of linguistic anthropology, which is generally concerned with the linguistic production of culture (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004). Language use can produce and reproduce particular identities (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004). Moreover, language is a key resource for the cultural production of identity as can be seen by the importance of linguistic evidence in socio-cultural anthropology, such as life stories, narratives, interviews, humour, oral traditions, literacy practices and media discourses (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004, p. 369).

Previous research on identity assumed that identities are attributes of individuals or groups rather than of situations. This traditional perspective, that language emphasises distinct group patterns, was maintained at the expense of recognizing variation across individuals within the group, or within a single individual. In contrast, a more dynamic perspective sees identity as existing in actions rather than in people, which means that identities can shift depending on the context or situation. (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004, p. 376)

Moreover, stereotypes or attitudes may impact sociocultural beliefs about languages and their speakers (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004). This is a part of the ideological process in which identities are produced according to Bucholtz and Hall (2004). The other three semiotic processes are practice, indexicality and performance. The ideological concept is related to

essentialist thinking in terms of how one thinks about someone's identity or culture, which fosters specific attitudes and bias which in turn create stereotypes. Additionally, the issue of power is another important aspect in the concept of ideology in terms of how language has sociopolitical meaning (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004).

Swedish Finland can be compared to French Canada in terms of how the languages are viewed by other countries that speak their language. Specifically, how France views Canadian French, and how Sweden views Finnish-Swedish. Much as French speakers from France have a difficulty understanding Canadian French speakers (Heller, 2006, p. 140), Swedish speakers from Sweden have difficulty understanding Finnish-Swedish. The differences in vocabulary and pronunciation make the biggest differences. Since the Swedish spoken in Finland is distinct and different from the one in Sweden and characterized by different accents and dialects depending on the region, the Swedish minority of Finland has its own culture with specific traditions dissimilar to Finnish speakers and Swedish speakers in Sweden. Therefore, the Swedish minority can be viewed as being more than a dialect of an established language. Furthermore, the understanding of language and language competence has shifted over time and is connected to thinking about identity where various pronunciations and lexical selection are related to certain personae (Cole & Meadows, 2013). Therefore, linguistic features like accents, which have been viewed as markers of origin within the traditional concept of identity, must be rethought (Cole & Meadows, 2013).

Cultural Identity

Cultural identity refers to an individual's psychological membership in a cultural group (Sussman, 2000). Cultural identity is a central concern in social sciences like communication, especially in intercultural contexts, and can be investigated from many perspectives (Kim, 2007). As the concept is broadly employed it includes related concepts such as subcultural,

national, ethnolinguistic, and racial identity, as well as an individual's psychological identification with a particular group (Kim, 2007, p. 238). The psychologist Erik Erikson puts cultural identity at the core of the individual and also at the core of their 'common culture', which means that cultural identity provides a sense of a common origin, as well as common beliefs and values (Kim, 2007, p. 240). Moreover, cultural identity is seen as an evolving and adaptive feature of an individual as can be seen in for example, cultural minorities adapting to the society in which they live (Kim, 2007).

When one is in contact with cultures that are not familiar, a process occurs through which a new cultural identity becomes integrated into the self (Sablonnière et al., 2016). There are three different ways of perceiving this identity integration. The first perception is when there is an interest in maintaining one's original culture, which fosters integration into the larger social network, or society (Berry, 2005). The second perception of identity integration is about individuals who are high on bicultural identity integration, which means that these individuals see themselves as belonging to a combined, or "third" emerging culture (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005). These individuals also find it easy to integrate both cultures in everyday life and do not view the two cultures as mutually exclusive, oppositional or conflicting (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005). The third perception of identity integration is about multiple identities becoming integrated in the self, and thus being equally important to the overall self-concept (Amiot et al., 2007). In this situation, various connections and links are created so that the different components do not feel fragmented in the self-concept (Amiot et al., 2007).

The Finnish-Swedish Identity

Kovero (2012), who conducted a lengthy study on the Finnish-Swedish identity of students (ages 11-18), noticed that the identity in question is subject to change as the student matures. Moreover, the language use of young people from bilingual families in the Helsinki region

changes from bilingualism (Swedish and Finnish) to a greater use of Swedish as the student ages (Kovero, 2012).

These young people have a complex relationship to their linguistic and cultural identity and define themselves in various ways depending on their linguistic situation at home (Swedish-speaking, bilingual, Finnish-speaking, or immigrant homes) (Kovero, 2012). Despite the common critical view of Finland's bilingualism, these young people are proud of their bilingual belonging and they rarely have prejudices against the concept of a 'Swedish-speaking Finn' (Kovero, 2012). The results in Kovero's (2012) study indicate that Finnish-Swedish schools are important for the linguistic and cultural identity formation for students attending these schools, regardless of their linguistic situation at home.

According to a study done by Kepsu and Markelin (2021) where 545 Finnish-Swedish people aged 15-19 across Finland were interviewed, Swedish is mostly used at home and with friends, meanwhile Finnish is used in public situations, for example, in shops. Moreover, the study showed that 20% of the young people use only Swedish in their daily lives even though they live in a bilingual society where Finnish is widely used. Even those who identify as bilingual say that they use Swedish to a higher degree at home, with friends, and on social media (Kepsu & Markelin, 2021).

Jenny Stenberg-Sirén, a media language researcher commenting on the study by Kepsu and Markelin (2021), states that the Finnish-Swedish identity seems to have different meanings depending on where in Finland one lives. In the Helsinki region, the Finnish-Swedish identity may be defined in relation to Finnish speakers whereas in the western areas along the coast it may be defined in relation to Swedish speakers in Sweden (Kepsu & Markelin, 2021). Moreover, identifying with being Finnish-Swedish or bilingual does not have to be exclusive to one or the other (Kepsu & Markelin, 2021). Rather, Stenberg-Sirén explains that one can have different identities depending on the context. Since the labour market in Helsinki is mainly

Finnish speaking, it is increasingly important to preserve the Finnish-Swedish language for the sake of its historical and cultural importance as its use is limited in public situations (Kepsu & Markelin, 2021). The Finnish-Swedish culture and language are cultivated during school, Stenberg-Sirén says, suggesting that a lack of Finnish-Swedish schools may hamper Swedish in the future. In addition, the Finnish-Swedish identity is shaped by nations and is dependent on where in Finland one lives as those along the coastal area identify in relation to Sweden to a higher degree than those in the Helsinki area.

Nationalism

A common critique of researchers of identity is the impact of essentialism (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004). This means that those who occupy an identity category, such as, being young, bilingual in Swedish and Finnish, and attending a Finnish-Swedish school, are fundamentally similar to each other and also fundamentally different from members of other groups, such as being old, monolingual, and in the working class. Essentialism sees these groups as naturally occurring and that they are distinctly separated (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004). Additionally, essentialism can be interpreted as a cultural phenomenon, as Holliday (2011) defines it as the detrimental categorization of nations and cultures as being distinctly separate. Nationalist standard practices, such as essentialist thinking, are difficult to shake despite the non-essentialist ways of thinking that help to cross cultural boundaries (Holliday, 2016). Nationalist standard practices also hinder proper engagement in linguistic and cultural diversity as one does not see nationalist communities as context-dependent from an essentialist perspective (Cole & Meadows, 2013).

