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SWEDISH AND FINNISH IN FINLAND - THE DECLINE OF A HEGEMONY

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Introduction

My task in this symposium "The Minority Language: Official Status and Reality in Education" is to present a case study of Finland to illustrate a course of development that has led from a situation where a dominant minority language has lost its former privileges and its speakers now feel their existence as a viable cultural group is threatened.

I will first present a brief historical sketch of the linguistic situation in Finland up to the present. After that I will describe the situation in the language teaching program in the Finnish educational system. I will conclude by describing the current scene and some preliminary results of a large-scale study of language needs in Finnish industry which now being written up.

Issues and Developments in Language Policy

The issues and developments related to language polidy in Finland cannot be understood without providing a historical background. This will be briefly sketched in this chapter.

There have been several waves of migration to Finland going back to 4000 B.C. and even earlier according to archeological findings. These people probably spoke a Finno-Ugric language as did those people who moved from the Baltic around the beginning of the Christian era. Swedish-speaking people have lived on the western and southern coast permanently from about 1000 B.C. but there had been at least temporary settlements hundreds of years before. The Catholic religion was spread from Sweden to Finland and by the end of the 13th century Sweden had extenbded its rule to the eastern parts of the country. The eastern parts of the country, Karelia, showed a much clearer influence of Kiev and Novgorod and adopted the eastern form of Christianity (Greek Orthodox). Due to the strong role of the German Hansa trade, German was frequently used, especially in the town of Viipuri (Viborg) in Karelia and German was sometimes used in official documents subnmitted to the courts there. It was also used there in some schools as the language of instruction.

The majority of the population spoke only Finnish, especially in all areas off the coast. It has been estimated that there were about 70 000 Swedish-speaking people living in Finland around 1600 (approximately 17.5 % of the entire population). The maximum absolute number of Swedish-speaking Finns was about 355 000 in 1940 (9.5 %) and has slowly decreased, mainly due to migration to Sweden, to about 300 000 in 1980 (6.3 %). (For more detailed information on demographic trends, see Table 1). They have always lived in the coastal areas in western and southern Finland.

TABLE 1. Size of Swedish speaking population in Finland, 1610 - 1979 (Source:

Allardt & Starck, 1981, p. 107)

Year	Number	%_of_total_population	Source
1610	70.000	17.5	Estimate
1749	87.200	16.3	Estimate
1815	160.000	14.6	Estimate
1880	294.900	14.3	Population register
1890	322.600	13.6	Population register
1900	349.700	12.9	Population register
1910	339.000	11.6	Population register
1920	341.000	11.0	Population register
1930	342.900	10.1	Population register
1940	354.000	9.5	Population register
1950	348.300	8.6	Census
1960	330.500	7.4	Census
1970	303.400	6.6	Census
1979	301.554	6.3	Census

Bilingualism was quite frequent among clergymen, officers, business people and artisans in coastal towns. Finnish was used occasionally in official contexts. The growing dominance of Swedish can probably be attributed mostly to Sweden's becoming a major European power due to several military conquests. This also brought along increased economic and cultural activity with more need for written codumentation. Earlier many official transactions had been handled orally and the Finnish could also be used. This development was sealed in the school ordinance of 1649 which made Swedish the language of instruction (in addition to Latin that had earlier been used) but made no provision for Finnish. In the 1700's Swedish became the sole language of instruction in secondary education.

Thus the growing dominance of Swedish in Finland is largely due to the process of modernization and bureaucratization of a growing political power. More civil servants were needed to manage the growing written records and many came from Sweden. When Russia occupied Finland at the beginning of the 19th century, many civil servants fled to Sweden and grew accustomed to speaking only Swedish. Many did not return when the hostilities were over and were replaced by civil servants born and raised in Sweden.

After some 700 years of Swedish rule, Finland became part of the imperial Russia in 1809 after Russia's victorious war against Sweden. While the war was still going on, Czar Alexander I convened the diet in the spring of 1809 and promised to uphold the current law, the social order and special privileges. The position of Finland as a Grand-Duchy was unique: a loose personal union with the Czar, represented by a Governor General, with its own government (senate), its old law and law courts, its own money and central bank, and its independent foreign trade. The exception to this autonomy was foreign and military policy. Such a favourable treatment has its rewards: Finland remained loyal and calm during the Polish uprisings in 1830 and 1863 and during the Crimean War of 1853-1855. Numerous Finns obtained high ranks in Russian civil service and army whereas Finnish civil service was not open to Russians. Russian was first made compulsory in schools but became optional in 1862. The relatively independent status of finland can be illustrated further by the fact in the early 20th century several political figures, including Lenin, took refuge in Finland to escape

imprisonment.

