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LANGUAGE USE AND FEELINGS OF CONFIDENCE OF RUSSIAN WOMEN
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Abstract

The aim of this study is to explore the implications of language use and linguistic confidence that influence the construction of an individual's identity and sense of belonging. Hence, the aim is to look for the links between the language use, feelings of confidence and identity, based on the interviews of six women of Russian origin living in Finland.

The motivation for this study is based on the researcher's personal interest and experiences. The thematic choice of this work was inspired by daily communication with Russian speakers in Finland and observations of a variety of perceptions of identity that were manifest in these speakers' language use. The background of the study is presented in an overview of the history of Russian speakers in Finland, but also by examining the current situation. The theoretical framework encompasses several themes related to language and communication, examined from a multilingual perspective, such as bi- and multilingualism, communicative competence, linguistic confidence and self-perceived confidence, language group membership, identity in linguistic anthropology and cross-cultural adaptation.

The data was acquired through six interviews of the research participants whose profile matched the outlined criteria for the study. Those criteria included knowledge of Finnish and Russian languages, as well as duration of stay in Finland not less than 5 years. The age group of participants is between 20 and 30 years. The interviews were conducted in person or via Internet (using Skype) and recorded, then transcribed and translated into English. The participants' experiences of issues related to their language use of Finnish, Russian and English, social attitudes and self-assessed identity were analysed using phenomenographic research method, which allowed exploring personalised insights concerning the ways that confidence in language use affects identity of an individual. The results based on the analysis are structured in several major themes and illustrated with quotes from the data. These themes include the research participants' perceptions of their use of different languages, sources of their feelings of confidence, perceptions of their own identity in terms of culture and ethnicity and finally, some further findings that emerged during the actual research process. All the themes were further divided in several sub-themes.

The research process produced knowledge about Russian women's use of different languages and about their perceptions of their own identities as well as about their views of the cultures that they feel they belong to. The events from the past have formed the realities these women live in and affected the attitudes they have towards language, culture and identity. All in all, findings of this research offer a glance into the lives of Russian-speaking women in modern Finland seen through the eyes of the six research participants.

Keywords identity, language use, confidence, phenomenographic research

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1 INTRODUCTION

This Master's thesis explores the implications of language use and linguistic confidence that influence construction of identity of a multilingual individual. The thematic choice of this work has been inspired by daily communications with Russian speakers in Finland and observation of a variety of perceptions of identity that were translated through their language use. These stories, emerging from their everyday life, were collected and analysed using the phenomenographic analysis research method that allowed to provide personalised insights in terms of the ways that confidence in language use affects identity of an individual.

The theme of this research is closely connected to researcher's personal experience - in 2005 I moved to Northern Finland to study in the University of Applied Sciences. I was not alone in this adventure - and it surely felt like one: I was a little over 18 years old, I have not been travelling abroad a lot before and I did not speak any Finnish - which, given the geographical location of my first Finnish educational institution, has provided some challenges in communication outside the educational environment. It is well-known that Finns usually have good English skills - by 2013, only 10% of the population did not speak any English (Helsinki Times, 2013), but the threshold for speaking is also very high, which was especially noticeable in 2005 at the town where I was studying. I remember having a small talk in German with a lady at the local bus stop at that time. My command of German was quite poor, and besides the positive emotions from that conversation, I also remember the sense of something very close to embarrassment that I felt for not being able to share my thoughts fully and properly with another participant of this communication. This episode, amongst some other similar episodes from my experience, indicated to me that the trigger for a fruitful communication itself was there - but it was lacking proper tools. The importance of learning Finnish started to become very obvious to me - and so it was for many other Russian-speaking individuals that I met during my stay in Finland.

This claim is also supported by the opinion of the Russian minority representatives - for example, it has been mentioned during the panel discussion on the topic of modern challenges of the Finnish Russian speakers (Suomen Venäjänkielisten Ajankohtaiset Haasteet) held by the Minority Rights Group Finnish Chamber of the Alexander Institute in 2015 that I visited. Amongst some other challenges that are mentioned further in this thesis, it was underlined that the need to speak fluent Finnish is one of the important aspects of the fruitful

integration. Naturally, a good command of the residence country's language often means a comfortable daily life there - including broader prospects for the employment and the vaster opportunities to create social connections, compared to the ones that would be provided by the use of some other language - like Russian or English (it is useful to note, though, that both of those languages also have rather broad application in Finland). Since the ability to create social connections had been traditionally important for the representatives of the Russian community, the positive perspectives of learning Finnish are clearly obvious to majority of the Russian-speakers in Finland - and many of them do speak Finnish at the fairly good level.

For a little over 10 years that I have been residing in Finland, in every town that I lived or visited I was able to get acquainted with Russian-speaking people. Usually, the conversations led to the language skills discussions - a lot of people that I met have already lived in Finland for a lengthy period of time, and in many cases their command of Finnish was on rather high level. Yet, the above-mentioned feeling of "something close to embarrassment", shyness or lack of confidence in the Finnish language use had been mentioned by many companions. In many cases, such feelings were interpolated to the use of Russian as well - from my personal experience, the majority of the acquaintances that had lived here for a lengthy period of time had expressed the similar feelings towards their skills in Russian. The fact that this feelings were not interpolated to the use of English (with those individuals who also could speak English) has sparked the idea that this feelings might be caused not only by the individual's self-appraisal of their language skills, but might somehow be linked to the individual's perception of own identity. This has become one of the reasons for choosing to study this topic further.

As it will be described in more detail in the theoretical framework chapter, it has been argued that language can be perceived both as an instrument for communication as well as an essential indicator of social identity on a variety of levels of human interaction. Moreover, in the field of linguistic anthropology (an interdisciplinary field of science that is examining the influence of the language to the social life) the language is perceived as a source for production of culture and, hence, identity. This provides a basis for the inquiry for a connection between the perception of own identity of an individual and their language confidence, which, in turn, may be determined by a combination of individual's self-appraisal of own communicative competence, individual's perception of the language group that is influenced

by the societal attitudes towards that group and the perception of the biculturalism that is determined by the bi- or multilingualism and the background of that person.

This thesis examines the emotional aspects of the ways that the research participants handle their languages and their attitudes towards the languages that they command. At the same time, this thesis explores to what extent the language of a certain group and the levels of attitudes towards the group (both by the individual language group member and the society) become the moving power for the individual's decision of either rejecting or adopting the language while pursuing positive identity. Based on the above-mentioned presuppositions, this research aims to provide an overview of the phenomenon of feelings of belonging in terms of language use, while looking for any links between the language use, confidence and identity implications based on the interviews of six female Finnish speakers of Russian origin who belong to the age group from 20 to 30 years old. The main research question of this thesis is:

Is there a connection between feeling of confidence in the language use and identity construction of the female Finnish speakers of Russian origin who have lived in Finland for a lengthy period of time?

Specifically, what are their experiences in terms of the influence of their feeling of confidence to their language use, and how are the implications of those experiences interpolated to their identity?

Another additional question that arose during the research process comprises the theme of language use and identity and include the following:

Does the current environment of research participants provide background for the lack of feeling of confidence, or, on the contrary, improves that confidence?

This research is not primarily aiming to provide results in terms of general connection between the language use and the construction of identity. That topic has been widely researched by many prominent scholars - which is also reflected in the theoretical part of this thesis. Rather, the main starting point for this research is to provide an overview of the experiences of six female Finnish speakers of Russian origin, demonstrating the processes that flow within those concepts from a personal perspectives of the research participants. This thesis is oriented to provide a portrayal of a specific situation in a specific context that might

offer some insights for the awareness of the current situation in terms of language and identity of the specific gender and age group.

Based on the overview of the Russian speaking population in Finland that is provided in the next chapter, it is possible to claim that the nature of this population segment is rather heterogeneous, which implements certain challenges for any generalisation, even in terms of a very limited gender and age group sample. That implication has influenced the choice of the research method, which was based on the initial idea of conduction of the qualitative research that would allow to omit the necessity of dealing with large amounts of numerical data, which, in a way, depersonalises research participants. Without belittling the importance of the quantitative research in this field, which had been conducted by a number of prominent researchers including Jasinskaja-Lahti, Iskanius, Protassova and others, this thesis uses the qualitative research method as it aims to contribute to the field by exploring the confidence in language use and implications for identity based on the six personal stories of the research participants. In a way, this work voices the challenges and opportunities which those women faced during their stay in Finland, and, hopefully, provides a path for others to get acquainted with the modern reality of those representatives of the Russian linguistic minority in Finland based on their unique lived experiences.

The second chapter of this work includes the information on the important aspects of the context of the research, including the socio-historical background and stages of the migration processes from Russia to Finland, the structure and the nature of Russian minority in Finland, certain challenges of attitudes towards the Russian language speakers that were induced by several socio-historical events and the fluctuating transformation of those attitudes in the current times. Further on, the theoretical framework that supports the topic is exhibited in the third chapter. It includes the definitions and overviews of such concepts as communicative competence, linguistic confidence, bi- and multilingualism and language groups, identity construction within the contexts of language, society and acculturation. The fourth chapter consists of the description of approaches that were used for this research, and includes the overview of phenomenography and its research methods. The fifth chapter includes the description of data collection and the analysis process, and the findings are presented in the sixth chapter. The seventh chapter is devoted to discussion of the results, whereas the research validity, reliability and ethical considerations are provided in the eight chapter. The conclusion is presented in the ninth chapter.

2 GENERAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

An important aspect of the context this study is that there is a long history of Russians living in Finland with a complex and diverse development in terms of population, migration, cultural and socio-political spheres. This chapter provides an overview of the Russian community in Finland by briefly describing the historical-political processes that lay behind the three major Russian immigration waves to Finland, the heterogeneity of the Russian-speaking population, and the issues that are connected to the use and the promotion of the Russian language.

2.1 The three waves of Russians moving to Finland

In general, the North-West region of Russia has always been a contact area for Russians and Finns - justified by the geographic location and a variety of historical and political processes. In the past epochs, such political and historical processes were the major influencing factors that triggered the immigration of Russians to Finland - and some of them were connected with very negative personal experiences in the sorrowful context of military activities, repressions, loss of relatives, friends and habitual environment. In the context of the state policy during the Soviet era, the immigration could have meant a one-way ticket to the individuals, which, in all fairness, could have had an influential impact on the mind set of those individuals. But not every instance of the immigration had been connected with negative emotions - the three major waves of Russian immigration to the Finnish territories were providing opportunities for migration on various grounds.

The first wave has begun during the period of 1809-1917 when Finland was an autonomous part of the Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire. Such situation has prompted immigration - but the “face” of a Russian immigrant during that times was mostly associated with a set of very ambulatory professions and other occupations such as soldiers, merchants, royal officials, civil servants, Orthodox priests and also tourists. The nature of their residency has been perceived as either temporary or permanent - thus, until the late 1930s the Russians were not generally regarded as an ethnic minority in Finland (Koivukangas, 2002). Yet, the modern Finnish language retains traces of that era in the form of well-integrated borrowings from the Russian language.

The second wave of immigration has been prompted by the declaration of independence of Finland on 6th December 1917 - especially during the post-revolutionary period of 1920s when refugees after the Bolshevik revolution fled to Finland. In 1922, Finland has observed the peak of post-revolutionary Russian presence: about 33 500 former Russian citizens (at that time counting the 1.1% of the population) arrived to Finland. Their faith yielded very differently - more than two thirds of those individuals have soon immigrated to other countries - primarily to France or to the United States. A fair number of those Russians who stayed in Finland has married with Finns and sometimes with Swedes (Protassova, 2008).

In between the second and third immigration waves, the Finnish population has started to become more and more involved in the relations with the Russians. During the Presidency of U. K. Kekkonen in 1956-1981 the so-called "Finlandisation" policy has emerged - the term was coined in West German political debate of the late 1960s and 1970s and referred to the decision of a country not to challenge a more powerful neighbour in foreign politics, while maintaining national sovereignty. Many Finns were working in the USSR, so new families between Finns and Russians started, settling to reside in Finland. The amount of Russian women greatly exceeded the amount of Russian men that moved to Finland for the family reason. In 1950-1960s a lot of Finns returned to Finland, in many cases not only being very fluent in Russian, but having Russian-speaking children as well (Protassova, 2008).

The third major immigration wave happened after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, as Ingrian Finns re-migrated to Finland. In 1990, Finnish President Mauno Koivisto issues a decree, according to which Ingrian-Finns may be considered as "returnees". In 1993 it has been reflected in the Finnish Law. (Prindiville, 2015, p.137). And in 1996 the unregulated flow of returnees was limited by the law, which specified the criteria for the Finnish origin. (Prindiville, 2015, p.42). Later on, a queue system was introduced, which assumed that the applicants would provide the evidence of rather good knowledge of the Finnish language. This has been partly substantiated by the fact that during the Soviet Era, many Ingrian-Finns had to undertake Russian as a language of communication in public due to the repression threats - besides, Finnish schools and churches on the Soviet territory was closed (Protassova, 2008). At the start of the repatriation of the Ingrian-Finns it was expected that the repatriates will be Finns and people who speak Finnish. In practice, the immigrants who were born in the Soviet Union in 1950-60-ies, had rather little amount of contact with the Finnish culture and history. Depending on the environment of socialisation, many of them

consider themselves to be primarily Russian or Estonian. Their children's perception of Finnishness was limited to the knowledge of their Finnish roots, childhood stories about Finland, or presence of a grandparent who spoke Ingrian dialect (Iskanius, 2002). Another factor that had influenced the increase of the amount of Russian immigrants at that era was in part caused by the intense reformation of the Russian political system during the late 1980s - early 1990s. During that timeline, the population of the modern Russia received an opportunity to move through the borders much easier than it was in the years of former political regiments. In 1993 the article on freedom of entry and exit for the entire population has been enacted in the Constitution. (Constitution of the Russian Federation, Article 27). The number of Russian immigrants moving to Finland began to grow, as an unstable economic situation and uncertainty about the future were forcing the former Soviet citizens to emigrate. (Iskanius, 2002).

Finally, in the past few decades a large number of the “New-Russian” immigrants had merged to the “Old-Russian” minority (as the immigrants of the timeline that precedes the World War II are referred to). (Protassova, 2008). At the moment, the total of Russian population of Finland has exceeded 1% of the total population. The Russians are present and are obviously very visible in the socio-cultural landscape of Finland, e.g. in the end of 2012 the Finnish government has announced the creation of the Cultura Foundation, which aim is to provide support for Russian culture. (Yle.Fi, 2012). This Foundation begun operation in the beginning of 2013. The peculiarities of the Finnish Russians’ language and their identity and attitudes had been vastly researched, for example, by Baschmakoff, Jasinskaja-Lahti, Harjula, Iskanius, Leinonen, Ovchinnikova, Protassova and others.

Popula- tion	Year	1900	1950	1990	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
	Unit									
Total	1000	2656	4030	4998	5181	5375	5401	5427	5451	5472
Russian	%	0,29	0,12	0,08	0,54	1,01	1,08	1,15	1,22	1,27

Table 1. Population structure of Finland by Statistics Finland (2011)

According to Statistics Finland (2011) agency (see Table 1), Russian speakers are by far the largest group of foreign language speakers in Finland, where individuals who speak other

than Finnish, Swedish or Sami language as a native language are regarded as foreign language speakers. By 2010, the amount of Russian speakers has reached 55,000 - roughly a one-fourth of the whole number of foreign language speaking residents. About 75% of the foreign language speakers live in the area of 17 municipalities - in this context, the population distribution is quite uneven - and so is the general situation in Finland, where about a half of the total population resides in four biggest municipalities - Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa and Tampere. Helsinki, being a capital, hosts the largest share of foreign-language speakers. In many other Finnish municipalities foreign-language speakers are still quite rare (Statistics Finland, 2016a). That could, in a way, have some implications on the ways that the inhabitants of those areas perceive the foreign-language speakers.

