

THE ROLE OF LEARNING FINNISH LANGUAGE IN THE INTEGRATION
PROCESS AMONG IMMIGRANT WOMEN

Anne Mwai and Nazish Ghaffar

THE ROLE OF LEARNING FINNISH LANGUAGE IN THE INTEGRATION
PROCESS AMONG IMMIGRANT WOMEN

Anne Mwai and Nazish Ghaffar
Thesis, Spring 2014
Diaconia University of Applied Sciences,
Degree Programme in Social Services
Bachelor of Social Services

ABSTRACT

Anne Mwai and Nazish Ghaffar. The role of learning Finnish language in the integration process among immigrant women. Pages 61. 1 appendix. Language: English. Spring 2014. Diaconia University of Applied Sciences. Degree Programme in Social Services. Degree: Bachelor of Social Services.

This study examines the role of Finnish language among immigrant women in the integration process. It also explains the opportunities the immigrant women acquire after learning the Finnish language.

A qualitative approach was applied in this research. Semi structured interviews method was used for collecting the data among the immigrant women. Interviews were analysed by thematic analysis method.

The results of the research indicates that, Finnish language skill plays a vital role in empowering the immigrant women. It is a tool, which can be used for their own well being. Learning the Finnish language has enabled the immigrants to integrate into the Finnish society. Women have created social networks in Finland, assimilated in the labour market, acculturated, and have a sense of belonging.

Language skills are relevant both for performance of daily tasks in new cultural society and establishing interpersonal relationships in the society. Cultural learning approaches assume a direct relationship between language fluency and sociocultural adaptation.

The findings of this research presented that for successful integration, it is dependent upon following indicators, Finnish language proficiency, education, labour market, social networks e.t.c. The research also emphasized on the importance of learning the Finnish language, and that the municipalities act on ensuring that there are adequate Finnish language courses for immigrants and ensure that the government implement policies that assist immigrants in incorporating themselves into the host society successfully.

Key word: Integration, Immigrant women, Finnish language, Acculturation, Networking, Identity, Interaction, Empowerment.

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION	6
2 BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW	8
2.1 Immigration to Finland	8
2.2 Characteristics of immigrants	9
2.3 Women and migration	12
2.4 Situation of immigrant women in Finland	15
2.5 Types of immigrant women	16
3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND PREVIOUS STUDIES	18
3.1 Integration	18
3.1 Social integration	19
3.1.1 Dimensions of social integration	19
3.2 Legislation	22
3.2.1 Integration act	22
3.3 Language as a tool to integrate	24
3.4 Language courses offered, process and organization	25
3.5 The linguistic status of migrants	25
3.6 Literature review	30
3.7 Community development perspective	31
4 METHODOLOGY	33
4.1 Qualitative research	33
4.2 Data collection	33
4.2.1 Data collection process	34
4.3 Interviewing process and description of participants	35
4.4 Data analysis	36
4.4.1 Data analysis process	37
4.5 Limitation	37
4.6 Ethical considerations and validity	38
5 RESEARCH FINDINGS	40
5.1 Acquisition of Finnish language skill	40
5.2 Educational and Economical change	42
5.3 Networking and Interacting	43

5.4 Social inclusion and participation	45
5.5 Acculturation.....	47
5.6 Social identification.....	48
6 Conclusion	50
6.2 Further research ideas	52
6.3 Professional development	52
7 REFERENCES	56
8 APPENDIX 1: Interview questions	62

1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the research is to describe the role of learning the Finnish language in the integration process among immigrant women. It is often maintained that learning the Finnish language is key to integration or participation. Focus is on the immigrant women who migrate to Finland for various reasons and have attended the Finnish language course as a way of integration process.

The research is conducted using qualitative method by interviewing immigrant women. Learning a foreign language eases the integration process into a new country. We are interested to know how the attainment of Finnish language skill benefits the immigrant women. Immigrant women are important contributors to the well-being of their families. When women's language proficiency is limited, they cannot fully access and benefit from the available services and resources to address their families' needs in the fundamental areas of health, education, and financial security. Finnish language being one of the major requirements for all immigrants to be integrated in Finland has played a role in the lives of immigrants.

Plenty of research has been done on the integration process of immigrants, hence our focus is on the importance of learning the Finnish language among immigrant women and how it helps them to integrate. We have also done practical placement in organizations that offer Finnish language courses, therefore the interest in the topic.

The principal aim is to examine the processes of integration of immigrants through the Finnish language. We are concerned with the ways immigrants organize their lives through integration. Economic, cultural or social integration can be seen as such contexts shaping immigrants' lives. Main focus being on the Finnish language aspect, we are able to know how the Finnish language skill has affected immigrant women everyday relationships; the local labour

market, cultural, and social aspects which becomes the terrain where migrants build their lives and develop their sense of belonging.

In this study, the research question is applied in order to know how the immigrant women Finnish language skills help them to integrate.

2 BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, we explain about immigration to Finland, the characteristics of immigrants, women and migration. Further we discuss the gender and the transition across the board. We also explain the experiences of women in a host country. In the last section we elaborate the situation of immigrant women in Finland along with that we would like to develop the knowledge of types of immigrants in Finland.

2.1 Immigration to Finland

In 2011, the International Organization for Migration estimated that there were a total of 214 million migrants internationally, some 3.1 percent of the world's population or 1 in every 33 persons (IOM 2011, cited in Gold and Nawyn 2013). They seek work and economical opportunities, reunification with family members, a more congenial environment or, most poignantly in the case of war-weary refugees, a safe place to live. (Gold & Nawyn 2013, 1).

Migration to Finland can roughly be divided into five categories: refugees, including UN quota refugees and the so called de facto refugees; family reunifications; return migration; labour migration and migration for other reasons. The most common reasons for migrating to Finland are return migration, asylum seeking and for marriage and family reasons. (Jasinskaja-Lahti et al. 2002, 17.)

Based on the reasons for immigration, immigrants may be grouped to those who have moved to a foreign country voluntarily, and those who had to move to a foreign country due to the threat to their survival. Hence, immigrants compose a very diverse group in the Finnish society in terms of reasons for immigration to Finland, nationality and mother tongue. This situation implies that immigrants have also very different backgrounds, needs and face different challenges while adapting to Finnish society and culture. (Viktorija 2012, 10-14.)

In the decades after the Second World War, the Finnish borders were tightly controlled and migration was very limited. During the 1970s and 1980s small groups of Chilean and Vietnamese refugees moved to Finland, while immigration in general remained modest. (Valtonen 1997). After the breakdown of the Soviet Union, Finland quickly converted into a receiving country for immigrants. The immigration flows that have targeted Finland come from the former Soviet Union areas. The war in Somalia and former Yugoslavia and other restless areas in Africa and Asia are other big sources of immigration. Mainly refugees and through family reunification. (Statistics Finland.)

Finnish migration is closely related to its history and its peripheral location. There has never been great pressure for migration. Neither has the country suffered from a labour shortage. Finnish migration policy has traditionally been rather restrictive because of the country's geopolitical location. (Forsander, 2002, 23; Similä, 2003, 99). The main reason for increased immigration to Finland are to be found in allowing return migration, in having larger refugee quotas and in increased labour migration especially from the neighbouring countries. We can assume that two of the drivers for increased migration are the dissolution of Soviet Union and Finland's joining the EU in 1995 (Triandafyllidou et al 2008, 99.)

2.2 Characteristics of immigrants

Finland has become an immigrant rather than emigrant country since the 1980s (Vartia et al. 2007, 16). The number of immigrants has grown substantially during the last decades, particularly after 1990, although it has decreased slightly since 2008 (see Figure 1). (Cited in Statistics Finland 2011.)

The figure below illustrates how immigration increased from 1991, and how emigration and net immigration declined. In 2010, the proportion of foreigners composed 3% of the population of Finland (Ministry of the Interior 2010, 3), and, compared to the other Nordic countries and countries of the Central Europe, was rather low (Vartia et al. 2007, 16). In conclusion, the phenomenon of immi-

gration is rather recent in Finland, and although its rates have dropped slightly since 2008, the number of immigrants is increasing every year. (Cited in Statistics Finland 2011.)

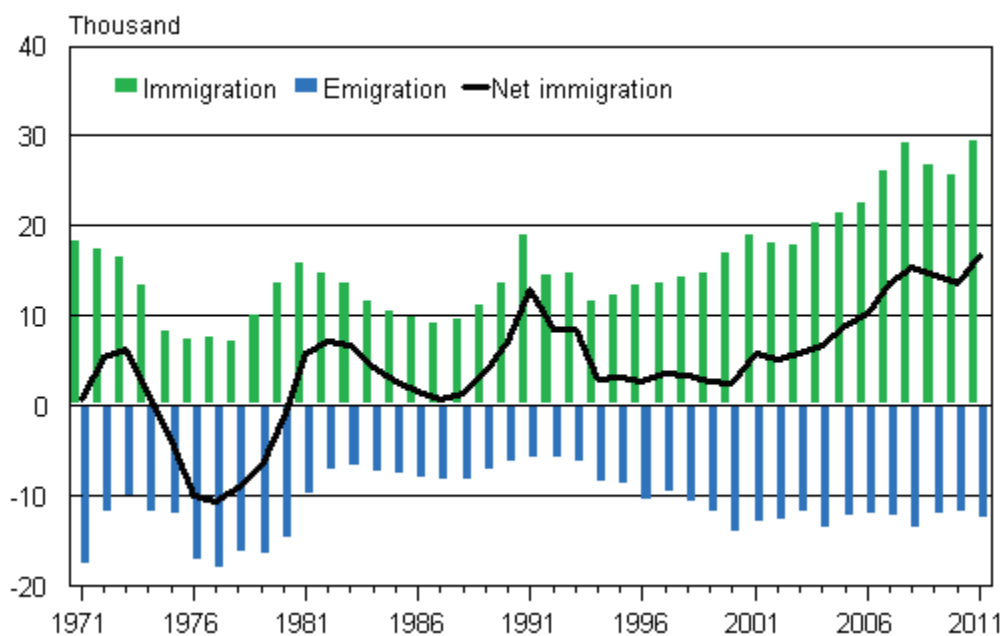


Figure 1. Immigration, emigration and net immigration in 1971-2011 (Statistics Finland 2011).