During the first decades of the Russian regime cultural influences from Europe gave birth to romantic nationalism among the educated classes in Finland. This had been preceded by an attempt, which has a parallel earlier in Sweden, to glorify Finland's position as a nation. This movement, called Fennophileism, tried to show that Finns could be traced back to Babel. The later stage of the national romantic movement was strongly influenced by the German philosophers Herder and Hegel. One of the most ardent "Fennomans" was Adolf Ivar Arwidsson, who crystallized the position of the large Finnish-speaking majority in a slogan: "We are not Swedes, we do not want to become Russians, let us be Finns". The most influential voice in the language debate was that of Johan Vilhelm Snellman often called Finland's national philosopher, who studied in Germany and was strongly influenced by hegelianism. In a number and articles Snellman outlined his rationale for "national awakening".

According to Snellman, culture which is not national, cannot be real, general human culture. It remains external behavior, like the conditioning of a dog or an ape. Such culture lacks independence and all power to develop. The culture of an entire nation cannot be mere imitation, borrowed from other nations, but must instead have its own form derived from its own national spirit. But the independent culture of a nation must be expressed in the own language. Language is such a product of culture that it expresses a nation's peculiar way of conceptualizing things and their causes, mentally portraying and thinking of sensory and extrasensory things. A nation can become aware of itself and of its particular nature only through engaging in cultural pursuits - including science and literature - in its own language. In Snellman's words:

It may be taught: a sound is merely a sound, a language is like another language, they only express the same thoughts in different ways. But a human being does not only express his thoughts in words: he believes and feels, knows and wills in his words; his thoughts, his whole rational being moves and lives in language. How could the spirit of a nation express itself in any other language than its own?

In the 1869's the old system of the four estates - the aristocracy, the clergy, the burghers and the peasants - was replaced more and more clearly by linguistic representation in the senate: the Finnish party, the Swedish party and the Liberals. Many Swedish-speaking people, who were in favor of developing culture in the Finnish language, were against rapid changes, since they thought that Swedish culture was the main quarantee of the preservation of western culture in finland. Finnish was considered an undeveloped language, which could not easily be used to exzpress cultured ideas and thoughts. There were also some voices warning about the negative effects if the Finns "prone to collectivism, passivity, and suggestion" were to dominate at the expense of Swedish-speaking people known for their "Germanic spirit of nation-building, energy, and manliness" (Allardt and Starck, 1981)

The complicated and prolonged cultural struggle, "the language feud", ended in victory for the Fennomans. This was concretized in the Language Edict of 1983, issued by Czar Alexander II in his capacity as the Grand Duke of Finland, that insured the Finnish language equal status with Swedish in official transactions. A grace period of twenty years was granted due to the deficient knowledge of Finnish by many civil servants. Development in other areas was also rapid. finnish became an elective school subject in secondary schools in 1841, the first Finnish-speaking secondary school was founded in Jyväskylä in 1858, and the first training school for Finnish-speaking primary school teachers in the same town in 1863.

The idyllic situation as the autonomous Grand Duchy ended towards the end of the 19th century. In 1890 the postal system of Finland was incorporated with that of Rusia and the final blow came in February 1899 when the Czar declared in the so- called Manifesto of February that Finland's special privileges were cancelled. The purpose was to make Finland a closer part of Russia, give Russian citizens the same rights as Finnish citizens had (codified in the Equal Status Act of 1912). Russian was made the official language of the Senate,

government agencies, and in some schools, and the number of lessons for the teaching of Russian in schools was increased (1900). All these measures were strongly resented and resisted, and the old loyalist attitudes turned to a spirit of opposition and created a lowly growing movement that stressed the need for national independence.

The link with Russia was severed in 1917, when the new Soviet regime acknowledged Finland's declaration of independence. This happened after a period of armed conflict, which is variably called the war of national liberation or the civil war depending on what aspect is emphasized.

In the new republic the positions of Finnish and Swedish differed greatly from the situation in the previous century. The language edict of 1902 had already laid down that in monolingual comunities the local language was to be used in official contexts, in bilingual communities the language of the majority was to be used, and all citizens had the right to handle their cases in court in their mother tongue. Since 1902, which finally secured the rights of the Finnish-speaking majority, the major issue in language policy has been how to maintain Swedish as a national and functional language in Finland.