2.2 Russian speakers in Finland today

At present, the economic and cultural influence of the Russian-speaking community living in Finland is increasing. A number of municipalities put forward a proposal to introduce teaching of the Russian language instead of Swedish in their schools, though in some predominantly Swedish-speaking areas (due to the Swedish rule from the 12th to the early 19th century) children with Russian as a native language have to study Swedish as well (Protassova, 2008). The Russian-speaking community have their own newspapers and radio stations, thematic evenings and excursions designed for people of all ages; there is a fair amount of free-time clubs that are organised for children and youngsters, and several Russian day-care centres, especially in the southern municipalities. According to Sanna Iskanius, such language circles not only facilitate the process of adaptation for the immigrants by providing the network of acquaintances, but as well conceal some dangers - mostly in the limitations of the social circle that they create. When the communication sphere is limited to a group of people who speak their own language, it might be more complicated to establish contact with the Finns (Iskanius, 2002). However, a lot of Russian immigrants identify the preservation of the Russian language among children as a priority (Yle.fi, 2013). The state also recognises and supports the importance of maintaining Russian as a mother tongue on the governmental level. (Protassova, 2008). Teaching Russian as a heritage language has been researched vastly by Ekaterina Protassova, Sirkka Laihiala-Kankainen, Olga Milovidova, Tatjana Rynkänen, and others.

The promotion of the Russian language in Finland has its own benefits in the cross-border economic, professional, cultural and personal relations due to the long shared border between the neighbouring states. The historical legacy of both countries, though, as well as the heterogeneousness of the Russian-speaking population was presenting some challenges. Before World War II, rather intense bias and prejudice against Russians and the language itself was present in Finland (Protassova, 2008). The echoes of an eventful common past has left its mark on the attitude of the Finns towards the Russian-speaking minority. This situation has been improving gradually - the positive shift in the mind set of population in the context of perceiving individuals of Russian origin has taken its turn, which could be also illustrated by the comparison of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance [ECRI] reports on Finland. In this reports, Russian-speaking minority is regarded as one of the vulnerable groups in terms of the prejudice and discrimination. In its third report, published in 2007, ECRI has noted that the Russian-speaking minority has been facing “*racist bullying and harassment in schools*” and that the “*Russian-speakers have been the targets of violence*”. (ECRI, 2007). However, the report of 2013 stated that “*bullying of pupils of Russian background in Finnish schools appears to have decreased*” and that the number of racist crimes has declined. (ECRI, 2013). The most common problem that the members of Russian linguistic minority were facing, according to the ECRI report of 2013 is the discrimination in the field of employment, as well as the recognition of the foreign qualification.(ECRI, 2013). Such implications, as mentioned earlier in the Introduction chapter of this thesis, may have some effect on the creation and maintenance of the national identity of the research participants.

Another important aspect is the gender of the research participants. Before moving further it is necessary to clarify the use of the term “gender” in reference to the sex of the research participants in the context of this thesis. According to the general definition of the concept of sex, it refers to a person’s biological status and is typically categorised as male, female, or intersex (i.e., atypical combinations of features that usually distinguish male from female) Gender, on the other hand, refers to the attitudes, feelings, and behaviours that a given culture associates with a person’s biological sex (American Psychological Association [APA], 2011). In terms of this research, this particular aspect of attitudes and feelings were in the spotlight of interest. All the research participants expressed gender-normative behaviour (compatible with cultural expectations). The gender identity was not directly discussed during the interviews in the context of this research, yet the theme of the interviews was clearly

focused on female stories. Without undermining the importance of the male stories in this field of academic enquiry, this study is concentrated on the female perspective.

The reason for bringing the female stories into the spotlight includes several roots of origin. It is partly defined by the disproportion of the amount of females and males of Russian origin in the Finnish population (see Table 2), where the amount of females of the age group of 20 to 30 exceeds the amount of males. (Statistics Finland, 2016b). This situation was emerging since the early 1950s - as mentioned earlier, many Russian women married Finnish men starting from that time, and this tendency is continuing. Many Russian children moved to Finland as the result of those marriages, which could also illustrate the importance of the portrayal of a Russian woman as a mother, before anything else, whose important mission is to nurture and raise children. In the context of the country of origin females tend to be perceived as the “keepers of the hearth”. Bestowing of the traditional family values and cultural heritage, including language, often lays on women’s’ shoulders. Another reason for looking at the female stories is, sadly as it is, proposed by the cases of discrimination on gender basis, which, while being widely confronted and contended with, still continue to instantiate in both Russia and Finland. This has some impact on the confidence of females of Russian origin, the consequences of which this thesis examines briefly.

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Males	346	429	699	998	1313	1636
Females	498	571	885	1201	1561	1972

Table 2. The gender of the Finnish population segment of Russian origin aged 20-30 (Statistics Finland, 2016b)

The age group of participants were chosen to be from 20 to 30 years old. While there are obviously some differences in the way the participants of the younger part of this age group would perceive the world (due to the variety of technological and socio-political processes that were undergoing at the moment of their personal maturity) the time gap of 10 years seems to be moderately small. Besides, the majority of the participants’ age difference did not exceed 5 years, which had placed them in approximately similar context. The differences in the participants’ Finnish residence backgrounds resulted in an even proportion, where three of them have moved to Finland as children and three other ones moved here as adolescents or young adults.

The topic of this research is very personal to me - I am a female Russian Finnish speaker who had lived in Finland for a lengthy period of time, belongs to a variety of social circles in terms of languages, and has relatives both in Russia and Finland. My position as a researcher also includes some implications in terms of the quest of forming own identity. My background holds the danger of a potential to affect the objectivity during the process of analysis, yet at the same time it also offers a possibility to examine this topic from the inside of the context.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK - LANGUAGE AND CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY IN A MULTILINGUAL CONTEXT

3.1 A multilingual perspective on language and communication

Human communication can be perceived from a theoretical perspective as a “*process of sending and receiving messages that serve to transmit information between persons or groups*”. (McLaughlin, 1998, p.4). Thus, it requires a speaker, a context and a listener. The speaker and a listener are self-explanatory actors - clearly, without anyone to transfer or to receive a piece of information, it cannot be passed. The context includes a certain setting in which the communication takes place (time, place, way of transfer, relationships between the actors, etc.) - thus it is an influential factor that determines the choice of a speaker to use a certain type and style of communication, a fitting “tool” for a certain situation. In this context, it is possible to draw a parallel with a person picking an instrument from a toolbox in order to hammer a nail - knowing that certain tools are used for certain applications, this person will most likely pick the hammer - however, if there is no hammer, or the hammer is broken, some heavy instrument like a wrench might work as well, given that the following requirements are fulfilled: a) the person is confident that this “substitute” tool has potential to have the job done and b) if that person is confident that they are able to use this tool. The linguistic confidence of a speaker in a certain language could provide some implications for picking the proper “tool” that one knows how to use. It is useful to note here that such instrumental approach is not the only way of perception of a language - for example, as referred by Grosjean, Haugen (1956) discusses the duality of the nature of a language being both instrumental and symbolic. (Grosjean, 1982, p.117). At the same time, Joan Kelly Hall (2011) sees the language as a resource for production of cultural aspect of identity.

Often viewed as an instrument for communication, the language could be examined from the group membership perspective as well - when a language becomes an indicator of individual's belonging to a certain group. Such group identification also has a certain potential for providing an impact on an individual's choice of a language for the certain context. The language choice is determined by the action that this “tool” has to perform, as well as a “label” that this symbol conveys to the other participants of this information exchange process, which becomes very visible in the multilingual setting especially (Grosjean, 1982).

The following chapters will explore further the mechanisms that affect individual's choice on choosing a certain language for a certain context, as well as the implications of the language choice on the process of identity construction. Due to the context of the research, the theoretical literature review starts with the exploration of the nature of concepts of bilingualism and multilingualism on the individual and societal levels.

3.1.1 Complex nature of bilingualism

Bilingualism and multilingualism are often studied both as an individual and societal phenomenon. On the individual level the focus for the examination is placed on the ways how the languages are acquired, how the languages are represented in mind of an individual, and how they are used in the process of communication. On the societal level, the following dimensions of languages are explored: the role and the status of a language in given society, the attitudes towards those languages and language group members, the reasons that determine the language choice and the symbolic and practical application of languages in question (Baleghizadeh, 2008).

Bi- and multilingualism is present in most of the places in the world, in all classes of the society and in all the age groups. According to François Grosjean, more than half of the world's population uses two or more languages, including dialects, daily. (Grosjean, 1982, p.1). He also argues that bilingualism as a phenomenon had existed basically from the origination of language in the whole history of human civilisation. The languages themselves often are the living proof of the historical instances of bilingualism - some of them exhibit its consequences in the form of, e.g. language borrowings, existence of pidgins. (Grosjean, 1982, p.41).

Grosjean identifies the factors that determine the origins of multilingualism in a country as quite varied - including the occasions of military conquests, crusades and colonisation, nationalism and political federalism, border zones, education and culture, industrialisation, urbanisation, religion and intermarriage. (Grosjean, 1982, p.30). As described by Sasan Baleghizadeh, Ralph Fasold (1984) establishes four major reasons for the origin of the societal bilingualism as migration, imperialism, federation and border areas. (Baleghizadeh, 2008). In that classification migration is divided into two types, which include the territorial expansion of a large group that take control over small sociocultural groups that live there, and the other one includes the migration of a small ethnic group into a territory that is under

control of another nationality. **Migration** of a large group tend to produce the two following phenomena: linguistic assimilation of a part of the native group and the maintenance of the own nationality of the smaller group. **Imperialism** as a reason for societal bi- or multilingualism is divided into three subtypes that include colonisation (a small group of people from controlling nationality takes charge of a new area by moving there), annexation (absorption and seizure of a smaller country by a more powerful one) and economic imperialism (invasion of a foreign language without the need for the actual political control of the country, partly determined by the economic advantage). The result of such process is the introduction of the imperialist language to the other societies in a form of governmental language, language of educational system, or language that is necessary for the international commerce and diplomacy. **Federation** is the voluntary or forced union that comprises of several ethnic groups or nationalities that gather under the political control of one state (Baleghizadeh, 2008). Baleghizadeh also notes that Fasold (1984) acknowledges the fact that even though the state borders are, as a rule, very clearly defined (if the other situation is not determined by the outside factors), many **border areas** between countries host the individuals who are citizens of one country and at the same time are members of a socio-cultural group of another country (Baleghizadeh, 2008).

Provided by Grosjean, a **functional definition of bilingualism**, adopted in this thesis as fitting to its purpose, defines bilingualism as an ability of an individual to regularly communicate in two languages. (Grosjean, 1982, p.230). Bilingualism is also a specific instance of the phenomenon of multilingualism, where the amount of languages that person speaks is not limited by numbers. The nature, origins, typology and impact of bi- and multilingualism on the life of an individual had been extensively researched by a variety of scholars in different fields of the academic enquiry. In the context of this research, the further focus will be concentrated on the concept of multilingualism due to the outcome of the interviews that identified that all of the research participants possess skills of several languages (to a different extent, which also indicates the need for a further discussion on the connection between the language fluency and the multilingualism of a person).

Multilingualism could be defined by timing and sequence of obtaining each of the languages that an individual masters. Some part of the researchers in that field identify the native language of a person as a first language. It is also often implied that a person may have only one mother tongue. For example, such popular dictionaries as Cambridge dictionary and Merriam-Webster dictionary provide the following definitions of a mother tongue - "the first

language that you learn when you are a baby, rather than a language learned at school or as an adult” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2016) and “the language that a person learns to speak first” (Merriam-Webster, 2016). Those definitions underline the supposed singularity of the concept of the mother tongue.

This singularity, in turn, is criticised by some researchers (McLaughlin, 1998, p.404; Lee, 1986; Zamyatin, Pasanen & Saarikivi, 2012), who state that there is a possibility for a person to have more than one native language, if it has been acquired in the timeline between early childhood and puberty, making that person a **simultaneous** bilingual, opposed to a **sequential** bilingual that is an individual who had acquired the second language after the first one (within the timeline after puberty). For example, according to Zamyatin and his colleagues, the definition of a mother tongue could depend on the four following criteria: the age of language acquisition, the type of language acquisition (language learned from parents or other parental figures), the language competence of an individual and, finally, the ethnic identity of an individual. (Zamyatin et al., 2012).

In that framework, a person who masters more than one language is regarded to be either bi- or multilingual. Subsequently in that framework, the phenomenon of bilingualism also can be examined through the same four criteria that are used to define a mother tongue: languages are acquired in the early childhood, the language competence is rather high, the both languages are used daily, and the individual actively identifies oneself with both languages and language groups. (Zamyatin et al., 2012). This definition of a bi- and multilingualism is supported by the general belief that the bilinguals - and multilinguals - are often regarded to be equally fluent in their languages. Yet, the accuracy of that belief has been refuted a number of times. (Grosjean, 1982). The language proficiency of bi- and multilingual individuals in a certain language is clearly determined by a number of factors - one of which could be the way that a certain language was obtained (e.g. the age of language acquisition, formal/informal setting of language acquisition); another one could be identified as the linguistic ambience and linguistic community that those individuals interact with (Lee, 1986; McLaughlin, 1998). Given that even one and the same language, being heterogeneous by its own nature, frequently endures substantial differences within different speakers, the case of several languages blending in one person turns out to be quite an uneasy matter to assess and unify. The question of the process and origins of such blending have been researched vastly in several fields of linguistics including Lee (1986, p.189), McLaughlin (1998, p.402), Iskanius (2002) and Mustajoki (2010). Moreover, one can accurately claim that there is no unified

example - every life journey of every multilingual individual is unique - and perhaps it is possible to claim that there is no “exemplary” story at all, as there is no identical language user. Ergo, the language proficiency of the multilingual individuals is very different as well. Some speak one language better than the other, others use one of their languages only in the certain situations, and the others cannot read or write in one of the languages. (Grosjean, 1982; Mustajoki, 2010).

The language fluency, often proposed as the main criterion in describing a person’s bi- and multilingualism, have been researched a lot in the linguistic field. Grosjean provides the following overview of the previous studies on the connection of language fluency and bilingualism: Bloomfield (1933), who described bilingualism as a “*native-like control of two languages*” is followed by Thiery (1978), who studied the criteria for the acceptance of the individual “*by the members of two different linguistic communities*”. (Grosjean, 1982, p.230). At the same time, Haugen’s (1969) view of a fluency as a continuum with a potential for gradations” the speaker of one language can produce complete, meaningful utterances in the other language” exhibits similarities to the Macnamara’s (1967) notion of continuum with a consideration of each of the four language skills, namely speaking, listening, reading and writing, “*when an individual possesses at least one language skill even to a minimal degree in a second language*”. (Grosjean, 1982, p.230).