Immigrants form a diverse group of Finnish population. Foreigners immigrate to Finland for many reasons. The most common ones are work, family ties and study (see Table 1).

Table 1. Granted residence permissions and refugee applications in accordance to the grounds in 2006-2009. People from EU countries are not included (Väestöliitto 2012b). (Cited in Statistics Finland 2011.)

Reasons to immigrate	%
Family ties	28.5
Work and occupation	24.2
Other (mostly labour)	14.5
Study	21.8
Humanitarian	8.8
Finnish origin	2.3

Since 2006, the number of applications on the basis of family ties (parents & children) as a reason for immigration to Finland has been growing and is a substantial factor (Väestöliitto 2012b). As can be seen in Table 1, in 2010, most applications concerned family ties to other relatives and family members of Finnish citizens. Most of the applications were submitted by Somalia's on the grounds of a family reunion. It is assumed that in the future there will be more applicants on the grounds of family ties due to a substantial number of refugees in Finland. The number of foreigners has risen; therefore, it may also raise the number of applications for residence permissions on the grounds of family ties. (Finnish Immigration Service 2010). Immigration due to employment and studies in Finland have also been among the most common reasons. Applications on the grounds of work have grown by 50% since 2005. Less than 10% immigrated to Finland as refugees and asylum seekers during 2006-2009. (Väestöliitto 2012a). (Cited in Statistics Finland 2011.)

There is a great diversity of nationalities among immigrants. In 2010, the majority of foreign nationals were Estonians (17.3%) and Russians (16.9%) as well as citizens of Sweden (5.1%), Somalia (3.9%), China (3.3%), Iraq (3.0%) and Thai-

land (3.0%). (Ministry of the Interior 2010: 4). After 2010, Estonian citizens became the largest group of foreign citizens living in Finland whereas in the past the Russians formed the largest group of foreigners. In 2010, there were 54,783 residents with a dual citizenship, that is, those who hold a citizenship of some other country in addition to a Finnish citizenship. Therefore, these people are not included as foreign citizens in official statistics. In 2010, the largest dual nationality groups were citizens of Russian Federation (15,348), Sweden (5,275) and the United States (3,220). (Statistics Finland 2011.)

In correlation with the rates of nationalities of immigrants, the largest groups of foreign language speakers are speakers of Russian, Estonian, Somalian, English, Arabic, and other languages. They form altogether 4.2% of Finnish population beside speakers of Finnish, Swedish and Sámi. (Ministry of the Interior 2010). In Figure 2, a number of foreign language speakers in 2000 and 2010 according to their native languages is presented. The figure shows that numbers of all largest groups of speakers have at least doubled during the last decade with a leading position of Russian native speakers. According to Population Register Centre (2011), there were 54,559 Russian speakers in 2010-2011. Estonian speakers form the second largest group by native language in Finland which is yet half smaller than the group of Russian speakers - 28,493 persons in 2010-2011 (Population Register Centre 2011). Speakers of other languages compose much smaller groups. For example, in 2010-2011, numbers of Somalian and English speakers were 12,985 and 12,855. In addition, there were 10,415 speakers of Arabic, 8,032 speakers of Kurdish and 7,546 speakers of Chinese in 2010-2011. (Population Register Centre 2011, see also Figure 2.)

2.3 Women and migration

The current share of women in the world's population of international migration is close to half, and available evidence suggests that migration flow and its impacts are strongly gendered. (Schiff & Sjöblom 2007,1).

Decisions made at the pre-migration stage are influenced by a variety of gender-related factors. In certain instances, men are more likely to migrate, while in others women may be the ones to leave. A decision to leave, however, is not the same as being allowed to exit or to enter a specific country. Through their policies, nation-states are major actors in a gendered international migration process. National policies of the countries of origin can influence migration through prohibitive, selective, permissive, promotional, or expulsive rules of exit that may affect men and women migrants differently. These policies are frequently conditioned by implicit or explicit assumptions about the status and roles of men and women both within the family and in society. For example, some labor-exporting countries have implemented conditions in their policies to protect women from exploitation that effectively prevent them from engaging in labor migration. (Boyd & Grieco 2005.)

Immigration laws and regulations of the country of destination also influence the migration of women and men. These policies can influence the ability of women and men to migrate in three ways. First, the migration policies of many receiving countries implicitly assume a "dependent" status for women and an "independent" migrant status for men. Women are often classified by their relation to men (e.g., wife or daughter) with whom they migrate regardless of their own, independent status. Second, by implicitly defining immigrant women as "dependent" and men as independent," immigration policies of receiving societies place women in a "family role" rather than a "market role." This, in turn, can reinforce some of the factors responsible for the social vulnerability of migrant women. This is especially true in labor-importing countries that separate the right to work from the right to reside and where women who lack a work permit may be employed illegally. Third, traditional sex roles and stereotypical images regarding the place of women in society can influence the type of work for which migrant female labor is recruited. Women admitted as workers are generally concentrated in "female" occupations, such as domestic service or nursing. When women enter on the basis of labor-market skills, many are in service occupations. In countries that recruit migrant workers on a temporary basis, most

women are admitted as domestic workers, which include those specializing in childcare. (Boyd & Grieco 2005.)

In addition to nation-states, intermediary organizations and institutions also influence who migrates, and thus the gender composition of immigration flows. Domestic workers and workers in the sex trade, for example, may enter countries under the auspices of organized intermediaries. Although not part of the policies of the countries of origin and destination, these intermediary institutions and agencies, both legal and illegal, work to circumvent established policies. The actions of intermediaries can increase the likelihood that women will migrate because they act as networks linking potential female migrants with demands for female labor in destination countries. Finally, international conventions that influence immigration policies also may be gendered. This can be seen in the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, which defines who is a refugee. Critics charge that this definition favors the recognition of men as refugees because forms of persecution experienced by women in private settings are less likely to be recognized as grounds for persecution. (Boyd & Grieco 2005.)

Immigrant women are normally faced by pressures they experience as they adapt and adjust to a new environment. It is for this reason that the situation of women deserves serious attention to ensure that they adapt to the host country's demands and expectations and attempt to fuse together the old and the new ways of life. While all women immigrants face difficulties in adjusting to a new environment not all share the same sort of experiences. There is no universal woman immigrant, refugees, or asylum seeker (Hajduwoski-Ahmed, Khanlou, and Moussa 2008). Race, ethnicity, religion, social class, and level of education privilege some and disadvantage others. (Githens 2013 12). These differences shape their experiences in adapting and adjusting.

Women immigrants' own aspirations are a third force or voice. For them (re)constructing their social identity is highly complicated. First there is early training, which inculcated certain norms. In a new country there are different

demands on their time, energy and allegiances. The majority of immigrant women find work in the low-paying, low skill flexible work force that leaves them little spare time for domestic life. Pressures stemming from government policies and expectations of the community combined with the need to work create serious stress in their everyday lives, in the family relationships, and at work. (Githens 2013, 11.)

2.4 Situation of immigrant women in Finland

According to Liebkind (1994) migration may be a threat for mental well-being if the following risk factors are present. Lack of the language skill of the host country. Immigrants suffer a significant decrease in socio-economic status. They are separated from their family members, they experience hostility or rejection from the surrounding society and lose the social ties with their fellow citizens. They also experience trauma or long-term stress just before migration. (Cited in Hille 2010, 84.)

Once immigrants move to Finland it is a starting point for a long journey from having an address in Finland to feeling at home there. Although migration is a personal experience, it has implications for other family members and the host society. Transnational everyday life is challenging for both the societies in sending and receiving countries and of course for the immigrant herself. Also, to enter the social life of Finland can be challenging. Martikainen & Tiilikainen (2008), there are many circumstances that influence on how well a person adapts to a new culture and a country. Women face more risks in integration than men in general, and there is a danger from the very beginning that especially refugee- and Muslim women are being victimized. It is important to note that different women's own resources and abilities play a role in coping in the process of integrating to the main culture. (Cited in Hille 2010, 97.)

Immigrant women and their situations in Finland can be seen in different perspectives. Some of them are trying to start independent lives, some are single

mothers struggling to raise their children, some of the immigrant women are housewives doing their domestic chores, and others are in the labour market struggling to get a job and are facing the challenge of lack of enough Finnish language skills. Forsander (2002) concluded that Finnish industry in particular employs people from the former Soviet Union. Asians and people from the Mediterranean countries find work in the restaurant industry. Cleaning services also employ immigrants. Immigrants act as buffers in Finnish companies for economic changes because their role is least stable in the company. They are the first ones to be laid off when times are hard but the first ones to be hired when there is a sudden need for workers. (Cited in Hille 2010, 98.)

2.5 Types of immigrant women

Manninen classifies immigrants into three groups: the immigrants in the first group (well-integrated immigrants) have the proficiency of Finnish language are studying or working, have satisfactory social networks, and feel that they can control their lives. Those in the second group try to integrate into the Finnish society. The immigrants in the third group isolate themselves from the community and do not have contacts to the Finnish society and culture. Types of immigrants and their classification in their integration process is presented in Figure 2. (Cömertler 2007, 1.)

