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Telling It Simply

Methods to Overcome Language Barriers in a Multicultural Context

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<p>This functional thesis has been realized in partnership with Multicultural Association Familia Club Ry, in an attempt to reduce the challenges that arise in communication beyond language barriers. In a multicultural environment, challenges related to providing information in an understandable manner often originate from the lack of common language between service providers and clients. Hence, the main purpose of this final project is to tackle the disempowering factor of misunderstandings by providing Familia Club members with comprehensible information. This should enhance their ability to make informed decisions regarding participation in different activities.</p> <p>Plain language and pictograms were the methods implemented to develop communication between Familia Club and their members. Our product, <i>Telling it Simply</i>, combines the selected methods in the form of eight text message and eight email models.</p> <p>The models were pilot tested with two groups of Finnish language students at Familia Club and their feedback was used to improve the product. Hence, the final product represents both, solutions made based on previous research findings, and the participants' viewpoints regarding the models' comprehensibility.</p> <p>Through this project one structural barrier to empowerment was acknowledged and innovative methods of communication were piloted in the multicultural context. Thus, an initiative was given for further experimentation and development by professionals in the field. Familia Club's mission of facilitating immigrants' integration into Finnish society was also served by improving the accessibility of their services through the new communication methods.</p>	
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<p>Tämä toiminnallinen opinnäytetyö toteutettiin yhteistyössä Monikulttuuriyhdistys Familia Club Ry:n kanssa. Pyrkimyksenä oli puuttua monikulttuurisessa kontekstissa usein ilmeneviin väärinymmärryksiin, joita kielimuri työntekijöiden ja heidän asiakkaidensa välille aiheuttaa. Opinnäytetyön päällimmäinen tarkoitus oli kehittää Familia Clubin jäsenille suuntautuvaa tiedotusta innovatiivisin menetelmin ymmärrettävämpään suuntaan ja täten edesauttaa maahanmuuttajajäsenten tiedonsaantia. Tavoitteena oli myös rakenteellisen, kielimuurista aiheutuvan, esteen poistamisen kautta tukea kohderyhmän voimaantumista.</p> <p>Opinnäytetyön tuotos, <i>Telling it Simply</i>, koostuu kahdeksasta sähköposti- ja vastaavasti kahdeksasta tekstiviestimallista, joissa kommunikointikeinoina on käytetty selkokieltä ja piktogrammeja. Mallit on suunniteltu välittämään informaatiota Familia Clubilta heidän jäsenilleen mahdollisimman selkeästi, ja helposti omaksuttavalla tavalla.</p> <p>Kohderyhmän edustajat osallistuivat tuotoksen kehittelyyn antamalla palautetta mallien ymmärrettävyydestä sekä ideoimalla muutosehdotuksia. Lopulliset sähköposti- ja tekstiviestimallit edustavatkin niin teoriaan pohjautuvia ratkaisuja kuin viestien vastaanottajien näkemyksiä niiden ymmärrettävyydestä.</p> <p>Tämän opinnäytetyön myötä havaittiin voimaantumista ehkäisevä rakenteellinen este, johon puututtiin pilotoimalla vaihtoehtoisia kommunikaatiomenetelmiä monikulttuurisuudessa. Samalla pyrittiin tekemään aloite sosiaalialan ammattilaisille kyseisten keinojen laajempaan hyödyntämiseen maahanmuuttaja-asiakkaiden tiedonsaannin turvaamiseksi. Myös Familia Clubin työtä maahanmuuttajien kotoutumisen edistämiseksi tuettiin parantamalla heidän palveluidensa saavutettavuutta uusien kommunikointi kanavien kautta.</p>	
Avainsanat	monikulttuurisuus, selkokieli, piktogrammi, kotoutuminen, voimaantuminen, sähköposti, tekstiviesti, kommunikointi-haasteet, maahanmuuttajat, osallistuminen, Familia Club

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1 Introduction

When communicating in a multicultural environment, it is vital that the information conveyed is understood. Receiving information regarding one's rights and available services is among the most important factors influencing the success of an immigrant's integration process (Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations 2005:10,34). Similarly, Valtonen (2008:15) stresses the vitality of providing immigrants with adequate knowledge and information regarding their host societies which assists them to effectively achieve their future objectives. However, in a multicultural society, securing the versatile population groups' access to information can be challenging. Even though the Finnish society is full of information, most of it has been written in general Finnish, Swedish or English. This proves as a major obstacle to newly arrived immigrants who do not speak any of the aforementioned languages.

The challenges related to providing comprehensible information in a multicultural context are also familiar to our working life partner Multicultural Association Familia Club Ry, which aims to support immigrants' rights, aspirations as well as promote their integration into the Finnish society. We also gained personal experience regarding these issues while completing our work placement in Familia Club, while one of us has been a member of the association. Thus, our connections to Familia Club as well as our interests in multicultural work provided a great opportunity to address the issue of these communication difficulties. Therefore, we developed the *Telling it Simply* -product in cooperation with them to tackle the challenge of misunderstandings when communicating beyond a common language. The target group was limited to those Familia Club's members who do not speak, nor understand Finnish, Swedish or English.

The *Telling it Simply* - product consists of eight email models and eight text message models with plain language and pictograms as methods for communication. The combination of picture symbols and plain language is intended to make the information conveyed to Familia Club's members more understandable. An additional motivation for implementing these methods in a multicultural context was that existing studies concerning alternative communication methods have mainly concentrated on improving communication for the disabled. Also, not much research has been undertaken on plain language in general (FAIDD n.d.).

In addition to improving immigrants' access to information, the utilization of our product in Familia Club aims to contribute to their empowerment by tackling disempowering elements of misunderstandings. This can be expected to support Familia Club in their valuable work of facilitating immigrants' integration into the Finnish society. Accordingly, when the immigrants are able to understand the information conveyed to them, they will have equal opportunities as the rest of the society, to make informed choices and participate in various services at their disposal. These objectives combined cover the social services degree program's objective of developing practices in the social field, our interests in multicultural work as well as Familia Club's developmental needs.

In this final thesis, the process of developing the *Telling It Simply* product will be described and supported with previous research on pictograms and plain language. The aims of the thesis, on the other hand, will be discussed using empowerment and integration as framework theories. Additionally, the importance of developing communication in multicultural context will be validated by appealing to obstacles that hinder immigrants' access to information.

2 Context of the Thesis

2.1 Description of Familia Club

Familia Club is a non-governmental-organization that was founded in 1988 to provide low-threshold services for immigrants in Finland. Their main target group is immigrants outside of the labour market for various reasons, such as having only recently arrived in Finland or being a stay-at-home mother. The services provided by Familia Club include: Finnish language courses, cultural activities, peer support groups, excursions as well as other activities, which all aim at facilitating immigrants' integration process into the Finnish society. Familia Club also advocates for their members' rights and promotes equality in the society by cooperating with other organizations and giving expert advice regarding multicultural and immigration issues. In addition, the association aims at preventing racism and alienation using methods that bring together immigrants and Finnish people interested in multicultural issues. (Familia Club 2012; Familia Club 2013.)

While the organization aims at facilitating integration, they also encourage the maintaining of clients' own cultures and languages (Patentti- ja rekisterihallitus 2011). In fact, Familia Club is a politically and religiously independent organization that respects the diversity their members represent. The members' skills and culture-related knowledge are taken into consideration and utilized when planning cultural evenings and other activities (Familia Club 2013).

Familia Club is supported to a great extent by Finland's Slot Machine Association (RAY) and a smaller part of the funding comes from the City of Helsinki. Familia Club's work is supervised by its seven board members, who are elected in a general meeting. Currently there are two projects running in Familia Club: Duo-project for intercultural families and Saimit-project, in partnership with Helsinki Deaconess Institute, that focuses on mentoring Thai women during their integration process. (Familia Club 2013.) Familia Club's information is included in the immigrants' services page in Helsinki City's website, a fact that confirms Familia Club's relevance in multicultural work in the capital area.

2.2 Current Trends in Immigration and Communications in Finland

Finland is considered to be a very homogenous nation, with a short history of immigration and little experience of multiculturalism. Yet, Finland has received a number of immigrant groups over the past centuries that are now considered part of the Finnish population. Minorities with established status and roots in the Finnish society include the Finnish Swedes, the Saami, the Jews, the Tatars, Russians and the Roma people. In fact, the Finnish national identity was not built until 19th century, as a conscious effort to strengthen the nation's defence against war and other threats. (Forsander & Ekholm 2001.)

Other than the above mentioned minority groups, immigration and multiculturalism in Finland are indeed still in their infancy. However, the number of migrants arriving in Finland has increased dramatically over the past three decades. For instance, the refugee quota has risen from mere 100 people per year in 1985 to 750 people in 2001 (Forsander & Ekholm 2001, Maahanmuuttovirasto n.d.). The number of asylum seekers, on the other hand, has increased hundredfold since the 1980s (Forsander & Ekholm 2001, Pakolaisneuvonta ry 2013). Further adding to the number of immigrants in Finland are individuals arriving due to family ties, work or studies. Altogether, 21 264

people applied for a Finnish residence permit based on these reasons in 2012 (Ministry of the Interior 2013b).

In 2012, there were altogether 195 511 foreign citizens residing in Finland. The biggest groups among the represented foreign nationalities were Estonians (20,3%), Russians (15,4%), Swedish (4,3%) and Somalis (3,8%). Also, Chinese (3,4%), Thais (3,1%) and Iraqis (3,0%) formed a rather large share of the population group in question. (Ministry of the Interior 2013b.) The same trend is also reflected in Familia Club's statistics of people participating in their Finnish language classes in 2012, as indicated in the figure below. The biggest nationality groups represented were Russians (15,9%), Iraqis (10,5%), Afghans (6,7%), Estonians (5,4%), Nigerians (5,4%), Somalis (4,6%) and Thais (3,8%). The group *others* (muut), which sums up to 34,7% of the entire group, consists of nationalities that were represented by 1-4 individuals. Within this group the largest subgroups included Cameroon, Algeria, Ukraine and Morocco. Altogether there were people from 60 different countries studying Finnish at Familia Club in 2012.