Such perception of bi- and multilingualism has led the enquiry towards the measurement of the phenomena. Grosjean describes the interest in the field towards the **balanced bilinguals** (individuals who speak two languages equally fluent) as opposed to **non-balanced** bilinguals - who are more fluent or dominant in one language. (Grosjean, 1982, p.233). A variety of tests had been developed to measure the degree of bilingualism, along with the complex schemes for its description. As mentioned by Grosjean, William Mackey (1968, 1976) developed the approach that is comprised of four dimensions for assessment of each language in order to provide a description of person’s bilingualism. Those dimensions encompassed comprehension and expression in both oral and written forms; assertion of the language function, ability to alternate between the languages, and, finally, linguistic interference - the instances of utilisation in one language features that belong to another one (Grosjean, 1982, p.237). Grosjean suggests that, without undermining the importance of fluency assessment, the other factors such as domains and regularity of use of each language, as well as the need for an individual to have certain skills in certain language (e.g. reading or writing) also play

a substantial role in the description of the individual's bi- or multilingualism. (Grosjean, 1982, p.230).

Traditionally, in the field of exploration of the language acquisition and language fluency, a concern of the overall impact of bilingualism to the language development has been expressed. (McLaughlin, 1998, p.416). Amongst the phenomena that are regarded to be potentially distressing are the practices of **code switching** and **style shifting**. As expressed by McLaughlin, code switching occurs when a bilingual speaker unknowingly inserts elements of one language into the other. This is very common in children speech, but it is not fully restricted to them - when children typically insert nouns to the sentences that are similar in structure. (McLaughlin, 1998, p.406), adults are likely to replace the entire phrases. Code switching is neither the indicator of language deficit - for example, in case of adult code switching the conversational and stylistic devices or informal expressions are being used if they are fitting but only available from the other language. Style shifting, on the other hand, belongs to the dialectical variation sphere of the bi- or multilingualism. Style shifting occurs when the speaker is switching between using the devices and styles of two dialects. In sociolinguistic, it tends to be explained from the contextual setting of a speaker - when they may switch between the variations of forms and styles depending on a listener (McLaughlin, 1998, p.415).

Disregarding the language proficiency and type of language acquisition, the uniqueness of bi- and multilingual individuals is established in the fact that they regularly interact with the surrounding environment in several languages or dialectical variations. (Grosjean, 1982). Every individual has their own way of speaking, yet the way people speak in communication situations is dictated by two major factors: the linguistic background of a person, and the situation - where and with whom they speak, and what their role in the speech act is. (Mustajoki, 2008, p.2). Simply put, in order to provide a complete description of one's bi- or multilingualism and evaluate the language proficiency, one ought to have an adequate scale for such measurement. The question of language proficiency of a bi- or multilingual person is closely linked to the linguistic confidence, which, in turn, is partly determined by the individual's self-assessment of own communicative competence. (Grosjean, 1982).

3.1.2 Defining communicative competence

Bagarić and Djigunović argue that in the fields of general and applied linguistics the term competence has taken its place as one of the most controversial ones. Those researchers also mention that since the introduction of the abstract notion of a language competence to the linguistic discourse by Noam Chomsky in 1965 the distinction has been provided between the concepts of competence - that is defined by an ideal speaker-listener's knowledge of language, and performance - that is the actual use of language in real situations (Bagarić & Djigunović, 2007, p.95).

The term communicative competence (with a sociolinguistic component that connects the language and culture) has been introduced by Dell Hymes, and since then it has been discussed and redefined by many authors, and a variety of models of communicative competence have been developed - especially in the field of language teaching (Llurda, 2000; Canale, 1983; Swain, 1980). Hymes' initial idea implied that a speaker needs to have more than grammatical competence in order to be able to convey an effective communication - but also to possess knowledge on the ways that the language is used by the members of that language group in order to achieve the goal of communication. (Hymes, 1972). For instance, Mustajoki (2010, p.2) identifies two major factors that influence the way that individual speaks: personal factor - the linguistic background of an individual and the situational factor - the setting, the topic, the listener, and the role of speaker in the speech act, which vary during the life of a person, or even within a day (parent/child, amateur/professional, learner/teacher etc.).

Hymes' definition of communicative competence has inspired the further research of the construct. For example, Bagarić and Djigunović claim that the applied linguistics community have reached an agreement on the necessity for a language user to obtain both the "*knowledge about language and the ability and skill to activate that knowledge in a communicative event*" in order to be regarded competent. (Bagarić and Djigunović, 2007, p.100). According to the model of Canale and Swain (1980), communicative competence constitutes four components. The first component, being **grammatical competence**, comprises the knowledge of the language code (including the knowledge of an individual on the elements and structures of the language). Another component is the **discourse competence** which implies the knowledge on how to combine language structures into a cohesive and coherent

oral or written texts. The third component is **sociolinguistic competence** (the ability to interpret the social meaning of the individual's choice, and to use language with the appropriate social meaning for the communication situation). The fourth element is the **strategic competence**, which is the individual's ability to recognize and repair communication breakdowns during the whole lifespan of the communication - including the substitution of unknown words, making clarifications if some factors hinder the communication etc. (Canale & Swain, 1980, p.30).

According to Enric Llurda (2000, p.91), the contemporary collection of the ways of perceiving communicational competence could be generalised into two distinct trends - mentalist theories and connectionist theories. While mentalist theories are concentrated around a symbolic model of mental organisation - the one that includes terms "competence" and "proficiency", observed as idealised abstractions, connectionist theories have redefined the notion of competence by simplifying it. While making the environment a centrepiece of the examination, connectivist theories claim that it has a potential to reduce the limitations that are imposed by "*idealised abstraction of competence*". At the same time, Llurda underlines the necessity of the complex examination of the construct of communicative competence, since the mentalist theories represent knowledge internally (Llurda, 2000, p.91).

While discussing the communication competence of an individual, it is possible to assume that the degree of competence has certain effect on their sense of confidence depending on a chosen language during the communicational event. This claim is illustrated by Canale and Swain's (1980) observation on fluency in speaking that could be examined as one's ability to generate ideas intelligibly and with relative ease, but not necessarily with accuracy. Such experience of fluency also provides the individual with a sense of comfort, confidence and control. (Canale & Swain, 1980). It is possible to argue that both the environment (including the setting and information receiver) and self-assessed fluency influence the sense of confidence of an individual, that, in turn, affects the process and the outcome of the communication - for instance, fear, prejudice, anxiety or lack of proper linguistic tools may restrain individuals from having successful interactions. The concept of linguistic confidence is explored further in the next sub-chapter.

3.1.3 Linguistic confidence and self-perceived confidence

Linguistic confidence has been under the microscope of the modern linguistics especially in the context of language learning - examined in a connection to the motivational factors for second language learning by many scholars (Clement, Dornyei & Noels, 1994), this concept has also been closely related to acculturation and integration. In this subchapter, however, in connection with the theme of the research, the linguistic confidence is viewed through the link with the self-perceived confidence, as well as a factor that may or may not influence the process of identity construction (or reformation) of a multilingual individual that has been placed to, and spent some substantial amount of time in the context of a foreign culture. Thus, the linguistic confidence in this work is explored as a factor that influences the individual's language choice and their attitude towards the language (or the connection of self-assessment to the behaviour in a certain context that requires choosing of the language of communication).

Linguistic confidence is associated with positive attitudes towards the language community, while self-perceived confidence is connected to the individual's capabilities of knowledge and resources in a specific area. (Tramontana, Blood & Blood, 2013). Therefore, self-perceived lack of knowledge or resources in a certain language of a bi- or multilingual individual may lead to their loss of confidence in that language. Such loss of confidence of a multilingual individual can be determined by a variety of reasons, and is especially visible (but not limited to) in a situation when the process of language forgetting takes place due to various reasons (Grosjean, 1982).

In a multilingual setting, linguistic confidence becomes a valuable mediator that prompts the communication and has implications to improve the psychological adjustment of an individual with the community. (Noels & Clément, 1996). According to Yang, Noels and Saumure (2006), linguistic confidence plays a vital role in cross-cultural adaptation of individuals to a new environment. Those scholars claim that, outside of a primary language setting, a high degree of individual's ability to reduce the difficulties that they face while using another language in order to handle daily tasks efficiently may boost the improvement of self-confidence, being a potential catalyst for improvement of socio-cultural adaptation process (Yang, Noels & Saumure, 2006).

Hummel (2013) illustrates how linguistic confidence is related to the experience of an inter-group contact: confidence in a certain language is increasing if the individual is able to communicate with the members of that certain linguistic group. Such obtained linguistic confidence may facilitate the further contacts with that linguistic group, which, in turn, may increase the involvement of those individuals into the said groups, affecting to some extent the feeling of belonging to that group by sharing the distinctive feature of that said group - their language (serving as a symbolic representation of the said group). On the other hand, the lack of linguistic confidence in the dominant language may obstruct the adaptation to the new environment - the linguistic restrictions may seem too harsh and thus hinder the contacts with the dominant language group (Hummel, 2013). The language group membership and both internal and external attitudes towards them are described in details in the next subchapter.

3.1.4 Language group membership and attitudes

According to the theoretical framework that is referred to earlier in this thesis, an individual is multilingual if they speak several languages. The society, in turn, although it may consist of speakers of different languages, is not always necessarily multilingual - the emergence of a multilingual community could be identified only if the different language speakers communicate with each other to some extent, and had accumulated of at least a bit of the knowledge on each other languages (Zamyatin et al., 2012). The face of the multilingual community is formed by the ways in which its members know and use the languages. Zamyatin and his colleagues illustrate that claim with the description of some Russian linguistic communities, where in the majority of the multilingual regions, in fact, only the representatives of the certain ethnic group in the given region are multilingual. Russians, constituting the bulk of the population, generally do not speak the local language, while the ethnic group members learn Russian in the early childhood (Zamyatin et al., 2012).

As Mark Sebba points out, the term “societal bilingualism” is used to refer to any kind of bilingualism or multilingualism instances at a level of social organization beyond the individual or nuclear family. (Sebba, 2010). As mentioned earlier, bi- and multilingualism are often a consequence of the contact of several linguistic groups. The aggregate enumeration of the speakers of the language groups of a certain state often reflects the number of mono-

lingual and bilingual speakers of each language. According to Grosjean, if the social or political powers are included into this situation, then a language group may be referred to as a language minority group or a language majority group, based on the power relations that undergo in the society. (Grosjean, 1982, p.24). The social and political relations between language groups often determine how the certain group and its members are perceived and treated within the society. The linguistic minorities, supported on the governmental level in some countries, face neglect or repressions in some others. Often they face cultural, social and educational problems.

In a community that hosts different language groups (and as it has been previously illustrated in this work, the majority of communities do so), attitudes towards the languages play an important role. As it was noted earlier in the theoretical framework of this thesis, language has two principal functions - as a tool for communication and as a symbol of group membership. As referred to by Grosjean (1982, p. 117) Haugen (1956) mentions the emergence of either favourable or unfavourable prevailing attitudes towards the languages involved into the contact. Such attitudes include attitude of a group towards themselves and towards the other group and may be affected by the political, economic, cultural or numerical dominance of the language group in question - in other words, by matters of power and prestige. Synchronically, Grosjean identifies a paradoxical observation that members of the majority group “are sometimes more positive about the minority group than the members of that very group” (Grosjean, 1982, p. 119).

At the same time, an examination of the phenomenon of attitude towards a language group should not be approached from a single perspective. Grosjean describes a language as being accompanied by attitudes and values that are perceived both by language users as well as by outsiders who do not possess the knowledge of that language. He illustrates that claim by referring to the sign language - a lot of people are aware of its existence and hold some value judgment, although not so many are able to communicate in that language (Grosjean, 1982, p.117).

The social notion of a language group also plays an important role in the construction of attitudes towards the language group. The symbolic nature of a language in the social context is explored by Jaspal as “*a means of asserting one’s identity or one’s distinctiveness from others*”. (Jaspal, 2009, p. 17). He refers to Dieckhoff’s (2004) allegory of common language being “*the ideal vehicle to express the unique character of a social group, and to encourage*

common social ties on the basis of a common identity". (Jaspal, 2009, p. 17). Thus, the function of a language to identify the group membership of an individual is potent to both "*bind and divide groups*" as well as "*displace other - ethnic or religious- identities*". (ibid). Bucholtz and Hall's (2003, p.371) point towards the social grouping being "*a process not merely of discovering or acknowledging a similarity that precedes and establishes identity but, more fundamentally, of inventing similarity by downplaying difference*". It is also possible to claim that the value and meaning of languages are bestowed by people, which prompts the actualisation of ubiquitous social representations. (Jaspal, 2009, p. 17). Such social representations, in turn, have some effect on the ways that people behave - but at the same time, they are not fully limiting.

Rusi Jaspal, among other scholars, notes that language attitudes tend to have some impact on the construction of an identity due to a complex nature of this process. The ways that the languages (or language group membership) are referred to in the society vary depending on the perspective. For instance, Jaspal refers to Lodge (1993) who claims that, in state-supported language standardisation, language is classified in a rather fair fashion (Jaspal, 2009, p.19). On the other hand, the attitude of the population towards various language groups may represent a huge scale of emotions, prejudice or praise, which, in turn, has potential to prompt the members of the stigmatised language groups into acceptance of the negative social representations of their language. Jaspal underlines that, according to Breakwell (2001), such negative stereotypes may also affect the way the members of that linguistic group perceive their identities. (Jaspal, 2009, p.19). The outcome of such perception might provide a great amount of psychological discomfort, due to the natural wish of individuals to "*feel good about their identities*". (ibid). Referred to by Jaspal (2009, p. 19), Breakwell (1986) notes that such discomfort could provide implications for distantiation of oneself from the causes that threaten the positive evaluation of oneself through identity by downgrading the importance of a language in order to accommodate the more popular one. Another potential challenge could ignite an impulse for growing desire for social mobility into a more respected language group - by adopting a new language. (Jaspal, 2009, p.20). Thus, it could be argued that the process of pursuing positive identity may explain the decision of an individual to either adopt or reject a language.

However, not in every case the attitude towards a language group is strictly positive or negative - Grosjean, for example, refers to confounding of them; at the same time, the degree of the language attitude can shift from negative to positive, as a result of an official recognition

of a language by government, acquired nation's independence, increased autonomy, civil right movements, as well as the work of social scientists or linguists. (Grosjean, 1982, p. 123).

3.2 Language, culture and identity

A research in the fields of identity could be contextualised in a variety of ways. Many identity studies relate to the field of psychology, but this thesis is exploring the formation of identity rather from the social, cultural and linguistic perspectives. However, the concept of identity cannot be totally separated from psychology - and this resulted in the references to some psychological theories.

In sociology, the term “identity” is often examined from the perspective of the combination of the group memberships that define the individual, while in psychology this concept is viewed in the personal self-identification context. In this work, identity is examined in terms of linguistic group membership (Russian-, Finnish- and English - speakers), which provides basis for the utilisation of the perception of identity in the field of linguistic anthropology. At the same time, this thesis follows the popular discourse in Russian cultural psychology, largely attributed to Leo Vygotsky, on the phenomenon of constant identity construction that is not solely based on the past experiences but also covers the future - that is influencing identity formation through the changes in the present. (Vygotsky, 1978). The same idea is shared by researchers in the narrower context of the field of linguistic identity. For example, as described by Joseph, Djité (2006) argues that the linguistic identities in our multilingual world are, in fact, fluid - the monolithic nature of them is often bestowed upon them by people, which often results in the way that others misinterpret thus providing basis for prejudice and discrimination. (Joseph, 2006).