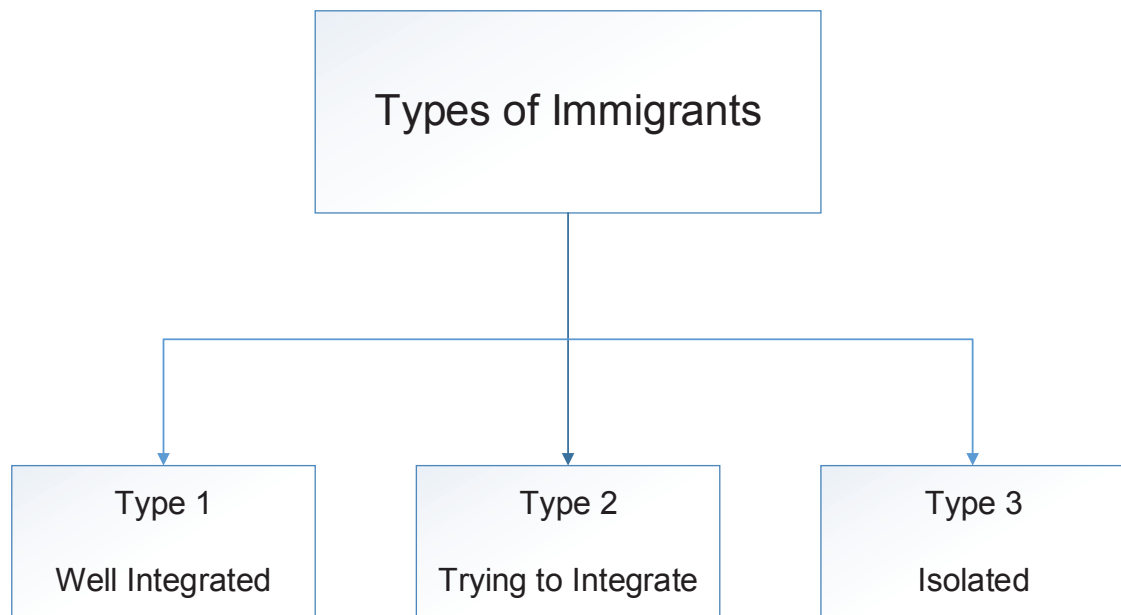


Figure 2. Types of immigrants according to Cömertler (2007).

Women's studies are very important and rapidly developing field of research in Finland (Bergman, 2002; Tuori and Silius, 2002). There are many official studies conducted on immigrants in Finland, even though studies on women immigrants are relatively few. (Cited in Cömertler 2007, 9.)

According Cömertler (2007), the women's educational backgrounds and knowledge of a second language are affecting their success in learning Finnish. They can be more successful if they have lessons with people of similar educational backgrounds. In addition, teaching them the daily language that they need will increase their attention and course attendance. (Cited in Cömertler 2007, 56.)

A significant problem among most of the immigrant women who do not work but, are willing to work is the language. They prefer to set up their own businesses and work for themselves. Immigrant women are facing challenges as well in the labour market, through integration process. For example, women who have the Finnish language skills complain about getting low skilled work with low salary despite of their educational or professional skills. (Cömertler 2007, 56.)

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND PREVIOUS STUDIES

As we enlighten the knowledge about immigration to Finland in the previous chapter, in this chapter we define integration and tackle the integration act, there is description of integration plan and its purpose in the integration process. We also explore how the policies and practices of integration work, and how acquiring the Finnish language skill eases the integration process hence promoting equality. We clarify integration, the aim of integration and give the concept of social integration. Moreover, we explain the dimensions of social integration and the purpose is to promote equality at all levels of the society. Therefore we present the role of language and women in integration process. In the last section, we discuss the language as a tool to integrate and the linguistic status of immigrants.

3.1 Integration

“Integration involves the formation and maintenance of a set of relations in which a person gives and receives effective support and social approval. To say an individual is highly integrated in this sense requires the existence of a social network of ties. Most proximate among those are friendships and affiliations with community organizations, particularly those in which there is face-to-face interaction and a process of identification has taken place”. (Pillemer et al 2000, 8.)

The notion of integration as a two-way process is important and is regarded as an essential element in ensuring sustainable results. Integration is different from assimilation because it concerns both parties: the immigrants and the receiving society. The effect of assimilation would be complete adaptation to the language, behaviour and values of the receiving society, with the consequential loss of the language(s) of origin, whereas in the process of integration both sides, migrants and the receiving country, are open to creating new common

ground for living together, respecting the already formed identity. This gives migrants a chance to make use of resources they bring with them and to expand their identity, acquiring new concepts and a new language; at the same time the receiving country will see migrants as people enriching its linguistic and cultural dimensions. This is a process, which takes a long time and which usually cannot be completed within the first years after arrival. To support this process it is not enough for the receiving country to provide special integration programmes which have to be attended within a very short period following immigration. It is necessary to change and adapt all kinds of public services, housing, admission to the labour market and education programmes to the needs of immigrants, as is pointed out in the second edition of the "Handbook on Integration". (European Commission 2007.)

3.2 Social integration

Social integration can be defined as the inclusion and acceptance of immigrants into the core institutions, relationships and positions of a host society. Integration is an interactive process between immigrants and the host society. For the immigrants, integration means the process of learning a new culture, acquiring rights and obligations, gaining access to positions and social status, building personal relationships with members of the host society and forming a feeling of belonging to, and identification with, that society. For the host society, integration means opening up institutions and granting equal opportunities to immigrants. In this interaction, however, the host society has more power and more prestige. (Bosswick and Heckmann 2006, 11.)

3.2.1 Dimensions of social integration

i) Structural integration

Structural integration means the acquisition of rights and the access to position and status in the core institutions of the host society: the economy and labour

market, education and qualification systems, the housing system, welfare state institutions (including the health system), and full political citizenship. These are 'core' institutions as participation in them determines a person's socioeconomic status and the opportunities and resources available to them, in a modern market society. This structural integration is a process that takes place largely at the urban level. Every society depends upon its material base: hence the centrality of economic institutions in societies, the importance of systems (such as the educational system) that prepares individuals for those institutions, and the role of an individual's socioeconomic position in their social status. To gain a position in society, and play a role in its socioeconomic institutions and systems, each member of society must obtain the required cognitive, cultural and social competences. (Bosswick and Heckmann 2006, 9.)

ii) Cultural integration (Acculturation)

The researcher has pointed out some similarities with research study we are carrying out. Masgoret and Ward (2006) point out that second language proficiency and communication competence are the core of cultural learning approaches, and ultimately of sociocultural adaptation. Language skills are relevant both for performance of daily tasks in new cultural society and establishing interpersonal relationships in the society. Cultural learning approaches assume a direct relationship between language fluency and sociocultural adaptation.

Immigrants can only claim rights and assume positions in their new society if they acquire the core competencies of that culture and society. In this respect, integration refers to an individual's cognitive, behavioural and attitudinal change: this is termed cultural integration (or acculturation). While cultural integration primarily concerns the immigrants and their children and grandchildren, it is also an interactive, mutual process – one that changes the host society, which must learn new ways of relating to immigrants and adapting to their needs. (Bosswick and Heckmann 2006, 10.)

Cultural integration does not necessarily mean that immigrant groups have to give up the culture of their home country: bicultural competencies and personalities are an asset both for the individual and for the host society. For those migrants and their children, however, who arrive with little education (in Europe, at present, a clear majority of immigrants), the degree of biculturalism and bilingualism required for adequate social mobility will be difficult to achieve. Biculturalism and bilingualism that is really semi-biculturalism and semi-bilingualism is not integration and its practice means the loss of a range of opportunities. (Bosswick and Heckmann 2006, 10.)

iii) Interactive integration

Interactive integration means the acceptance and inclusion of immigrants in the primary relationships and social networks of the host society. Indicators of interactive integration include social networks, friendships, partnerships, marriages and membership in voluntary organizations. Certain core elements of cultural integration, particularly communicative competencies, are preconditions for interactive integration. In the first phase of the integration process, interactive integration into the social systems of the ethnic colony is a help to immigrants – through the support and solidarity of relatives and co-ethnics, and through their sharing of information and experiences. In time, however, such integration may hinder the immigrant in creating links with the host society and in acquiring the cultural and social capital necessary for competing in the core institutions of the host country. (Bosswick and Heckmann 2006, 10.)

iv) Identification integration

It is not possible to participate in a host society's core institutions without having first acquired the cultural competencies by which these institutions function. It is, however, possible to participate without *identifying* with the goals of these institutions and without having developed a feeling of belonging to the host society. This feeling of belonging may develop later in the integration process develop as a result of participation and acceptance. Inclusion in a new society on the

subjective level – identification integration – is indicated by feelings of belonging to, and identification with, groups, particularly in ethnic, regional, local and/or national identification. (Bosswick and Heckmann 2006, 10.)

3.3 Legislation

3.3.1 Integration act

The Finnish integration act came into force 1.5.1999. It aims at providing immigrants with knowledge in Finnish, information about the Finnish society and culture and possibilities to education and work. (Act on the Integration of Immigrants and Reception of Asylum Seekers.)

Section 10 of the act talks about integration plan. “Integration plan is a personalized plan drawn up for individual immigrants covering the measures and services under section 7 to promote and support their opportunity to acquire a sufficient command of Finnish or Swedish and other knowledge and skills required in Finnish society and working life, and to promote and support their opportunity to participate in society. The integration plan also takes into account measures and services to promote and support the integration of an immigrant’s family”. (Act on the Integration of Immigrants and Reception of Asylum Seekers.)

The purpose of this Act is to promote the integration, equality and freedom of choice of immigrants through measures which help them to acquire the essential knowledge and skills they need to function in society. The act applies to those immigrants whose residence in Finland is considered to be permanent that they have been entered in the population register. The law states that, during the first three years in the country, newcomers have the possibility to concentrate on studying Finnish or Swedish, to complement their professional skills and to acquire the forms of knowledgeable and abilities needed in Finland. In exchange, immigrants have an obligation to play an active role in trying to obtain employment and training. To this end, integration plan is drawn for them. As

long as an individual follows the agreed plan, his/her livelihood is guaranteed by means of an integration allowance. (Act on the Integration of Immigrants and Reception of Asylum Seekers.)

The purpose of the Integration Act was to make integration more efficient and to give all immigrants equal opportunities. While the Act has modified the situation in principle, practical implementation has been slow. There are few language courses for immigrants that are arranged as employment training and the queues for courses are very long (Latomaa, 2002). As Matinheikki-Kokko and Pitkänen (2002) point out, the new law focuses on the changes and cooperation at the administrative level rather than on actual changes in the educational practices. Moreover, the current situation in immigrant education is as a result of the market-based arrangements developed in the 1990s that have produced high variability in educational practices rather than a coherent training system. (Kaplan & Baldauf 2005, 166).