The Constitution (1919) guarantees that Finnish and Swedish are the national languages of the republic. Each citizen has the right to use his or her mother tongue in all official contexts in matters that concern him or her. Such rights, and the material and cultural needs of both language groups, are to be satisfied on equal basis. The linguistic status of each local unit of selfgovernment is determined by the Language Act of 1922, amended in 1975 in the interest of the swedish-speaking minority. The community is bilingual if the minority amounts to 8 % of the total population or is a least 3000 people. The status of each comunity is assessed every ten years, after the national census. A community cannot be declared monolingual unless the share of the minority has dropped below 6 %, and the Government can grant special dispensation for ten years even if that figure is not reached. Such regulations make the language policy in Finland comparatively speaking one where the rights of a linguistic minority are very effectively protected. The Province of]land Islands was recognized to belong to Finland and it was demilitarized by the decision of the League of Nations (1921). The population was guaranteed a high degree of autonomy and the position of Swedish was given strong unilingual guarantees.

The Lapps (Såmis), the autochthonous population of the northern part of the whole of Scandinavia, speak a language which is related to Finno-Ugric languages. The Såmi language and Finnish are, however, mutually unintelligible. Såmi people live in Norway (30 000), Sweden (15 000), Finland (5000) and the Soviet Union (2000). The language rights of the Såmi people are not officially recognized although some arrangements have been made quite recently to have instruction in their own language and make Såmi a school subject as well. this has been facilitated by the fact that the Såmis have been able to agree on a common orthography.

Although there is only an official recomendation that Såmi pupils in finland ought to be instructed in their mother tongue as far as possible, most schools in the Såmi area have arranged teaching in Såmi during the nine-year period of compulsory education. Såmi is also taught in the upper secondary school and it was included in the external Matriculation Examination for the first time in 1980. The Scandinavian Såmi Conference is working consistently to go beyond such "voluntary" recognition of the language rights of Såmis and make the Såmi language a statutory oficial language (National Board of General Education, 1981).

Emergence of Self-classified Language Groups

Language groups were created as social units by the national awakening in the 1800's. Conditions for classifying the Swedish- speakers as a group were created by the emergence of Fennomans (advocates of the Finnish-speaking culture) and Svecomans (advocates of the Swedish-speaking culture). Before that the links between the different Swedish-speaking

provinces had not been especially close and there had been no crystallized sense of identity. The Swedish Folk Party, officially established in 1906, successfully combined the interests of the two distinct elements of the Swedish-speaking population: the urban "cultured" groups and the rural groups. The importance of the monolingually Swedish rural areas with their own popular culture was stressed. Even a sizable part of the Swedish-speaking workers have traditionally voted for the clearly predominantly middle- class, and to a lesser extent upper-class, Swedish Folk Party. The Swedish-speaking population has clearly become more middle- class since the beginning of the present century, measured in terms of their occupational position.

The second stage of the language feud in the 1920's and 1930's, during which the new "Fennomans" used the slogan "make Finland Finnish" and advocated delegating Swedish to local use, helped to cement the philosophy of "one nation with two nationalities" and "patriotism and Swedish identity" among the Swedish-speaking population of Finland. The Swedish-speaking population in Finland is by international standards generally judged to be unusually strongly anchored to its native country. Sweden is a neighbor but Finland is the home. Finland is their native country and Swedish is their native language. This is manifested in the current usage: in both Swedish and Finnish, they are referred to literally as "Finland-Swedes" (finlandssvenskar, suomenruotsalaiset) or perhaps in better English "Swedish-Finns". In Swedish there is also a term "finländare" used to refer to a citizen of finland when no distinction is being made with regard to his or her mother tongue. Thus the Swedish language in particular has come to possess a terminology which makes it possible to make subtle sociolinguistic references, which are not easy to render in English.

Language usage, thus, is an important indicator of how linguistic groups classify themselves and how they perceive their identity. The Constitution 81919) of Finland calls Finnish and Swedish the "national languages" of the republic and refers to the two language groups as "populations". Between the two world wars, the Swedish-speaking population was usually referred to as "nationality". The term "minority" entered the common usage in the literature of the 1970's. The term "nationality" is seldom used in these days. In practice, as Allardt and Starck (1981) note, the position of Swedish in Finland has changed more and more clearly towards that of a minority language. This is reflected in the fact that while most Swedish-speakers are now bilingual, only a small part of Finnish-speakers are fluent in Swedish. Thus, Allardt and Starck conclude that the term "minority" appears to be both appropriate and useful in describing Finland-Swedes. This view is shared by Reuter (1981).