The exploration of a concept of identity is varied to a great scale, depending on the context and the approach that is used to explore it. The intent of this work is not to provide an exhaustive definition - rather to describe current perspectives on the concept of identity and its connection to culture and language use, and provide a functional definition that serves the purpose and context of this thesis.

The idea on the language being a source for production of culture originated centuries ago. It had went out of favour in 1960s and '70s when Noam Chomsky introduced the theory of

universal grammar - a belief of language to be “pre-organized” in some way or another within the neuronal structure of the human brain, while the environment’s role is in shaping those contours into a particular language (Boroditsky, 2010). Boroditsky argues that this approach had opposed the behaviourist model which accounted for language development solely by means of environmental influence. While Chomskyan concept of language acquisition has inspired many scholars to investigate the nature of these assumed grammatical categories, the existence of universal grammar has also propelled criticism. Evolutionary biologists argue that the modes of communication which are compatible with the brain’s natural abilities had been invented by humans, reflecting the constraints of natural abilities in the universal structures of language (Boroditsky, 2010). The implication of the linguistic differences that, in turn, influence difference in thinking, had inspired the search for linguistic universals. Boroditsky writes that this search had been followed by the emergence of interesting data on languages which also yielded an innumerable amount of unpredictable differences. Patterns in language had shown to shape many domains of thought, including space, time, causality and others - a variety of experiments in the cognitive research field had provided a vast basis for such claim. (ibid.). In the next few chapters the connections between the language, culture and identity will be explored in more detail.

3.2.1 Identity in linguistic anthropology

Linguistic anthropology is the interdisciplinary field of science that is examining the influence of the language to the social life. A relatively young field of science, traditionally, linguistic anthropology explores the links between the language and communication, the relevance of language and group membership to the social identity formation and develops a common cultural representation of natural and social worlds (Society For Linguistic Anthropology [SLA], 2016). For the purpose of this work, social identity will be understood here as a part of individual's self-concept, which derives from their knowledge of their membership of a social group or groups, together with a value and emotional significance attached to that membership. It is very clear that this is a limited definition of the broad concept of identity or "social identity". This limitation is chosen purposefully in order to avoid an endless discussion on what identity is and to provide a functional definition of this concept that fits the topic of the study. As underlined by Henri Tajfel (1981), the image or concept of oneself of an individual is infinitely richer than the assumptions provided by their belonging

to a social group, however, some of the aspects of that concept are contributed by the membership in social groups or categories. Thus, a working definition for a social identity will be that of a term that is used to describe some aspects of the concept of self that are relevant to certain limited aspects of social behaviour. (Tajfel, 1981, p.255).

Linguistic anthropology is, in many ways, the study of language and identity. As described by Bucholtz and Hall, the classic linguistic-anthropological studies are focusing not on the kinds of speech, but rather on types of speakers, who “*produce and reproduce particular identities through their language use*”. (Bucholtz & Hall, 2003). The interest towards the exploration of identity has developed recently, placing the concept of identity into the centre of the study of linguistic anthropology, thus making the language, thanks to its flexibility, a “symbolic resource”, amongst many other available for the cultural production of identity (ibid).

Baumeister and Muraven (1996) present the historical view on the development of the discourse on identity. Through the exploration of the concept of “selfhood” in the context of the Western society, Baumeister and Muraven describe the changes that this concept underwent during the course of history. The first conception of identity started with merely a physical identification of an individual and was based on the socially accepted dress codes, assigned to each person through their background, gender and social ranking. However, at the early stages of such conception the division between the “invisible essence or soul and the visible person” was present. Baumeister and Muraven write that the theological changes around the 11th and 12th centuries began to conceptualise souls in unique and individualistic terms (Baumeister & Muraven, 1996, p.408). At the same time, the lack of social and geographical mobility ensured the stability of one’s social identification. Further, the understanding of identity has been adapting to the changes that the social conditions underwent. Those changes had influenced the examination of the idea of “self”. The “self” was considered to be something that existed hidden inside the person, and was able to be discovered only gradually and selectively (ibid). Such acceptance of a large important inner self has certain implications on the modern understanding of the identity being a hidden entity that is only indirectly known by being expressed in one’s actions or roles. This, in turn, leads to an interesting inquiry on the group membership as one of the many factors that influences individual’s construction of identity:

“Selfhood is universal and pre-cultural, at least in its most basic sense: people everywhere have selves that serve some of the same basic functions. The society and culture, however, provide a context in which the self has to operate, and to do so it adapts in far-reaching, important ways. The nature of adult identity can be seen as the result of both the basic nature of selfhood and the sociocultural context.”(Baumeister & Muraven, 1996, p.409).

Along with this understanding of identity, Joseph (2006) notes the connection of the concept of identity to the definition of “us” and “them”, as do many other researchers. Bucholtz and Hall (2003, p.369) describe the polarisation of identity through the concepts of sameness and difference as phenomenological processes that emerge from social interactions. Furthermore, they criticise a popular assumption on the identity being an attribute of individuals or groups rather than of situations. (Bucholtz & Hall, 2003, p.376).

Joan Kelly Hall (2011, p.34) underlines the role of an individual in the shaping of the identity, adding that the degree of such influence is very variable and fluid, and is interrelated with action:

“The degree of individual effort we can exert in shaping our identities, however, is not always equal. Rather, it is ‘an aspect of the action’ (Altieri, 1994: 4) negotiable in and arising from specific social and cultural circumstances constituting local contexts of action.”(Hall, 2011, p.34).

Bucholtz and Hall argue also on the importance of dynamic perspective on identity, as opposed to a more traditional view where identities are “*unitary and enduring psychological states or social categories*”. (Bucholtz & Hall, 2003, p.376). They underline that identities abide in actions, not in people, and may also shift and recombine while adapting to the new circumstances (ibid).

According to Hall, our use of language represents a particular identity at the same time that we construct it. The connection of language use and identity is viewed here through the individual's lived experiences that involve the language as well. In the deeper context of language use in the social action, the language is used as a representation of the individual's position in a social field rather than merely a tool for voicing the individual's intentions (Hall, 2011, p.44). Social action becomes a site of dialogue where an individual is choosing from available linguistic resources that are appropriate for the situation in an attempt to mould those situation for own purposes acting as an author. (ibid). Furthermore, Hall quotes

Weedon (1997, p.32), who argues that individuals are inhabiting particular emergent, locally situated and historically constituted social identities to mediate their involvement, as well as the involvement of others, in their practices. Those identities, often contradictory and precarious, are constantly being re-evaluated in discourse each time an individual thinks or speaks (Hall, 2011, p.44). The identity in this view is definitely a reflexive and dynamic product of the social, historical and political contexts of such experiences. (Hall, 2011, p. 31).

Linguistic anthropology has a long history of the examination of identity in order to understand the relationship between language and culture. It has been recognised that culture does not exist apart from language or apart from individuals as language users (Hall, 2011, p.44). Hall agrees with Duranti (1997) on the view of culture as being “*reflexive, made and remade in our language games and our lived experiences*” (Hall, 2011, p.44), and existing through routinized action that relies on the physical conditions and social actors’ experience - which implies that neither the use of language nor language user “*is considered to be culture-free*”. (ibid). Hence, the following assertion that challenges the common understanding of language as a reflection of one’s culture and identity is presented by Bucholtz and Hall:

“Individual’s identity to some extent is not simply the source of culture but the outcome of culture: in other words, it is a cultural effect. And language, as a fundamental resource for cultural production, is hence also a fundamental resource for identity production.” (Bucholtz and Hall, 2003, p.382).

This assertion is especially interesting in the context of the bilingualism and pre-supposed biculturalism that is often mentioned in the connection with bilingualism.

3.2.2 Cross-cultural adaptation

Culture has been defined in many ways. In the words of anthropologist Sir Edward Burnett Tylor, culture is “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (1974, p.1). Geert Hofstede sees culture as “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others”. (2011, p.3). In other words, it is a collective phenomenon that can be connected to different collectives - ethnic groups, nations and organisations. The broader application of term is possible in the context of gender, generations or social classes as well.

Anthropologists agree on culture to consist of several components: besides the ways of maintaining the life it includes habits, customs, objects and artefacts, ideas, sentiments and social arrangements; moreover, culture is the way of life, rules of the behaviour, religious beliefs, laws, economic, social and political systems, and, naturally, the language (Grosjean, 1982, p.157). A coexistence or combination of two different cultures forms biculturalism of an individual, which is often connected to a phenomena of bilingualism, however, Grosjean stresses that bilingualism and biculturalism are not necessarily coextensive. (1982, p.157). Such distinction is further illustrated by an example of existence of monolingual yet bicultural individuals provided by Grosjean (*ibid*).

In the context of this thesis, the culture is approached from the perspective of identity formation - which, in turn, leads to the further need of exploration of the phenomena of acculturation as a result of the immigration even that the research participants had experienced and which had influenced their perception of own culture.

Immigrant identity formation inquiry may be considered from the perspective of acculturation. Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind & Vedder (2001) write that the distinction between the constructs of ethnic identity and acculturation provided by other researchers were unclear and sometimes those concepts were used interchangeably. However, those authors consider the acculturation to be a broader construct that comprises the behaviours, attitudes and values that are subjected to change when a contact between cultures occur (Phinney et al., 2001 p.495). According to Phinney and her colleagues, a sense of ethnic identity is beneficial to the individual's psychological well-being, and the most positive psychological outcomes for immigrants are expected to be related to a strong identification with both their ethnic group and the larger society (Phinney et al., 2001). Inga Jasinskaja-Lahti (2000, p.7) also refers to an observation that biculturalism does not place an individual between the two cultures, but rather involves participating in both of them to a flexible degree.

Based on the first classical definition of acculturation presented by Redfield, Linton and Herskovits in 1936, Inga Jasinskaja-Lahti identifies the necessary attributes of the acculturation as "a contact, a process and a state". (Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2000, p.4). The emphasis is put on the existence of a dynamic activity during and after a continuous and first-hand contact or interaction between the cultures, as well as an emanating result of that process. The result, in turn, may be relatively stable, but may also continue to change in an ongoing process.

Jasinskaja-Lahti also mentions that the interest towards the multidimensional nature of acculturation had shifted the perspective from merely anthropological into the cross-cultural psychology, resulting in the emergence of term “psychological acculturation” (ibid).

During the course of history, a number of acculturation models were proposed by sociologists, in which acculturation is presented as a sub-process of assimilation and where biculturalism is only a transient phase. Jasinskaja-Lahti argues that such unidimensional models had faced strong criticism, which pointed in the direction of the bi-dimensional approach. (Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2000, p.4). In those models the identification with each of the two cultures had to be measured independently, resulting in the measurement of change in each of the dimensions. Brown and Zagefka (2011) refer to John Berry’s acculturation model (1987) as one of the most famous ones. They quote Berry (1987, 1989) on the grounds for this model to be predicated by the assertion that a person who is settling in the host society is confronted by the two emerging issues. Those issues include (1) evaluation of the usefulness of maintenance of own identity characteristics in the new setting and (2) estimation of necessity to maintain relationships with the host society (Brown & Zagefka, 2011). Brown and Zagefka (2011) argue that in reality, such dimensions of cultural change are almost always inevitably crossing, thus accommodating a palette of four acculturation attitudes. Those attitudes include assimilation, integration, separation and marginalisation. Berry’s model evaluates the degree of preservation of one’s heritage culture and adaptation to the host society that is derived from yes or no answers to the two above-mentioned questions. However, the dynamic nature of identity seems to be missing from Berry’s model. While it assumes that the answers to the two defining questions may change over time, the model does not offer an explanation why or how those strategies may be altered. Even though the results of application of Berry’s model had provided the dominance of the integration as a choice, the addition of the ethnic identity concept to the acculturation study yielded different results (Brown & Zagefka, 2011).

Another perspective on acculturation that is reviewed by Jasinskaja-Lahti (2000) had been provided within Hutnik’s quadripolar model (1991) which included the four following strategies of adaptation in the context of the individual’s identification in terms of the ethnic group and the majority group: (1) assimilative, when the individual chooses to perceive own identity as the majority group member, (2) acculturative, that is an instance when the individual adopts a joint identity, (3) marginal, meaning that the individual is either indifferent to ethnic group identifications or chooses to identify with neither group, and (4) dissociative,

where the individual associates entirely within the bounds of the ethnic minority group (Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2000, p.4). Such model claims that identification with both cultural groups (and, in other words, biculturalism or dual identification) provides certain psychological and adaptation advantages for ethnic minorities. (Brown & Zagefka, 2011, p.133). Jasinskaja-Lahti (2000, p.4) also underlines the importance of the dynamic nature of those strategies.

Sanna Iskanius offers the following definition for acculturation: the term refers to changes that occur as a result of the interaction of cultures, which includes an adaptation to the dominant minority culture and the attitude of the dominant group to the language and culture of minorities (Iskanius, 2002). Based on the previous studies, Iskanius identifies the positive bilingual identity as a necessary prerequisite for successful integration into Finnish society. The development of such bilingual identity is possible in the case where an individual understands the necessity of learning the Finnish language and seeks contact with the Finns while preserving the native language and cultural practices and contacts (Iskanius, 2002). In the Finnish context, a number of studies were conducted in the last few decades on the degree of acculturation of individuals of Russian origin by researches including Inga Jasinskaja-Lahti, Sanna Iskanius, Ekaterina Protassova and others.

4 METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK - PHENOMENOGRAPHY

In this section the justifications of the methodological choices for the research of qualitative methods and specifically phenomenography are provided, along with the description of data collection and research process that includes the ways of how the study was conducted. The data analysis is also included in this section.

4.1 What is phenomenography?

Michael Uljens (1990, p.82) offers the following definition of phenomenography: it is “a qualitative and interpretative research approach [...] that attempts to describe, analyse, interpret and understand how people conceive, experience, perceive or understand different aspects of the world”. He explains that, based on their everyday life, every person knows that there are a lot of different things on which people have different opinions, and the ideas of people often vary to a great extent - such as on the topics of what or on what topic should a newspaper write - or where to build a new road and so on. The heterogeneous nature of those opinions is usually accepted as self-evident truth. On the other hand, our own experiences in what we see or hear are perceived as real and independent references to objects and their properties - a blue sky, seen by an individual, is believed by them to be blue - not just seem so, disregard the limitations of colour perception of a human eye and other factors that reveal the heterogeneousness of the ways that sky colour may be perceived. Uljens notes also, that sometimes even understanding of the fact that someone else conceives it in another way may be problematic (Uljens, 1990, pp.80-81).

Uljens also states that conceiving of something is a complicated process, particularly due to a non-dualist nature of the ways that people interpret things. Even if the object of the exploration seems to be well-known and self-explanatory, the variation in the way a phenomenon is experienced provides an assortment of **conceptions**. In phenomenography, a conception is the starting point on which an individual bases their view on some aspect of reality. Uljens notes that by conceiving of the surrounding world, an individual **constructs** the meaning. Conception also has a relational character - the reality is considered to exist through the way in which a person conceives of it. Uljens underlines that this **relational** character defines the aim of the phenomenographic research as to reflect the qualitative variation in which a certain population understands something, rather than to provide explanation of the reasons that

substantiate such variation. Uljens further explains that phenomenography investigates reality as experiences, using an indirect method of second-order perspective: a certain aspect of reality is observed through the conceptions of it that are experienced by some group (Uljens, 2008, pp. 82-83).