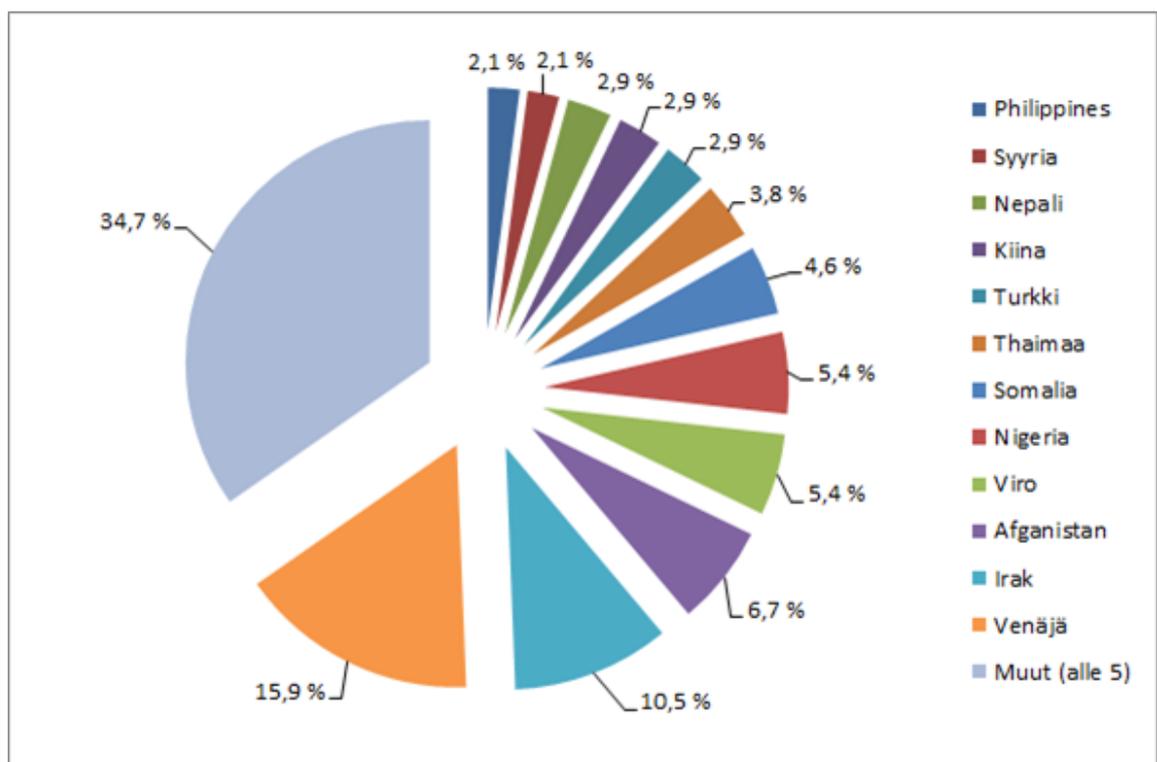


Figure 1. Nationalities of Familia Club members participating in Finnish language courses in 2012.

The fact that there has been an increase in both the number of immigrants and in the variety of their backgrounds, complicates communication between the Finnish society

and the newly arrived immigrants. Further complicating matters is the fact that our information society is full of brochures, guidebooks, leaflets and instructions but most of them have been written in general Finnish (or Swedish). This makes them difficult, if not impossible, to be read by newly arrived immigrants. Yet, receiving comprehensible information is especially important for immigrants who have only just started their integration process (Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations 2005:13). It is not enough that integration services are available; they also need to be made accessible by providing information regarding the services in a reachable manner. Thompson (2003:33-34) refers to “communicative sensitivity” as the capability of individuals or organizations to identify a need for communication. The concept also includes sensitivity towards selecting the right communication methods when considering the needs of the other correspondents.

The Ministry of Transport and Communications (2011) has acknowledged the need for improving communication methods and launched an action programme called Towards a barrier-free information society, which started in 2011 and is to be concluded in 2015. The programme is concerned with promoting accessibility of services by ensuring that digitalization is done from a client-centered, rather than technology driven, perspective. The Ministry of Transport and Communications (2011) advocates for the development of information society and the related increase in digitalization. They find that the development of digitalization increases availability of services and enables equal opportunities for all citizens to benefit from them. Simultaneously, they acknowledge that the citizens’ skills of using different technological solutions need to be taken into consideration when developing new communication channels in order to ensure accessibility, rather than just availability, of services. In fact, the ministry (Ministry of Transport and Communications 2011) strives for Finland to become a forerunner in “barrier-free information society solutions” and requests the government, private sector and NGOs to work together towards reaching this goal. By enhancing the communications in Familia Club to a more client-centered direction, this final project is, thus, contributing to the current national mission towards an inclusive information society.

Based on previous research findings, it can be assumed that having all parties fully cooperating on this action programme might be easier said than done. For instance, when immigrants’ information needs and the fulfillment of these needs were studied (Levo-Henriksson 2000:12-37), it was discovered that the public sector mainly provides information because of and within the limits of the law. The act on promoting integration

(Laki kotoutumisen edistämisestä, 1386/2010 7§) requires public officers to provide and update information about Finnish society and the rights, obligations and services regarding immigrants in Finland. However, the methods and channels of informing are not defined by the law and therefore, tend to be ignored. In fact, it was discovered that the public sector professional communicators were not even aware whether or not the information that they provide reaches their target group (Levo-Henriksson 2000:12-37). Thus, it is obvious that persuasion or even legislative requirements might be needed in order to engage all the concerned parties in to the pursuit for accessible information and services. Hence, the Action Programme aims at proposing policy measures that would tackle the defects in the information society and transfer the ideal of equal opportunities from theory to practice.

2.3 Integration

2.3.1 Current Integration Policies in Finland

The integration act in Finland was first decided upon in 1999. Since then, it has been amended several times to suit the changing situation regarding the reception of immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees. The act in general has been stipulated to promote equality and good ethnic relations, to reduce discrimination and to increase the immigrants' freedom of choice regarding resources and services intended to achieve their integration into the Finnish society. (Laki kotoutumisen edistämisestä 1386/2010; Laki maahanmuuttajien kotouttamisesta ja turvapaikanhakijoiden vastaanotosta, 493/1999.)

According to the Finnish integration law for immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers, who have been granted a residence permit and are eligible to be covered by the Finnish National Social Security System, are entitled to have an individual integration programme created to facilitate their integration process (KELA 2013). The integration programme includes: an integration plan describing the various measures, services and organisations involved in the promotion and support of the immigrants' integration process as well as the goal of promoting immigrants' awareness of their rights and duties in the Finnish society (Laki kotoutumisen edistämisestä 1386/2010; Laki maahanmuuttajien kotouttamisesta ja turvapaikanhakijoiden vastaanotosta 493/1999; Ministry of the Interior 2013a).

According to Tanner (2011), non-governmental organisations have an important role in cooperating with the government in achieving immigrants' integration to Finnish society. Valtonen (2008:153) further discusses the importance of integration goals of institutions and organisations corresponding to the wider national integration policies. In Finland, the integration of immigrants is promoted, monitored, implemented and developed through the municipality in which the immigrant is registered, the Ministry of Employment and Economics, the Ministry of Education and Culture, non-governmental organisations, as well as employer and employee unions among others. (Laki maahanmuuttajien kotouttamisesta ja turvapaikanhakijoiden vastaanotosta, 493/1999, Ministry of the Interior 2013a; Ministry of Employment and the Economy 2013a) As a non-governmental multicultural organisation, Familia Club's activities are aimed at ensuring that the members are provided with opportunities for social participation and Finnish language learning. These activities act by thrusting immigrants at the frontline for equal opportunities with the rest of the society. Thus, it is fitting to conclude that Familia Club, like other third sector organisations, contributes to the process of integrating immigrants based on the broader National integration policies and practices (Dayton-Johnson, Katseli, Maniatis, Münz & Papademetriou 2007:53).

In June 2012, the Ministry of Employment and the Economy (2012:4) published Government Resolution on Government Integration Programme for 2012–2015. The programme declares focus points for developing integration throughout the process from planning services to following up on their efficiency. The main aim is to enhance integration at a national level and to implement measures proposed include advancing positive interaction between native population and immigrants, guiding municipalities, identifying and applying good practices as well as supporting immigrants' own organisations (Ministry of Employment and the Economy 2012:19-21). In his editorial in *Helsingin Sanomat*, Räikkä (2012) criticises the programme for lack of concrete plans on how to reach its objectives. He further argues that declaring grand targets, such as cutting immigrant unemployment in half, requires concrete action plans rather than vague directives pointed at different actors on the field.

Nevertheless, the Finnish government is working towards a multicultural society, where different ethnic groups' interaction and positive attitude towards diversity is encouraged. Through the four-year long Government Integration Programme, research is undertaken to study the functionality of the existing integration practices as well as to

identify the developmental areas. The first survey conducted in 2012, where feedback was collected from municipalities, unemployment office and immigrants, the results indicated that accessing services is difficult for non-Finnish-speaking immigrants and those outside the labour force (Ministry of Employment and the Economy 2013b:17-18, 71-72). Immigrant children under the age of sixteen, on the other hand, were found to have good access to services. The greatest developmental needs were identified as lack of opportunities for illiterate immigrants to study reading and writing skills, insufficiency of Finnish language courses and difficulties in accessing initial assessment process (Ministry of Employment and the Economy 2013b:15-17). Therefore, Familia Club has an important role in filling the gap in these services.

2.3.2 Integration in a Multicultural Context

In Finland, the Ministry of the Interior (2013a) defines integration as a process in which immigrants adapt themselves into the Finnish society by acquiring Finnish or Swedish language skills as well as educational competences or work practices. These proficiencies will enable them to actively participate and contribute to their new home country. Bosswick and Heckmann (2006:3) define integration as “an interactive process between immigrants and the host society.” However, integration is also described as a process that requires immigrants to “adjust and ultimately blend” into their host society (Crepaz 2008:165). Generally, the integration depends on the relation between immigrants and the resources available by the new culture, which includes policies as well as social and economic capitals. The immigrant and new culture are in a continuous and adaptive interaction with each other; while the immigrant acquires new abilities, the native society learns to accommodate the newcomers. (Bosswick & Heckmann 2006:11.)

In this same context, Samovar, Porter and McDaniel (2010:401), integration may be defined as a stage in the acculturation process in which immigrants ably maintain their own native culture while simultaneously and actively participating in their host culture’s daily interactions and way of life. Acculturation is a process whereby immigrants identify with their host society by acquiring the society’s values, customs and way of life. (Neuliep 2006:416.) Assimilation on the other hand, may be defined as a process in which individuals do not wish to identify with their native cultures during their adaptation into their host societies (Bosswick & Heckmann 2006:4). However, some research executed on migration and immigrant settlement use the terms assimilation and integra-

tion interchangeably (Bolt, Phillips & Özüekren 2012:5). Either way, both terms involve immigrants' participation in activities which aim at assisting them to acquire the life management skills in their host society.

Still, in the summary report, '*Gaining From Migration*', Dayton-Johnson et al. (2007:13) describe integration as a combination of policies and practices that enable societies to bridge the gap that exists between natives and immigrant performances. Other studies executed relating to immigration and integration policies express similar opinions about integration. From the perspective of the International Organisation for Migration (2013) integration has been explained as a process of mutual adaptation between the immigrant and the host society. Thus, the process of integration which involves immigrants being gradually absorbed into their host societies as well as their host societies adjusting, adapting and being accommodative of the immigrants can be referred to as a two way process. Similarly, Laakkonen (cited in Rätty 2013) states briefly that integration is a reciprocal process in which immigrants and the host society should collaborate between each other. Valtonen (2008:62) further describes this process as an exchange in which immigrants are able to fully participate in the social, economic, cultural and political spheres of the society in which they are to settle into, yet, at the same time, being able to maintain their own cultural identity. Unfortunately, in regard to this two-way integration process, immigrants are usually expected to adopt and learn their host societies' values and customs, without much reciprocity from the host citizens in the integration process (Alghasi, Eriksen & Ghorashi 2009:21-24).