There is a particular political consciousness regarding language in Helsinki that can be compared to that of the region of Quebec in Canada (Heller, 2006). In Monica Heller's book 'Linguistic minorities and modernity: a sociolinguistic ethnography' (2006), she writes that

individuals in Quebec even as young as high school students have an opinion regarding independence and nationalism. This could be compared to young people in Helsinki, as Canada and Finland have similar histories regarding linguistic minorities. This leads to the question of whether young bilingual people in Helsinki hold equally strong opinions regarding nationalism as French Canada, since both Finnish nationalism and Swedish nationalism are historically important movements (Östlund, 2019).

Bilingualism within a Linguistic Minority

A linguistic minority is, by definition, bilingual as they have an ethnic minority language at home (Swedish) while using another language in societal situations (Finnish) (Leung, Harris & Rampton, 1997). Moreover, language use, ethnicity and social identity are linked. Therefore, one needs to pay attention to the way that bilingual learners construct their patterns of language use, ethnicity and social identity because the patterns can often contradict the fixed patterns attributed to bilingual learners (Leung, Harris, Rampton, 1997).

In terms of bilinguals' construction of their social identities, Heller (2007) suggests that bilinguals consistently challenge historical, social, linguistic, and cultural categories in their everyday lives. This view is drastically different from considering bilingualism to be the acquisition of a set of formal language codes. Rather, the bilingual or bicultural person is complex and draws on a wide range of linguistic and social resources to form different identities and challenge roles in society, thereby creating multiple identities which they manage in various social interactions. (Heller, 2007)

As a demonstration, 67% of the Finnish-Swedish young people interviewed in the study by Kepsu and Markelin (2012) feel a part of a minority. Out of those, 97% say that the reason for feeling a part of a minority is that they speak Swedish. This feeling is not only prevalent for monolingual Swedish speakers, but also for bilinguals speaking both Swedish and Finnish.

Despite being able to speak the majority language of Finland, Finnish, the bilinguals still identify with the Swedish minority. By doing so, these bilinguals challenge societal roles as Heller (2007) suggests since having linguistic competences in a language does not automatically lead that individual to identifying with the social or cultural constructs related to that language.

Methodology

Methodological Approach

Due to the highly complex characteristics of this research and the value of an emergent research design (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 37), a qualitative approach was chosen. Additionally, the lack of prior research makes the exploratory nature of qualitative research desirable (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 39). The flexibility that is offered in conducting a qualitative study is crucial for the purpose of this study. Moreover, the goal is to explore the linguistic and cultural identities of the participants as well as their attitudes toward the Finnish-Swedish minority itself, which requires rich and complex details that can only emerge in interviews (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 38). Therefore, this study will mainly take an inductive approach, where the gathered data will ultimately lead to new insights on these topics.

The research question of what factors that influence whether or not young bilinguals in Helsinki identify with the Finnish-Swedish minority was investigated by collecting primary qualitative data through ethnographic interviews. The qualitative and ethnographic approach is the most suitable because the aim is to produce contextual real-world knowledge about the behaviours, social structures and shared beliefs of a specific group of people. Ethnographic research aims to describe and analyse the practices and beliefs of cultures, such as distinct communities (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 130). This makes it a suitable method as the main focus in this study is on how the participants' linguistic backgrounds impact their linguistic and cultural identities as well as their attitudes in relation to the Swedish minority of Finland, where the minority can be seen as a distinct culture and community in itself.

Ethical considerations

“Social research concerns people’s lives in the social world and therefore it inevitably involves ethical issues” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 63). These ethical issues include targeting sensitive or intimate matters, which in this context, could be applied to the participants’ personal views and details of their identities. Moreover, the handling of the collected data, the ownership of the data, and questions regarding anonymity all need to be considered.

The terms to which the participants needed to agree prior to the interview are based on Utrecht University’s guidelines on how to handle data in a lawful manner. For this study, each participant received a consent form in which all the details regarding the data collection, ownership and storage were explained. These consent forms needed to be read and signed before the initiation of the interview. Before starting the interview, the participants were asked if they had understood the information letter and consent form, and if they had any questions. This was done to ensure that the researcher and the participant agreed on the purpose of the interview and were on the same wavelength. Although the interviews were recorded, the recordings were only used for transcription purposes. Moreover, the recordings were deleted as soon as the study came to an end. In addition, the interviews were anonymous since the demographic details of the participants were not taken into account for the analysis.

Data Collection

Participants

Five participants were selected by the researcher based on the following criteria. The participants are young adults (ages 22-28), speak at least Swedish and Finnish on a native or fluent level, and live in Helsinki. The participants were contacted by the researcher via WhatsApp as they were a part of the researcher’s personal network. Thereafter, communication

took place over e-mail as the participants were sent an information letter about the study and the participant's role. The participants were also sent a consent form which they signed before taking part in the interview. All participants who were asked to participate agreed to take part in the study and did so on a voluntary basis without compensation.

Procedure

The data was collected through semi-structured ethnographic interviews. The interviews were conducted in Swedish as this was the most appropriate language for the purpose of the interview and was shared between the researcher and the participant. By using Swedish, it also minimized the language barrier that may have been present if English were to be used, where the chance of missing valuable information would be present. The main topics covered in the interview were: linguistic background, the use of Swedish and Finnish in their daily lives, the values they attach to the two languages, their perspective on the Finnish-Swedish minority's status in Helsinki and their view on the status of the Swedish language in Helsinki in the future.

Since the questions were ethnographic in nature, they were open-ended which encouraged the participants to share what they deemed important from their perspective (Dörnyei, 2007). This also minimized the risk of the researcher missing any valuable insights. Due to current restrictions, the interviews were conducted in an online environment on Microsoft Teams. The interviews lasted for an average of 30 minutes per participant and they were recorded for transcription and analysis purposes.

Data Analysis

The interviews were transcribed on Word using its dictation tool in real-time during the interviews. Since the interviews were recorded for transcription and analysis purposes, the

transcriptions were finalized with the help of the recording after the interviews were finished by playing the recordings and correcting errors in the preliminary dictated transcription.

Thereafter, a textual analysis was conducted in five stages supported by the coding tool Dovetail. More specifically, a thematic analysis was used for the coding and examining of the data to identify broad themes and patterns. Each theme was examined to gain an understanding of participants' perceptions and motivations.