4.2 Phenomenographic approach

As defined by Reed (2006, p.1), phenomenography is “a research approach that takes a non-dualist, second-order perspective describing the key aspects of the variation of individuals’ experience of a phenomenon”. Phenomenography is the empirical research of the qualitatively different ways in which different aspects of the world are experienced by different individuals. There are strong connections between phenomenography and constructivism - the concerns of how the world or even the reality appears to a particular individual based on their lived experiences and personal views are in the basis of such an implication. The scope of the phenomenographic research lays in the discovery of a structural framework that composes the variety of categories of understanding. (Reed, 2006, p.3). In connection of what is being studied, different methods can be applied during the research process in order to work with such versatile data as descriptions and experiences of people in specific contexts. The choice of the qualitative research method for this study is justified by the nature of this study. Here, phenomenographic approach holds potential to provide results through exploration of participant’s lived experiences, their feelings and attitudes, the phenomena that cannot be quantified.

The second-order perspective is a traditional approach in the phenomenography (Reed, 2006; Uljens, 2008). It also has some ontological consequences. The above-mentioned blue sky example describes the phenomenon of naive realism - a natural attitude of a person towards the world at the initial contact with something. Through a critical approach to own perception, one may abandon their initial position and think of other ways of perceiving something, yet, as Uljens notes, this imposes a question of whether or not it is possible to claim what the world really is beyond one's conception, perception, understanding or experience. This question has been discussed a lot in the scientific community, and there still is no clear answer to that. The argument proceeds towards exploration of the nature of the reality - is it comprised of “what we know” or does it exist “as such” and that we can learn more or less about it. Correspondingly, the argumentation proceeds on to the construction of

reality through the different understandings of different people, allowing to provide a comparison of different understandings in an allocated cultural context (Uljens, 2008, p. 84). Uljens argues that the comparison of such understandings is possible, while the comparison of the understandings with an un-experienced reality is not. This argument implies that a person's perception is probably biased, and the perception is not fully determined by the object met (Uljens, 2008, p.85).

In his definition of phenomenology, Uljens further refers to Sajama and Kamppinen (1987) content theory of intentionality (Uljens, 2008, p.86). As described by Uljens, Sajama and Kamppinen (1987, p.70, referred to by Uljens, 2008, p. 86) had summarised the key features of that theory in the following four distinctive attributes: a mental act has a context-based nature; the content is a marker of reference of an act to a certain object; when the content of an act fails to determine an act in question, the mental act is considered to be objectless; mental acts are individuated by means of their contents. Uljens (2008, p.87) writes that phenomenography analyses the meaning of different mental acts (their content), through their expressions (through words, speech and texts). Such characteristic allows to conduct the issue of reference to non-existing objects through an argument that every expression has a meaning (sense), yet not necessarily a referent. Thus every expression has a sense by which the feature to which the object that it corresponds to is defined (Uljens, 2008, p.87).

4.3 Data analysis in phenomenography

Qualitative research does not forecast what is to happen in the future; rather, it is an analysis that provides a depth of understanding for those who are interested in the events of a particular setting and time. Since phenomenography is a qualitative research approach, it shares some features that characterise qualitative research approach in general, including the combination of analysis process with the collection of data, systematic, logical and reflective nature of the analysis process, division of data into meaningful parts without losing its wholeness, further categorisation of those meaningful parts into an organised system, continuous nature of comparison of various aspects of the content, pragmatic nature of the analysis, identification of the criteria for data sorting and organising preliminarily to the data analysis, which is also not mechanical in its nature, and, finally, the outcome of the analysis comprises a description of regular patterns, features or themes, theoretical categories and identification of the fundamental structure of the data, providing a synthesis on a higher level

of abstraction (Uljens, 2008, p.87). A relevant observation has been provided by Marton, Sherman and Webb on the topic of abundance of theoretical categories, justified by an actually limited number of ways that individuals perceive a phenomena:

“When investigating people’s understanding of various phenomena, concepts, principles, we repeatedly found that each phenomenon, concept, or principle can be understood in a limited number of qualitatively ways” (Marton et. al, 1986, pp. 30-31).

Uljens writes that phenomenography-specific research procedure usually includes the five following steps: (1) definition of a phenomenon or its aspect, (2) interview conduction of the chosen group on the focus of the research, (3) interview typing, (4) interview analysis, (5) conclusion of the categories of description (Uljens, 2008, p.88). The three first steps are extensively examined in the qualitative research approach, and the justification of them in the context of this thesis is provided in the next sub-chapters. The analysis of the empirical data provides a great interest due to the phenomenographic approach peculiarities. In the context of phenomenography as a research method, it is essential to note that phenomenography represents a less structured research approach in qualitatively oriented analysis (Uljens, 2008 p.89), where the method and content are interconnected to some degree. Due to the nature of phenomenographic approach, a variety of analysis methods are utilised by the researchers tailored for a specific study - often those are slightly different yet complementary methods (e.g. Marton et al., 1986; Moustakas, 1994).

In general, the data analysis process constitutes of the four following steps. The first step is the **de-contextualisation**. It includes extraction of significant statements or units from each instance of data (description, interview protocol etc.) with an aim to gain a sense of the whole. **Transformation** is the second essential step. At that stage, an interpretation of the different meaningful statements or units is done. As meanings emerge from the significant statements, they are formulated into a more general and theoretical language. **Characterisation** is the third leap of data analysis. A comparison of all the meaningful units that belong to the same subarea is done, resulting into a characterisation of person’s conception of that subarea. **Categorisation** is the final step that involves an analysis of the characterisations on the individual level in a relation to each other. This last step results into construction of one or several categories of description. Often the categorisation requires referring back to the original transcript to ensure no data has been ignored or added to (Uljens, 2008. p.90).

The results are presented in form of categories of description that are selective, summarising and organising, and can vary in the level of description (Uljens, 2008, p.91). Due to the nature of the results, it is not possible to predict them in advance. Uljens writes that it is essential to remember to keep the focus of the analysis on individual's conception of the phenomenon, rather than looking for an explanation of the emergence of such conception (Uljens, 2008 p.90).

5 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

This qualitative study used phenomenological inquiry through semi-structured interviews (see Appendix 1) in order to obtain the lived experiences of six Finnish-speaking females of Russian origin, age group 20 to 30, that had lived in Finland for a lengthy period of time. Three of them had moved to Finland as children, while three other ones had done so during their late adolescence. The phenomenological approach was used to understand the subjective aspects of their experiences.

The study started with the formulation of the research questions. The initial interest laid in the field of linguistic, specifically the use of languages in a situation that resembled my own - being a female immigrant of Russian origin in Finland my struggle with languages had been ongoing for quite a while, evolving from surviving with knowledge of Russian and English only towards the wider use of Finnish. At the same time I became very interested in the other cases that I have met during this time in Finland - the linguistic background of every woman of Russian origin that I got acquainted with differed considerably from others, yet the estimated similarity appeared to be in something fluid, something that had in a way united those women under the duality of their perception of the "Russianness" and "Finnishness", providing some implications on the relationship with the languages they use. Such implications had sparked the idea for the examination of the links between the feeling of confidence in the language use and identity construction. The major research question had been formulated and the research process begun. In order to create the interview questions, three major themes that were of interest for the study were formulated, including (1) language use (2) identity (3) feeling of confidence.

5.1 Research participants and interview methods

The interviews, in general, are one of the most popular yet not the single method for data collection in phenomenography - any manner in which participants can describe their lived phenomenal experience can be used to collect data (Simon & Goes, 2011, p.1) Although the most classical means of data collection in phenomenology are the in-depth interviews, researchers in that field utilise a variety of approaches: written or oral self-reports or even aesthetic expressions - study of conceptions using the drawings or other ways of reflections turned into forms of art e.g. descriptive statues that symbolise the conceptions of some kind

- and many more. Those creative approaches are very appealing due to the variation of meanings that they provide, however, in this study a semi-structured interview was chosen as data collection method.

The reasons for this choice were plenty. The ease to obtain the results was beneficial in terms of data collection - the chosen research participants had an opportunity to devote 30 to 40 minutes to the interview, and the appointment for the interview was tailored to fit to their schedules. Semi-structured interviews also provided a sense of comfort for the participants - a personal and intimate atmosphere of the conversation was gained by the face-to face setting, even during the interviews that were conducted via Skype. The efficiency in terms of timing is another positive side of this data collection method. The interviews provided instant data in the form of recorded conversations, thus the potential drawbacks of data collection were avoided. And, finally, the interview process itself served as an advancing method for exploring the initial thoughts of the participants on the topics discussed, as well as providing an opportunity for the researcher to clarify some aspects of the answers at hand and on the go by asking additional questions.

The participants were found through personal connections. This is a well-known limitation in terms of objectivity due to the potential bias that such relationship may provide, and I fully acknowledge that limitation. At the same time, it may be seen as an insight that had provided a possibility to discover a bit more about the participants, as well as to ease the atmosphere of the interview allowing them to feel safer while answering some very personal questions.

In order to acquire specific data, the participants were chosen to fit a certain profile. The factors that determined the choice of the research participants included requirements in terms of (1) age group (in order to sample a part of population that shares some certain experiences in terms of an epoch), (2) language competence (minimal requirements included some knowledge on Russian and Finnish) and (3) their duration of stay in Finland being not less than 5 years. Such sampling allowed to concentrate on a certain segment of population.

Originally the amount of participants was meant to include five individuals. I personally contacted fifteen acquaintances of mine in an early stage of the research process, enquiring on their interest in participation in such a study and their availability for the interviews. One of the interviews was conducted almost immediately. Later, additionally I sent an email with an invitation to participate in the study to the mailing lists of the universities in Oulu to

secure the amount of participants. The search for participants yielded eight active responses, and out of those the first five ones were invited to the interview, totalling six interviews. The sixth interview was added to the original amount due to the emergence of a coincidental finding that concluded that three of potential participants moved to Finland as children, whilst the three other ones did that during their adolescence.

The participants were offered two possibilities in terms of language of the interview, being Russian and English (due to limitations of researcher's fluency in Finnish). Five of the interviews were conducted in Russian on the request of the interviewees, and one of the interviews was conducted in English. Three of the interviews were conducted face-to-face - one in a coffee shop, and another two in the home setting of the interviewee and the interviewer (the latter one was organised for a participant that lives in another town and was visiting Oulu). Three other ones were recorded during the prearranged Skype session, again, due to the fact that the interviewees and interviewer reside in different cities. Immediately after each interview session, the recordings were transcribed (and in five cases, translated from Russian into English according to researcher's best knowledge). Before each interview, the participants were informed that any risk to them was minimal as they disclosed personal information only if they chose to do so and that they had an opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time and have their data destroyed.

The questions were phrased in a general manner to secure that the interviewees will share their unique experiences in their own ways, choosing what to tell and what to keep to themselves. The questions generally focused on the following topics: (1) the migration event details and the attitude of the respondent towards home country, (2a) the linguistic background of the respondent and their contemporary language use, (2b) reflections of the respondent on the own and societal attitudes towards the languages that the respondent uses, (3) the exploration of the topic and reflections on own ethnic identity (see Appendix 1 for the Interview Template). Although the majority of questions were chosen in advance, the style of conversations was flexible. That helped to investigate each participant's unique experience. During the flow of conversation some topics were addressed over again.

All interviews were digitally recorded in order to capture verbatim language, then translated and transcribed in order to ensure quality. During the translation process (that, as noted before, had followed the interview immediately) a great number of peculiar findings and ideas appeared, so they were immediately placed on a sticky notes with a reference to the name of

the interview participants and the finding description. Those notes yielded very useful later on during the analysis process. In addition, the researcher read through the translations several times for better understanding, in order to further emerge into the context and note some small details that might have been concealed in the data. All collected data was stored and managed in my home study. The recommended three-copy amount has been fulfilled. The interview transcripts were printed out in three copies as well for further needs of analysis.

5.2 Data analysis process

The research question involves my personal passion and my profile fits the sample criteria, thus making me the first informant for this research. (Moustakas, 1994). This fact had determined the specific method of data analysis and the techniques that it had involved. Preliminarily to the data collection, in order to increase the vigilance of my own underlying feelings about the research topic, I had described my own experiences on the themes that are encompassed within this thesis. As the other research participants, I have experienced the same phenomenon, so this technique had assisted me to relinquish biases and observe the topic from a variety of perspectives – as a woman in the similar setting and as a scholar (Moustakas, 1994).

The data analysis process had begun with the collection of the first source of data. For this particular study I utilized Moustakas' (1994) modification of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method to analyse the data. As a first step, all the relevant statements that describe participants' experiences were extracted from each instance of data. That was done by manual highlighting of all quotes that referred to an instance of a lived experience. This new data was interpreted in terms of meanings. All meaningful, non-overlapping statements were compiled into themes that encompass the inquiry (language use, confidence, identity and other). Further, the individual descriptions of each participant's experiences were compiled using the verbatim quotes, followed by textural-structural description of meanings. This allowed to prepare the basis for a composite description of the experience for all participants as a whole. The results are presented in a form of categories, divided further into sub-themes, including the verbatim quotes for illustration. The outcome of the analysis is presented in the sixth chapter.

6 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

This chapter presents the final outcome of the analysis process. It includes the verbatim examples that assist to illustrate in detail the reflections on the experiences of the research participants. Each sub-chapter describes in detail the perception of the participants on each of the four major analysis outcomes - language use, confidence, and identity, as well as other interesting themes and notions that emerged during the data analysis process.

In order to fully illustrate the findings, the following table has been prepared. It demonstrates the background of the research participants and their perceptions of the languages and identity.

Pseudonym	Actively used language (s)	Self-perceived useful language skills	Self-perceived most-used language	Presence of emotional language attitude	Expressed identity
Research participants that moved to Finland in the late years of adolescence					
Valerija	Finnish Russian	Russian Finnish English	Finnish	-	“Global Russian”
Anastasija	Russian English Finnish	Russian English Finnish	Russian	Finnish (to some degree)	Russian, Russian- Finnish
Viktorija	Russian English Finnish	Russian Finnish English	English and Russian	English	“Not a Russian anymore, never been a Finn”
Research participants that moved to Finland in childhood					
Sofja	Finnish Russian	Russian Finnish	Russian and Finnish	Russian	Ingermalandian, “We are not totally Russian”
Alina	Finnish Russian	Finnish Russian	Russian and Finnish	Russian	Russian

Natalja	English Finnish	Russian English Finnish	English	-	“I feel more Finnish than Russian”
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Table 3 - The background of the research participants and their perceptions of the languages and identity.

6.1 Participant’s perception on language use

6.1.1 Reflections on the Finnish language

Finnish is used by all of the respondents to a varying degree, often based on their needs and skills. Three of the participants assessed their level of Finnish as fluent. However, disregard the reflections on language performance, Finnish is seen as a language of the environment. This environment often provides challenging situations in terms of language use, are based on different reasons. The most obvious reason is the language barrier, experienced either in the past or in the present:

“There were no Russians at that time in [town], whether you like it or not - you have to communicate with people.”(Anastasija).

“I use it [Finnish] mostly at work, because I have to, and most people don't really know English there. And, well, with people, since its Finland, some people start speaking Finnish.”(Natalja).

“Well, I suppose, at my work there are some people who don’t speak English very well - and they, somehow, distantiate from those who speak English well. If you know what I mean.”(Sofja).

All the participants mentioned that in a situation when there is a need to address a person in public, the Finnish language is used as a gesture of politeness and respect and also as a “safe” option:

“I don’t know what their language skills are, so I by default start with Finnish.”(Natalja).