Quantative Trends in Bilingualism

In 1980 there were 399 unilingually Finnish administrative districts of local government, 17 bilingual districts with Finnish majority, 22 bilingual districts with Swedish majority and 26 unilingually Swedish districts, 16 of which are on the autonomous and constitutionally unilingual]land Island. Bilingualism has become more and more an urbanized phenomenon since the beginning of this century. The majority of the urban Swedish- speakers in Finland now live in bilingual districts (mostly towns and cities).

Helsinki offers an interesting case. Since the middle 1800's, bilingualism was more common among the working people: it was characteristic of popular culture, shown in the borrowing of words and phrases in Helsinki slang. Since about the 1950's the Swedish-speaking intelligentsia has also become more clearly oriented towards bilingualism.

In 1950, 83 % of Swedish-speakers in Helsinki reported that they were bilingual while the corresponding figure for Finnish- speakers was 33 %. Since that time the extent of bilingualism is assumed to have increased among the former but decreased distinctly among the latter. In 1950, about 46 % of Swedish-speakers in the whole country reported themselves to be bilinguals, while only about 8 % of Finnish-speakers did the same.

TABLE 2. Percentage of Swedish-speaking population in Finland in 1950 and spread of

bilingualism by type of community in those provinces where there is Swedish-speaking population (Source: Allardt & Starck, 1981, p. 13)

	Swedish-speaking as percentage of total population	Bilingual as percentage of Finnish-speaking population	Bilingual as percentage of Swedish-speaking population
Whole_country	8.6	7.7	45.8
Cities	13.0	19.9	70.6
Smaller towns	4.7	8.8	62.6
Rural communities	7.3	3.3	27.8
Province_of_Uusimaa (south-coast, aroung Helsinki)	25.2	25.3	60.7
Cities	22.4	33.4	76.5
Smaller towns	12.9	12.9	59.6
Rural communities	32.8	12.5	42.0
Province_of_Turku_and Pori (south-western coast)	5.8	7.0	54.9
Cities	6.8	15.5	84.3
Smaller towns	21.1	15.4	54.1
Rural communities	4.8	3.4	39.4
Province_of_Ahvenanmaa (]land Islands)	96.3	75.6	10.3
Cities	92.1	73.1	24.5
Rural communities	97.0	73.0	7.9
Province_of_Vaasa (western coast)	18.6	6.0	23.3
Cities	30.3	22.2	46.7
Smaller towns	1.2	8.6	82.7
Rural communities	16.9	3.1	13.8

Sociological Patterns of Bilingualism in Finland

Education

Finland-Swedes are among the few European minorities that have always been able to have their education in their own language from kindergarten to the doctorate (Allardt and Starck, 1981, p. 217). Primary schools were established relatively early in the Swedish-speaking regions and helped to standardize language usage and to promote comunication between dialects. In many ways, the schools have become the institutions that are the most genuinely "Swedish" for the majority of Finland-Swedes. Allardt and Starck suggest that the choice of the school, which also means the choice of the language of instruction, finally has a decisive influence on whether the children of linguistically mixed marriages develop a predominantly Finnish or Swedish identity. Thus it is not surprising that, in spite of the fact that 91 % of monolingually Swedish families put their children in Swedish-speaking schools, it is a matter of concern for the minority in Helsinki that 52 % of bilingual families have chosen

Finnish-medium schools.

Marriage and HomeLanguage

Unlike the gypsy minority, the Swedish-speaking population does not have any strict social norms concerning marriage. Whereas endogamy is the rule among the Finnish gypsies, most Swedish- speakers in Helsinki marry across the language line. This is somewhat more common among Swedish-speaking men than women. This may be explained partly by the fact that Swedish-speakers on the average have had and still continue to have a slightly higher social position. Since traditionally the social status of the family has been determined by the husband's occupation and social position, a Swedish-speaking man can marry more easily a Finnish-speaking woman without jeopardizing his social position. This social explanation is also reinforced by the fact that, since women assume their husbands' names after marriage, only Finnish-speaking somen - not men - have been able to get a potentially prestigious family name by marriage. In spite of the fact that linguistically mixed marriages are common,Swedish- speaking people followed the endogamous pattern six times more often than could be expected if marriages were to follow statistical chance patterns. Linguistic endogamy has traditionally been more common among higher social groups.