The preliminary analysis was conducted by reading through the transcripts and highlighting interesting insights or segments important to the research questions. Thereafter, the transcripts were uploaded to Dovetail where the main coding took place. By reading through each interview, the following preliminary themes were created: linguistic competences, Finnish-Swedish, language use, attitude, and future. Each theme also had several preliminary categories. However, during the coding of each interview, new insights appeared that created new themes and categories. Therefore, the themes and categories were added or changed throughout the analysis process. Due to the changes and additions in the themes and categories throughout the analysis process, each interview was analysed twice to ensure that all themes and categories were considered for each interview. The final themes and categories can be found below in Table 1. The number within the brackets is how many times this category was coded.

The initial research questions were changed during the process of data analysis as the interviews uncovered insights that the initial research questions did not include. The initial main research question was about which identification processes that are used by young bilinguals in Helsinki. This was changed to a focus on the factors that influence whether or not young bilinguals identify with the Finnish-Swedish minority. Moreover, one of the two initial sub-questions was also altered due to the same reason as stated above. The first initial sub-question focused on the linguistic and cultural traits that the young bilinguals portray. This was

broadened by changing the focus to how the linguistic and cultural identities of the young bilinguals affect their identification with the Finnish-Swedish minority. The second sub-question stayed the same as the attitudes of the young bilinguals toward the Finnish-Swedish minority itself remained an important focus for this study throughout the analysis process.

Table 1*Themes and Categories used in the Data Analysis*

Theme	Linguistic Background	Identification	Attitudes and Perspectives	Finnish-Swedish	Finnish	Future
Categories	Family linguistic background (16)	Which language they think in (8)	Swedish speakers' attitudes to Finnish speakers (4)	Swedish competence (14)	Finnish competence (11)	Language with children (11)
	Other language competencies (9)	Mother tongue significance (14)	Finnish speakers' attitudes to Swedish speakers (19)	Finnish-Swedish culture (17)	Finnish culture (9)	Swedish in the future (15)
		Identity (29)	Finnish speakers' attitude to learning Swedish (19)	Community (10)	Finnish use family and friends (13)	Finnish in the future (1)
			Experience when in a group of Swedish vs. Finnish speakers (5)	Lack of knowledge about minority (4)	Finnish use public services (9)	
			Negative atmosphere between Swedish and Finnish speakers (12)	Finnish-Swedish significance (35)	Finnish use public places (8)	
			Positive atmosphere between Swedish and Finnish speakers (8)	Swedish use family and friends (17)	Finnish use work (7)	
			Separate societal groups (9)	Swedish use public services (6)	Finnish use general (9)	
			Stereotypes (12)	Swedish use public places (6)	Finnish advantages (13)	
			Importance of knowing languages (7)	Swedish use work (4)	Finnish pride (3)	
				Swedish use general (11)	Finnish importance (6)	
			Swedish advantages (17)	Finnish in school (3)		
			Swedish pride (5)	Finnish hobbies (3)		
			Swedish importance (31)			
			Swedish in school (20)			
			Swedish hobbies (3)			

Evaluation and Justification of Methodological Choices

Due to the qualitative nature of this study, the analysis will be dependent on the researcher's interpretation of the data (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 38). Therefore, the researcher's own characteristics such as values, personal history, and demography will inevitably have an impact on the outcome of this study (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 38). However, the researcher's self-awareness of their possible bias aids to circumvent this limitation as they reflect on their role and position in relation to the participants' answers.

In addition, the researcher has similar demographic characteristics and background as the participants. This adds a unique perspective, as the researcher can ask follow-up questions that an outsider of this sample group may not be able to do. Moreover, the researcher has had a personal relationship with the participants for 3-4 years prior to the interviews. The personal relationship between the researcher and the participants is characterised by trust, which creates a unique environment where the participants feel comfortable to share personal details and experiences.

Moreover, the number of interviews will not be enough to draw conclusions based on the entire population of the Swedish minority but merely on the sample of this study. Due to constraints on time and resources, the geographical focus on Helsinki contributes to the restricted conclusions. Additionally, the voluntary basis of participation in this study may create a biased view of the situation as the participants may have a prior interest in the topic that guides their perspectives. Their personal relationship with the researcher may also have influenced their willingness to participate in the study. Nevertheless, the study contributes to the literature on minority identity and gives valuable insight to the situation at hand.

The link between essentialism and nationalism is important to consider (Cole & Meadows, 2013) as the participants taking part in this study may portray essentialist thinking.

Due to the complexity of the Finnish-Swedish concept and identity, the researcher might be tempted to simplify certain aspects in order to draw conclusions. However, this would weaken the conclusion and contribution of the study, and create the risk of neo-essentialism, which is when you recognize the limits of essentialism but nevertheless reinforce it (Holliday, 2011, p. 69).

Validity and Reliability

As qualitative data is subjective in its nature, the validity and reliability of a study may be affected. As mentioned, these interviews do not produce results that can be generalized beyond the sample group, however, they do provide more in-depth understanding of participants' perceptions, motivation and emotions than a quantitative-oriented study, such as a survey would. Since the conditions for this study are quite specific considering the researcher's own demographic characteristics and background and their relationship with the participants, The study cannot be reproduced entirely under the exact same conditions, which may restrict the reliability to some extent. However, the findings can be considered more in-depth than if the researcher would be an outsider of the sample group, which leads to trustworthy results and improves validity.

Results

The following results begin with an overview of the participants' linguistic backgrounds and language use in their everyday lives. Thereafter, findings related to identification processes are introduced. Specifically, the Finnish-Swedish identity is described, the Finnish-Swedish community is presented, and the importance of the Swedish language is outlined. Then, findings related to certain attitudes are introduced. The societal atmosphere is described, and nationalist values are presented. Finally, findings of stereotypes and discrimination, as well as the role of the Swedish language in the participants' futures are outlined.

Linguistic Backgrounds and Language Use

The participants were asked which languages they speak and how they have learned these languages. Most of the participants speak Swedish as a mother tongue, which they have learned at home from one or both parents. Two participants have learned Finnish at home with their family whereas the three others have learned it at school. The five participants' linguistic backgrounds are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Participants' Linguistic Backgrounds

Participant	Swedish	Finnish	Language(s) spoken at home
1	Native	Proficient	Swedish
2	Proficient	Native	Finnish
3	Native	Proficient	Swedish
4	Native	Proficient	Swedish
5	Native	Native	Swedish and Finnish

Regarding the participants' language use in their everyday lives in Helsinki, it is clear that all of the participants use Finnish in the majority of situations when it comes to public places and services. Moreover, Swedish is commonly used with family and friends, and at school, as all of the participants have attended a Swedish school and/or university. However, Swedish is also used in some public situations. Most commonly, it is used when the participant is certain that the other person that they want to interact with speaks Swedish. This happens in certain cafés and shops that are traditionally Swedish. Additionally, some services such as governmental agencies and banks offer service in Swedish. An overview of the participants' self-reported language use is presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3

Language Use in Participants' Everyday Lives

Participant	Swedish (public places/services)	Finnish (public places/services)	School and/or University
1	Sometimes	Most of the time	Swedish
2	Rarely	Always	Finnish, English and Swedish
3	Rarely	Always	Swedish
4	Sometimes	Most of the time	Swedish
5	Rarely	Always	Swedish

Identification

Finnish-Swedish Identity

When asked about which term that the participants identifies the most with, some identified more with the Swedish minority, and some identified with the Finnish majority to some extent.