The European Social Charter includes an element of the integration policies developed during the last decades:

Article 19 stresses the necessity „to promote and facilitate the teaching of the national language of the receiving state ...” (19.11) and „to promote and facilitate, as far as practicable, the teaching of the migrant worker’s mother tongue to the children of the migrant worker“(19.12). This position is also articulated in the European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers.

In the last century based on research as well as on political agreements there existed a kind of European consensus as far as integration policy was concerned which could be summarised as follows:

- Integration into the host country requires special provision to enable migrants and their families to learn the language of the host country.
- Integration into the host country implies an adjustment of the legal, social and economic conditions under which migrants live at the moment of arrival to the standards of the host country.

- Integration includes respect for the languages and cultures of origin of migrants and makes it necessary to develop educational offers to maintain these.
- Integration is an opportunity for the receiving society to use the presence of migrants and their families as an opportunity for a cultural opening and enhancement.

European countries have of course implemented such principles in extremely different ways. The teaching of the mother tongue, for example, was mainly offered in order to facilitate the return of migrants to their countries of origin, not primarily because of the human rights aspects. (Hans-Jurgen & Verena 2008, 71.)

3.4 Language as a tool to integrate

Learning the language is the first and the most important action taken by any immigrant to be the part of the host society. It is a very significant way for an incomer to interact and socialise with the natives of the new society. According to Östman, Verschueren & Jaspers, as people interact they develop and display both tacit and explicit knowledge of patterns of interaction that pertain to certain settings and to certain type of activities. (Östman, Verschueren & Jaspers 2010, 116.)

According to Jaspers, Östman and Verschueren, Contact is an important factor in language use, language maintenance, language variation and language change. There is a cliché in linguistics that language is a living thing. But a moment's thought make it clear that it is the user who gives language life. Language grows as the user grows; it varies and changes as the user varies and changes; it also dies as the user dies. Language contact is therefore the contact between users of different languages. It is said that people use different languages or they come into contact with each other because of different reasons.

Some of them are forced by the circumstances or some of them communicate according to their own wishes. (Östman, Verschueren & Jaspers 2010, 127.)

3.5 Language courses offered, process and organization

Language plays an important role in order to integrate in the host society. It is a way to communicate and to interact with the natives of the host society.

The Finnish language courses are offered by the municipalities and other educational institutes. The language certificates have three levels: basic level, intermediate level and advanced level. Basic level is intended for those who can use the language in day-to-day situations. Intermediate level is intended for those who can use the language fairly well. Advanced level is for those who have an excellent grasp of the language. The certificate of language proficiency focuses on the following: text comprehension, writing, grammar and vocabulary, speech comprehension and speech. For an immigrant to be enrolled in the Finnish language course he has to apply to the employment and economic development office. Applicant should explain his grounds to apply for the course. Employment and economic development will make decision for the Finnish course. (Infopankki.)

3.6 The linguistic status of migrants

From the perspective of the receiving society there is a danger that migrants may be considered as “speechless”, because they are not able to use the language(s) of that country. However migrants are just as able to communicate as other people, perhaps in different languages. Many migrants are able to use more than one language because they come from countries which are multilingual (such as African, Asian or the Balkan countries) or because in their process of migration they have had contacts with other languages. And because of their personal experiences of multilingualism many of them are much more aware of linguistic issues, of similarities or differences between languages and

of the different communication contexts existing. But even if they are not plurilingual by origin, migrants start to get bilingual or plurilingual due to their language contacts with the society of the receiving country in the course of the migration process. How their plurilingualism develops in the context of integration depends on various factors, which are as follows: psychosocial situation, opportunities for language learning, quality of the language contact in respect of linguistic complexity and affective level, future options and so forth. As far as second language acquisition research in migration contexts has taken place we can say that the language identity of migrants is very complex for several reasons: the language shift they experience due to their migration and their language biographies are influenced by the linguistic situation and language policy in the countries of origin. So we can say that language habits and language capital, the attitudes towards language and at least towards language learning of the receiving society is determined by very different factors which cannot be brought into a simple relation. (Hans-Jurgen & Verena, 2008.)

So for example in some (rare) cases where bilingual migrants have been part of minorities, they want to leave a certain language behind upon leaving their country of origin, because it is connected with violence and persecutions of an oppressing power. In most cases however migrants see their first languages as an essential element of their personal identity, an essential link to their own personal, religious and cultural origin, to their parents and to other members of their families and as the only bond to an essential part of their lives they had to leave behind. It may be that their languages represent the only factor of stability in their otherwise insecure lives. (Hans-Jurgen & Verena, 2008).

For most people, the first language belongs to the kernel of their identity – it is the language in which they started to realise themselves as persons (personal identity), as members of a family and social group (social identity), and in which they developed values important for their lives (cultural/ religious identity). The more people have to leave behind, the more important their first language is. It is often the only stable element in their lives. This is one of the reasons why the

right to use one's mother tongue is one of the fundamental human rights. (Hans-Jurgen & Verena, 2008).

From a psycholinguistic point of view it is also very important to emphasise that the mother tongue is also a very important basis for learning any other language successfully – for children as well as for adults. In acquiring the first language one develops important cognitive competences as well which can be used successfully when learning a second language. This means for children that if the acquisition of the L1 is interrupted too early, then the acquisition of a second language cannot build on a solid fundament. Jim Cummins (1984) summarizes these insights in this “developmental interdependence hypothesis” which argues that an interrupted development of L1 (especially if children do not learn to read and write their first language) is a negative indicator for the development of bilingualism. It is therefore not enough that an oral usage of L1 is maintained. Cummins (1979) differentiates between the basic interaction communication skills which migrants usually adopt very quickly also in a second language, and the cognitive academic language proficiency, i.e. more complex ways of communicating (including reading and writing), where a successful development in L2 depends to a large extent on a corresponding competence in L1. (Hans-Jurgen & Verena, 2008.)

Katharina Brizić (2007) shows through her research that there is an intergenerational transfer of linguistic capital at work: parents who lived in a stable L1 context (e.g. had an opportunity to learn their language properly at school) will create better linguistic conditions for their children in all languages than those parents who themselves could not develop their L1 properly (like, for example, speakers of Kurdish in Turkey). There is an impact of the first language on second language acquisition for adult learners too. It is empirically verified that in their learning strategies adult language learners make more or less conscious use of comparing language structures and therefore the first and other languages spoken by learners need to be taken into consideration in the learning process of the second language. There are observations that learners who already speak several languages are highly aware of language usage and there-

fore are supposed to be “good language learners”. (cf. Hufeisen/Fouser 2005.) Discussing second language acquisition of adult language learners in the context of migration and integration there is some evidence that socio-psychological factors are as important as psycholinguistic developments. Research on adult migrant women in Canada (Norton 2000) shows that the status of migrants in the receiving society, especially the loss of power and social opportunities, has impact on their learning-process. Adult migrants face a fundamental change in their lives due to migration. They lose their familiar surroundings, networks and their social roles. This may represent an opportunity for some individuals, but in most cases it means a loss (in status, in income etc.). They face a lack of social acceptance, the experience of social decline, discrimination and racism in the new society. (Hans-Jurgen & Verena, 2008.)

The linguistic status of migrants may be described as that of people with a plurilingual and pluricultural identity, living under legal and social constraints, contradictions and very often also facing economic problems. It seems to be obvious that questions of language therefore can neither be observed and analysed nor be treated in isolation, because all these dimensions and factors are interrelated.

a) 20th century: European consensus on integration policies

The consequences of the growing mobility, especially of the free movement of workers in Europe, have been discussed already for over 50 years in international organisations; at the same time educationalists and linguists have undertaken research and developed models as far as the implications for the educational system are concerned. (Hans-Jurgen & Verena, 2008.)

The council of Europe has so far always been a driving force in the discussion of these issues and in developing integration policies. It claimed early on that migrant workers should be employed under the same social and financial condi-

tions as native workers. In several resolutions and recommendations the council of Europe invites member Governments to make greater efforts to enable all migrant workers to learn the language of the reception country” [Resolution (68)18] and “to develop their mother tongues both as educational and cultural instruments and in order to maintain and improve their links with their culture of origin [Recommendation R (82) 18]. This latter Recommendation quotes (par. 10):

b) Language learning by migrants and their families

1. To promote the provision of adequate facilities for migrant workers and the members of their families:

2. To acquire sufficient knowledge of the language of the host community for them to play an active part in the working, political and social life of that community, and in particular to enable the children of migrants to acquire a proper education and to prepare them for the transition from full-time education to work;

3. To develop their mother tongues both as educational and cultural instruments and in order to maintain and improve their links with their culture of origin.

4. To promote the introduction and development of appropriate initial and further training programmes for teachers of languages to migrants, leading to recognised qualifications.

5. To participate in the development of language programmes involving cooperation between authorities or other bodies representing the host community, the migrant community and the country of origin, especially with regard to the production of teaching materials, teacher training and mother tongue development. (Hans-Jurgen & Verena, 2008.)

3.7 Literature review

Delander et al has evaluated on the role of language proficiency and experience. He evaluated a Swedish pilot scheme that targeted immigrants with weak Swedish-language skills registered as unemployed at public employment offices. The research is similar but our focus is the role of learning Finnish language among immigrant women in the integration process. (Delander et al, 2004).

Tubergen and Wierenga examined the language acquisition of male immigrants in a multilingual destination. Turks and Moroccans in Belgium. The aim was to determinants of immigrant's second-language proficiency in the multilingual context of Belgium. The research is similar in that second-language skills are higher among immigrants who followed a language course, and who intend to stay in Belgium. (Tubergen & Wierenga, 2011).

Fast, Kröger and Yoshizumi (2010) have written a wider scope on integration of women in the Finnish society. A lot of emphasis has been put on the empowerment of women through different activities which the women chose themselves. The main focus has been on the activities that will generate an atmosphere where immigrant women would improve their Finnish language skills. (Fast, Kröger and Yoshizumi 2010).