Since linguistically mixed marriages are so common among the Swedish-speaking population, the question of the home language and the choice of the school become very important problems. As Table 3 shows, 90 % of monolingually Swedish families use only Swedish. Almost half of linguistically mixed marriages (46 %) use only Finnish. This contrasts dramatically with the proportion of those mixed families which use only Swedish (12 %). The approximate proportions are 65 vs 35 in favor of Finnish in bilingual families. It is evident that the family's social position has a clear impact on the choice of the home language in addition to the general language environment. When the wife of the bilingual family had graduated from the senior high school, 47 % of children were registered as Swedish-speaking in 1970. This compares with 22 % when the wife had only attended the compusory school. Linguistically mixed marriages are more common among lower social groups and most of the children of such families become Finnish-speakers (Allardt and Starck, 1981, p. 268).

TABLE 3. Home language by type of family in an interview study among Swedish-speaking population in Helsinki (Source: Allardt & Starck, 1981, p. 266)

Home language	Monolingual family	Bilingual family	All families
Only Swedish	90 %	12 %	66 %
Mostly Swedish	5 %	6 %	6 %
Swedish and Finnish equally often	2 %	16 %	7 %
Mostly Finnish	1 %	19 %	5 %
Only Finnish	1 %	46 %	15 %
No answer, some other language	1 %	1 %	1 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %
	(394)	(181)	(575)

Social Institutions and Patterns of Social Interaction

As it will have appeared from the above discussion, the maintenance of the Swedish language has been supported by a whole network of institutional arrangements. The official status of the language is guaranteed in the Constitution. There is a full- fledged educational system from kindergarten to university. There are both electronic and traditional massmedia available as well as publishing companies. There are also a host of voluntary associations ranging from a political party representing the interests of the minority to various kinds of social and cultural organizations. Contacts with such institutions support the attitude that it is worth working for the preservation of the language. Allardt and Starck suggest that the facts concerning the position of Finland-Swedes lend support to the theory that social organization is an essential part of the existence of minorities.

It is possible, as Allardt and Starck point out, that the fact that there exists such a network of social institutions in Swedish has made it possible for the Swedish-speaking minority to have such close contacts with the Finnish-speaking majority. Thus the Swedish-speaking group in Helsinki is a remarkable open, not closed, minority. The same is true to a somewhat lesser degree of other Swedish-speaking regions. The fact that their language is officially recognized, that they can have education in their own language, can fulfill their social needs by means of a network of social institutions and thus have a fair chance of developing a clear social identity, combined with the self-evident gains of being able to use the language of the majority create favorable conditions for voluntary bilingualism, as opposed to bilingualism imposed upon the minority to escape discriminatory treatment. Thus, for the majority of Finland- Swedes fluent bilingualism is becoming a natural way of life. For the younger generation this creates no problems. Some of the older generation may fear that that is a stepping-stone towards continued erosion of the vitality of Swedish in finland (Reuter, 1981).

Finland-Swedes present an interesting case of a linguistic minority. Statistics and a number of studies in the domains of history, sociology, linguistics, political history, literature, etc., make Finland-Swedes an exceptionally well documented minority. Research in their conditions is also well institutionalized so it can be expected that Finland-Swedes will continue to provide interesting data for the study of linguistic minorities and bilingualism.

Language Teaching Policy in Finland

Quantitative Trends in the Study of Various Languages

The other national language (in the case of Finnish-speaking students, Swedish), German and Russian were taught as "long language courses" (i.e., starting in the early grades of the lower secondary school) during the 19th century. English was first offered in 1883 in the non-classical gymnasium as a "short language course" (i.e., starting during the first grade of the upper secondary school). In 1914 English could be studied as an optional subject from the third grade of the lower secondary school. The number of weekly lessons was the lowest possible, one lesson a week. In 1918 English became a regular subject in the girls' secondary school and it could be studied as an alternative to French from grade 4 onwards. English entered the boys' secondary schools and the coeducational secondary schools (which was the dominant school type) in 1941. From that time onwards, the official terminology referred to Swedish as the "other national language" and to all other modern languages as the "first modern language", the "second modern language", and the "third modern language".