Researcher Vuori (2012:235) uses the concept of "constitution of everyday citizenship" to describe the process of social integration. She argues that the integration process is built on the migrant's social contacts in the new home country, such as organizations, communities, native people or other immigrants. In a practical sense, constituting the everyday citizenship entails the utilization of social contacts in order to learn the language, societal structures and customs of the host country. This means that the citizens gain adequate life management skills, awareness of their rights and responsibilities as well as the feeling of belonging to that society. (Vuori 2012:235.)

Oliver (2010:157) interestingly sums up the broad context of integration by arguing that it entails multiple indicators, such as individual's living area, knowledge of the local language or religious views. Level of integration is also manifested in the extent that an individual gets to exercise equal opportunities in the host society. These possibilities,

such as access to work and education, therefore, influence individuals' settling in the new society. (Oliver 2010:157.)

2.3.3 Promoting Integration of Immigrants

Dayton-Johnson et al. (2007:60) emphasize the importance of participation in civic, political and cultural activities in accelerating the integration of immigrants. Civic activities are actions performed in society by citizens with the purpose of common good of society (Kansanvalta 2006). At Familia Club, various resources intended for integration of immigrants are offered to their members including: cultural evenings, excursions, opportunities for volunteering and multicultural family club in Kannelmäki among others; all of which classify as civic activities intended to facilitate the integration of immigrants into the Finnish society.

As reported by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD 2012:133), immigrants' willingness and active participation in their host society's activities is a significant indicator of how much they have become integrated into the host society. However, since integration programmes are available to only those immigrants who have been granted residence permits and are entitled to Finnish national social security insurance, this limits the integration process of the so called non-eligible immigrants. Even though one may have been granted a residence permit, they may still not be eligible to social security, for various reasons, such as residing in Finland on a student status. (Niemelä & Salminen 2006.) Also, a feature contributing to the hindering of integration of certain immigrant populations in Finland is the fact that integration policies mainly focus on facilitating migrants' entry into the workforce (Vuori 2012:259).

Moreover, women with small children tend to assume child caring responsibilities, which leave immigrant women outside of the labour market. Hence, they are largely ignored when planning integration services. Fortunately, third sector organizations, including Familia Club, organize Finnish language courses and other activities that are mainly targeted for housewives, pensioners and other people outside of the workforce. For instance, the child care service, also referred to as crèche (*=lapsiparkki*) in Familia Club, allows mothers with children to have the opportunity to choose to participate in the Finnish language courses, while their children are cared for by some of the Familia Club staff. Valtonen (2008:159) supports the idea that "Child care services for children

under school age have, in Finland, for example, allowed women [...] to participate in language training early in settlement.” Consequently, participation in civic activities show the extent to which immigrants are able to broaden their scope of opportunities in society, from surpassing their material needs to having their voices heard (OECD 2012:133).

Payne (2005:271) confers that in multicultural societies cultural and ethnic sensitivity can be achieved by valuing and appreciating immigrants’ cultures and their contribution into the already existing native host society. This cohesion of different cultural experiences gives rise to cultural diversity. It is also maintained in the OECD report: *From immigration to integration* (2006:12-53), that immigrant associations contribute greatly to the integration of immigrants at a local level by advocating for the fulfillment of their clients’ needs, thus, encouraging the development of services and practices that are culturally sensitive. Moreover, having immigrants to actively participate in Familia Club’s activities corresponds with Kallen’s Model (cited in Valtonen 2008:63-64) of structural integration.

Structural integration is described as a process in which members of different ethnicities are able to participate in integrative activities within the; social, cultural, economic, political and civil spheres of institutions in the receiving society (Valtonen 2008:63-64). The recognition and sharing of various cultural activities such as: the Chinese and Estonian speaking childrens’ club, the Kannelmäki family club and Kenya Day celebrations, among others, support the integration of members’ through cultural diversity. Not only the Finnish experience is shared, but also the combination of immigrants’ cultures. (Familia Club 2013.) Therefore, the utilization of our product at Familia Club will enable the association to further maintain their aim of integration by using culturally sensitive approaches. Thus, by conveying information concerning the various cultural activities to their members in an understandable manner, Familia Club will avail their members the freedom of choice to participate in these activities.

Moreover, in addition to civic activities, various studies suggest that learning a new language is a central aspect of integration, which consequently expands a person’s life control skills (Neuliep 2006). The OECD (2012) publication, *Indicators of Immigrant Integration*, also discusses that language facilitates the integration of immigrants. It is further suggested that being proficient in the host country’s language as well as being

able to communicate in a language similar to one's home country simplifies the integration process. In a similar manner, Valtonen (2008:158) and Dayton-Johnson et al. (2007:46) support the importance of language training and language proficiency as a major driving force for successful integration. This is because by participating in language training, immigrants are provided with the opportunities to actively engage and participate in other spheres of public life and civic activities. Valtonen (2008:159) goes on to argue that the attainment of fluent or adequate language skills nurtures independence, confidence and empowerment in immigrants when they are able to interact effectively in their everyday lives.

As previously mentioned, providing Finnish language learning opportunities is part of Familia Club's main services to immigrants. In addition to the Finnish language, other language learning opportunities include: Swahili, Chinese and Thai discussion groups. This exchange of languages allows for the two way process of integration to effectively happen when both immigrants and host society members benefit from their multicultural society. In this case, the association is a converging point where immigrants can learn Finnish, while Finnish people interested in multicultural issues learn foreign languages and cultures. The *Telling It Simply* product therefore, should enable the association to effectively convey information about the Finnish language learning opportunities among other activities to immigrants in an understandable manner. The ability to understand the information should empower immigrants and provide them the freedom to choose whether or not to participate in the language courses, eventually facilitating their integration process.

Valtonen (2008:159) also argues the fact that immigrants' inability to communicate in a language of a receiving country renders them vulnerable and dependent on other persons to interpret their private messages, which can be a barrier to the process of integration. Therefore, the combination of pictograms and plain language in our product aims at diminishing the barrier created by misunderstanding when there is lack of a common language, as well as supporting confidentiality of the interaction between Familia Club and their members.

3 Theoretical Framework

3.1 Empowerment

Empowerment is a very central concept related to this thesis, because our product aims at contributing to the empowerment process of our target group. Empowerment can be defined as “the means by which individuals, groups and/or communities become able to take control of their circumstances and achieve their own goals, thereby being able to work towards helping themselves and others to maximize the quality of their lives” (Adams 2003:8). Similarly, another definition of empowerment is given by Whitmore (1988 cited in Hutchison and Lord 1993:3) as being a series of transformational social and personal actions that trigger people to impact on the structural system, such as institutions and organizations, consequently, influencing on their living environments. Also, Rubin and Rubin (1992:62 cited in OECD 2005:121) argue that empowerment happens when mastery regarding difficult circumstances and the strength to tackle these are achieved.

In the case of this thesis, empowerment can be related to one’s own motivation towards learning Finnish or taking part in activities that facilitate integration, as well as making use of the opportunities available. With the aid of this product in Familia Club, members are supported to better understand information regarding Finnish courses as well as other activities. Thus, they will have the opportunity to choose whether or not to partake in such activities. Pettit (2012) supports the idea that: “Empowerment and participation are deeply complementary and can be considered both means and ends, processes and outcomes.” This statement undoubtedly correlates with the aim of this final thesis, because our product contributes to the process of empowerment, which in itself can be considered a goal but also functions as a step to participation and integration.

Other factors influencing people’s empowerment are opportunity structure and agency. Opportunity structure consists of formal institutions through which personal assets are put into practice, and are also crucial for how well these personal assets are exercised (Alsop, Bertelsen & Holland 2006:10-11). Alsop et al. (2006:1) also emphasize that, when the access to opportunity structure is facilitated, people are more likely to choose wisely. According to Alsop and Heinsohn (2005:6), an effective choice is resulted by the interaction of agency and opportunity structure. Here, agency refers to

the capability of making “purposeful choices” based on one’s assets, which are psychological, social, human, productive, and informational resources. Opportunity structure, on the other hand, consists of formal and informal conditions affecting to the possibilities within which decisions can be made. (Alsop et al. 2006:10-11.)

In order to empower individuals and enable them to overcome disempowerment, structural barriers to empowerment need to be removed and sufficient opportunities to learn Finnish and to access the social system need to be provided. Geetha and Vindhya (2012:137) claim that, in opportunity structure, individuals might be faced with empowering or oppressive situations. Immigrants in Finland often encounter oppressive situations in the bureaucratic social system, for instance when they are provided information in difficult language. Similarly, the members of Familia Club are often faced with barriers to empowerment, such as lack of Finnish language skills, illiteracy and unfamiliarity with the Finnish social system. Therefore, Familia Club aims to improve the opportunity structure in favour of their members’ personal agency. In the same way, this final project aims at being a channel to tackle structural barriers in Familia Club, thereby enabling them to provide their services in a more empowering manner.

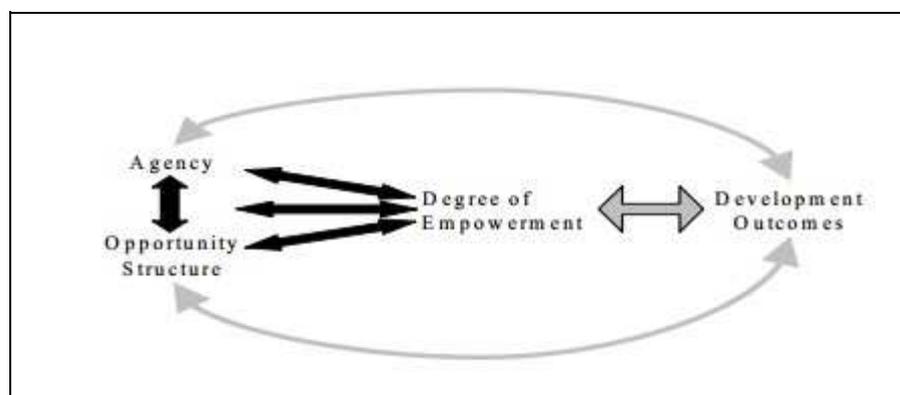


Figure 2. Alsop & Heinsohn (2005:6). “The Relationship between Outcomes and Correlates of Empowerment”

Figure 2 above shows how agency and opportunity structure affect each other, and how they lead to degrees of empowerment. It is further portrayed how the level of empowerment leads to different development outcomes. The development outcomes, in turn, reinforce the degree of empowerment. To summarize, one’s ability to choose effectively depends on how the agency and opportunity structure contribute, simultane-

ously, to such choices (Alsop et al. 2006:15). Through our product, Familia Club's opportunity structure will be influenced, by enabling them to convey information in an understandable manner. This will enable the members to utilize their agency in making decisions regarding participation in Familia Club's activities. As a result, they are likely to experience degrees of empowerment. This, in turn, can be expected to lead to participation and, eventually, facilitate integration. Experienced outcomes of participation and integration furthermore enhance the members' degrees of empowerment, their agency and, as a result of them taking action, also Familia Club's opportunity structure.

It may be disempowering for clients to get information that they are not able to understand, especially when seeking for activities. This can be even worse if they are unemployed and do not have anything else meaningful to attend to (Adams 2003:16). By utilizing this product in Familia Club, members will be able to more easily understand information about Finnish courses and other activities, which will facilitate their informed decision making and might also increase participation. Increased participation, in turn, is likely to enforce members' integration into Finnish society.