Participant 1:

“When I hear Finnish-Swedish, I think of myself”

Participant 3:

“I would say that I have had that traditional Finnish-Swedish identity but also half, or maybe a bit less than half, I don’t know if I can say Finnish, but Finnish features, Finnish values that may not be seen as stereotypically Finnish-Swedish.”

Another perspective arose portraying a more fluid relationships between the two societal groups.

Participant 5:

“I do not think that you are either Finnish-Swedish or Finnish, that there is nothing else, but rather than you can float in-between the two. [...] I am clearly Finnish-Swedish, but it does not feel right to choose such a black and white label.”

Additionally, some did not identify with being Finnish-Swedish due to their linguistic background.

Participant 2:

“Maybe because I do not speak Swedish at home, so therefore it feels like I am not Finnish-Swedish. I would say that I do not identify as Finnish-Swedish. Maybe bilingual. Perhaps more Finnish than Finnish-Swedish, or bilingual.”

Community

When asked what they think of when they hear ‘Finnish-Swedish’, most participants mentioned that the Finnish-Swedish community is very particular and important to them. More

specifically, the well-known concept of the ‘duck pond’ (in Swedish: Ankdammen) means that “everyone knows everyone” and that there is always a connection in common with another Finnish-Swedish person. This contributes to the feeling of being a part of a community, both linguistically and culturally.

Participant 4:

“I definitely think of ‘the duck pond’. I think of a club, a pretty exclusive club. [...] I feel that you always try to look for something in common. For example, in a group of Finnish-Swedish people, there are always the questions of where you have gone to school and if you have a friend in common.”

Participant 1:

“I think of a community, that people know each other. If I meet another Finnish-Swedish person, it feels like the chance is quite big that they know someone that I know. It’s a huge network in that way.”

Participant 5:

“It’s a sort of community in Finland.”

Importance of Swedish

The Swedish language is described as important historically and culturally in Helsinki. The participants agree that Swedish is important and that it would be a shame if the language would disappear.

Participant 5:

“It’s an important part of our history. I understand the argument that it would be a shame if it would go extinct.”

Participant 1:

“If you would compare with what I think is the normal level, I think I am more on the side that I consider Swedish to be really important and therefore I try to keep my Swedish strong.”

Usually, those who speak Swedish in Helsinki also speak Finnish and English, and one other language such as Spanish, German or French, averaging four languages per person. This shows the importance of languages for a bilingual young adult in Helsinki. The idea that knowing languages opens doors to communicating with people from other countries is prevalent. This finding is brought up when asked if they consider it important for Finnish speakers to learn Swedish.

Participant 1:

“At least I would like to have the attitude that it is an additional language, and that if I know Swedish as a Finnish-speaker, then I also have the doors open to Sweden and Norway. It is also a lot easier to learn other languages, for example, German becomes a lot easier than if you only speak Finnish.”

Participant 4 adds:

“I definitely think that it would be great if these Finnish people who do not know Swedish would learn it, because it would be good for them. But often they do not see it in this way, but rather as something they have to learn in school and that is really a shame.”

A couple participants described their experience when abroad. In these situations, it is important to make it clear that they are Finnish-Swedish rather than Finnish.

Participant 1:

“I have noticed that when I am abroad and I am talking with someone about life, I am very thorough with pointing out that Swedish is my mother tongue, not Finnish.”

People from other countries are generally not familiar with the Finnish-Swedish minority. This makes it quite difficult for some of the participants to explain their origin when meeting someone new. The example below explains how they have tried to simplify their identity but that this makes them uncomfortable.

Participant 4:

“When I’m talking to someone and they are surprised [that I don’t speak Finnish] and say, ‘you don’t speak your own language?’ and then I have to explain. But usually, I say that I am from Finland with a bad taste in my mouth because it’s always the same long story to tell, just to make it easier.”

Attitudes

Societal atmosphere

Participants had mixed perspectives when it comes to their impression of the societal atmosphere between the Finnish-Swedish minority and the Finnish majority in Helsinki. When asked about the situation between Finnish-Swedish people and Finnish people, the answers were both negative and positive. The two groups seem to be separated in society to a certain extent as shown by the examples below.

Participant 1:

“It feels like there is a wall in-between, but I think that it’s because of the fact that we have those who are Finnish speakers and then those who are Finnish-Swedish, so you don’t have a lot of contact with each other because all the Finnish-Swedish people go to Swedish schools when they are young, and then university in Swedish. Finnish speakers have their own. [...] For me it feels like it is very separated, in that way, despite living in the same society and being around each other.”

Participant 4:

“It is definitely very separated from each other. For those who do not speak Swedish, it is hard for them to get in contact with you because they aren’t curious, in a way.”

One participant brought up a more profound difference between the two societal groups related to values.

Participant 3:

“It comes down to values a lot too. I can tell when I spend time with Finnish-Swedish friends or with Finnish friends that there is a whole different world of thought in a way, despite belonging to the same demographic or socio-economic status, there is still something there that is different.”

Nationalism

A Finnish nationalism or pride was mentioned by a couple of participants.

Participant 5:

“I have observed the Finnish attitude that there is quite a proud Finnish identity because Finland has been such a small and insignificant country. So, there is a confidence and an attitude toward Swedish speakers that they do not belong to this identity group [Finnish].”

Participant 3:

“In the context in which I was brought up, I have very strong features of Finnish-Swedish that I identify with, but at the same time, there are some Finnish patriotic features as well.”

Similarly, a Swedish pride, or an importance of the Swedish language, was also brought up.

Participant 5:

“I went to a Swedish school and you want to preserve the Swedish language [...]. Also, this “propaganda” to preserve Swedish and that it is your mother tongue, “never forget that it is your mother tongue”. It has become such a grand and formal thing somehow that Swedish is my mother tongue.”

The will to learn Swedish as a Finnish speaker seems to be rare and participants’ perspectives vary here as well. Although they consider Swedish to be an important aspect of Finland’s history and culture, the practice of learning Swedish as a Finnish speaker is recognized as difficult.

Participant 2:

“Yes, I think that it is important [to learn Swedish] and good since it has been such a big part of Finland’s history and background, so I think it is important. [...] Especially Swedish is easy to learn here in Finland as well, and it is important historically, I think. It is important to learn it.”