According to many studies on immigration, learning Finnish is often seen as the most important factor in the success of the integration, hence our emphasis is on the role of learning the Finnish language among immigrant women in the integration process. The research should be studied in order to strengthen the policies of the integration hence improve the well-being of immigrant women.

In chapter 3, the idea of social integration gives the base for the meaning of integration. This supports the important elements of learning the language among immigrant women in the integration process are structural, acculturation, interactive and identification integration.

3.8 Community development perspective

Community is about the experience of belonging. We are in community each time we find a place where we belong, to belong is to be related to and a part of something. It is the opposite of thinking that wherever I am, I would be off somewhere else to belong to a community is to act as a creator and co-owner of that community. The work then, is to seek in our communities a wider and deeper sense of emotional ownership; it means fostering among all of a community's citizens a sense of ownership and accountability". (Block, 2008).

Community work focuses on organization of those adversely affected by the decisions, or non-decisions, of public and private bodies and by more general structural characteristics of society. The strategy aims to promote collective action to challenge existing socio-political and economics structures and processes, to explore and explain the power realities of people's situations and through this twin pronged approach, develop both critical perspectives of the status quo and alternative bases of power and action. Community development emphasizes self-help, mutual support, the building up of neighbourhood integration, the development of neighbourhood capacities for problem solving and self-representation, and the promotion of collective action to bring a community's preferences to the attention of political decision-makers. (Meenai 1964, 27.)

Community organization involves the collaboration of separate community or welfare agencies with or without the additional participation of statutory authorities, in the promotion of joint initiatives. Service extension is a strategy which seeks to extend agency operations and services by making them more relevant and accessible. This includes extending services into the community, giving these services and the staff who are responsible for them, a physical presence in a neighbourhood. (Meenai 1964, 28.)

This study is going to help to strengthen the policies for the immigrants who are in the integration process. We hope that the policy actors are going to use a different approach and ensure that there is active participation of the immigrants

in the integration policy making. They should adopt a bottom up approach and ensure that the opinions of the immigrants are heard. It is our belief that this study will enable the municipalities to have more institutions that offer the Finnish language courses as there are very few. This will ensure that there are no long queues and ensure that the immigrant women who lack the Finnish language skills are not marginalized and their well-being is put into consideration hence not feel excluded in the society.

4 METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, we introduce the qualitative research method applied, we explain on how we collected data and the data collection process, the interviewing process is also described. We explain the description of the participants, data analysis process and the method used in transcribing the data, limitations encountered, ethic consideration and finally discuss the validity of the research.

4.1 Qualitative research

The qualitative research method was applied in this research. Denzin and Lincoln (2003, 3) claim that, "qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them".

4.2 Data collection

The research was done by use of interviews. Denzen and Lincoln (2008, 118-119) view interviewing as one of the most important common and powerful ways in which we try to understand our fellow humans. Interviewing includes a wide variety of forms and a multiplicity of uses. The most common form of interviewing involves individual, face-to-face verbal interchange, but interviewing can also take the form of face-to-face group interchange and telephone surveys. It can be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured. Interviewing can be used for marketing research, political opinion polling, therapeutic reasons, or academic analysis. It can be used for the purpose of measurement, or its scope can be the understanding of individual or a group perspective. An interview can be a one-time brief exchange, such as 5 minutes over the telephone, or it can take place over multiple lengthy sessions, at times spanning days as in life history interviewing.

We conducted semi-structured interviews by collecting data based on the research question on the role of the Finnish language skills among the immigrant women as part of integration process in Finland. The idea of doing interview based research is to acquire the knowledge of different experiences and perspectives of a certain group of people for example, women, minorities of specialized workers (Have 2004, 7).

4.2.1 Data collection process

The target group and the focus of this study are immigrant women living in Finland. The aim of the study was to describe the role of learning the Finnish language in the integration process among immigrant women. In the research, we conducted individual interviews by use of semi-structured interview questions focusing on the research question as the theme also being covered. Semi-structured interviews are conversations initiated by the interviewer for the purpose of obtaining information (Cohen & Manin, 1994, 271). According to Warren, (2001, 83) interviews are essential because they enable the researcher to understand the interviewees viewpoint, on certain issues and most importantly his emotion on the topic.

Our plan was to interview six to eight women, but after conducting five interviews, we reached the saturation point where we acknowledged that there is no need of conducting more interviews. According to Ranjit Kumar (2005, 165) in qualitative research, there is a need to reach a certain point, in terms of your findings to find out the variation, known as saturation point. This is a researcher's decision that he realizes that if there is repetition of data, or no new information is obtained.

“Semi-structured interviews combine the flexibility of unstructured, open ended interviews with the directionality and agenda of the survey instrument, to produce focused qualitative, textual data at the factor level. The questions on the semi-structured interview guide are performulated, but the answers to those questions are open-ended, they can be fully expanded to the discretion of the in-

terviewer and the interviewee, and can be enhanced by the probes.” (Stephen et al, 149.)

The reason that we used the semi structured interviews was that, the interviewees were more confident and comfortable with informal discussions and we let the themes emerge from the common discussions with the participants. We had long and open discussions with the participants which was more comfortable for the both parties.

4.3 Interviewing process and description of participants

The interviews were conducted in Autumn 2013 in various places due to the different schedules of the participants.

Participants are immigrant women who have lived in Finland for more than two years. They migrated to Finland due to various reasons, and have been in the integration path where they have learnt intensive Finnish language course for at least nine months. The background of the immigrant women differs from one another in terms of education, family and life situations in Finland. Some of them were staying at home with their children while others were working and studying. They range from ages thirty to forty years old and already have families in Finland. The time they have been to Finland varies from two to thirty years. (Participant 1-5.) The interview questions were formulated in English due to our own comfort in addressing the topic in English, and also because the immigrant women understand English very well.

Interviews were done at various places such as, homes, library, cafeteria where they felt comfortable. The environment was quiet which enable us to record hence producing good results and very clear sound.

The first interview was done in a library, the participant choose the place since it was near her place of work. The place was also very calm and was less crowded which enabled the interview to be recorded without any interruption. The re-

ording was very clear while we were transcribing. The second interview was done at a cafeteria as participant suggested it is convenient for her due to her busy schedule after work. The interview took place at a relaxed mood while taking coffee. The third interview was done at home of the participant since she wanted to have a rest due to her busy schedule. The fourth interview agreed to be interviewed at home because she works during the day and it was easy for her to be at home at the same time with the family. The atmosphere was very calm and quiet at the same time we were having coffee. The fifth interview wanted to be interviewed at home because during the day she attends the Finnish language course. The environment was noisy as the children were playing, but the participant tried to calm down the children and the interview was successful as her answers were direct to the point. All the interviews took about 30-45 minutes. Some of the interviews were to the point, while others were conversational. The interviews were tape recorded in order to capture all the information and were later transcribed into data and were analyzed through thematic analysis.

4.4 Data analysis

Thematic analysis is the method used in analyzing the interviews. Data analysis is a technique of methodologically examining interview feedbacks, field notes, and other research items gathered to help a researcher to understand them and be able to present them to others. Analysis includes working with research information, arranging them into small parts, blending them, looking out for differences, noting the important lessons and making decision of what others should learn from the process. (Bodgan & Biklen 1992, 153.)

Thematic analysis is the form of analysis that is used in the research since it analyses the participants talk about their experiences. Thematic analysis is a method that comprises the main issues or themes arising in a body of evidence. Thematic analysis provides a means of organizing and summarizing the find-

ings from a large diverse body of research. It can handle qualitative and quantitative findings. (Pope, Mays & Popay, 2007, 96.)

4.4.1 Data analysis process

We used the tape recording method to collect the data from the interviews. This was important in order to remember every single word spoken by the participants. After collecting the data by conducting semi-structured interviews, we came up with certain themes. Therefore, we decided to use thematic analysis method in order to transcribe the collected data.

Immediately after the interviews, we started transcribing by listening to the interviews several times in order to become familiar with the data and its contents and allowing the themes to emerge. We listened to all the recorded interviews and made some written text. The interviews lasted for about 45 minutes each. We attended fully to what the speaker was saying by focusing wholly on what was being said. The data obtained from the interviews was about 12 pages. The outcome was reliable and valid since both of us transcribed all the data and analyzed the content of the interviews. By both of us being present while transcribing helped us to discuss all the content and we were able to note down most important data into a summary.

Transcribing involves creating a verbatim text of each interview by writing out each question and response using the audio recording. The interviewer's side notes should also be included in the transcription, and properly labeled in a separate column or category. (Guion et al, 2011.)

4.5 Limitation

Time limitation resulted in getting only five women for the study. We had to make appointments with the participants within a short period of time and due to their busy schedule, there was a delay for it was on a short notice. Participants

were postponing our meeting since they were busy with their family and work commitments.

Another limitation was the research available on the integration and Finnish language among immigrant women was in Finnish language which posed a challenge to the researchers.

4.6 Ethical considerations and validity

Good scientific practice (National Advisory Board on Research Ethics, 2002) requires that researchers follow the general principles accepted by the scientific community. This means honesty, accuracy and diligence while planning the research, in collecting the data, analyzing it and reporting the results. One ought to practice transparency throughout the research process. Other researchers' scientific achievements are to be presented respectfully and credit to them should be fairly given. For the non-medical human sciences (National Advisory Board on Research Ethics, 2009) there are three ethical ground rules: to respect the research participants' right of self-determination, refrain causing any harm for them and to provide anonymity for the research participants in a way that they are not recognizable. (Hille, 2010, 67.)

Ethical considerations are very crucial in any research work. Before conducting the interviews, we explained the purpose and the content of our research to the immigrant women and participation was only voluntary and where it will be published. We assured confidentiality and anonymity of the research. We also informed them that they will be recorded in order to get their consent before undertaking the interviews. We also ensured that the interview will be taken from their places of choice to ensure they are comfortable.