3.2 Concept of Power

Power, in the context of empowerment, is a central concept in regards to supporting the theoretical framework of our thesis. The Cornell Empowerment Group (1989 cited in Hutchison and Lord 1993:2) explains power as a "capacity of some persons and organizations to produce intended, foreseen and unforeseen effects on others". Power can also be defined as a way of influencing results (Fiske 1993, Keltner, Gruenfeld & Anderson 2003, Overbeck & Park 2001 cited in Brion, Overbeck & Tiedens 2006:480). Solomon (1987 cited in Burke & Dalrymple 1995:14) emphasises power as an element that is present in all social situations and human interactions.

On the other hand, Thompson (2007:4) states that power is not an easy concept to define. Also, Adams (2003:32) notes that power is a core and difficult concept in empowerment. He clarifies that the various theories contributing to the interpretation of power also complicates the definition of empowerment, which in turn, has an impact on how empowerment is practiced.

Power can be used to empower others or it can be abused. The concept of power can be interpreted positively as a tool that can be utilized to improve people's life management skills, or in an illegitimate manner, for instance, if social workers take advantage of clients by using their institutional power. (Gomm 1993:133 and Henderson 1994:23 cited in Burke & Dalrymple 1995:14.) Regarding this final project, power can be positively applied when clients are enabled to understand the information conveyed through our product, thus allowing them to exercise the power to choose. In this sense, Familia Club is using its power, as an organization, constructively while implementing this product that contributes to their members' access to information, thus, empowerment.

The concept of power cannot be separated from the aspects of powerfulness and powerlessness. Brion, Overbeck and Tiedens (2006:480) define that powerful people are the ones who are free to choose and act regardless of any circumstance; while the powerless are characterized as people who face challenges in decision making. Solomon (1976 cited in Burke & Dalrymple 1995:14-15) acknowledges three factors contributing to people becoming powerless: negative self-image, negative feedback from the environment as well as structural obstacles that prohibit empowerment. Therefore, this product focuses on diminishing the target group's experiences of powerlessness by tackling a structural obstacle created by insufficient means of communications.

3.3 Self-Empowerment

Self-empowerment concept was included in this thesis because it is a pillar in the empowerment process. Adams (2003:48) defines self-empowerment as "people making power over their own lives". A self-empowered individual can also be defined as someone who is aware of what is in their best interest and has the capacity to pursue their personal goals (Dictionary.com 2013).

The main purpose of our product is to increase comprehensibility of information provided to the members of Familia Club. Adams (2003:16) states that: "One person may feel empowered because of something realised or understood." We hope that by being able to understand the information regarding services, the members will feel empowered enough to take the initiative and participate in these activities. We focused in an alternative communication approach in which members can, directly or indirectly, feel empowered when understanding the information given. Based on our experiences at Familia Club, understanding language is an important factor in self-empowerment. For

example, those members who had a common language with the staff, like English, were able to understand the information conveyed better and participated in the activities more than our target group.

To aim for clients' empowerment, the worker himself must be self-empowered first. This originates an empowering attitude towards people and their self-empowerment, consequently developing working methods and tackling oppressive practices in institutions. (Stanton cited in Adams 2003:49.) Adams (2008:82) further argues that "the person who feels and is empowered is more likely to have the motivation and capacity to empower other people and to be empowered by them." At Familia Club, this product can help in workers' self-empowerment by overcoming the challenge of limited language skills, thus improving the quality of their services. The empowerment process includes the self-empowerment of the worker, who empowers the client, who, in turn, gains the capacity to empower other people. For instance, empowered Familia Club members will be empowered to communicate about the activities to other immigrant friends or family members.

To summarise, empowerment encompasses "making links between clients' personal positions and structural inequalities" (Payne 2005:286). This involves supporting clients to gain power and control over their lives and achieve their goals by utilizing their agency to overcome personal insecurities and limitations as well as formal obstacles that they face. Additionally, they become powerful, active advocates in decisions concerning themselves. Importantly, individual power gained further enhances one's personal resources and empowering others. (Payne 2005:286,295.)

4 Process of Making the Product

4.1 Description of products

4.1.1 Background

The need for developing communication methods between Familia Club and its members was initially expressed by the association's staff and management. Over the years, they have experienced difficulties in communicating important information to their members in a comprehensible manner, due to challenges in overcoming language barriers. Recently the association has been taking steps towards diminishing these communication problems and, for instance, visited the Finnish Centre for Easy to Read (Selkokeskus) in order to develop their intercultural communication skills. All of us have also had some experience at Familia Club, with two of us having completed our final four-month-long work placements there and one of us having previously been a member of the association. Therefore, we all have experienced the prevalent challenges of communicating across cultures professionally as well as in our personal lives, since we all come from different continents and live in multicultural families. Therefore, we were eager to work with Familia Club to overcome these challenges.

The challenges that Familia Club has been facing in contacting their members and effectively conveying information to them, have been due to the fact that many clients lack both Finnish and English language skills. Due to Familia Club's staff also not speaking all of their members' mother tongues, a common language between the staff and their clients is often missing. So far, contacting the members has been done through phone calls: a method of communication that lacks all the benefits of non-verbal communication. Not surprisingly then, this practice has led to recurrent misunderstandings and, as a concrete consequence, to members' absences from Finnish language classes, discussion groups and other activities.

4.1.2 Choosing the Communication Methods: Plain Language and Pictograms

The quest for better communication methods started from the notion that phone calls alone were an insufficient means of successfully conveying information to Familia Club's members, therefore alternative methods of communication were needed. As the association's staff had expressed their interest in implementing plain language as a tool in their work, it was logical for us to start the developing project from there. Simultaneously it was decided that written rather than spoken plain language would be implemented since understanding spoken Finnish over the phone had proven to be challenging for many members.

Previous research on plain Finnish emphasizes the importance of conceptuality of messages and encourages utilization of pictures to support the information conveyed through written language (Wiio cited in Rajala & Virtanen 1986:22-23; Virtanen 2009:131-133). This was found to be relevant also in the context of our final project due to our target group consisting of immigrants with limited Finnish language skills. Therefore, it was decided that the plain language would be combined with pictograms to further enhance the comprehensibility of the information conveyed to Familia Clubs' members.

4.1.3 Selecting the Communications Channels

Email and text messaging were selected as the medium for delivering the plain language and pictogram messages. These communication channels were chosen because of their effectiveness as methods of communication in reaching a vast scope of Familia Club members. Compared to the previously used individual phone calls, contacting the members by sending an email or a text message could save the staff hours of working time each day. An additional benefit of the email messages was that they allowed us to utilise both plain language and pictograms in the designs. Nevertheless, the increase in the use of communication technologies creates need for cautious planning of how the written information is presented in a client-centered manner (Payne 2005:170-171). Including pictograms into the text message models, on the other hand, was not possible within the limited resources available for this final project. However, designing plain language text messages, even without the pictograms, was considered important due to the fact that while all Familia Club members do not use email, all of them have mobile phones.

Immigrants' media consuming habits, including using of email and mobile phones, has not been studied much in Finland so far. In fact, most of the research concerning immigrants and media focus on how immigrants are represented by the media. (Levo-Henriksson 2000:4.) However, the few studies that have focused on immigrants as media users have revealed that immigrants in Finland are active and versatile media consumers, even more so than Finns themselves (Laukkanen 2004; Levo-Henriksson 2000). Foreigners in Finland use different media to stay in touch with their home countries as well as to facilitate their integration into the Finnish society (Levo-Henriksson 2000:117-119).

According to a research undertaken by Laukkanen (2004) on immigrants' media using habits in Turku area, immigrants use media regularly and in a versatile manner. Their interest in maintaining contacts to their home countries is assumed to be a motivational factor behind their activeness in using media. Laukkanen's (2004) research findings revealed that over 60 percent of the respondents had an email address, while more than 80 percent owned a mobile phone. Within both email and mobile phone users, people under the age of 25 were most active in using the media in question. Interestingly, Arabic speakers and Kosovans were found to be most active daily email users, while Somalis used text messaging most often compared to the other ethnicities presented by the respondents.

Another study carried out by docent and senior lecturer Levo-Henriksson and her communications course students (2000) looked into how media using habits and the public sector's communication methods affect immigrants' integration process. The general findings were supportive of Laukkanen's (2004) conclusions; immigrants used media to connect with their countries of origin as well as to improve their knowledge of Finnish language and culture. It was also concluded that as the immigrants' knowledge of Finnish language increased, they also used different types of media more frequently. (Levo-Henriksson 2000:117-119.)

Based on these studies, it can be assumed that majority of the immigrant members of Familia Club are familiar with different types of media. We can expect nearly all members to have their own mobile phones, thus enabling them to receive text messages, and approximately half to actively use email. In fact, Familia Club has got a contact mobile phone number for most of its members, while email addresses have not been

collected for long. For the past year, however, email contacts have been requested in Familia's course registration form but a comprehensive record of members' email addresses is yet to be compiled. Based on Laukkanen (2004) and Levo-Henriksson's (2000) research findings it can also be expected that newly arrived immigrants are motivated to improve their media using skills, due to their need to keep in touch with family abroad as well as the desire to learn more about the Finnish society.

Our product: eight text message models and eight email models utilizing plain language and pictogram communication, is an attempt to answer to the needs of the target group and Familia Club so as to help bridge the gap in communication. As stated by Wiio (cited in Rajala & Virtanen 1986: 22-23) among other people involved with plain language research, conceptuality is an important indicator of how understandable a message is. Therefore, our text message and email models take a leap from the previously used phone messaging by providing options other than ones merely relying on understanding spoken language. The email models convey information through both plain Finnish and pictograms with corresponding messages. This way the receivers have an opportunity to decode the messages sent to them by either reading the text, studying the pictograms or, perhaps, by construing the meaning by looking at both of these sources of information. These methods also allow the receiver to take time and comprehend the information conveyed to them, whereas phone communication is more quick-tempo and, thus, requires better alertness and more advanced language skills from the persons involved.

4.1.4 Planning and Delineating the Topics

To begin with, the themes commonly communicated to Familia Club members were identified by reflecting on our personal experiences as Familia Club trainees as well as by discussing with the permanent staff members. It was discovered that the most common messages that Familia Club needed to deliver to their members were related to participation in the Finnish language courses, membership issues as well as informing about activities, such as excursions and discussion groups. The categories that we chose to focus on included: *Familia Club's contact details* (tule, soita tai lähetä sähköpostia Familia Clubiin), *free vacancy in the Finnish course* (vapaa paikka), *information regarding Finnish language course* (suomen kielen kurssi), *multicultural family club in Kannelmäki* (Kannelmäki perhekerho), *waiting list* (odota), *annual membership fee* (vuosimaksu), *discussion group* (keskusteluryhmä) and *class cancelled* (tunti peruttu).

The topics chosen were such that could be made into models that did not require much alteration from the sender. Therefore, a model, for instance, for excursions was not composed due to Familia Club organizing trips to a multitude of different destinations, which made designing one basic model to cover all excursions impossible. However, it is desirable that Familia Club staff will apply the methods of our products when informing about the excursions and other activities we may not have composed a model for. In case of the *class cancelled* (tunti peruttu) model, on the other hand, one model can be used, as long as the sender edits the dates and times accordingly. In fact, instructions for using the email and text message models were compiled for Familia Club workers in order to facilitate and enhance their implementation.