Participant 3:

“I see it from the point of view that if they do not want to learn Swedish, why force them? Those who choose to learn Swedish voluntarily actually want to learn it and, therefore, they will. [...] I think it [forcing] will lead to Finnish people not wanting to learn Swedish, so then it does not matter if they learn it at school or not because they will not learn it anyway”

Additionally, Finnish-Swedish people assume that Finnish speakers do not know Swedish, and therefore switch to Finnish as soon as they think that the person is not Finnish-Swedish.

Participant 1:

“If you are in a group with nine Finnish-Swedish people and one Finnish person, then you speak Finnish all together because you assume that they do not speak Swedish. Although they actually should know Swedish, but most of the time they do not. So, then all the Finnish-Swedish people change to Finnish because it is most often the easiest.”

Stereotypes

The participants were not asked specifically about stereotypes. However, almost all of the participants mentioned or discussed the impact of stereotypes for Finnish-Swedish people or Finnish people in some way. Interestingly enough, the participants had similar views on which stereotypes belonged to each group. The most common stereotypes for Finnish-Swedish people are that they are spoiled, rich, open-minded and international. They also go sailing during the summer and spend a lot of time in the archipelago at their cottages. In contrast, the most common stereotypes for Finnish people are that they are uncultured, quite primitive, and closed-minded, and patriotic.

Participant 3:

“There are some stereotypes that belong to Finnish-Swedish people and to Finnish people. I think that many of those stereotypes are true. I think that Finnish-Swedish people have many Swedish features such as being open-minded and Western, like internationalized, and interested in other cultures. [...] Whilst Finnish people have the stereotype that they are more withdrawn, perhaps not as open-minded to other cultures, pretty strong patriotically”.

Participant 5:

“Finnish speakers can think that Finnish-Swedish people are spoiled and such, but it is based on some person and not everyone. It is the most common impression you have but I don't know if anyone actually believes in it. On the other hand, Finnish-Swedish people have a picture of Finnish people that they are more primitive maybe, or maybe not in Helsinki specifically, but if you think about the rest of Finland where they live in the countryside, then they are not so cultural.”

In relation to identity, the participants tended to be careful in expressing an identification to being Finnish-Swedish due to the stereotypes related to this societal group. The Finnish-Swedish identity is described as very particular as exemplified below.

Participant 3:

“I would say that I am 100% Finnish-Swedish, but maybe there are different kinds of Finnish-Swedish people. [...] This whole Finnish-Swedish minority is so specific as an identity so to speak.”

Participant 5:

“I also have a view of what a real Finnish-Swedish is, and I think that I have not been within that culture so much.”

Additionally, one participant described feeling Finnish-Swedish in certain contexts.

Participant 4:

“When I am home in Helsinki, I have always felt very Finnish-Swedish so I think it depends a lot on which people I am in contact with, which gives me this identity.”

Discrimination

Most of the participants also reported evidence of discrimination towards the Finnish-Swedish minority without being specifically asked. The participants gave some examples which include old Finnish men shouting at Finnish-Swedish children to stop speaking Swedish. This type of discrimination is not very prevalent in the participants' lives; however, they are aware that it is happening to other Finnish-Swedish people. The participants mostly agree that most discrimination happens outside of the capital region in more rural areas.

Participant 1:

“I have the feeling that the attitude towards the Finnish-Swedish minority has improved recently. I mean, it is not the same now as when you think of a situation where old Finnish men scream at you because you speak Swedish. I don't think it happens in the same way nowadays like many years ago. Of course, it does still exist, I have also experienced some drunkards shouting at me, but it is very rare.”

Participant 5:

“I have, for example, felt uncomfortable to speak on the phone in Swedish because I have gotten some hateful reactions towards being Finnish-Swedish. Some drunk old man when I was little has shouted at me, but it was an exception. Of course, I have heard of people being discriminated against, but I have never noticed it much in Helsinki.”

Additionally, a more subtle type of discrimination was introduced, as explained below.

Participant 3:

“There is perhaps a small part, I wouldn’t call it hate exactly, but somehow it affects each interaction. You can have a completely normal interaction with someone, and it is fine, and then when the fact that you are Finnish-Swedish is raised in the conversation, there is just something that brings a certain negativity. Especially outside of Helsinki.”

Swedish in the Future

Most of the participants think that the use of Swedish will remain on a similar level in the future as it is today. They also consider Swedish as an important part of their lives as they get older.

Participant 5:

“I expect that Swedish will remain on the same level so that I can find the Swedish community and be a part of it. [...] I hope that there will still be many activities in Swedish. Especially when I am older I would very much like to spend time with other Finnish-Swedish people. In some way there is that feeling of community.”

Participant 4:

“I think Swedish will remain quite on the same level. I have a hard time imagining that it would become more popular than it is now. It’s a language that exists because of a lot of history and background. But I hope that it will not become less popular, but I also think that there are proud Swedish speakers who try and keep it alive. Perhaps in the future, we will have to make a bigger effort to keep it alive.”

When asked about their linguistic preferences in their future families, it is clear that Swedish will be spoken with the majority of the participants’ children. However, they do recognize the importance of knowing Finnish as most of the public services and places are more accessible in Finnish. When asked what language they would speak with their future children, the following was said.

Participant 1:

“Swedish. It would be Swedish [...]. It wouldn’t feel natural to speak Finnish with my child [...], but at the same time I would like the child to have a Finnish hobby or go to pre-school in Finnish, just so they would have it easier when they are working later on. [...] It feels like doing a good deed for the child’s sake if they learn Finnish when they are small, but Swedish will be a priority.”

Participant 5:

“I would speak Swedish because it is also easier for me, I think. I would see if there is a Finnish school so that they would learn all of the languages so they will do alright. Just so that they can get by in Finnish.”

Participant 3:

“Swedish, and that is because I view myself as predominantly Swedish-speaking than Finnish-speaking. The Finnish-Swedish part is so much stronger than my Finnish part, so I would see it as my first priority to pass on Swedish, and it is also a more international language.”

Discussion

In this part, the results will be discussed in relation to the literature review in order to answer the research questions. First, identification processes will be discussed, such as linguistic identity and cultural identity. Thereafter, the participants' attitudes toward the Finnish-Swedish minority will be analysed in relation to prior academic work. Finally, the conclusion will answer the main research question of what factors influence whether or not a young bilingual in Helsinki identifies with the Finnish-Swedish minority. The two sub-questions will also be answered whereafter limitations and suggestions for future research will be presented.

Identification Processes

As described in the literature review, identity constitutes a personal and a social part of an individual (Kim, 2007). Identity development occurs when the identity of the individual and of the group are merged into one (Kim, 2007). According to the results, the participants' linguistic identities are formed as a result of the linguistic dynamic of their family and other personal relationships, in combination with the impact of the linguistic dynamic of the society in which they grow up. Moreover, when one is in contact with new cultures, identity integration occurs, and a new cultural identity is created (Sablonnière et al., 2016). This suggests that when individuals who are familiar with the Finnish-Swedish culture growing up get in contact with the Finnish culture, a new kind of cultural identity is created.