Codes of ethics insist on safeguards to protect people's identities, and those of the research locations. Confidentiality must be assured as the primary safeguard against unwanted exposure. All personal data ought to be secured or

concealed and made public only behind a shield of anonymity. Professional etiquette uniformly concurs that no one deserves harm or embarrassment as a result of insensitive research practices. (Denzin & Lincoln 2005, 145.)

Informed consent means that individuals participating in a research study have a responsible expectation that they will be informed of the nature of the study and may choose whether or not to participate. They also have a reasonable expectation that they will not be coerced into participation. (Aurelius, 55-56.)

At any point the women felt uncomfortable by answering any of the questions, we ensured them that they do not have to answer and continue with the discussion.

'Validity' is another word for truth (Silverman 2005, 10). The interviews were done putting into focus the research question and ensuring questions were direct to the point and clear to ensure the participants answered the questions with adequate answers.

According to Shadish, Cook and Campbell (2002), it is a primary task of researchers to demonstrate that their findings, and thus the methods through which they were collected, have validity that is, that they support the interpretations or inferences that are being made. They argue that the concepts of validity and invalidity "refer to the best available approximation to the truth or falsity of propositions, including propositions about cause". (Cited in Berry et al 2011, 277.)

5 RESEARCH FINDINGS

As stated earlier, learning the language is the first and the most important action taken by any immigrant to be the part of the host society. In this research we try to find out how learning the Finnish language has helped women to integrate better. In order to find out this we interviewed five women. In this chapter we tell about the results of our thematic analysis. The themes that emerged from the data were acquisition of Finnish language skills, educational and economical change, networking and interacting, social inclusion and participation, acculturation and social identification. We look at each of the themes separately.

5.1 Acquisition of Finnish language skill

There is a certain level of Finnish language each participant has attained, and participants also discussed how they attained the language through everyday interaction. They also explained how the language taught in class differs from the Finnish language spoken on daily basis.

“I can say that my level is intermediary, but you cannot say that you have learnt everything, because learning the Finnish language is a process, and especially to an adult, and every day I am learning something new”. (Participant 1).

“I learnt Finnish language in a funny way, I went to live in the northern part of Finland and nobody spoke English to me, so I had to learn even the northern dialect. After moving to Helsinki, I also learnt the southern dialect. Even nowadays I still use the northern dialect”. (Participant 3).

Participant 4 responded the same that:

“I have been learning the Finnish language in Helsingin Aikuisopisto and in the everyday events and I can say that I always improve my Finnish language, so, this language is a continuous process. One cannot just learn in two, three, or five months and say you have learnt everything”.

“There is a difference in the Finnish language taught in class and the spoken Finnish. In class I learnt the formal Finnish and in everyday experiences I also learnt the spoken Finnish since it is the mostly spoken especially by the young people. So, I can speak the formal Finnish taught in class, and at the same time the slang which is spoken mostly by the young people. I can apply my language skill depending on the situation”. Participant (5).

Based on the interviews, successful integration is achieved through Finnish language acquisition. Immigrant women knowledge of a foreign language, and especially after the intensive Finnish course, they were able to read, write and speak in Finnish. Acquisition of a foreign language helps the immigrant women to communicate and integrate with the local community.

The findings indicate that immigrant women language proficiency helped them to understand the Finnish language better. It also shows that learning a foreign language needs interest and practice. There are also different modes of learning a foreign language, formal and informal. Formal where you learn in a classroom environment and informal where you learn through daily encounters. They also had the same feeling that learning the Finnish language is an ongoing process. Learning local language helps immigrants to communicate and integrate with the local community. Learning experience and personal interest of people enables them to be skilled and more efficient in language proficiency. The ideas of the participants were quite similar.

Delander et al has similar idea that with traditional language instruction on how teachers are the most proficient speakers. Learners have considerable expo-

sure to the inter-language of other learners and how they combine the language taught in the classroom with the learning in a natural setting. This creates opportunities for interactions between learners and native speakers. (Delander et al 2004, 25.)

The foreign language skills of immigrants play a key role in their position in the labour market (Shields and Price 2002), in the social contacts they maintain with the native population (Stevens and Swicegood 1987), and in the language acquisition of their children. (Alba et al. 2002 cited in Tubergen and Wierenga, 2011).

5.2 Educational and Economical change

By learning the foreign language, an immigrant can access to the quality of education in diverse fields which leads to improvement of their well-being. Also knowledge of a foreign language increases the chances of immigrants acquiring jobs.

Employment is one of indicator of integration. Immigrant women are now contributing to the labour market. Acquisition of professional skills among immigrants is indicated by their good knowledge of Finnish language. Immigrants are able to study different courses in Finnish in either in college or university. Participants expressed on how they have been able to achieve various professional skills.

Participants described how they are able to acquire jobs in different sectors. Participant 1 narrated on how it was difficult for her to change her job due to lack of Finnish language skills.

“I am telling you without the Finnish language, you cannot get the job that you want, I was only working as a cleaner, which was very difficult for me, but after learning some Finnish, I got another job”

Participant 3 explained how she got a job after completing her nursing course.

“I am lucky that after finishing my first Finnish language course, I continued with the integration program since I wanted to further my studies. I was able to apply for a course in nursing and got accepted. After completing my studies, I was able to secure a job, now I am a nurse. Before I could not get employment since in Finland for one to get employed, one must at least have some Finnish qualifications”.

Work involves regular contact with the natives, being able to talk to them in their own language helps communication to be easier.

“Since I started working, I can say that my Finnish has improved, before I was very shy to talk because my Finnish was not very good, and at home I could speak my native language. Now at work I talk with clients and my colleagues very well”. (Participant 4).

According to the participant’s arguments, we can easily see that Finnish language has an impact on immigrant women’s well-being, there is a positive change towards life, a good command of Finnish language results to opportunities to get jobs in various working fields. Learning foreign language gives immigrants access to acquiring professional skills, and also contributing to the labour market.

It should be kept in mind that immigrants have an important function in the labour markets of settlement societies. The majority of immigrants belong to the labour force in the country of settlement, making them important actors in national economies. In a globalized world, contemporary labour markets and economies are becoming increasingly interconnected. These processes features centrally in economic theories of migration and are presented as a facilitating force in the movement of people across borders. (Valtonen 2008, 2.)

5.3 Networking and Interacting

Networks are very important in the early stages of integration. Networks can help people in need to connect with the right people. They also provide a way for immigrants to connect with their peers and share the knowledge. This build-

ing of relationship with people is a good thing as they help the community's well-being. They help in cooperation among members, learning and sharing of information, provide peer support. How people behave and communicate towards each other through the daily interaction, beliefs, values, interests etc. The participants had different experiences on how they were able to find social networks.

According to the interviews it can be seen that language is a tool to interact and communicate with people. Learning the local language helps to communicate and integrate with the local people. Finnish people are so antisocial with immigrants but there can be several reasons. One of the main reasons can be the lack of Language skills, cultural differences among others.

Participant 3 expressed:

“I was feeling myself socially excluded when I could not communicate with the Finnish people. They are so quiet. But after knowing Finnish, I could communicate with them. Also through various organizations for immigrants, I also made friends with the other fellow immigrants who act as tutors for the newcomers”.

Interaction with the natives on regular basis and family members is influenced by the knowledge of the language. Participant 2 was describing how it was difficult for her to socialize with the family members and how to behave whenever they went to visit them.

‘I can now be able to communicate with my in-laws, before I used to keep quiet which made me feel out of place. I am now happy I have improved my communication skills.’

Participant 5 explained that,

“After learning basic Finnish, I tried to communicate with people in Finnish language. Gradually I started making friends in class with the fellow immigrants. This language helped me to find friends very easily”.

If family, in-laws or friends speak a different language, learning that language will help to communicate with them. It is also a way of knowing their culture and way of thinking.

According to the participant 3, language skills made her able to connect with natives. Therefore, she has great opportunity to learn the new culture and to interact with the natives. Similar research done by Ward and Kennedy (1999, 56) indicates that good language proficiency is argued to be associated with the increase interaction with the members of new culture and a decrease in socio-cultural maladaptation.

Similar results found in Valtonen (1999) states that, in ethnic groups, informal structures have developed spontaneously many years before formal organization. Individuals and families find circles gradually as people find out with whom they can get along, and with whom they cannot. When the circumstances of flight are still fresh, the question of 'trust' is uppermost.

5.4 Social inclusion and participation

For a successful integration, it is important for the members of the community to be active members in the activities that improve on their well-being and be part of the change.

Participant 2 stated that,

“Finnish language skill builds the confidence in women, which empower them to take major steps in their life”

According to Alan Twelvetrees (2008) a healthy society needs active participation of its citizens-imposed solutions to problem without the involvement of their supposed beneficiaries just don't work well enough. Citizen participation is also vital as a means of holding politicians and policy makers to account. He further states that, without the assistance, many attempts by people to engage in col-

lective action and other forms of participation and influence fail, especially in 'excluded' communities (Twelvetrees 2008, 2.)

Participant 3 said that:

"I feel empowered by using the Finnish language skills; I can now participate in various social activities"

Learning a foreign language creates opportunities for interactions between learners and native speakers. This enhances the immigrants social skills which builds their confidence and improves their well-being. Delander et al (2004, 25) approves that teaching of the dominant language for immigrants is not a goal itself but an instrument to attain something that is important for the integration process, such as to create opportunities for individuals to support themselves and to participate in social life.

Participant complained about the slow process of getting into the integration plan which demotivates them and this makes them feel excluded.

For one to be included in the society, it comes along with a feeling of exclusion. The integration plan is a process, and in order for immigrants to be in the plan, there comes some challenges, for instance, immigrants are put in a waiting list which can last for a long time which turns out to be devastating. The municipalities have few Finnish language courses and immigrants are put in the same Finnish language course regardless of their professional background.

"Sometimes the integration plan can be discouraging because of the long waiting queues, and there is a mixture of skilled and unskilled immigrants which makes integration process slow". (Participant 5).