4.2 Plain Language

4.2.1 Definitions

Rajala and Virtanen's (1986) solution on how to overcome misunderstandings is plain language (selkokieli). They define the concept in the following way:

Selkokielessä kieltä on tietoisesti ja suunnitelmallisesti muutettu niin rakenteellisesti kuin sisällöllisesti helpommaksi ymmärtää. Tyypillisesti selkokielineen viesti [...] suunnataan jollekin rajatulle väestöryhmälle, jonka vastaanotto kyvyssä tiedetään olevan puutteita.

(Unofficial translation: In plain language the content and structure of language have been purposefully altered in order to make it easier to understand. Typically, a plain language message [...] is targeted at some specific population group, whose ability to comprehend the message is known to be limited.)

It can also be defined as a form of Finnish language that is easier to read than standard Finnish. In plain language the structure, content and vocabulary of the text has been modified in order to make it more comprehensible for people who have trouble understanding standard language. (Selkokeskus n.d.)

4.2.2 Why Do We Need Plain Language?

The importance of plain language can be justified by appealing to the principle of equality. For instance, Rajala and Virtanen (1986:9) argue that a democratic society needs to take into consideration the various needs of its citizens: the same rights and opportunities need to be offered to all people despite of their different level of language skills and understanding. Correspondingly, the Finnish constitutional law states that no one is, without an acceptable reason, to be unequally treated based on their language nor any other personal characteristic (Suomen perustuslaki 11.6.1999/731). Yet, the fact that most information is provided in standard Finnish constantly puts certain groups of people in an unequal position. In fact, based on the Finnish Centre for Easy to Read's (Selkokeskus 2001) estimation, there are altogether 210 000 to 350 000 people living in Finland who would benefit from written plain language materials.

Population groups, such as immigrants, disabled people and the elderly, often have difficulties comprehending information written in standard Finnish. For immigrants who have recently arrived in Finland, problems in understanding are caused by a combination of lack of sufficient language skills and unfamiliarity with the cultural connotations of Finnish language (Numminen 2006 cited in Virtanen 2009:30). Thus, providing immigrants with information and forms written in standard Finnish may delay if not prevent their integration process into the Finnish society. Rajala and Virtanen (1986:10) furthermore argue that difficulties that many clients of the social services face in understanding the messages sent by the media, put them at risk of marginalisation.

Ministry of Education (Opetusministeriö 2006:7) suggests that positive discrimination may be necessary in order to provide equal opportunities also for the above mentioned groups. They approach the challenge by focusing on improving the accessibility of services; in other words providing services that are not only available but also actualized and marketed in such a manner that participating in them is possible for all interested parties. Possible barriers to accessibility, on the other hand, as listed by the Ministry of Education (Opetusministeriö 2006:7) are related to: senses, methods of informing, difficulties in understanding, attitudes, physiological- and financial factors as well as problems in decision making. Thus, in this context positive discrimination refers to being aware of and eliminating the possible barriers to equal opportunities. For instance, in order to successfully organize integration services for immigrants in Finland, two barriers need to be overcome: methods of informing need to be such that they reach the

target group and communication methods need to be carefully planned in order to diminish difficulties in understanding.

4.2.3 Producing Plain Language

When writing plain Finnish, it is important to pay attention to the vocabulary used, the grammar as well as the conceptuality of the text. Difficult concepts and challenging grammatical cases should be avoided and explanatory rather than vague writing style should be implemented. (Virtanen 2009:68-111.) Some practical tips provided by Virtanen (2009:84-95) include: using active voice rather than passive, avoiding abstract sayings such as proverbs, using examples as well as repeating words that are central to the topic at hand.

Wiio (cited in Rajala & Virtanen 1986:22-23) who has studied understandability and readability of Finnish language lists conceptuality as one of the four characteristics of understandability. The other three factors are: to what extent one can identify with the message, its complicatedness and how interesting the message is. Especially relevant from our final thesis' point of view is Wiio's (cited in Rajala & Virtanen 1986:22) statement that the more illustrative a message is, the better it will be understood by the receiver. He argues that the extent to which a message can be sensed: seen, heard or touched, determines how understandable it will be.

In this same context, Margulies and Valenza (cited in Hogan 2007:195) support the importance of using both words and images as well as other visuals to convey information to recipients. Using visuals allows recipients to process their thinking in a visible manner and, thus, enables better understanding of the received messages. Furthermore, Horn (cited in Hogan 2007:186) states that visuals are useful in communication across cultures. He goes on to argue that "using pictures is a global language" that can be helpful in conveying information beyond cultural barriers (Horn cited in Hogan 2007:186). Hogan (2007:188) sums up that it is easier to understand information conveyed through pictures than through words.

Virtanen (2009:131-133) also speaks for the benefits of combining pictures and written language. He argues that pictures play an important role in any plain language publication. In fact, a survey conducted by Selkouutiset (2002 cited in Virtanen 2009:132) concluded that many readers understood the topic of an article simply by looking at its

heading and the pictures included. However, a discrepancy between the text and pictures may confuse readers and, thus, selection of the pictures should be done carefully.

Accordingly, we decided to combine plain language and pictograms in the e-mail models, and utilised plain language in the text messages to communicate with people from different cultures. This combination should improve conceptuality as well as understandability of the messages created.

4.3 Pictograms

4.3.1 What are pictograms?

In a Finnish dictionary pictograms are defined as symbols that represent some predefined meaning in a concrete manner (Korpela n.d.). Concurrently, an English dictionary concisely outlines pictogram as “a picture that represents a word or an idea” (Dictionary n.d.). Furthermore, in his doctoral thesis, Heeryon (2009:7) refers to pictograms as “iconic representation carrying semantic interpretation.”

Nevertheless, sometimes the word pictogram refers to a special type of picture communication system with black and white images, which originates from Canada (Papunet n.d.). In fact, there are several different types of picture communication systems, some with more abstract symbols than the others and some using colorful, while others black and white images. For the purposes of our final thesis, however, we will use the word pictogram to refer to any picture symbol, which is meant to convey a meaning from one person to another. Thus, we will adapt the definitions of Heeryon (2009:7) and the dictionaries mentioned above.

4.3.2 Previous Research on Pictogram Communication

The differences in pictogram interpretations, both within and between cultures, were studied by Heeryon (2009) in two countries considered to be culturally markedly different: USA and Japan. The focus was on the characteristics of the pictogram interpretations as well as possible differences in the interpretations given by the Japanese and American participants. (Heeryon 2009:9.) It was discovered that all 120 pictograms

used in the study got more than one interpretation word in the U.S. study and some pictograms, though being different, were given same interpretation words (Heeryon 2009:11). Cases where a pictogram was described with several differing words was named “polysemous pictogram interpretation” (Heeryon 2009:11) whereas cases where several pictograms were interpreted with the same words were called “shared pictogram interpretation” (Heeryon 2009:11). In some cases the U.S. respondents presented more ambiguity in their answers than the Japanese participants did (Heeryon 2009:19).

During Heeryon’s (2009) research differences in pictogram interpretations between cultures were divided into three categories. The first category included cases where both cultures understood the main message of the pictogram in a similar manner but looked at it from different perspectives from another. The second category covered cases where the two cultures had some similar interpretations but also some very different ones. Cases where no similarity in interpretation was found belonged to the third category. (Heeryon 2009:29.) Notable in all three categories is that all of them included some differences in interpretation. Thus, it can be anticipated that misunderstandings are likely to occur in pictorial communication across cultures unless attention is paid to careful selection of pictograms when designing the messages.

One explanation on why same images can be interpreted in so many different ways is that people focus on different aspects of the pictograms when looking at them. In Heeryon’s (2009) research pictograms were categorized in five different themes: agent, matter, event, location and time, according to their focus point. The agent category referred to images with a human figure that lead the viewer to focus on the characteristics of that figure. Pictograms portraying objects belonged to the matter-category and those showing actions to the event-category. Pictograms that focus on the background or milieu, on the other hand, were categorized in the location class. Lastly, time-category included pictograms that illustrated the passing of time or time of the day or year for example. (Heeryon 2009:35-37.) Understandably, then, a misunderstanding will occur if in the same pictogram the sender focuses on the human figure and the receiver focuses on the background of the image. The prior may, for instance, try to communicate *man* while the latter interprets the same image as *park*. Consequently, the meaning of the entire message will be altered.

4.3.3 How to Select Culturally Sensitive Images?

Heeryon (2009:38) suggests that, in order to reduce ambiguity in interpretation of pictograms with polysemous meanings, message sender should be provided with the possible interpretations of all pictograms. The sender could, then, ponder how the receiver would interpret each image before selecting the most appropriate one. In case of several pictograms sharing the same interpretation words, the sender could be presented with a ranking that indicates how relevant each pictogram is to the desired interpretation word (Heeryon 2009:39). Heeryon (2009:40) goes on to define semantic relevance measure which indicates the likelihood of a given pictogram to be interpreted in a desired manner. In order to further diminish ambiguity in cases of polysemous and shared pictogram interpretation, an additional ranking system is introduced that would present the most appropriate pictogram based on the categories mentioned earlier (Heeryon 2009:52). A system calculating semantic relevance measure would enable people to select pictograms that are most likely to be interpreted in the manner intended, as well as to prevent misunderstandings and lack of understanding.

For the purposes of our functional final thesis, we did not, unfortunately, have access to such technologies as the one proposed by Heeryon. However, we applied his research findings by comparing different pictograms, paying attention to possible polysemous interpretations and selecting images that are as unambiguous as possible. The five pictogram categories were used as a guideline to facilitate the selection of pictograms where the receiver's focus would be directed as intended. We also utilized our different cultural backgrounds by comparing how each of us interpreted selected pictograms.

4.4 Designing the Models

4.4.1 Email Models

Designing the email models was started by selecting suitable pictograms for each topic. Papunet picture bank (kuvatyökalu) was used as a main source for pictograms; however, many of the images were edited to better suit the purposes of the messages intended. Modifications on the original pictograms were made, for instance, when designing messages involving the concept *Finnish language class* (Suomen kielen kurssi). In these cases, pictograms portraying a *classroom* were edited by adding a Finnish flag and some personal pronouns on the original picture's blackboard. In the case of

family club (perhekerho), on the other hand, we chose to combine a number of pictograms portraying different actions in order to better explain what activities a family club includes.

Knowledge gained from previous research undertaken on pictogram interpretation was also implemented by paying attention to certain characteristics of pictograms that might have caused ambiguity in interpretation. For instance, Heeryon's (2009) findings regarding polysemous and shared pictogram interpretations were taken into account and most unambiguous images were selected. In the *please contact us* (soita, lähetä sähköpostia, tai tule käymään Familia Clubille) –model, for example, a pictogram of a hand typing on a cellphone was selected rather than a pictogram with a person holding a mobile phone to his ear. This was done in order to avoid the possibility that the receiver might focus on the figure on the image and thus interpret the pictogram as *caller*, when the intended message *call* was better conveyed with an image portraying an action.