The language barrier is perceived as an obstacle that one has to overcome, in order to emerge into the environment, to communicate with others. The importance of own effort in language learning in the given environment has been underlined by the majority of respondents, disregard the age during the migration event:

“Here I have already started to actively learn Finnish, because I needed to: I had to somehow communicate with others, with other children, with teachers, and on the go we have also been taught the English language.” (Alina).

Such self-emergence provides substantial ground for learning Finnish through informal ways - such as communication with language speakers in daily situations, at home (with Finnish-speaking relatives) and at work:

“As of now, in the family we have options to speak either English or Finnish - but I think that since I have learned Finnish so why would it go to waste.” (Valerija).

“Well, yes - at first it was an obligatory course at the university. And besides those [courses] I haven’t been visiting any, I already got to work and at work I have been learning it...well, I decided to learn it because it was necessary” (Viktorija).

This expressed necessity of learning Finnish is underlined by all participants. That strong stress on the necessity also provides the implications on the attitude towards language - the interest is present, yet the motivation is based on the obligatory feeling. That instrumental perception of Finnish (as opposed to a symbolic perception of Russian) in a way prevents the participants to see Finnish language learning as a leisure activity:

“I would like to watch series in Finnish more. I don’t watch them now. I would like to - but I don’t know, for some reason I don’t do it. Because there is so much [to do]...you know, the usual....and you feel like you are being at class.” (Viktorija).

At the same time, Finnish is seen as a medium of reciprocal cognition of each other, a way to present yourself to Finns, to tell own story and to submerge into culture:

“Besides, I also speak Finnish fluently- so they are interested to get to know some facts, simply - like, how is it in Finland for me, or how people live in Russia. The usual, interested. They have nothing against.” (Alina).

However, not only the environment bestows the language. The intrinsic motivation for the language skills improvement is present as well. It is often based on own critical self-assessment:

“Naturally, even by now I get some words, some Finnish words - new words - the meaning of which I don’t even know. And of course then I have to Google - “What is it? Translate!” - So yes - every day something new arrives.” (Alina).

“And Finnish, of course for now this is not at the dream’s limit - I would like to master it better.”(Sofja).

“In order for me to make it a habit. Because for many years I have been communicating in English, or in Russian - and I haven’t been using Finnish at all.”(Viktorija).

6.1.2. Reflections on the Russian language

The use of the Russian language is prevailing at home (for the participants whose family members speak Russian), in communication with friends and relatives who live in Russia, and with Russian-speaking acquaintances. When necessary, Russian is used in a formal environment, such as work. The language is viewed as a primary language by many to a varying degree. Sometimes the distinguishing between the “main” languages is challenging:

“In Russian... Well, I have a guess that anyway Russian will stay. It's easier for me, in Russian, to expound my thoughts, but...Finnish...is still very... it is also taking over in this battle, so to say. I am bi...how it is? Bilingual. Yes.”(Alina).

In many cases, the bilingualism is providing situational difficulties - the respondents mentioned that often they are asked to translate something, which they do willingly in an informal setting. Those experience assist in perceiving Russian as a very applicable skill for the future, especially for family and employment perspectives:

“I think it’s useful at work. Especially in Finland - it’s very useful. It’s going to help you get a job, if you know more.” (Natalja).

“Of course I would gladly go to such work where I could use the Russian language.”(Anastasija).

“And here are a lot of jobs that demand both of the languages.”(Alina).

While the Finnish language is viewed through the prism of its instrumental value, the application of Russian varies depending on a situation. The instrumental perception of the Russian language is seen in the utilisation of the “secret” aspect of this language:

“Depending on the people surrounding us - we might refrain from saying some certain words - and categorically use Russian only - so we wouldn’t be understood.”(Alina).

Using Russian as a secret language allows to include extra agenda to the instance of communication. At the same time, this implication suggests that the participants see the non-Russian speaking people in the environment as active members of the conversation disregard the absence of Russian language skill. For example, the following comment illustrates such inclusion:

“Naturally, everyone has their own train of thought - they combine the known words together - and if their names are mentioned - it's easy to get, to catch the essence of the talk.”(Alina).

It is possible to claim that the respondent closely associates with the environment, and the concept of language in general, indeed, seen as a tool. At the same time, the symbolic meaning of the Russian language is described by the strong emotional attitude of many respondents towards it, who are sure that others share the same awe:

“The Russian language is a rich language....this is well-known by everyone, everyone understands that, and, clearly, in Russian one can speak very beautifully, express oneself very beautifully and so on. Finnish is not that rich, but it has its positive sides - there are certain words that, once again, lacking in Russian.”(Alina).

The symbolic notion of the mother tongue is influencing the awareness of the need to preserve it:

“I think it's important to kind of master fluency in all of the languages that you know, especially when you already know them so well, especially if it's your mother tongue, and you have forgotten a lot of it, I think it's important to get it back.”(Natalja).

While fluency in Russian is important, the language skills are perceived from the position of language use. The necessity of learning Russian through interactions and from the environment is underlined:

“Russian is kind of lacking the environment to do that. It's only my mother, so - like I only speak it with mom, most of the times, and she has also lived the same, like, as long as me here, so her Russian is also...difficult.” (Natalja).

“It's natural, in order not to forget. The grammar - obviously...I watch movies in Russian, and in Finnish - in order to hear the language from the side.”(Alina).

6.1.3. Reflections on the English language

Several participants expressed their skills in English as fluent. Three of the respondents were initially using English after the migration event for a while - they were studying in English, and they had a possibility to be included into a Finnish Russian-speaking community (at the universities, through relatives or through work). The actual need to use Finnish for these participants was acute only at the daily routines (shops, health care, small conversations), and their comfort zone was secured by their fluent English skills - as mentioned earlier, the application of English is very high in modern Finland. However, they share the strong feelings of the necessity of learning Finnish on a fluent level, for various reasons that were identified as employment prospects, family well-being and inclusion to the local culture.

The previous history of the application of English has resulted in their perception of English as a language that provides the feeling of confidence in assertion of own power to navigate in the challenging situation. The English language is seen as a means of rescue. Moreover, it holds the value of an informational source, providing the feeling of empowerment:

“It has such an advantage - all the information in the world is in English - so knowing English you have such a great power.” (Viktorija).

At the same time, respondents remain critical towards their English skills. It is possible to assume that this questioning is a result of their cross-examination of all the languages that they speak. The way they refer to English learning is described as an ongoing process rather than a result, and it is probable that this self-assertion is interpolated through their broad linguistic horizon and experience in language use.

6.1.4. Implications of the bilingualism

Code switching is present in all cases, and the respondents are aware of it (as a contrast to Grosjean's (1982) definition when the individuals use that often unknowingly). The research participants perceive code switching in different ways, but mostly positive, often it held instrumental value. None of the participants expressed the difficulties that emerge from such practice, however, many try to avoid it based on personal critical attitude reason. For example, switching single words is seen slightly more negative than substituting the whole sentences, yet not crucial. Two participants explained their code switching as an instance of

“own language” that they use with other Russian-Finnish speaking friends and family members as a result of active use of both languages:

“It is also been named as some own language, the mixed one - even when we kind of speak in Russian, some Finnish phrases are glimpsing. Because not all the words could be translated word-by-word - so well that they have the meaning. The certain meaning, kind of...maybe something is lacking in Finnish that we have in Russian, and vice versa. “(Alina).

Others mentioned that using Finnish words while speaking to a Russian in Russia would be “silly”. Thus, the environment determines the linguistic behaviour. This illustrates the fact that the sociolinguistic competence is very well present in those cases:

“Well, with friends from Russia who live in Russia I don’t speak in this way. I only use Russian with them. But with those who live here, in Finland - I use everything.”(Viktorija).

“It happened so with me that I mistakenly addressed someone in English or in Finnish in Russia. And how did they react? Strangely. “(Viktorija).

The application potential of a language determines the attitude of the respondents towards the need of further improvement of skills in that language. It is partly explained by the existence of an abundance of the languages to navigate through, so the pragmatic attitude is present. An inapplicable language shifts to the background and sometimes is totally abandoned. For instance, in this quote of a respondent with self-assessed good skills in Russian and Finnish and moderate skills in English:

“..and on the go we have also been taught the English language (this is where I have then myself started to fathom, to learn bits on my own), naturally, we have been taught Swedish, too, but it has not left in me any trace... “(Alina).

The explanation for such shift is provided by participants to be a result of lack of interactions and application of a certain language:

“Russian has shifted to the background, because nowadays I use Russian only with my friends and my parents. Well, I started to notice, that, for example, the quality of the English language has gone worse a bit compared to what it used to be previously, because there is no actual practice. “(Valerija).

6.2 Participant's perception on confidence

6.2.1 Sources of confidence

According to the results of the analysis, the participant sources of confidence vary, but there are some very distinctive features that they share. To start with, Russian background is perceived as the strong source of confidence, which is often explained by the interest of others towards the “exotic”, unusual background and the feeling of belonging to a large group with rich culture and language. It is useful to note here that at the same time the perception of a country is divided into a perception of a country as a political state (towards the policy of which the participants have varying attitudes, from support to disapproval), and a perception of a country as a symbol for place of origin, for people and for culture. Sometimes, the Russian background as a source of confidence and pride is perceived as an opposition to the instances of an existing opinion in the same population segment:

“On the contrary to some others I am proud that I am from Russia. I tell it very proudly. “(Sofja).

Another source of confidence that is connected to the Russian background is being a speaker of a demanding language, acknowledging the fact that one is possessing rare but useful skills that provide assistance to others:

“... and of course people there don't speak, staff doesn't speak Russian, and then we have to...and the Russian people most of the time don't speak English, and then I have to go help, and they are so happy - like, somebody speaks Russian! And, of course, it's like, respect from staff as well that I speak Russian. “(Natalja).

As mentioned earlier, the Russian language is seen as an essential part of culture, a symbol that is also recognised by others, a source for cultural production and a language for affection. Such positivity in the perception of own mother tongue that is assured by the opinion of other people offers a potential for the confidence:

“...as much as I have talked to Finns, the ones who heard the Russian language - they tell it's interesting to listen to. So much of different intonations, a lot of emotions! (Laughs). Even in one sentence they could be.”(Anastasija).

For the three respondents who moved to Finland in their childhood, the migration event was connected with a lot of stress - a fear of the unknown, dependence on the decision of parent(s). Right now, as adults they find the sources for confidence in own power to make a decision:

“I’m an adult now...so I can travel, I am planning to visit St. Petersburg or even further, to visit relatives in [Russian town], to see them, they are left there.”(Alina).

The recognition of own double identity, the feeling of belonging and the strong emotional connection to both countries is perceived as a source of pride, when biculturalism perceived as a richness:

“I am proud that there is in me Russian blood and that I have a bit of Finland in me.”(Alina).

6.2.2. Challenges for confidence

The communicative competence provides the basis for the confidence when the language skills are self-assessed as fluent. Many respondents mentioned the lack of confidence in their languages especially regarding the grammar. Fluency in one or another language is constantly questioned by most participants, and all of them identify the need to develop the language skills further:

“My grammar - even if you write it in English letters but, in like... Russian words, the grammar still counts - like, I am kind of, also, conscious about it.”(Natalja).

This is especially visible in the context of the Russian language - the lack of communications with the “bigger group” (Russian residents) is perceived as a disadvantage that affects the language performance, thus providing shyness and application of extra effort:

“I don’t know, maybe I just have this experience with Russian, or like an idea of Russian people as being kind of perfectionists, and kind of really demanding - especially when that’s your own language and I feel kind of embarrassed in front of Russian people, like strangers, or new people. If they are Russian I feel like they’re going to judge me for not knowing Russian....properly. So I really try to actually speak Russian, most of time with them.”(Natalja).

The following quote illustrates the attitude towards the Russian language, however, the research participants demonstrated a holistic view on their languages, followed by the underlying need for constant improvement of language skills in all languages that they use. Sometimes that lack of confidence leads to rejection of the potential benefits provided by Russian background, in order not to embarrass oneself in terms of language:

“There’s been many people, already actually from businesses asking me to translate something, because the translations are...mostly like live, on the spot, not paper, then I say no, because I feel unconfident about it.”(Natalja).

Such situation is well-known for several participants. The lack of confidence usually occurs when the individual knows that they will be assessed by others (e.g. during the translation job). However, the instances of a successful navigation in a challenging communicative situation thrusts the acknowledgement of own power to manage such situations when they emerge again:

“I get stuck. A lot. If somebody asks something, and then... I have to explain something suddenly then, and I don’t know one word, then I get stuck, and I try...really hard to kind of explain the word in other terms, and everything.”(Natalja).

“Well yes, I knew not much words before - and now I know more - and I can drive out (“vyrulit”) from bigger amount of situations.”(Viktorija).

“At the grade 8 we were told: “Sorry, you have to”. And we had to. Let’s go! The programme from the previous year, count that, plus the 8th grade programme - so we passed it in a year and then in grade 9, too.”(Alina).

Confidence in use of Finnish is provided by the above-mentioned instrumental attitude towards the language, but it is not the only one element for this feeling to emerge. The Finnish language is seen quite strictly as means to navigate in the environment, and the level of the skill (self-assessed) has strong implications on the expressed confidence. The self-assessment, in turn, relies on the response of the other participants of the communication - the Finns. In their journeys, the research participants had been through various degree of helplessness in Finnish language - which led them to the awareness of inevitability of situations that demand using Finnish. In such settings, when one has a half-working instrument to convey thoughts to others, the others have to respond positively in order to provide resources

for confidence. The respondents mentioned the support provided by Finns who make every attempt to understand that level of Finnish:

“I wouldn’t say that I know totally everything - but at work - because I had to communicate - and people understand me - even though I make mistakes - in general, I feel confident. Like, I understand that I can deliver my idea, so such shyness, that used to be, is not present anymore.”(Viktorija).

At the same time, the respondents do not solely rely on the other members of conversation to be able to guess what exactly they are trying to say. The responsibility for the conversational outcome is perceived as the one that lays on the individual’s shoulders:

“Well, yes and if I know that there is such a situation that there is no one else - whether I like it or not I will have to find some words. That I know from my experience.”(Anastasija).

Overall, the respondents expressed that their linguistic confidence depends on a context, and without a pressure of a demanding situation the communication goes easier:

“Speaking Finnish is very easy for me. And, basically, Russian as well. Of course it depends on the situation - but as of normal communication...” (Anastasija).

” Like, just chit-chat and stuff? Yeah! Yeah, that works really fine.”(Natalja).

The stress that derives from the estimated, pre-assessed societal high expectations of performance in language use, often arises in work situations. The following quotation illustrates the opinion of one participant on the Finnish language:

”I use Finnish mostly at work still, well, not a lot but a bit - and in some complicated work process moments I am lacking the vocabulary to explain those moments. To think quickly, for instance. But when I’m writing emails, it’s very easy for me - I can sit down and check something out about the essence of the problem.”(Sofja).

Such feelings were expressed by several other participants in the cases when they were asked to translate something from Finnish into Russian in a more formal than usual environment (informal work events, a wedding):

“Because then I didn’t know all of that that I needed to translate, from Finnish - and I was very nervous - but I was told later that all went excellent (laughs). I was very worried, even my hands were shaking!”(Anastasija).