It took about 20 years for English to surpass German after it became officially recognized as one of the regular modern languages in 1941. Around 1960 English surpassed German. When the lower secondary school was phased out in the 1970's and merged with the primary school to form the new comprehensive school, the percentage of English being studied as the first language was over 90 %. This trend is also illustrated by statistics about the external Matriculation Examination.

Developments in Language Teaching Policy

Foreign language teaching has been the subject of continuous discussion from the beginning of the establishment of modern secondary schools. One of the pioneers of Finnish, J.V. Snellman, complained in 1855 about the "heavy foreign language program" and about the poor standards achieved. Similarly, the proponents of mother tongue teaching have for a long time deplored the status of their subject and asserted that Finland is "the country with the fewest lessons for mother tongue teaching in the world". Many, if not most, other subject associations are making similar claims and demanding more time on the timetable.

The growing domination of English did not pass without notice. Concern about the fate of other foreign languages led to the setting up of a national commission, which was to make a survey of the extent of the teaching of "less frequently studied foreign languages" in Finland and to make recommendations about improving the situation, especially concerning the teaching of Russian. The Commission submitted its report to the Ministry of Education in 1972. It recommended that French, German, and Russian should be studied as the first foreign language in larger cities, which were specifically singled out. It also recommended setting up several new foreign-language schools, where the instruction is totally or partially in a foreign language. Some other similar suggestions were put forward. Many of its suggestions led to concrete improvements, e.g., state support for the preparation of new teaching materials for the teaching of Russian, Latin and Lappish (Sâmi).

The reputation of foreign languages being difficult subjects was definitely one of the main reasons why the proponents of the comprehensive school advocated the policy of only one compulsory modern language. This posed the great problem: which language would that be. English was clearly becoming more and more popular so, as far as Finnish-speaking students were concerned, the position of Swedish was clearly threatened. The matter was argued fiercely for quite a while, but no agreement was reached. The compromise was reached when there was a cabinet crisis and the Swedish Folk Party held the balancing wheel. Making Swedish (or more generally speaking, the other national language) obligatory was the Party's precondition for joining the coalition government. Thus the political situation in the country played a decisive role in that important decision of language policy. Subsequent debates about streaming kept foreign language teaching in the comprehensive school very much in the forefront of educational politics. There were also debates about whether students ought to have a second foreign language in the new upper secondary school, which needed reorganization in order to ensure articulation between it and the preceding comprehensive school. There were also plans underway concerning changes in the teaching of foreign

languages in the vocational schools and the university. The situation was very fluid.

It was finally recognized that something needed to be done to provide a firmer basis for decisions concerning the teaching of foreign languages at all levels of education. As is customary in finland, a national commission was set up at the end of 1976 to prepare a proposal for arranging the teaching of foreign languages. The present writer was one of the secretaries of the commission, which was officially called "Committee on Language Teaching Policy". Its unanimous report was submitted to the Ministry of Education in early 1979.

The Committee made a thorough statistical survey of trends on the teaching of foreign languages. In order to assess the need of different language the Committee reviewed all needs assessment studies carried out in finland and major studies in several other countries. It also reviewed the use of different languages in international organizations and Finland's economic and cultural ties with other countries. On the basis of these surveys and taking into account the overall educational and cultural policy of the nation, the Committee made a proposal for a long-term language teaching policy in Finland and defined the criteria that any such policy ought to fulfill.

The Committee recommended that all Finnish citizens, irrespective of their mother tongue, should in the future have some knowledge of the other national language and one foreign language. Those who have chosen other than English as their first foreign language should always have some knowledge of English also. Thus English would be studied by all students. The Committee suggested that about 30 % of the population should also have knowledge of German and the same proportion would know Russian. French ought to be known by about 15 % to 20 % of the population. The number of languages would vary as well as the level of knowledge (cf. Figure 1). On the average each person would know 2.5 languages. This average would be reached so that everybody would have studied at least two languages but some students would have studied up to four languages.

The Committee stated that its quantitative and qualitative targets would best be achieved by increasing the number of pupils who study languages other than English as their first language. From the Finnish-speaking students, 70 % would read English as their first language, about 15 % Swedish, about 5 % to 7 % German, about 5 % to 7 % Russian, and 2 % to 3 % French. this would mean that from an average age group of some 60 000 students, about 42 000 would read English and 18 000 students some other language (instead of some 55 800 and 4200, respectively, at the present time). In order to achieve such a better balance, the Committee proposed that the number of languages offered as the first language ought to be geared to the size of the community. Communities with a population of 100 000 or more should offer five languages, those with a population of at least 50 000 should offer four languages, and communities with a population of at least 20 000 should offer a choice of three languages.