Figure 3. *Calling* (Papunet kuvatyökalu)

In the pictogram on the left, attention is drawn to the action *typing* or *calling*. According to Heeryon (2009:35-37) images depicting actions belong to the event- category, while pictures with prominent human figures, like the one in the middle, are part of the agent- category. The pictogram on the far right, on the other hand, might produce polysemous interpretations, such as *phone conversation*, *network* or *walkie talkies*, for which reason it was not selected.

After selecting and modifying pictograms for each of our eight email models, we proceeded to add the plain language messages to each model. Hannu Virtanen (2009:132), the forerunner of Finnish plain language (selkokieli), advocates for using images to support the written information. Furthermore, he emphasizes the importance of both the pictures and the text conveying the same message (Virtanen 2009:133).

This advice was followed through the process of designing the email models by ensuring that the pictograms selected were convergent with the plain language information.

While writing the texts, instructions for writing plain Finnish were followed. As mentioned earlier in the chapter on producing plain language, using informative writing style, simple grammatical structures and familiar words improve the understandability of a text (KAKS 2013:34-35; Virtanen 2009:68-111). Therefore, concepts used in the email models were chosen carefully and difficult grammatical cases were avoided. Since the target group of this project consists of people who do not yet speak much Finnish, it was found important to simplify the texts as much as possible. To the extent that instead of writing *Kannelmäen perhekerho* (family Club in Kannelmäki), as it is stated in Familia Club's activity calendar, it was chosen to be written in the form *Kannelmäki perhekerho* (Kannelmäki family club).

The next step in the designing process was to add headings to each model. According to Selkouutiset (2002 cited in Virtanen 2009:132), the heading together with pictures, when well designed, have on their own the capacity to convey the main message of an article to a reader. For that reason, the selection of headings for each model was done by expressing the main information of a given message in a concise, yet informative manner. For instance, in the model informing about a client being on a waiting list for a Finnish course, the selected heading is *odota* (wait) due to the term *wait* being a more familiar term for many immigrants than the concept *waiting list*.

Different solutions also had to be considered in order to find the most practical way to save the models and to facilitate their introduction to Familia Club staff's work. The final models were decided to be saved as images so as to avoid text and pictures shifting when being attached to email messages. The email models, together with instructions on how to use them, were stored on Familia Club's memory stick, where they are safely storage and easily accessible to all staff members. In order to ensure the receivers' access to the information, it was also considered simpler to copy and paste the given model straight to the email message rather than having it added as an attachment. Furthermore, the models with dates and times had to be designed in such a manner that modifying them would be simple for Familia Club's staff. This will be further discussed in the chapter on instructions for workers.

4.4.2 Plain Language Text Message Models

The plain language for the text message models has been derived from the email models. Thus, as mentioned before, the models were based on the guidelines for using plain language. Hence, the text messages in our product have been purposefully created to make the messages conveyed easily understandable. Since our product is aimed at Familia Club members who speak little Finnish, difficult words have been replaced with simpler words. For example, our product requesting the clients to contact Familia Club, initially had the phrase *ota yhteyttä* (please contact us), however, based on the evaluation feedback, this was altered into: *soita, lähetä sähköpostia, tai tule käymään Familia Clubille* (please call, send an email or come visit Familia Club). Also, the grammatical structure has been changed to shorter sentences so that the reader would be able to get the message translated easily into their own language, if they were to use an online dictionary.

With the exception of the *class has been cancelled* (tunti peruttu) plain language text message, the text messages start with a greeting; *hello* (hei) and closes with a signature; *yours sincerely* (terveisin) Familia Club. This was intended to make the messages more personalised, warm and friendly. The text message informing about the class being cancelled starts with a call for *Notice!* (Huomio!) so that the receiver of the message immediately knows that the message has unusual and important information.

The messages were stored in the Familia Club phone message archive under the theme titles for easy identification, and also have been written in a manner that that they can be edited and modified by the Familia Club staff, depending on the situation and information being conveyed.

4.4.3 Instructions for Workers

In order to facilitate the utilization of the *Telling It Simply* -product, instructions for how to use the models were compiled for Familia Club's workers, trainees and teachers. A step-by-step guide was included, elaborating how the email models can be modified in the future, to ensure that they are coherent with Familia Club's yearly activities. The models that may need modification were italicized for easier identification by the staff. The instructions should also enable the continuity of our final project by giving Familia Club the initiative to create new models for their future activities. The workers can find

the instructions and the product in a printed format at Familia Club. They can also be used in assisting with face-to-face communication in absence of a common language.

4.5 Testing the Product with Familia Club Members

The evaluation of our product was executed in July 2013 at Familia Club, with two groups of Finnish learners: the basic Finnish course and Summer Club discussion group. The product was evaluated because we wanted to determine how effective the pictograms and plain language messages were in conveying information in an understandable manner to Familia Club members, while the feedback was gathered so that changes could be made based on the participants' responses regarding the product. Additionally, we took a client centered approach with our target group by involving them in the development process of alternative communication methods intended for their benefit.

4.5.1 The Testing Process

For the preparation process of the evaluation of our product, the basic Finnish language teacher and the student trainee in charge of the summer discussion group, were contacted. These groups of Familia Club members were chosen as participants for our evaluation process because they corresponded to our target group due to their relatively small knowledge of Finnish language. The aforementioned staff members of Familia Club were contacted to inquire about what languages the participating members spoke so as to determine the need for translation assistance, as well as to gauge their knowledge of English and Finnish. The Familia Club's staff was also requested to inform their members about the purpose of our product in Familia Club and our intentions to evaluate our product with their assistance.

At the beginning of the testing process, we introduced our final thesis to the clients and explained why we were doing this for Familia Club. We also described the process of our evaluation and the members' role in the final thesis as participants and further reminded them that their participation was only voluntary. In total, twenty-two members participated in the evaluation process of our product. In both groups, the basic Finnish language students and the summer discussion group members, the participants were divided into groups of two to three, with each one of us facilitating and collecting feedback from one group.

The process of evaluation involved each email model being evaluated separately and notes from the participants being written down as they gave their opinions. Firstly, they were shown the models and given a few minutes to examine the information on them. The participants were then asked to explain how they understood the messages and notes of their feedback were taken. Next, the actual message intended in each model was revealed to them. Finally, the participants were asked for alteration ideas, so the models would better portray the intended message. They were further asked to indicate specific parts that they felt were misleading and how they could change them. Again, notes of the participants' suggestions were written down.

The final stage of our evaluation process of the product involved reviewing each email model and the respective feedback as well as suggestions obtained from the participants. Next, we identified and compared each email model and feedback obtained for similarities and differences in opinions. And finally, the possible alterations based on the participants' feedback were discussed.

Additionally, it is important to mention that alterations were largely based on the majority feedback and suggestions rather than on the minority opinions. This was because it would have been impossible to consider each participant's opinions and also, as mentioned earlier, pictograms are bound to be interpreted differently each time. Thus, our product is client-centred in a sense that Familia Club members' needs and opinions have been considered throughout the creation of our product.

4.5.2 Alterations of the Email Models

Generally, the participants were able to understand the main ideas from the products. However, a few aspects that arose when interpreting the products were discussed with the participants. For example, in the products' pictograms for *tunti peruttu* and *suomen kielen kurssi*, the *A, B, C* text in the pictogram was replaced with *minä, sinä, hän*. This was because, a large number of the participants understood the '*A, B, C*' text as learning the alphabet, while *minä, sinä, hän* is more familiar with Finnish language learners and thus conveyed the message about Finnish language course in a more understandable manner.

Also, when evaluating the model *membership fee* (*vuosimaksu*), there were quite a number of similar interpretations that, however, were not the ones intended. Therefore, alterations were made, as can be seen in figure 2. The first pictogram, on the left, was designed with the utilization of a pictogram from Papunet indicating the act of payment. However, from the evaluation, it was discovered that a significant number of the participants understood the pictogram to be a cash machine, a cheque, an envelope or a post box, among others, which were far from our intended message. Therefore, from the feedback and discussion about the *membership fee* (*vuosimaksu*) model, the participants felt that the message of payment would be better portrayed by having a human figure handing over a cash note to someone, money being given through an open door, or the twenty euro in the note in bigger font. Thus, based on the client feedback acquired on how to use pictograms, the final model of *membership fee* (*vuosimaksu*), on the right, was altered showing a human figure (Familia Club member) giving money to a Familia Club staff member.

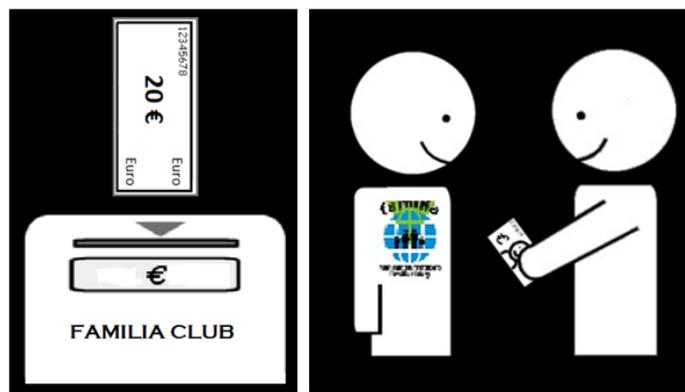


Figure 4. Alteration of *vuosimaksu* (membership fee)

In the *odota* (waiting list) model, based on the participants' feedback, we altered the order of the pictograms and changed one of the pictures to another with a longer waiting queue. We also changed the human figure of the caller from Familia Club to look similar as the rest of the human figures in the pictograms. It was also essential for the participants to have an additional picture of the Finnish language course, which completed the model, thus giving the message to the participants, to wait patiently for someone from Familia Club to contact them whenever there would be an opportunity to take part in the Finnish language course.

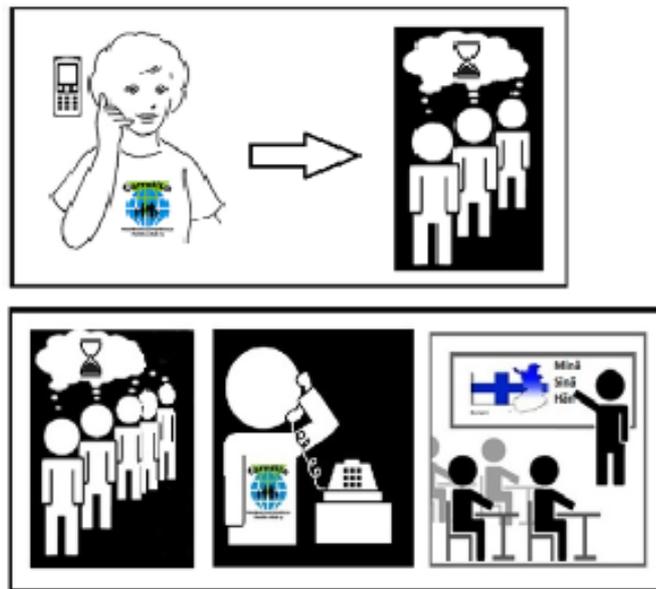


Figure 5. Alterations in the *odota* model.