Those formal situations are acknowledged as requiring fast and correct response, which provides challenges for the research participants in terms of language confidence. At the same time, daily situations do not bring such pressure. The participants often mentioned the ease of shifting between the languages during meeting with friends or informal phone conversations:

“Many people were surprised - when you walk with some Finn - then I speak Finnish - but if the phone has called and then someone from Russians calls - then literally immediately - they look at me and are like: “How is this, is this that easy?” this goes automatically, I don’t get obsessed with it at all. Then [Husband] calls me and I am back to Finnish.”(Anastasija).

The lack of confidence in own language skills, disregard the actual proficiency, was described as an attribute of formal language use situations. It is possible to assume that such pressure is based on the awareness and distinction of the situations according to the level of perceived importance of self-representation as a language speaker.

6.2.3 Societal attitudes

As it was mentioned in the previous subchapter, overall Finns are seen as supportive when it comes to non-native Finnish language skills. The research participants stressed that the Finnish language is a major plus for a connection with Finns. Through the active language learning and language use, the respondents had been able to integrate to the society, find new friends, create families and make new connections.

However, becoming a part of new culture is viewed as a challenging process. One has to abstain from own stereotypes and prejudice, distantiate from the difficulties that were faced during the first years in a new country, get used to new circumstances and withstand the instances of negative responses to the expressed identity. As explained before, Russia and Finland have a long history together, and besides the positive outcomes of cultural exchange, some parts of that history have left a mark in a form of stereotypes. Many respondents had faced issues of a various degree with attitudes towards their expressed identity:

“I am very familiar... and sensitive to the stereotypes, that the Russian women...sometimes...have or represent or something.”(Natalja).

“The reactions of others are, naturally, somehow maybe I had caught some glances that...like, if I am speaking Russian in Finland - “Why are you speaking Russian, we live here”...like that. “(Alina).

However, the respondents often choose not to perceive it as a personal issue, denying the influence of stereotypes and presenting a healthy self-assessment as a source of confidence disregard the attitude of certain individuals:

“But the most popular stereotypes are negative, in my opinion. So I don’t identify with them or anything.”(Natalja).

“Well, no, I’m proud of me being from Russia. On the other hand, I have not had such unpleasant moments after telling that I am from Russia. I mean stereotypes and such. If [the reaction was] not adequate than at least I haven’t noticed that.”(Valerija).

“Yes, and later on at my class I haven’t had any problems [at] high school. Then also here in Oulu I have never had those issues. And I didn’t much pay attention to that somehow. It didn’t hurt me much.”(Anastasija).

Moreover, if such instance occurs when the negative attitude becomes visible (which the respondents underwent only in the childhood) they explain such behaviour of others as caused by external motivators. The cases of strong negativity or aggression are asserted when there is no knowledge of the aggressor on the real personality of the respondent.

Confidence is gained through the understanding that the rejection that happened in the past was non-personal and does not define the individual. The experience of the respondents provides them with an opportunity to see that this rejection is just another pole of the societal attitudes, where the welcoming and interest comprises the other pole. The following quotes reflect that their "otherness" is perceived by respondents as a difference that has a potential to provoke both negativity and support and interest. Negativity is seen as based on bias and is not taken personally. The support is explained from the natural interest of others to communicate with the respondent. The respondent’s uniqueness in terms of proficiency in both languages contributes to such interest as well:

“If we look from the very beginning, from the childhood - children were...confused, why? Not everyone accepted Russians, like, why did we move here? But now - totally on the contrary - I meet people who tell “Bravo!” - they are glad and proud of that, that I am Russian, for me, they are interested in communication.”(Alina).

“I have been bullied, for me being Russian, and treated me bad, based only on the fact that I am Russian. But it happened as well that people treated me well just because I am Russian. So, in a way - that is one of the reasons, too, why I devalue the background - because this is so very subjective.”(Viktorija).

At the same time, the confidence of the respondents is supported by the perception of own “otherness” as a common feature that all foreigners share. A sense of belonging to a bigger group of other “others” is contributed to by the repetition of the attitude being subjective:

“Some Finns have some slightly different attitude to any foreigners - it's harder for them to get used to the other (“drugim”) people.”(Sofja).

“In every country there is a reaction to the aliens’ (“chuzhie”) languages, and, moreover, it depends on a person how they react to a certain nation. “(Alina).

6.3 Participant’s perceptions of identity

6.3.1 Russianness, Finnishness, both or none?

The participants’ perception on identity showed a great variation. The short summary of those results is available in the Table 3 that includes the background of the research participants and their perceptions of the languages and identity.

During the interviews, the participants were asked to describe their perception of own ethnic identity. To some of them the whole idea of questioning own ethnic self-identification was new. Some others expressed that the thoughts had been appearing previously, and the concept of identity have been shifting, also examined and questioned:

“Well, surely, thoughts appeared many times, and many times my opinion on that topic was changing - and, finally, now after so many years have passed - I can tell that my self-identification is fully blended.”(Viktorija).

“Surely - those thoughts have occurred. And many Finns tell me: “You are a Finn, you are a native Finn” - but I reply “No, anyways, no”. I have Russian blood in me, and I have Russian mentality, and it is very different from Finnish, so I am Russian! “(Alina).

Feelings of belonging to both countries (to some extent) were reported by four out of six participants. The sources for this duality are various. For example, this quote illustrates the identity estimated through assumed perception of others:

“And here I am regarded as a Russian. Well, not anymore now, but I have never really thought about it. Born in Russia, moved to Finland, live here.”(Anastasija).

The Finnishness is associated with the place of residence, a new home. The perception varies from participant to participant in terms of degree of belonging, however the acknowledgement of the fact that their life journey was connected to Finland is always present:

“Usually when I introduce myself I tell that I am from Russia and live in Finland for many years. Something like Russian-Finnish comes out.”(Sofja).

“When I meet somebody new and they ask me where I am from, I always say I'm from Russia. But...I always at some point of the discussion, the conversation I always say that I feel more Finnish than Russian...because... I've lived here most of my life.”(Natalja).

The above-mentioned duality of belonging provides certain benefits for the respondents. One of these benefits includes an opportunity to shift between the identities depending on the setting and own goals:

“Probably in some certain moments this wish appears - you start to compare - that in Finland something would have been different. But usually you forget Finland while being in Russia and (laughing) Russia you also forget in the reverse [situation].”(Sofja).

Russianness, on the contrary to Finnishness, is often perceived as “a palette” that has a variety of dimensions. To some, the origin and ethnicity have potential to be a symbol for identity:

“So, if identifying by blood - I think that the “Russianness” is a very common notion.”(Valerija).

“The main point is - now I have the double citizenship, but in my birth certificate it is written that I am Russian. Even though in Russia we are regarded as Finns - Ingermalandians. “(Anastasija).

“If this happened in Finland I tell that I was born in Russia. Because I was born there. I never deny that. Because I know some people who try to be Finnish-Finnish as soon as they move here, and they don't even want to know any Russians.” (Anastasija).

At the same time, the ethnic background, even though being symbolic for the respondents, is not always important in terms of greater context of self-identification. The same person who acknowledges oneself in terms of ethnicity to be Russian, also underlines that this notion has a personal value, and is not necessary to be translated to the outer world:

“There are so many people nowadays that are from everywhere - they don't really identify with any place, so, when they tell me that they are from some...some nationality - I already automatically think that it's not necessarily what they identify with.” (Viktorija).

6.3.2 Sources for identity

During the interviews, some participants stated that their identities, indeed, had been shifting especially after the migration event. The new setting had prompted the inquiry of own background perception, and even though in some cases this process had been going “on the back of the brain”, the participants were able to analyse the timeline of change. The new country where they had spent many years had added something to their self-perception. The environment also determines the choice for the current identity, as well as the goals that the person wants to perceive in a certain situation by shifting from one to another:

“To be more exotic sometime, I would just say “Russia”, but it kind of blends in.”(Natalja).

By many respondents family is seen as a resource for feelings of belonging to Finland and the Finnish language. It relies on a feeling of connection to Finland being the place of life partner's origin, as well as the realisation that the children will inevitably belong to both cultures. Often also the example of parents is regarded as important to support the feeling of belonging to Finland:

“A primary [language], most likely it’s Finnish. Because at my family we communicate in Finnish.”(Valerija).

“My father always tells if there is a hockey game when Finns play with Russians - Ours versus Ours.”(Anastasija).

The description of Russia and Finland can take very poetic forms. This example illustrates how the perception of people is acquired through the perception of their language - even so that the respondent is comparing the countries with the adjectives that are used to describe the nature, where Finnish is perceived as a more tranquil, and Russian - very emotional language:

“I am proud that there is in me Russian blood and that I have a bit of Finland in me...That Russia is such a stormy (“burnaya”) land, and Finland, vice versa, is a still (“tihaya”) land, and this all is contained in me.”(Alina).

The languages are perceived as an essence of Russianness and Finnishness:

“I feel myself as a Finn and as a Russian. I always had the two languages - from my very birth - and I have not been obsessed with that. “(Anastasija).

This participant demonstrates a strong prevalence of Russianness with an acknowledgement of Finnishness. The same participant’s perception of the Russian language was one of the most emotional in the interview:

“Yes, they coexist for now very good, but Russia takes over - there is more of Russia. I think that anyway this Russia in me will stay, it will always be with me, and somehow I will be always linked to it.”(Alina).

Moreover, Russianness is very often viewed from the linguistic perspective, when language preservation plays a substantial role in communication with Russian-speakers inside and outside of Finland:

“It would be weird to speak Finnish with a Russian person.”(Natalja).

“I usually try rather to speak Russian, just Russian, with them... because it's a bit weird, switching to English with the Russian people especially...or Finnish [language].”(Natalja).

The opportunity to be emerged in the ethnic culture practices, communicate with language speakers even in the host country offers another source for the duality of feelings of belonging:

“[The future] is maybe more [linked] with Finland, if I will stay, it's whatever - there are a lot of Russians here, Russian-speakers.”(Alina).

At the same time, the criticism of straightforward distantiation from the host culture is also present:

“They are like, find Russian people, connect and they don't really practice English or Finnish.” (Natalja).

The influence of the languages to the self-identification is also determined by seeing self as a link between cultures, a guide, a translator that belongs to one culture but fully including oneself to another one in order to provide a medium of communication:

“I would go there to introduce my country to other people, or the foreigners, since I know the ways around and everything.” (Natalja).

“I mean, even though I don't know Russian. I mean I'm not fluent in Russian anymore, I'm not perfectly familiar with everything what's happening there - but I still have the connection there, I still know something - and that helps, that little something also helps a lot.”(Natalja).

“Well, usually if I need to translate for someone - when someone asks: “Help me, what does that mean?” And there is some text in Finnish. Then I translate. Or vice versa- if someone needs a translation into Finnish.”(Anastasija).

”Besides, I also speak Finnish fluently- so they are interested to get to know some facts, simply - like, how is it in Finland for me, or how people live in Russia. The usual, interested. They have nothing against.”(Alina).

The impact of such emergence into the Finnish culture is identified as resulting from the Finnishness to gradually “take over”. One of the reasons for this shift is the weakening feeling of connection to the own culture, due to the connections left behind in the country of origin:

“..It used to be very strong in the first years, maybe in the first 7 years, or something like that. But after that, I’ve started gradually feeling more and more estranged with Russia.”(Natalja).

“I think as a child I was...really comfortable in Finland, because I didn't care about the language difference, I was learning Finnish, and I was using it, so it was pretty good, but...I think the environment was a big, a huge difference. I didn't miss the [Russian] language as much as the environment or ...people.”(Natalja).

“But it is harder in a way that I lived in Russia for so long and I acquired something there. Friends, some kind of reputation you already have at the old place, and also a family, the support - then you are being ripped out from there and moved to a totally another environment where you are alone and everything is very unusual.”(Viktorija).

“I have a lot of friends left there.”(Anastasija).

These feelings provide the support of the idea that being Russian means to be included in the life of the Russian community in Finland, and when such inclusion does not happen for one reason or another - the perception of own Russianness is fading away:

“I haven't been in one of those [Russian group meetings], I didn't feel the need to - because I've had my mom, so... and, since I was a kid, I've already integrated - like, I integrated into the Finnish society fast, and now I feel so...far from...being Russian. So, I don't know - I could go there just for curiosity, to see what kind of people they are, but not really for my own sake.”(Natalja).

6.4 Further comments on the data

A source for identity inquiry is also provided by a perception of self as a link between cultures, a medium for communication (voluntary translations, telling stories about Russia, travel to Russia with others to show what Russia is):

“Besides, I also speak Finnish fluently- so they are interested to get to know some facts, simply - like, how is it in Finland for me, or how people live in Russia. The usual, interested. They have nothing against.”(Anastasija).

It was interesting to see how the participants saw Finland as a country. For example, in this quote, Finland is perceived as a homogenous country in terms of population, contrarily to Russia:

“ [Mother-in-law], well, her mom had showed me a huge folder - she found a whole electronic catalogue, all the relatives starting from year 1500 - all the generations - who was born where, who died when, who married whom - who is whose brother etc. Even though, think about it - Finland is a small country - maybe it's easier. Especially the surnames - if you hear some surname you know where is this person from.” (Valerija).

Denial of country of origin's interpolation to identity is also worth commenting on. The attitude towards the home country is based on comparison of the two countries that results in a wish to improve life in the present day for Russia. The modern Russia is seen as a state, not as a source of cultural heritage:

“Honestly speaking, I am not very proud of my country. I don't support very much its actions and that way how everything goes on there - you know yourself - you can compare - in Finland everything is a bit better, and you can actually really compare and realise that in Russia, too, everything can be much better, but for some reason it is not done. Probably someone just doesn't care - or something.” (Viktorija).

At the same time, the same individual sees the identity holistically, where central piece is given to the individual's self-identification. The necessity for adaptation to the environment is underlined and its importance is stressed because the ability to adapt to something has a potential to provide genuine love for something:

“Me, as a person - as in Russia, as in Finland - I am the same. But I do adapt to circumstances, somehow. There is no such thing for me as my Russianness - something that I am used to in Russia - disturbs my life here. In reality, during these years I got very much used to live here - and all the Finnish traditions somewhat - not all, but some - are already mine, too. But in the context of culture - I don't see anything hard - human still adapts, however you put it. You get used to that and it's not so scary anymore, like in the beginning - and you start to even love something.” (Viktorija).

There appeared also some thoughts worth considering in the interview when the respondent's ethnic background was discussed. The importance of someone's background was perceived as diminishing, especially in the modern time:

"There are so many people nowadays that are from everywhere - they don't really identify with any place, so, when they tell me that they are from some...some nationality - I already automatically think that it's not necessarily what they identify with."(Natalja).

"Everybody has a background - so it shouldn't be evoking any negative emotions at least."(Natalja).

A rejection of the importance of own background was explained as based on the idea of unitary nature of people, where the attitudes and bias are strictly subjective. Such unification of "human nature" and a denial of the concept of "otherness" serves as a source for confidence, because the differences do not need to be taken too seriously:

"After you had lived, minimum, in two countries - you realise that everything is not so.....serious. In reality - there are so much more similarities between people, and everywhere (laughs). This is why - answering your question - does my background play a role - I can tell that not at all. When I lived in Russia - it had a role, yes, and now - already not. Nowadays no one's background plays a role. What plays - is what kind of person it is."(Viktorija).