According to the above mentioned explanation of the participants, a useful tool to evaluate policy effects and monitor integration process should be a two way. Immigrant's opinion should also be taken into consideration both in the local and national level to improve the integration policies.

5.5 Acculturation

Participants stated how life changed drastically while adapting the Finnish culture. Participants explained also how they face challenges and it has been difficult for them to adjust with the changes of life, and to maintain their psychological well-being.

Participant 1 explained that:

“In order to learn the ways of life of the destination place, you learn the local language, you get also to learn the culture of the people which is regarded as an important factor”. In a way you feel like you are also forgetting your own culture.

While the participant 3 argued that,

“Though it is important to learn the new culture, we should not forget our own culture as well. Because I am having some cultural shocks by living here. I am a Muslim by religion for instance women shaking hands with men and sauna system is totally new for me. Definitely I agree that we must learn the positive things, which can really have an impact on our lives”.

One participant was concerned with retaining her son’s cultural values and norms. Along with learning the host culture, it is important also for the immigrants to maintain their culture as well.

“I am trying very hard for my son not to forget our native language, I always speak to him as it is important so that he can communicate with my family back home. But he is forgetting and is worrying me”. (Participant 4).

According to the different views of the participants about the same question explains that, acculturation is an important factor of integration but coping with the new culture comes with its challenges. As Sam & Berry puts it, in addition to adjust to two cultural systems (as part of their acculturation), immigrant women, and in particular mothers, have the added responsibility of helping children deal with adjusting to two or more cultures, including the values of their own ethnic

group, and those of the society of settlements. For instance, mothers try to support their children in the learning of their heritage language, as well as training them the national language. It is the responsibility of a woman to build social support networks of a wide variety be they at home or abroad. (Sam & Berry 2006, 410.)

The phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultures patterns of either or both group. Under this definition acculturation is to be distinguished from cultural change, of which it is but one aspect, and assimilation, which is at times a phase of acculturation. (Redfield, Linton and Herskovits 1936, 149-152.)

According to Sam & Berry (2006) “acculturation” points to outward “contact between two cultural groups” as a prerequisite to change. However, with psychological acculturation where changes may include personal characteristic such as values, attitudes and identity, it is not always easy to identify the origin of the change, or whether the change is indeed acculturation. All human beings undergo ontogenetic development and this may entail changes in identity or behavior development. In essence it may not be easy to distinguish psychological acculturation from ontogenetic development (Sam & Berry 2006, 16.)

5.6 Social identification

Social identification can be referred to the process of locating oneself, or another person, within a system of social categorization, or as a noun to any social categorization used by a person to define him or her-self and others. (Henri Tajfel, 972).

Participant 2 and 3 expressed how they feel accepted in the dominant society.

“I can now feel that I have a sense of belonging. I have learnt the Finnish culture, the shared values; I feel a sense of commitment

here. This makes me feel accepted by the community. Most of the times I do Finnish stuffs, I have Finnish friends, which makes feel me part of this society”. (Participant 2).

“Language is the key to open the doors as I feel much confident being part of the Finnish society. Now I can really define my identity and needs I want in my life. I have a Finnish passport, I feel the society has embraced me”. (Participant 3).

According to participant 2 and 3, they have a positive attitude towards the Finnish society as they feel that they are being embraced. Also by acquiring the citizenship, this shows that someone has a sense of belonging. They have their social relations and with the power of language they are building their self-confidence. Similar results found in Sam & Berry’s research work that, in regard to identity, positive psychological outcomes for immigrants tend to be related to a strong identification with both their ethnic group and the larger society. (Sam & Berry 2006, 84).

6 CONCLUSION

In this section we give the summary of the research and how it is related to the working life. We highlight on the other previous researches that have been done.

One important aspect of integration is learning the language which creates opportunities for immigrants. Learning the language of the host country is crucial as it integrates the immigrants into the labour market. Language acquisition helps the immigrants in conversational interactions. Integration leads immigrants towards participation of various societal activities. It also enhances the immigrant women's confidence, motivation, and promotes positive attitudes towards the society hence improving their well-being.

Integration plan is bridging the gap between immigrants and natives of the host society. It is helping the immigrants and natives to learn each other's culture. There is adaptation, tolerance and acceptance through the acquisition of language and integration.

Some participants complained about the slow process of the integration. Integration plan emerges with challenges as it tends to be a slow process since immigrants have to wait for long queues in order for them to be enrolled into the Finnish language courses. The municipalities have a big role to play in order to ensure that there are enough Finnish language courses for immigrants in order to avoid them being excluded from the society. The long wait results to many immigrants being socially excluded hence affecting their well-being. It also emerged that for the integration process to be complete, immigrant women bear the burden of the long wait which can be very frustrating which results to a feeling of neglect and suffer from marginalization.

“When I was put in the integration plan, I waited for one year to enroll in the Finnish course. This was frustrating and it made me feel like an outsider from the society”. (Participant 5).

In the Finnish language class, we were mixed with people who had no reading or writing skills, this was confusing". (Participant 1).

There should be a difference in the integration process depending on the literacy level of the immigrants. There should be a mechanism of classifying immigrants depending on their literacy level rather than putting them into the same group of Finnish language courses. For instance, people with professional skills should be enrolled in a different Finnish language course than people without skills. The findings are useful in ensuring that the immigrant voice is heard in the development of integration process. Integration actors should consider immigrants perspectives on the integration policies and know whether they are effective.

Additionally, this study presents community development work with a very new idea and as a wide topic for professionals. Community workers should motivate and encourage the women to participate in the integration program in order to be the active contributors of the host society. But it is a continuous and long process. Similar research conducted by Ledwith (2011, 51) indicates that, community development is a mutual process. It begins in everyday lives, understanding histories, cultures and values, and listening to hopes and concerns as the beginning of the process of empowerment and change.

This research ensures that women's voices and opinions are heard and able to make changes in the policies. Through greater participation of women in social development, they can challenge assumptions and concepts that influence public policy decision making and encourage more inclusive and equitable public policy.

More emphasis should not only focus on the integration of immigrants, there should be strong efforts that ensure that integration is across the board, working with both the immigrants and the broader community can be a positive initiative. We cannot refute that immigration is increasing, so managing integration should also start with the recognition that immigrants are capable of making long term contributions to the host country.

6.1 Further research ideas

The research should be developed by involving the policy makers, professionals, and language teachers. There should be a bridge between the policy makers and the immigrant in order to make policies that meet the needs of the immigrants rather than posing policies. A useful tool to evaluate policy effects and monitor integration process should be a two way. Immigrant's opinion should be taken into consideration both in the local and national level to improve the integration policies. A bottom up approach should be applied for a smooth integration process.

6.2 Professional development

Professional development is defined as those processes and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills and attitudes of educators so that they might, in turn, improve the learning of students. (Guskey 2000, 16.)

Professional learning comes to impact on student learning. This is a strong beginning and sets the base and challenges to the researchers as well. This enables the researcher to widen their knowledge on their research work and relate it to practical. In this study we have gained some experiences and this has also come along with its challenges. During our previous studies, while doing the assignments we applied the knowledge acquired. Conducting a wide research was our very first experience. It was a wonderful idea to do it as a pair and work as a team. This helped us a lot to improve our professional skills as well and reflect on the group work processes. We learnt quite a lot from each other working as a team and this gave us new ideas. This study has deepened our knowledge on qualitative research methods, semi- structured interviews and thematic analysis. We had to work on all these processes appropriately. Ethical consideration was also important during the whole process. Building trust with the participants was crucial as it enabled us to interview them which created a good rapport.

One of the main challenges was time management and to fix the appointments to meet three days a week because of our different working schedule. We developed the skill to organize the team work and to divide the tasks equally. We got to know that the negligence of one of us can affect our research work. Time management was also essential and we had to be punctual with our schedule.

After doing this research we are more capable and confident in taking initiatives. We have improved our self-determination and the skill to work on our own as well as a team. We have learnt how important it is to attain the language skills of a destination country which entails the economic and social aspect among immigrants. This study has also made us identify the challenges immigrant women face in a new society.

This research also enabled us to work with a diverse group and we were able to understand and use concepts of identity and culture. We learnt that there should be mutual respect for other people's different backgrounds, being tolerant towards other people as human beings, celebrating one another as we need each other, allowing other people have their own opinions, and trust towards each other among others. Diversity represents all the ways that we are different and society cannot do one at the expense of another. As professionals, we should value diversity by acknowledging the benefits of the members of a community as much as we have things in common as well as differences. These differences bring new ideas, innovations, and different rich culture in the society. By sharing these differences, we work to build sustainable relationships among people and institution with diversities.

Professional development of Anne:

This research process was my good learning experience. Carrying out the research was interesting and challenging but it was worthwhile. I have a deeper understanding on how to conduct a qualitative research by use of semi-structured interviews. I also developed further a better understanding of migration, language and integration and policies. I also learnt the importance of the

acquisition of the host society's language which is a pathway to economic success and social integration among migrants. I am also aware about how the topic of integration and immigration is widely studied.

During the process, I developed interpersonal skills like communication skills, listening skills which I applied while conducting and analyzing the interviews, problem solving whenever there was any difficulty, I sought for a solution and decision making in all the processes of the research. I also developed personal organization skills by planning on the research, arranging on where and what time to meet with participants while conducting the interviews, and meeting the deadlines which assured of a productive and a successful research work.

The research participants have a diverse background. Working with people from different backgrounds enables one to have cultural awareness, and tolerance and ability to interact with people. I learnt that trust, tolerance and confidentiality are important aspects in creating cultural safe zones. In a cultural safe zone people are respectful towards other cultures.

In the process I have faced some challenges, for instance, from planning, timing, implementing, getting the literature review and matching with the findings but this has developed and this confirms that I can cope with the life's challenges like working in a challenging environment.

Professional development of Nazish:

During this research process I have gained a valuable experience in the field of immigrant women, their integration and challenges. After conducting this research I came to know that how vast, significant and broad topic is this. This study has opened my views about immigrant women and how they are trying to cope to be the part of this society. This research has significance in raising the women's voices and their opinions to be considered. This is the field I would definitely like to work in the future. Being an immigrant myself, I can feel their emotional and mental states of their minds.