In general, from the members' feedback, common suggestions for areas to be changed or alternated were: the need for more color, indicating time in a specific manner and the need to use more pictograms with more action. Also, it was evident that those participants who understood some Finnish language paid attention to the plain language texts and combined these with the pictograms when interpreting the products, while those who had little or no knowledge of Finnish language concentrated more on the pictograms to interpret the models.

5 Discussion

This final project was initiated by our joined interest in multicultural issues as well as our working life partner's need for developing communication methods in a multicultural context. Guiding us in the process was also Metropolia's Degree Programme in Social Services' goal of developing working practices in the social field. We had all experienced the prevalent challenges in communicating across cultural and language barriers and, consequently, found it important to explore possible methods of overcoming these obstacles. Therefore, the project benefited both Familia Club and us, the future Bachelors of Social Services. We gained insight into how to overcome challenges related to

communication in multicultural context, while Familia Club received a tool with which to better reach their members.

The methods used in developing our *Telling It Simply* -product, plain language and pictograms, were also chosen based on both parties' interests. Familia Club had taken an interest into plain language communication by visiting The Centre for Easy to Read in January 2013, a trip where also one of us had the opportunity to participate. Based on further readings on the topic, we decided to combine plain language and visuals in order to maximize the clarity of the chosen communication methods. The literature on plain language and pictograms also revealed that they were mainly targeted for and used with disabled people and implementing them in multicultural work was still in its infancy. Therefore, we found that piloting a project employing these alternative communication methods at Familia Club could function as an introduction for their implementation in the multicultural work field more broadly.

Even though visual communication and the combination of plain language and visuals are recommended as effective alternative communication methods, the messages conveyed through them are open to subjective interpretations. In fact, all human interactions, vocal or otherwise, are susceptible to the communicators' personal stance. Therefore, despite of our best efforts, the plain language and pictogram messages created might have some polysemous interpretations depending on the perspective of each receiver. Consequently, we found that testing and modifying our product on multiple occasions would not have resulted into coherent, universally unambiguous interpretations, but rather would have created a need for further alterations and polishing of details. However, the final product that was modified based on the target group's feedback could have been tested in practice by sending emails and text messages to members instead of calling them, in order to study the product's short-term effects. Unfortunately, due to the limited timeframe reserved for this final project, testing the product in Familia's every day work was not possible.

Our final product consists of email and text message models and is, thus, a tool for digital communication. Additionally, we compiled a file with the email models that can be used at Familia Club's premises for face to face encounters with the members. Hopefully, issues that have previously proved to be difficult concepts to explain, such as *waiting list* (*varasija*), can be clarified with the help of the printed models. The communication methods used in this project, could also be implemented in Familia Club's

communications more broadly. For instance, the association's website could be written in plain Finnish and some images could be used to support the text. Additionally, other organizations dealing with newly arrived immigrants could also benefit from implementing the methods proposed in this thesis. We would also like also to mention, that to further develop our product within this final project, more resources would have been needed. Thereby, this product could have been extended to other immigrant service providers, for example, reception centers.

Testing our product with the target group consisting of immigrants with very little or a complete lack of Finnish language skills was somewhat challenging. Ironically, during the testing process, we still faced the challenge of misunderstandings that our project aimed to erase. Despite of the participants being informed by their teachers beforehand and then again by us in the beginning of the feedback session, all of them did not at first understand that we were asking for their feedback, not advertising services. Perhaps, this could have been avoided by designing an additional plain language and pictogram utilizing model, depicting the feedback collecting process. Regardless of the challenges, we found that testing the product with immigrants who already knew some Finnish would not have served the purpose of evaluating how the actual target group interprets the messages.

Involving non-Finnish-speaking immigrants in the testing of our product also gave us a chance to include the target group in the project. The feedback received from the participants was versatile and partly contradicting, yet we were positively surprised to receive plenty of comments and suggestions. This is because during our work placement, collecting feedback regarding Familia's Finnish language courses turned out to be very challenging; participants were reluctant to give any negative feedback and most of them were unfamiliar with the whole process. Unfortunately, the language barrier during testing meant that we had to rely on one of the participants' assistance in translating from English to Arabic and from Arabic Persian and then back to English. Therefore, it is highly likely that the information might have been distorted along the way.

Also, we must add that we may have been somewhat biased when interpreting participants' comments and when selecting which alteration ideas to implement, due to the fact that we all have some personal experiences with immigrant related issues. The theoretical framework of this thesis was based on empowerment. Yet, claiming that our

product alone has the capacity to empower Familia Club members would be exaggeration. Instead, we argue that tackling the obstacle of language barriers is the first step on the road to immigrants' empowerment. As discussed in the chapter on theoretical framework, both personal aptitudes and structural limitations influence individuals' empowerment (Alsop & Heinsohn 2005:6). Throughout this thesis process, we have examined one of the structural limitations affecting non-Finnish-speaking immigrants in Finland; whereas immigrants' knowledge or aptitudes were not attempted to be influenced. On the contrary, the product was designed from a client-centered perspective, by considering the target group's current literacy rate as well as their Finnish language and information technology skills.

We expect the product to have an influence at three interrelated levels: firstly, in Familia Club's everyday work when contacting their members, secondly, in contributing to the members' empowerment and thirdly, in the long-term, by supporting the association in their integration work. At practical level, the product takes a step toward better understanding between Familia Club staff and their members due to providing an alternative to phone calls. The new method of conveying information regarding services should then increase their accessibility, while providing the members with feelings of empowerment due to understanding information provided by the new host society. Finally, having access to services and being able to make informed decisions regarding in which ones to participate, should facilitate immigrants' integration process in the new home country.

6 Ethical considerations

Due to the fact that in Finland information about services is largely conveyed in Finnish or Swedish, immigrants remain at the threat of being marginalised. Valtonen (2008:159) discusses that "Individuals who cannot communicate in the language of the country are in a situation of vulnerability, dependent on formal and informal interpreting and information brokerage". She goes on to add that this hinders immigrants from actively speaking for themselves and creates a breach of privacy.

Working ethically means that people's human rights and dignity are considered in planning actions that affect their wellbeing (Talentia 2007). Therefore, throughout this final thesis process, we tried to be mindful of Familia Club's members' diversity in terms of

gender, culture, religion, language and so on. For instance, during the development stage of the 'membership fee' email model, we were not able to find respective pictograms depicting the action of payment, and thus came up with ideas that would best indicate to the members that an annual payment to participate in Familia Club activities would be required. Therefore, we thought that a pictogram of a piggy bank with the Familia Club logo would be suitable. However, since some of the Familia Club members are Muslims, using a piggy bank might have been offensive, thus we took precaution by using a box bank with the Familia logo instead. However, after the feedback was received from the participants, a pictogram of someone handing over a note to a Familia Club staff member seemed more appropriate.

As mentioned in the testing process, the participants were informed twice prior to the testing process of our product, so as to gain their informed consent. They were further reminded of their freedom to withdraw from participating in the testing process. Our final thesis process did not require any of the participants' personal details, nor contacts. Nevertheless, we reminded them that we would not need their names or phone numbers and that the information collected was in theirs and Familia Club's best interests. In this way, we wanted to assure the participants of their confidentiality and anonymity being protected.

Dungee-Anderson and Beckett (cited in Payne 2005:280) discuss the awareness and importance of understanding the various cultures in our work environments in avoiding mistakes and misunderstandings. Our product was tested during the month of Ramadan, which is a period in the Islamic calendar when Muslims refrain from consuming food or drinks for several hours during the day. A significant percentage of Familia Clubs' members consist of Muslims. Unfortunately, our ignorance of this practice portrayed us as culturally and religiously insensitive when we offered the participants biscuits in appreciation of their contribution in our feedback session.

7 Conclusions

The purpose of this final project was to innovate communication methods for our working life partner Multicultural Association Familia Club Ry. Due to the misunderstandings originating from language barriers, the association needed tools for tackling these challenges. In order to convey information in an understandable manner to Familia

Club's members, the *Telling It Simply* -product was designed to provide an alternative to the association's already existing communications. The product consists of eight email models and eight text messages which combine plain language and pictograms to improve immigrants' access to information.

In Finland, majority of information is available in the form of brochures and forms written in Finnish or Swedish. However, immigrants who do not understand these languages lack the access to the information and are easily excluded from the service provision. To alleviate this challenge, innovative communication methods need to be created to avail equal opportunities to all. Therefore, this project contributes to the need for knowledge in using plain language and pictograms in the multicultural context and we believe that it paved way for intellectual nourishment for professionals and further studies in the field of social services.

Previous research in plain language and pictograms fully supported the creation of the product, by arguing that conceptuality of messages increases their understandability. These findings were further supported with empowerment theories that defended the fact that understanding the conveyed information empowers recipients. Integration theories further justified the necessity of supporting immigrants' adaptation into their host societies.

The product was pilot tested with immigrant members of Familia Club. The feedback revealed that the combination of plain language and pictograms may simplify conveying of information when the sender and receiver do not share a common language. Due to the variety of members' backgrounds, also the results of this pilot testing were miscellaneous. Despite the differences, the collected feedback assisted us in editing the models into a more client-centred direction. The feedback received was further used to develop the plain language text messages.

Finally, we can conclude that tackling barriers within institutions or organizations depend greatly on the workers' resources and interest in developing the social field. Through this final project and the development of the *Telling It Simply* -product, we took an initiative of developing practices in multicultural work. Moreover, the project created a reflective, empowering and client-centred approach, in a field where power could be misused when communicating with disadvantaged clients.

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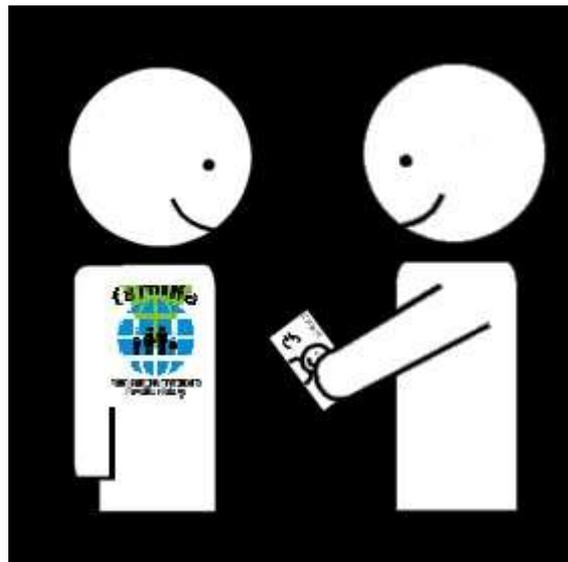
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Email Models



Familia Club vuosimaksu

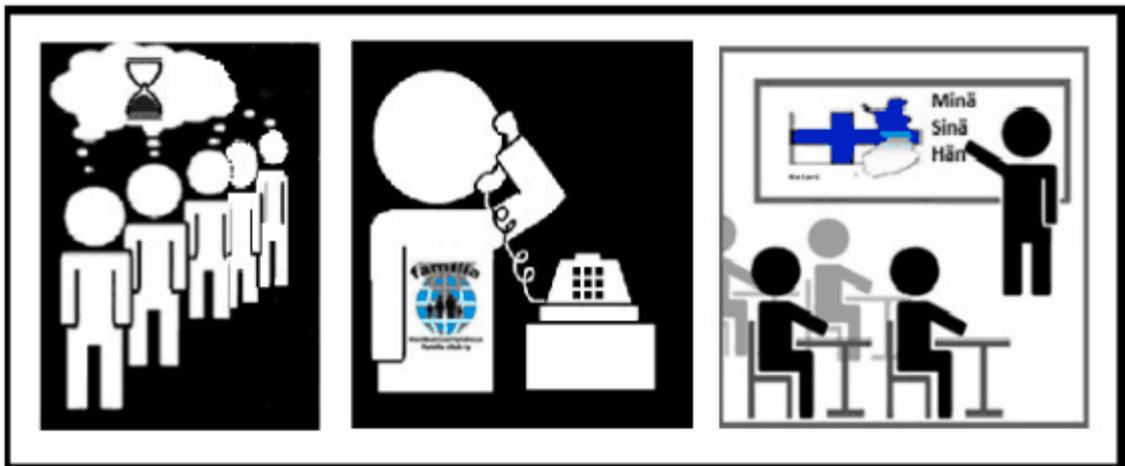
Sinä voit maksaa 20€ ja osallistua Familia Clubin toimintaan (esimerkiksi: suomenkielen kurssi, perhekerho, keskusteluryhmä, retket) koko vuoden.