Linguistic Identity

The participants' linguistic backgrounds (Table 2) seem to play a big role in relation to their linguistic identities. Firstly, the results show that most of the participants use Swedish at home and with friends, and Finnish in more public situations, such as going to the store. This finding is in line with that of the study by Kepsu and Markelin (2021), where young Finnish-Swedish

people (aged 15-19) were interviewed about their language use and identity. The results in their study indicate that 20% of young people use only Swedish in their daily lives despite living in a bilingual society, such as Helsinki (Kepsu & Markelin, 2021). This can be compared to the participants' experiences in this study who do not use Swedish in public situations to a high degree in their daily lives.

Moreover, the finding that their linguistic backgrounds form the participants' linguistic identities is similar to that of Kovero's (2012) study on the Finnish-Swedish identity for students (aged 11-18), who found that the complex relationship to young people's linguistic and cultural identities depend on their linguistic situations at home. Those participants who speak only Swedish at home show a stronger tendency to identify with the Finnish-Swedish minority than those participants who speak both Swedish and Finnish at home.

Kovero's (2012) study further showed that Finnish-Swedish schools are important for the formation of linguistic and cultural identities of students attending these schools, regardless of their linguistic situation at home. This can also be found in this study's results, as Participant 5 recognised themselves as belonging to the Finnish-Swedish minority as a result of attending Finnish-Swedish schools all of their life even though they have a bilingual linguistic background at home. Participant 2, who speaks only Finnish at home and has a mixed education background with Finnish, Swedish and English, does not identify as being a part of the Finnish-Swedish minority, despite their excellent Swedish skills. These results suggest that the Finnish-Swedish schools hold an important role in cultivating the Finnish-Swedish culture and language, as concluded in the study by Kepsu and Markelin (2021).

It is clear that one's linguistic background is important for one's linguistic identity. As language is a key resource for the cultural production of identity (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004), it makes sense that those participants with a Swedish dominated linguistic background also identify more strongly with the Finnish-Swedish culture and identity.

Cultural Identity

The results suggest that a majority of the participants considered the Finnish-Swedish minority and the Finnish majority to be quite separated in society in Helsinki. One of the reasons for this is that Finnish-Swedish people usually attend school and university in Swedish, and Finnish people attend school and university in Finnish. As a result, Finnish-Swedish and Finnish people do not get a chance to interact much during their childhoods, which creates a bigger barrier for connecting and interacting on a personal level when they are older.

Another reason is the difference in values held by the two societal groups. As Participant 3 explained, there is a whole different world of thought between the societal groups despite belonging to the same demographic or socio-economic status. As cultural identity refers to an individual's psychological membership to a cultural group (Sussman, 2000), the view of Participant 3 suggests that psychological memberships in the Finnish-Swedish and Finnish cultural groups are different, and thus that they are separate cultural groups.

Furthermore, a strong feeling of community within the Finnish-Swedish culture was felt by most of the participants. The concept of the 'Duck Pond' (in Swedish: 'Ankdammen'), the idea of having a closely knit network within the Finnish-Swedish community, suggests that Finnish-Swedish people want to maintain a strong bond with each other and thereby stay connected. Participant 1 stated that they did not see a similar feeling of community being common for the Finnish majority. This can be related to Kim's (2007) point that cultural identity provides a sense of common origin, beliefs and values, since cultural identity is in the core of the individual and in the core of their 'common culture'. As Finnish-Swedish people hold a strong connection to each other, they thereby share many of the same beliefs and values, and thus can be seen to have a 'common culture'. The Finnish-Swedish community could also be related to the ethnic identity of an individual's social identity (Henning-Lindblom, 2012). As the ethnic identity is deeply connected to an individual's origin (Henning-Lindblom, 2012),

similar to cultural identity (Kim, 2007), the Finnish-Swedish community can be seen as a part of the individuals' social identity as well.

As previously mentioned, it is clear that most of the participants identify as Finnish-Swedish to a higher extent than as Finnish, except for Participant 4 who does not identify as Finnish-Swedish at all. Furthermore, there is a mix in perspective as to which cultural group they recognise themselves in as two of the participants consider themselves as having some Finnish values in addition to their Finnish-Swedish values. This suggests a perspective that the relationship between the two cultural groups is quite fluid and that an individual can recognise themselves across these groups, rather than only recognising themselves in one. This finding is dissimilar from the traditional perspective of identity, which is that identities are attributes of individuals or groups, rather than situations (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004). Rather, this fluidity perspective is more dynamic where identity is seen as existing in actions rather than in people, which means that identities can shift depending on the situation in which one is (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004). This perspective can further be compared to identity integration, where a new cultural identity becomes integrated into the self when one is in contact with an unfamiliar culture (Sablonnière et al., 2016). More specifically, it is comparable to the identity integration introduced by Benet-Martinez & Haritatos (2005) where individuals see themselves as belonging to a combined, or a "third" emerging culture. Instead of identifying with one established culture, these individuals feel more comfortable identifying with a combined culture of the Finnish-Swedish minority and the Finnish majority.

Moreover, the fluid relationship between the two cultural groups can be compared to the findings in the study by Kepsu and Markelin (2021). Similar to Bucholtz and Hall (2004), identifying as Finnish-Swedish and as bilingual does not have to be exclusive, rather, it depends on the context in which one is (Kepsu & Markelin, 2021). For example, Participant 4 stated that they do not identify as Finnish-Swedish since they speak Finnish at home. However, when

they are in a group of Finnish friends, they do not feel entirely Finnish due to their excellent Swedish skills. The context plays a role here, and this shows that one's self-perception can change as different identities are more or less salient depending on who one interacts with (Bodenhausen, 2010).

Bilinguals consistently challenge societal roles in their construction of their social identities (Heller, 2007). This is evident for the participants as having linguistic competences in Swedish and Finnish leads them to creating multiple identities that they manage in different ways depending on the social interactions that they are in (Heller, 2007), similar to what was suggested by Kepsu and Markelin (2021) above. However, linguistic competence in a language does not automatically lead an individual to identifying with the culture related to that language. However, as suggested by Kepsu and Markelin (2021), the bilingual participants tend to identify more overall with the Finnish-Swedish minority than the Finnish majority despite their proficient language skills in Finnish, which suggests that the Finnish-Swedish culture is a part of their cultural identities to a higher extent than the Finnish culture.

Attitudes

Stereotypes and nationalism were discussed by almost all of the participants on their own initiative, which suggests that these elements play a big role in the participants' identification processes. The fact that nationalism was brought up by the participants without a prompt suggests that these young bilinguals hold strong opinions regarding nationalist values, similar to the high school students in French Canada (Heller, 2006). This finding answers the question posed in the literature review, that young bilinguals in Helsinki hold equally strong opinions regarding nationalism as French Canada.