Time management was so hard for me because of our different work schedule. We tried to manage it so well. We have been meeting three times in a week in the library for maximum eight hours. I have learnt to be punctual with time. Furthermore, I have improved my skills to hold big tasks like this research work. I feel myself able to work under pressure and in different life situations. This process has been full of challenges over all. But I have tried my best to overcome on all those challenges. I was so motivated to conduct this research. As a result I have improved my skills in working with immigrant women as a way to empower them and to give them an emotional support. This is the part of community development work and well-being of the women.

During the whole process of our thesis I applied the tools learnt during my studies, for instance, data analysis methods, observations and put them into practice. I now have a deeper understanding and a wider viewpoint.

7 REFERENCES

- Act on the Integration of Immigrants and Reception of Asylum Seekers. <http://www.finlex.fi/en/laki/kaannokset/1999/en19990493.pdf> Accessed 15.12.2013
- Aurelius, Markus. Ethical Issues in Qualitative Research. 51-67 Sage Publications. http://www.uk.sagepub.com/upm-data/27011_4.pdf Accessed 20.1.2014
- Berry, W. John, Poortinga H. Ype, Breugelmans M. Seger, Chasiotis Athanasios & Sam L. David. (eds) 2011. Cross-Cultural Psychology. Research and Applications. Cambridge University Press, UK.
- Bodgan, Robert. S, & Biklen, Sari, K. 1992. Qualitative Research for Education. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Bosswick, W., Heckmann F., 2006. Integration of migrants: Contribution of local and regional authorities. University of Bamberg, Germany. <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/pubdocs/2006/22/en/1/ef0622en.pdf> Accessed 10.2.2014.
- Boyd, E & Grieco E 2005. Women and migration. Incorporating Gender into International Migration Theory, Migration Policy Institute, Migration Information Source. Accessed 3.12.2013
- Boyd Monica & Greico Elizabeth. 2003. Women and Migration. Incorporating Gender into International Migration Theory. <http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?id=106> Accessed 19.3.2014.

- Carmon N. 1996. Immigration and Integration in post- industrial societies. Theoretical Analysis and Policy. Related Research. Macmillan Press Ltd. London.
- Cohen, L. & Manin L, 1994. Research Methods in Education (4th ed.), London: Routledge.
- Cömertler Necmiye. 2007. Integration of Turkish Immigrant Women in Finland into Finnish Society. University of Tampere. Finland.
- Delander, Lennart, Hammarstedt, Mats, Månsson, Jonas & Nyberg Erik. 2004. Integration of Immigrants: The Role of Language Proficiency and Experience. Sage Publication.
- Denzin N. & Lincoln Y. (eds.) 2000. Handbook of Qualitative Research. London: Sage Publication Inc.
- Denzin N. & Lincoln Y. (eds.) 2005. The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research. Sage Publication Inc. Carlifornia, USA.
- Denzin N. & Lincoln Y. (eds.) 2008. Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials. Sage Publication, London.
- Fast, M. Kröger, M. Yoshizumi P. 2010. Empowering Immigrant Women through the Neighborhood Café. Laurea University of Applied Sciences Otaniemi, Espoo.
- Githens, Marianne 2013. Contested Voices. Women Immigrants in Today's World. Pulgrave Macmillan, New York, USA.
- Gold, J., Stevens & Nawyn, J., Stephanie 2013. The Routledge International Handbook of Migration Studies. Routledge.

Guskey R. Thomas 2000. Evaluating Professional Development. Sage Publications.USA.

<http://www.google.fi/books?hl=fi&lr=&id=CklqX4zgDtgC&oi=fnd&pg=PR9&dq=professional+development&ots=gR9xID7Cdv&sig=8Gn09aTVSLe4b8gzSwwX3DrfEpc>

Hans-Jurgen Krumm & Verena Plutzer, 2008, the Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants. Tailoring Language Provision and Requirements to the Needs and Capacities of Adult Migrants. University of Vienna.

Haralambos, Michael & Holborn, Martin 2004. Sociology. Themes and Perspectives. Sixth Edition. Collins, London UK.

Have, 2004. Understanding Qualitative Research and Ethnomenography. Sage Publication Ltd, London.

Henri Tajfel, 1972. Social Identity and Intergroup Relations, Cambridge University Press, UK.

Hille-Janhonen-Abuquah (2010). Gone with the Wind? Immigrant Women and Transnational Everyday Life in Finland. University of Helsinki, Finland.

<https://helda.helsinki.fi/bitstream/handle/10138/20059/gonewith.pdf?sequence=2>. Accessed 18.3.2014.

Immigration Act. http://www.migri.fi/information_elsewhere/integration. Accessed 28.5.2012

Infopankki. Living in Finland. <http://www.infopankki.fi/en/living-in-finland/education/other-study-opportunities/labour-market-training>. Accessed 28.3.2014

- Jasinskaja-Lahti, Inga, Liebkind, Karmela & Vesala, Timo 2002: Racism and Discrimination Finland. Immigrants' Experiences. Gaudeamus: Helsinki.
- Jaspers, Jürgen, Östman Jan-Ola, Verschueren Jef. 2010, Society and Language Use. Handbook of Pragmatics Highlights. John Benjamins Publications.
- Joensuu, T. & Rustanius, M. 2005. Power of peer support: Experiences from the Finnish Refugee Council Backed by-project 2003-2005. Forssa: Forssa Printing.
- Kaplan, Robert B. Baldauf, Richard B. 2005. Language Planning and Policy in Europe, Volume 1 : Finland, Hungary and Sweden. Multilingual Matters Publishers. Clevedon, GBR
- Kothari, C.R. 2004. Research Methodology – Methods and Techniques. Second Revised Edition. New Age International Publishers, New Delhi, India.
- Kumar, Ranjit 2005. Research Methodology. A step-by-step Guide for Beginners. Sage Publications Ltd, London.
- LA Guion, DC Diehl, D McDonald. 2011. Qualitative Research. Conducting an in-depth interview. University of Florida, USA. <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fy393>. Accessed 22.3.2014
- Ledwith Margaret. 2011. Community Development. A Critical Approach. The Policy Press, Great Britain.
- Masgoret, A. –M., and Gardner, R, C. (2003). Attitudes, Motivation, and second language learning: A meta-analysis of studies conducted by Gardner and associates. Language learning, 53, 167-211.

- McRoy, R., Grotevant, H., & Zurcher, L. (1988). Emotional disturbance in adopted adolescents: Origins and development. New York: Praeger. http://www2.uncp.edu/home/marson/qualitative_research.html. Accessed 2.1.2014.
- Meenai Zubair 1964. Participatory Community Work. D.K. Agencies (P) Ltd. India.
- Pillemer Karl, Moen Phyllis, Wethington Elaine, Glasgow Nina 2000. Social Integration in the Second Half of Life. John Hopkins Universtiy Press. Baltimore, Maryland.
- Pope, Catherine; Mays, Nick and Popay, Jennie 2007. Synthesising Qualitative and Quantitative Health Research. A Guide to Method. Buckingham, Open University Press.
- Redfield, R., Linton, R., and Herskovits, M. J. (1936). Memorandum on the study of Acculturation. American Anthropologist.
- Salmenhaara, Perttu, 2002: Immigrants, ethnic minorities and the labor market. A research report. League for Human Rights.
- Sam L. David & Berry W. John. 2006. The Cambridge Handbook of Acculturation Psychology. Cambridge University Press. UK.
- Schiff, M, Morrison, A., R. & Sjöblom Mirja (2007). International Migration of Women. World Bank Publications, Herndon, VA, USA.
- Schiff, Özden, Çağlar. 2005. International Migration, Remittances, and the Brain Drain. World Bank Publications, Washington, DC, USA.
- Silverman, David 2005. Doing Qualitative Research. Sage Publication Ltd. London.

- Steinar Kvale 1996. Interviews. An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing. Sage Publications, California, USA.
- Stephen L. Schensul Jean J, Schensul Margaret D, LeCompte, 1999 Essential Ethnographic methods. Altamira Press. UK.
- Triandafyllidou, Anna Gropas, Ruby (2008). European Immigration. A Sourcebook. London. Ashgate Publishing Group.
- Tubergen and Wierenga, 2011. The Language Acquisition of Male Immigrants In a Multilingual Destination: Turks and Moroccans in Belgium. Routledge Taylor & Francis group pp.1039-1057
- Vainio, R. 2009. Immigrant family cultural changes often through the pain. Helsingin Sanomat. 02/17/2009.
- Valtonen, Kathleen 1999. 'Integration of Refugees in Finland in the 1990s.' Ministry of Labor, Helsinki.
- Valtonen, Kathleen 2008. Social Work and Migration. Immigrant and Refugees Settlement and Integration. Ashgate Publishing Ltd. England.
- Viktorija, R- Lysty 2012. Scaffolding Adult Immigrant Students in an EFL Lesson. Master's Thesis. University of Jyväskylä. Accessed 26.11.2013.
https://jyx.jyu.fi/dspace/bitstream/handle/123456789/40039/URN_NBN_fi_jyu-201210192732.pdf?sequence=6
- Ward, C., and Kennedy, A., (1999). The measurement of sociocultural adaptation. International journal of intercultural relations, 56, 1-19.
- Warren, A.B. 2001. Qualitative Interviewing. In Gabrium, Jaber F & Holstein, James A. 2001. Handbook of Interviewing Research. Context and Methods. Sage Publications, USA.

8 APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- ❖ What are the opportunities you have acquired with the knowledge of Finnish language skills through the integration program?
- ❖ What kind of challenges did you face while learning the Finnish language?
- ❖ How has the Finnish language skill shaped your sense of identity?
- ❖ What supported your integration process?
- ❖ In your opinion, what can be done to improve the integration process of the immigrant women?
- ❖ What do you think about the integration programs offered in your area? (e.g. language courses, cultural etc).