At the same time, the uniqueness of one's own ethnic background is rejected based on the idea of similarity with many others in the same situation:

"Everyone had same roots - well maybe a part was Karelian, but a very small part, and most spoke Finnish and also had Finnish surnames. I didn't have such thing. It's of course very pleasant to hear: "Wow you are from Russia" - or, vice versa - in Russia people ask if I live in Finland - but actually now it's not that surprising in Russia - Where do you live? In Finland - Ok - many people moved there. This somehow doesn't exist anymore."(Anastasija).

7 DISCUSSION

In this chapter I am going to discuss the aim and the research task of this thesis, which is to find answers to a question how women of Russian origin in Finland portray their reality. However, it is necessary to emphasise that the results of this research do not provide basis for generalisation, since those are personal stories of a very small group (six women). Not only the origin and background of the research participants is heterogeneous, and so is their command of Russian and Finnish (and sometimes Swedish or English, too). It is worth mentioning, that this study is not aimed to offer an evaluation of research participants' use of languages while investigating *the application* of those languages as tools for communication in their daily environment, but rather to explore the confidence, with which those languages are used.

Two of the research participants who had moved to Finland in their early childhood identified the Finnish language to be their second mother tongue. The third participant that shares the same background but has been exposed to English as a language that was used at home besides Russian, expressed the similar perception of English. According to Grosjean (1982), this is an instance of the simultaneous bilingualism.

Zamyatin et al. (2012) define mother tongue as a language that fulfils certain criteria, including the person's age of language acquisition, the type of language acquisition, the language competence of an individual and, finally, the ethnic identity of an individual. In the three above-mentioned cases those requirements in terms of Finnish (and in one case English) were fulfilled: all women acquired the second mother tongue in the early age from parental figures. Their competences in those languages are high, self-assessed as "fluent", and the ethnic identity in part corresponds to the second mother tongue.

The other three women who moved to Finland during their late adolescent years have immersed themselves into the Finnish language, however, their linguistic journey was a bit different. Besides the Russian language, all three of them possessed fluent skills in English, which in a way determined the prevalence of English as a language for communication with the new environment - as has been mentioned previously, Finns usually have good skills in English. The linguistic landscape of those three women allowed them to make a choice in terms of the adoption of Finnish. The demand for fluency in Finnish was evaluated by them as definitely necessary, resulting in the wish to turn Finnish into their second most used

language. Still very often English is seen as an important back up, means for communication that provides comfort due to the assessed language competence. At the same time, the respondents often wish to utilise Finnish as often as they can.

The multilingualism of those women provides an interesting ground for inquiry. As described by Grosjean (1982), the language fluency often is proposed as the main criterion in describing a person's bi- and multilingualism, however, my respondents often mention the challenges that the Finnish language provides for them. At the same time, these women are accepted by the members of two different linguistic communities, which goes in line with the revised criteria for a bilingual person. (p.230). In his description of bilingualism, Grosjean refers to Haugen's (1969) view of fluency as a continuum with a potential for gradations (Grosjean, 1982, p.230) - and this is the case presented by those three respondents.

The inquiry of the connection between the perceptions of own identity and language confidence yielded a variety of outcomes. However, based on the data from this study, it is possible to claim that in the examined cases the linguistic confidence in a certain language offers a source for self-perceived confidence in communication, as argued by Tramontana, Blood, and Blood (2013) which, in turn, influences the decision of an individual to include themselves in certain linguistic environment. That environment is further learnt through communication with the language speakers, as well as through inclusion into cultural activities and practices. This inevitably leads to emergence of interest towards the culture and further involvement that, in turn, provides a feeling of immersion. Such immersion elicits the inner comparison of host culture with home culture in the contexts of the country (seen as a state and as a home), societal attitudes (positive and negative) and the language.

The results of this comparison in this study were positive in relation to both Finland and to Russia, yet four out of six respondents mentioned Finland as a more comfortable place to stay disregard the potential language difficulties. It is noteworthy that the language attitude inquiry yielded other results - as reviewed in the analysis chapter, two out of six participants demonstrated strong affectionate feelings towards the Russian language, disregard own assessment of language skills. Those same two individuals have stressed their strong identification with Russia (one of them also underlined the duality of own ethnic identity). The language is seen not only as a reflection of a culture, but as a source of culture, thus supporting the view of Bucholtz and Hall (2003).

The dynamic perspective on identity construction that is described by Bucholtz and Hall (2003) is present in the results. The factors that affect the identity construction are often regarded to include the social attitudes towards the language group (Jaspal, 2009; Grosjean, 1982). Different attitudes had been faced by the majority of participants. The duality of those attitudes provided an interesting effect - being subject to both stereotypes and curiosity, the majority of respondents had developed a healthy view towards those instances. This view includes the understanding of the phenomenon of “otherness” being subjective and situational, thus varying depending on the environment and setting. It goes in line with the theoretical assumptions of Joseph (2006) on the connection of the concept of identity to the understanding of members of different cultures being “us” and “them”. Own “otherness” is perceived as an attribute that can provoke both interest and negativity. While the interest of Finns towards research participants as mediums of information about their culture was not described as a disturbing issue, the negativity was seen as based on bias towards the group as a whole and thus not taken personally. Moreover, the sources for negativity were explained by research participants as external (e.g. historical issues, political tension, media bias, parents’ talks’ influence on children, etc.) and thus the instances of hostile behaviour are asserted as the lack of knowledge on the real personality of the research participant.

So, has a clear answer been found to address the main research question of this study? According to the results, there is a connection between feeling of confidence in the language use and identity construction of the respondents. The languages that these women utilise daily, as well as the situations where they apply those languages have strongly influenced their feelings of confidence. An interesting origin of the feeling of confidence is a memory of a challenging experience from the past (e.g. a difficult language use situation) that yielded positive results due to individual’s sociolinguistic competence (Canale, 1983; Canale & Swain, 1980).

The confidence originates from some other sources as well. One of them is a perception of self as an individual with a rich background in terms of culture and language. The Russian language seen as an important part of self, an essence of Russianness and is inevitably connected with the ongoing inquiry in terms of identity, which goes along with the approach towards a language being a symbolic resource for identity construction by Bucholtz and Hall (2003). Such view on the language is supported by the growing interest of Finns towards the individuals who not only know Russian but can communicate with them in either Finnish or

English. The respondents do not oppose being a source of interest, they see the process as a reciprocal cognition of each other's culture and habits.

Current environment of research participant provides background for the improved feeling of confidence. The societal attitude towards Russian-speaking inhabitants of Finland is perceived by the respondents as neutral or even positive. The own uniqueness in the linguistic background offers hope for successful future, with Russian as a potential positive attribute in the career life or as a gift to the (future) children. Such uniqueness sometimes is seen only in terms of language, not the background - the Russianness is determined by fluency in the Russian language, not by ethnicity or culture.

8. VALIDITY, RELIABILITY AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As described by Simon and Goes, Pereira (2012, p.19) explored the thoroughness in phenomenological research, and came to a conclusion that in order to be regarded valid, a phenomenographic study “*must take into consideration methodological congruence (rigorous and appropriate procedures) and experiential concerns that provide insights in terms of plausibility and illumination about a specific phenomenon*”. (Simon & Goes, 2011, p.2). In this subchapter the potential limitations of the study, as well as its validity, reliability and other considerations are overviewed.

This study has been undertaken for a specific purpose in a specific, certain and relatively small group of participants that, even though belonging to a greater group, could be considered as a specific group. The results cannot be generalised to represent the conceptions of the whole Russian-speaking minority - the meaning of this research is rather to shed light on the views that exist in a smaller segment of a population group.

Since the topic of the present study was personal descriptions of a somewhat unusual and definitely unique personal experience, the research participants needed to be invited to participate. (Kvale, 1996). It is acknowledged that this reduces the trustworthiness of the results, yet, I chose purposive sampling to identify the primary participants. The selection of interview participants was based on my assessment and determined by the purpose of the research looking for those whose experiences was related to the topic of the research. The fact that all of the research participants knew the researcher beforehand was considered as an implication to the success rather than failure, since such setting had offered them a feeling of comfort and sense of security, as the trust was already established between us beforehand.

In order to ensure ethical research I utilised the informed consent. In order to avoid inflicting counter-productive consequences of deception, I refrained from exposing any major interview questions during the initial introduction of the research topic to the potential research participants. In order to provide information on the research topic to potential interviewees, I have followed the procedure described by Thomas Groenewald (2004). According to him, the first step consists of providing information of the purpose of the research without stating the central research question. The next step is to discuss the procedures of the research with the interviewees. Further on, a brief overview of the risks and benefits of the research should be offered to the participants. The voluntary nature of research participation should be

clearly stated, and the informant's right to stop the research at any time should be underlined. The procedures that are used to protect confidentiality should also be discussed (Groenewald, 2004, p. 10). The emphasis on the confidentiality of data has helped to promote sincere responses. For the purposes of confidentiality, the names of the participants have been switched to the pseudonyms, and all the details that could compromise the anonymity of the participants, such as spouses/partners names, places of origin and so on have been marked out of the interview transcripts. As to the interview recordings, the participants were assured that they will be kept confidential, thus in case they provide a source of further interest for examination, the transcript with marked out personal details in either Russian or English will be presented on request.

Five out of six interviews were conducted in the Russian language, whereas the sixth one in English at the request of the participant. In order to utilise the data, the recordings of the interviews have been translated into English by the researcher. My previous professional experience with English-to-Russian translations, as well as a degree in the field allows to claim the relative accuracy of the translations. During the translation process, I have made all possible attempts to preserve the meanings of the original data. In some cases, a very peculiar words were used to describe attitudes, and in the translated outcomes explanations of the meaning of such words have been added along with the Russian word reference in brackets.

In connection to the actual interview process procedure, an ethical concern has been taking into consideration during the interview process. As it has been reviewed by Paradis (2013, p.86) Richardson (1999, p. 69) mentions that during the process of the interview, some participants experience a deep connection with the researcher since they are telling their story to someone that is truly and genuinely interested in their experiences. That, in turn, might inflict a counselling role on a researcher, which should be avoided. I kept that in mind while conducting interviews, and I need to note that I have acknowledged the emergence of potential pitfalls during some interviews.

To insure validity of this research, I have placed all efforts to apply bracketing technique to remain as most objective as possible by "bracketing" my own preconceptions before entering "*into the individual's lifeworld and use the self as an experiencing interpreter*" (Miller & Crabtree 1992, p. 24, quoted by Groenewald, 2004, p.13). The concept of "the Epoche", a

term used by Husserlian school of thought in phenomenography that describes the researcher's' position as "*to abstain*" (Groenewald, 2004, p.13), was also utilised during the reciprocal dialogues.

The invariable hazard of equipment failure during both the interview process as well as during the data storage and processing has been borne in mind. Multiple copies on several carriers and extra batteries have been inventoried before every interview

Finally, my own experiences that fitted to the participant criteria requirements created a bias that had potential to inflict limitations on my analysis. I fully realised that in the early stages of the research and strived to be aware of those biases and set them aside.

9 CONCLUSION

The process of this research have yielded results in terms of experiences of the Russian women about their perception of the cultures that they feel they belong, the languages that they speak and their view of own identities. These results, unified to some degree, describe the attitudes of those women to the realities they live in. The events from the past have been forming those attitudes, however, the present and future have something to say in that context as well. The findings of this research offer a glance to life of Russian-speaking women in the modern Finland from the perspective of the research participants.

The decision to commit to a different country is always not easy, especially for a Russian woman, whose culture often emphasises her role in a society as a future mother. In such perception, along with other maternal responsibilities, the woman is regarded to be a medium that transfers cultural values to her children. This implication provides a point of pressure in terms of feelings of belonging and own identity for the woman who had faced a migration event.

However, the cultural perception also offers a source for confidence: historically, in Russia it was women who were supposed to leave the paternal home after marriage, in order to build her own family through joining to another kin. Traditionally, this has been reflected through the change of a surname - as contrasted to some other cultures, in the new family in Russian culture it is the woman who takes the surname of a man. In the modern Russia, the decision of surname change is often seen as a personal choice, but such "home leaving" practices are widely described in fairy tales and stories that girls heart in their childhood. The mobility for Russian women is not something that is unknown in the modern times. From the times of "Dekabrists" when women followed their husbands to exile, until today- especially if the husband has to change place of residence due to work demands.

However, such mobility often happens in the context of a variation of own culture. The context of immigration provides a vaster field for redefinition of own identity. The new language and the gradual immersion into the new life offers new means for self-assessment in terms of belonging. In the new setting, through own linguistic background that comprises the languages that she knows and the languages that she is learning, a woman often participates in a number of groups that also form different environments. That places her into various situations that demand a choice in terms of language use and self-representation as well as self-

perception. Depending on the context, some identities become more important than others. Sometimes an identity is displaced by another one in a new situation.

Undoubtedly, the attitude of the surrounding society influences the process of adaptation and well-being of the new members of the given society. The confidence of the women in different situation relies on their healthy self-assessment. This assessment is reflected, for instance in terms of seeing herself not as a subject for stereotypes but rather a source for cultural exchange; in terms of language use - the trust in own power to be able to navigate in a challenging linguistic situation.

Each individual interprets the significance of an identity in their own way, as different factors hold different values for each person. The major changes in everyday life and environment that inevitably follow the immigration event prompt the shift in the individual's perception of self in terms of the new situation. In search for own identity young women encounter various difficulties: the necessity to learn a new language, withstand controversial attitudes and organise their lives. In such process, naturally, the comparison of the aspects of "the new" versus "the old" takes place, providing the space for new attitudes, re-evaluation and, probably, more questions.

This research aimed to provide an overview of the phenomena of feelings of belonging in terms of language use. The emotional aspects of the ways that the research participants handle their languages have been explored, as well as and their attitudes towards the languages that they command. At the same time, the results have illustrated the extent to which the language of a certain group becomes a moving power in one's decision to adopt a new dimension to own perspective on identity. This study takes part in the discussion on the very essential part of life of Russian-speaking inhabitants of Finland. It is possible to claim that the topic of identity of individuals who find their place between two, sometimes more cultures will always be a source of interest. Fluid, adjusting with time, going through the new challenges, the perception of own feelings of belonging towards a language and culture is constantly re-defined. It would be interesting to conduct a similar study in several years in the same group in order to record those fluctuations and somehow get a grasp of that fluidity.

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APPENDIX 1

(1) Respondent's background:

- Let's start with where we are today. Have you always lived here?
- What brought you here?
- Where do your parents come from?
- Do you visit Russia often? Do you miss it? Why/Why not?

(2) Language use and confidence:

- Which languages do you speak? Where did you learn them?
- Which language do you consider as your mother tongue?
- Is it your primary language? How often do you normally use it?
- If your mother tongue is not your primary language, which one you would consider it to be?
- Thinking of **all** the languages you know, in which situations do you use them, and with whom?
- How well do you think you master the other languages? Do you feel confident using the other languages? Why? Why not?
- Do you mix the languages, when you speak with certain people, in certain situations? (For example, switching from Finnish to Russian in the middle of discussion, or do you use Finnish words when speaking Russian, or English words when speaking Finnish etc.) Do you think that it could cause challenges for communication in some situations?
- How do you feel about the different languages? Do you enjoy speaking one language more than the others, and do you have a feeling that one language is more respected than other languages for example in Finland, or in Russia?
- Would you like to improve your competence in one or all of the languages you know? Why? Why not?

(3) Ethnic identity:

- How do you identify yourself in terms of ethnicity and why?
- Is your background a source of pride, confusion, discomfort or something else?
- How do others react to your perceived and expressed identity?