Stereotypes were strongly connected to the Finnish-Swedish minority, however, the participants distanced themselves from the stereotypes and did not identify with the

stereotypical impressions of the minority. Moreover, stereotypes related to the Finnish majority were introduced by those participants who are familiar with both the Finnish-Swedish culture and Finnish culture on a deep level. It is notable that the stereotypes of the Finnish majority are drastically more negative than those of the Finnish-Swedish minority. There is an element of elitism related to the Finnish-Swedish minority as they are thought of as rich, spoiled, or overall privileged in several ways. In contrast, the Finnish stereotypes hold a strong connection to Finnish nationalism, which may explain why they are considered as closed-minded or primitive. Moreover, the stereotypes could be related to the historical context as the Swedish language has had an elitist and culture-oriented role in comparison to the Finnish language which was mostly used in rural areas or in religious context (Östlund, 2019). Furthermore, according to Bucholtz and Hall (2004), stereotypes or attitudes can impact sociocultural beliefs about languages and their speakers and contribute to an essentialist view of identity and culture. This essentialist perspective of Finnish-Swedish and Finnish people thereby contributes to a societal division where the two cultural groups are seen as fundamentally different. Additionally, the issue of power comes into play as language can hold socio-political meaning (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004) as seen by the elitism portrayed by the Finnish-Swedish stereotypes.

The nationalistic values that were discussed by the participants may also influence why the Finnish-Swedish and Finnish cultural groups seem to be separated in society in Helsinki. Similarly to stereotypes, nationalism can be connected to essentialism, which has the detrimental effect of distinctly separating cultures (Holliday, 2011). The essentialist view also hinders the nationalist communities from being context-dependent and reinforces the boundaries between them (Cole & Meadows, 2013). The nationalism present from both the Swedish and Finnish groups can be related to the historical context during the 1800's when the Fennoman movement and the Svecoman movement both fought for their respective language's rights (Östlund, 2019). The nationalist values of the Finnish majority may also explain the

elements of discrimination toward the Finnish-Swedish minority that were brought up by most of the participants. Although discrimination has not occurred often in the participants' own lives, they describe the resentful attitude toward the Finnish-Swedish minority as still being present in a subtle way. The Finnish majority was described as having a negative attitude toward the Finnish-Swedish minority overall even if it is not shown explicitly. The question of how the Finnish-Swedish minority is affected by this resentful attitude comes to mind. Does it lead them to shy away from identifying as a Finnish-Swedish person, or does it spark a pride of belonging to this specific minority? It seems that both of these possible consequences occur as the participants do not like to identify with the stereotypical values of the Finnish-Swedish minority. However, there is also an element of Finnish-Swedish nationalism that surfaces here as is described further below.

Similar to the stereotypes of the Finnish majority, nationalistic values were introduced as being a part of the Finnish-Swedish minority. Participant 5 described their Finnish-Swedish school as having placed a lot of importance on the Finnish-Swedish language as well as its history and culture. In addition, all of the participants describe the Swedish language and elements of the Finnish-Swedish culture as being important in Helsinki both historically and on a personal level. They also agree that it would be a shame if the language were to become less popular or if it would disappear altogether as they would like to keep engaging with the Finnish-Swedish community also when they are older. As was shown in the results in Kovero's study (2012) and in the study by Kepsy and Markelin (2021), Finnish-Swedish schools are important for the linguistic and cultural identity formation for students. Additionally, the lack of Finnish-Swedish schools is said to possibly hamper the status of the Swedish language in the future (Kepsu & Markelin, 2021), which suggests that the Finnish-Swedish schools also contribute to maintaining the current role of Swedish in Helsinki.

All of the participants agree that learning languages is important and beneficial for their lives. Many participants think it's a shame that more Finnish people are not interested in learning Swedish as they think that it would provide an advantage for communicating with people from neighbouring countries, such as Sweden, Norway and Denmark, and for learning other Germanic languages, such as German. Another value of the Finnish-Swedish minority that can be seen as nationalist in nature is prevalent when the participants are abroad. Most of the participants are very particular with expressing that they are Finnish-Swedish rather than Finnish. Participant 4 explained that talking with people who are not aware of or knowledgeable about the Finnish-Swedish minority's existence and who believe that they are Finnish, makes them uncomfortable as they do not identify with the Finnish majority. In addition, they try to simplify their origin by saying that they are from Finland as not to complicate the interaction too much, even if they do not fully agree with that statement.

All of the participants consider the Swedish language to be important and they agree that the language will continue to be present in Helsinki in the future. Most of the participants consider it a priority and a given that they will speak Swedish with their future children because it is the language that they know the best and that they feel the most comfortable with. However, they also recognise the importance of being able to speak Finnish in Helsinki as it is the majority language and is used in the labour market as well as in public situations. Therefore, they wish that their children would participate in hobbies held in Finnish or learn the language in another way as it would make their lives easier.

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore which factors that influence whether or not a young bilingual in Helsinki identifies with the Finnish-Swedish minority. In order to answer this main research question, the goal was also to see how the linguistic and cultural identities affect the young

bilinguals' identification with the Finnish-Swedish minority, and what their attitudes are toward the Finnish-Swedish minority itself. Based on a qualitative methodology with an inductive approach, ethnographic interviews were chosen as the most appropriate method as the subjects of linguistic and cultural identities are rich and complex due to their subjective nature (Dörnyei, 2007). This conclusion will start by answering the two sub-questions as a lead up to answering the main research question.

SQ1: How do the linguistic and cultural identities of the young bilinguals' affect their identification with the Finnish-Swedish minority?

It can be concluded that the participants' linguistic backgrounds play a big role in their linguistic identities. Despite using Finnish to a high degree in their everyday lives in public situations, the participants use Swedish in interactions with friends and family. Therefore, the two languages carry very different functions to the participants and thereby hold different values in their linguistic identities. The findings further indicated that the Finnish-Swedish schools are important for the formation of linguistic identities as was suggested in the study by Kovero (2012). The importance of the Swedish language for the participants is strengthened in these Finnish-Swedish schools regardless of their linguistic backgrounds, however, the participants who have a Swedish dominated linguistic background do tend to identify more strongly with the Finnish-Swedish identity than those with a bilingual or Finnish linguistic background.

Furthermore, the participants' linguistic backgrounds and linguistic identities have an effect on their cultural identities. The fact that Finnish-Swedish people tend to attend Swedish schools and universities and Finnish people tend to choose Finnish schools and universities, creates a society with two societal groups that are quite separated. The two societal groups are affected not only by linguistic differences, but also by holding different values and by

portraying different worlds of thought. This separation is strengthened by the strong community feeling that the Finnish-Swedish people have where they want to stay connected to each other due to their sense of common origin, beliefs and values, and thereby a ‘common culture’ (Kim, 2007).