Odota

Suomenkielen kurssi on täynnä. Sinä olet jonossa. Jos tulee tilaa, Familia Club ilmoittaa sinulle.

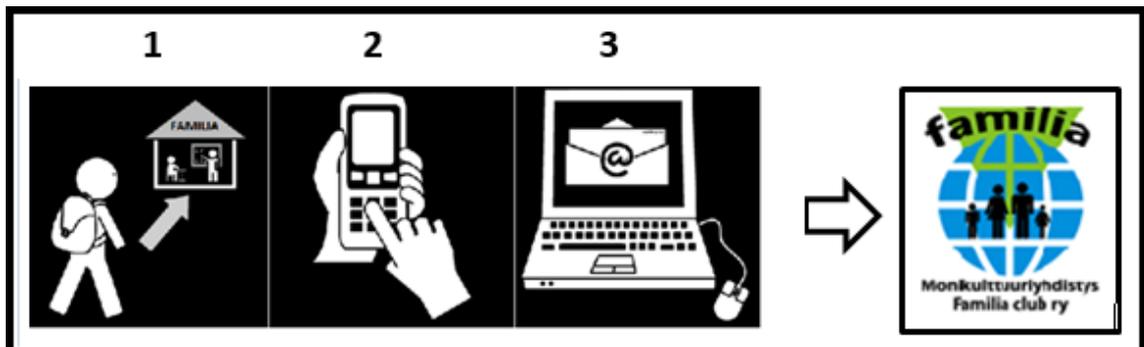




Tule, Soita, TAI Lähetä sähköpostia Familia Clubiin

Sinä voit:

- 1) Tulla käymään: Yrjönkatu 29 A
- 2) Soittaa: 09 738 628 **TAI**
- 3) Lähettää sähköpostia: harjoittelija@familiacub.fi





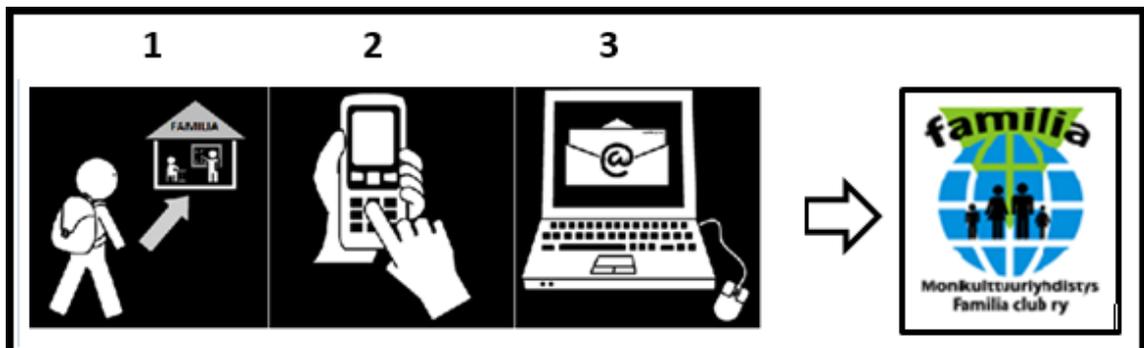
Vapaa paikka

Sinulla on nyt paikka kurssilla. Ota yhteyttä Familia Clubiin viikon sisällä.

Kurssi on maanantaina ja keskiviikona 10.00 - 12.00.

Sinä voit:

- 1) tulla käymään: Yrjönkatu 29 A
- 2) soittaa: 09 738 628 **TAI**
- 3) lähettää sähköpostia: harjoittelija@familiaclub.fi





Keskusteluryhmä

Tule puhumaan suomea joka *keskiviikko kello 10.00 - 12.00.*

Ryhmä on avoin kaikille. Tervetuloa!

9. SYYSKUU						
Maanantai	Tiistai	Keskiviikko	Torstai	Perjantai	Lauantai	Sunnuntai
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						






Kannelmäki perhekerho

Äidit ja lapset, tervetuloa perhekerhoon joka keskiviikko kello 10.00 - 12.00. Kerhossa tehdään ruokaa, tanssitaan, leikitään, puhutaan ja pidetään hauskaa yhdessä. Kerho on Kanneltalossa (Klaneettitie 5, Helsinki)

9. SYYSKUU						
Maanantai	Tiistai	Keskiviikko	Torstai	Perjantai	Lauantai	Sunnuntai
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

↓











43



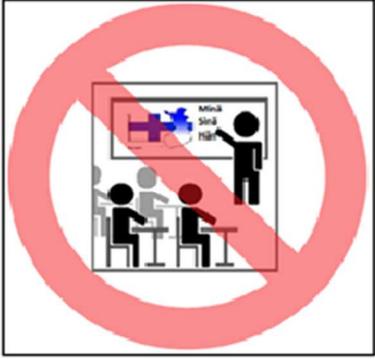
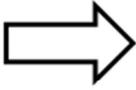
M



Tunti peruttu

Maanantaina 8.7 ei ole tuntia. Opettaja on sairas. Seuraava tunti on tiistaina 9.7.

MA	TI	KE	TO	PE	LA	SU
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4





Suomen kielen kurssi

Tervetuloa kurssille *Kirjaimet ja numerot tutuiksi A maanantaina*

ja keskiviikkona kello 10.30 - 12.00.

9. SYYSKUU						
Maanantai	Tiistai	Keskiviikko	Torstai	Perjantai	Lauantai	Sunnuntai
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

10. LOKAKUU						
Maanantai	Tiistai	Keskiviikko	Torstai	Perjantai	Lauantai	Sunnuntai
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

11. MARRASKUU						
Maanantai	Tiistai	Keskiviikko	Torstai	Perjantai	Lauantai	Sunnuntai
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

12. JOULUKUU						
Maanantai	Tiistai	Keskiviikko	Torstai	Perjantai	Lauantai	Sunnuntai
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					



Text Message Models

Tule, soita, TAI lähetä sähköpostia Familia Clubiin

Hei! Soita, lähetä sähköpostia tai tule käymään Familia Clubiin.
Puhelinnumero: 09 738 62, Sähköposti: harjoittelija @familiacub.fi,
Osoite: Yrjönkatu 29 A. Terveisin, Familia Club.

Vapaa paikka

Hei! Sinulla on nyt vapaa paikka suomen kielen kurssilla Familia Clubissa. Soita, lähetä sähköpostia tai tule käymään Familia Clubiin.
Puhelinnumero: 09 738 62, Sähköposti: harjoittelija @familiacub.fi,
Osoite: Yrjönkatu 29 A. Terveisin, Familia Club.

Suomen kielen kurssi

Hei! Tervetuloa Familia Clubin suomen kielen kurssille. Kurssi alkaa XX.XX.2013. Tunnit ovat joka *maanantai ja keskiviikko kello 10:00 - 12:00*. Terveisin, Familia Club.

Kannelmäki perhekerho

Hei äidit ja lapset! Tervetuloa Kannelmäki perhekerhoon joka keskiviikko kello 10.00 - 12.00. Kerhossa tehdään ruokaa, tanssitaan, leikitään, puhutaan ja pidetään hauskaa yhdessä. Kerho on Kanneltalossa (Klaneettitie 5, Helsinki). Terveisin, Familia Club.

Odot

Hei! Valitettavasti suomen kielen kurssi on täynnä. Sinä olet nyt jonossa. Jos tulee tilaa, Familia Club ilmoittaa sinulle. Terveisin, Familia Club.

Vuosimaksu

Hei! Tervetuloa Familia Clubiin. Osallistuminen Familia Clubin toimintaan vuoden ajan maksaa 20€. Terveisin, Familia Club.

Keskustelu ryhmä

Hei! Haluatko oppia lisää suomea? Tule puhumaan suomea joka keskiviikko kello 10.00 - 12.00. Ryhmä on avoin kaikille. Tervetuloa! Terveisin, Familia Club.

Tunti peruttu

Huomio! *Maanantaina 08.07.2013* ei ole suomenkielen tuntia koska *opettaja on sairas*. Tervetuloa seuraavalle suomen kielen tunnille *tiistaina 09.07.2013*. Terveisin, Familia Club.

Instruction for Workers

Telling It Simply – tuotos syntyi vuonna 2013 osana toiminnallista opinnäytetyötä kolmen Metropolian sosionomi-opiskelijan toimesta. Sen tarkoituksena on edistää tiedonvälitystä Familia Clubilta heidän jäsenilleen selkokieltä ja piktogrammeja apuna käyttäen. Tuotos koostuu kahdeksasta sähköposti- sekä kahdeksasta tekstiviestimallista. Mallien avulla Familian henkilökunta, harjoittelijat, vapaaehtoiset ja opettajat voivat viestiä jäsenille tärkeää tietoa muun muassa suomenkielenkurssien aikatauluista taikka oppitunnin peruuntumisesta. Osa malleista on valmiina käytettäväksi, mutta joihinkin tulee tehdä pieniä muutoksia kuten ajan ja päivämäärän päivitys. Ohessa ohjeita päivitysten tekemiseen.

Ohjeet sähköpostien muokkausta varten

- 1) Avaa Word-tiedosto
- 2) Muuta päivämäärä ja kellonaika, jotka ovat *Italicin*-muodossa
- 3) Jos haluat liittää muokatun kuvan sähköpostiin, paina print screen-nappi ja avaa se paint-ohjelmassa.
- 4) Tallenna kuva paint-ohjelmassa ja siirrä se Wordiin.
- 5) Liitä kuvat sähköpostiin.

Ohjeet kalenterien muokkausta varten

- 1) Avaa kalenterien tiedosto
- 2) Värjää kurssin ajankohdat (mm. ma ja ke ja sen alkamis- ja loppumispäivät)
- 3) Paina print screen-nappulaa ja liitä kuukaudet, jolloin kurssi toteutetaan

Ohjeita tekstiviestimallien käyttöön

Tekstiviestimallit löytyvät Familian toimiston puhelimen luonnoksista.