Some of the participants described that they do not identify strictly with one societal group or the other, thereby introducing a view dissimilar to the traditional perspective, where identity is considered static (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004). Rather, they presented a perspective where one’s identity is fluid and changes depending on the context (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004). This means that the participants’ feel more comfortable shifting between identifying with the Finnish-Swedish minority and the Finnish majority depending on the situation that they are in. Identity integration can also be applied to this finding as the participants may see themselves as belonging to a “third” emerging culture where they identify with a combined version of the two groups (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005). The context plays a role in their identification here (Kepsu & Markelin, 2021) where one’s self-perception can change depending on who one interacts with (Bodenhausen, 2010).

The identification processes of bilinguals are complex in nature (Heller, 2007), which is evidenced by the participants shifting identities depending on the context. In addition, the multiple identities that they manage depending on their social interactions challenge societal roles as these individuals do not fit into one category, or one culture. However, the participants tend to identify more with the Finnish-Swedish minority than the Finnish majority despite their language skills in Finnish, suggesting that the Finnish-Swedish culture is a part of their cultural identities to a higher extent than the Finnish culture.

SQ2: What are the attitudes of the young bilinguals toward the Finnish-Swedish minority itself?

It can further be concluded that the linguistic and cultural identities of the participants are related to their attitudes toward the Finnish-Swedish minority. As explained in the answer to the first sub-question, the separation of Swedish and Finnish schools is one source to the separation of the two societal groups, which differ both linguistically and culturally, as well as the community feeling attributed to the Finnish-Swedish minority that reinforces this separation. Another factor related to the two separated societal groups is that of stereotypes, which was discussed by almost all of the participants on their own initiative. Both societal groups were described as having specific stereotypes, however, despite being historically relevant considering the elitist role that the Swedish language has had (Östlund, 2019), the participants concluded that they are not fully applicable to themselves. Thereby, they distanced themselves from identifying with the stereotypes of the Finnish-Swedish minority and in some cases, also from those of the Finnish majority. The stereotypes at hand contribute to an essentialist perspective and reinforces the separation of the two societal groups (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004). Although the participants did not identify with the stereotypes, the stereotypes are nevertheless a part of their attitudes toward the Finnish-Swedish minority and Finnish majority.

Nationalism was also discussed by the participants without a prompt. Similar to the effect of stereotypes explained above, nationalist values can also be connected to essentialism and to the separation of the Finnish-Swedish minority and the Finnish majority. One of the stereotypes attributed to the Finnish majority was also directly related to Finnish nationalism, which can be historically connected to the Finnish nationalist movement in the 1800's (Östlund, 2019). The Finnish nationalism could be a reason for the discrimination toward the Finnish-Swedish minority, as described by the participants, since Finnish people were presented as holding a resentful attitude toward Swedish speakers. The discrimination can be

shown both explicitly through hateful behaviour and implicitly by creating a subtle negative atmosphere. The negative attitude toward the Finnish-Swedish minority can be seen as a source of Finnish-Swedish nationalism, but also as a reason for the participants not wanting to identify with the stereotypes of the Finnish-Swedish minority.

All of the participants consider the Swedish language to be important in Helsinki, both historically and culturally. They also hope that the language would not become less popular in the future as most of the participants would like to speak Swedish with their future children and continue participating in community activities held in Swedish. The importance of Finnish-Swedish schools is once again brought to light here, as it is described as placing a lot of value on portraying the value of the Swedish language to its students. Moreover, all of the participants consider Swedish to be important as well as beneficial internationally as it is easier to communicate with neighbouring countries and to learn other Germanic languages. However, the participants also recognise the value of speaking Finnish in Helsinki as it is the majority language and is mainly used in the labour market and in public contexts. Therefore, they would also want their future children to grow up bilingual but with a priority on the Swedish language as this is the language that most of the participants are most comfortable with.

The following main research question will now be answered below: What factors influence whether or not a young bilingual in Helsinki identifies with the Finnish-Swedish minority?

The factors that influence whether or not a young bilingual in Helsinki identifies with the Finnish-Swedish minority are manifold as the participants have complex linguistic and cultural identities that vary depending on their linguistic backgrounds and experiences. The linguistic backgrounds of the participants as well as Finnish-Swedish schools play a big role in how the participants identify linguistically and culturally. The participants who have a Swedish dominated linguistic background and that have attended Swedish schools tend to identify more

strongly with the Finnish-Swedish identity than those participants who have a bilingual or Finnish linguistic background.

The attitudes held by the young bilinguals are another factor of whether or not they identify with the Finnish-Swedish minority. Stereotypes and nationalism are common themes in the participants' views of the Finnish-Swedish minority that also reinforce the separation of the Finnish-Swedish and Finnish societal groups. These themes are related to essentialism, which distinctly separates cultures from each other (Holliday, 2011) and has a detrimental effect as the essentialist view hinders the nationalist communities from being context-dependent and reinforces the boundaries between them (Cole & Meadows, 2013).

However, this study found that the participants identities are fluid and context-dependent despite the commonality of stereotypes and nationalist values in their lives. Therefore, the main factor that influences whether a young bilingual in Helsinki identifies with the Finnish-Swedish minority is context, as they can move from one identity to another depending on who they interact with (Bodenhausen, 2010). This fluid relationship between the Finnish-Swedish minority and the Finnish majority shows that the two cultural groups do not have to be exclusive, but that one can shift identities depending on the situation (Kepsu & Markelin, 2021).

Limitations

The first limitation of this study is the number of participants who were interviewed. The low number of five individuals does not allow for generalisations of the entire population of the Finnish-Swedish minority. Rather, the conclusions that are drawn in this study can only be applied to the sample group. Secondly, the fact that bilinguals were chosen for this study excludes those who speak only Swedish. Including a more versatile sample in terms of language skills could have added deeper insights. However, focusing on bilinguals in the

bilingual commune in which Helsinki is located leads to interesting insights and acts as additions to the literature on bilingualism within linguistic minorities. Finally, the study's focus on the capital region of Helsinki cannot be related to the situation in the rest of the country. However, due to a lack of time and resources, these three limitations were difficult to solve.

Suggestions for Future Research

As a first suggestion related to the previous limitations, a study with a bigger sample of participants who are both bilingual and monolingual in Swedish as well as a broader geographical focus could lead to more insightful results. Moreover, future researchers could conduct a similar study by focusing on how the Finnish majority views the Swedish minority as well as their own identities in various contexts. This would arguably be a complementary study as this research only showed one limited perspective. Additionally, there was evidence of the Finnish-Swedish minority and the Finnish majority being separated societal groups in Helsinki. Therefore, the factors that impact this perception would be important to focus on in future studies as this essentialist and categorical view of the two groups is limited and possibly inaccurate considering the evidence of the more fluid perspective in terms of identity found in this study.

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