Thus it is obvious that the recommendations of the Finnish committee are clearly more detailed and specific than those of the President's Commission in the United States. In spite of its efforts to find out if similar work had been carried out or was being carried out in other countries, the Finnish Committee was not aware of the existence of the President's Commission - another example of the quality of information exchange in the world.

Current Scene

The language question has re-emerged quite strongly during the last few months. Even some time earlier the (now retired) chairman of the Rural Party (often taken to be a populist party that gains its support from a variety of "marginal groups" - the little man - that oppose what they take to be privileges and misuses of power) attacked the Swedish-speaking sector for its alleged unfair privileges and arrogant behavior. This was usually condemned by other parties and major newspapers. A critical letter to the editor by the wellknown music critic of the biggest Finnish newspaper led to a flurry of supporting letters but the author backed down disclaiming any plans to become the spokesman for a movement for reforms in the official language policy.

What caused the most recent and still on-going debate was the annual meeting of the League for the Promotion of Finnish Language and Culture (Suomalaisuuden liitto). A radical pro- Finnish group packed the meeting and - according to press reports - the meeting was conducted in an atmosphere where the position of Swedish in Finland was criticised and Sweden was faulted for not granting similar rights to the large Finnish- language minority in Sweden as Finland has granted to her Swedish-speaking minority. The elected chairman objected to the progress of the meeting and the meeting was adjourned. Some prominent members immediately left the association. Even more recently, there has been discussion in the press concerning how more easily Swedish-speaking youth can get a study place in higher education.

The former chairman of the Swedish Folk Party and the long- time editor of the largest Swedish-language newspaper in Finland, former professor of political science, Jan-Magnus Jansson has recently suggested that it is difficult to discuss the rights of the Swedish minority in Finland if some reciprocal measures are not taken by the Swedish government regarding the Finnish minority living in Sweden. Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, in her latest book, "Minority, Language and Racism" (Minoritet, spr}k och rasism, published by Liber in 1986), analyses the situation more critically claiming that the history books in schools gloss over the truth that Finland was no equal part of Sweden but a typical exploited colony. She accuses Sweden of refined cultural racism and states that only in Sweden do immigrant Finns have a bad reputation. In other countries Finnish immigrants are alleged to enjoy a good reputation. The bad reputation of Finns in Sweden and the refusal of Swedes to even seriously consider learning Finnish Skutnabb-Kangas takes to be the typical racist attitude of former colonialists, even if the active colonialist period ended in 1809. She claims that the attitudes have persisted and live today in the Swedish culture.

Whatever the merits the various parties' arguments may be, one of the factors to consider is the need of language skills that we have in Finland. A large-scale study involving a total of almost 5 000 respondents employed in industry was conducted recently by a colleague and the present writer. The results are summarized in the following two tables, where the figures are precentages. The figures in brackets in the "Total need" column indicate the percentage of those respondents who would have needed a particular language skill but lacked it.

Language	No need	A few times a year	A couple of times a month	Weekly	Total need
English	24%	32%	15%	29%	76% (+7) 83%
Swedish	33%	36%	14%	17%	67% (+7) 74%
German	55%	26%	10%	9%	45% (+15) 60%
French	93%	6%	1%	-	7% (+12) 19%
Russian	93%	5%	1%	1%	7% (+11) 18%
Norwegian	92%	5%	2%	1%	7% (+5) 12%
Danish	94%	4%	1%	1%	6% (+5) 11%
Spanish	98%	2%	-	-	2% (+4) 6%
Portugese	100%	-	-	-	0% (+1) 1%
Other Europ. languages	98%	1%	1%	-	2% (+3) 5%
Non-Europ. languages	99%	1%	-	-	1% (+2) 3%

	Engl.	Swed.	German	French	Russ.	Norw.	Danish	Span.	Port.	Other
Sufficient oral skills	26	29	18	25	8	50	50	30	18	38
Sufficient written skills	26	30	21	28	5	49	47	30	42	30

The figures show clearly that three languages are commonly needed in Finnish industry: English, Swedish and German. Thus, it is not the case, as has often been claimed in the public debate in the press, that the need of Swedish is negligible. Similar needs-assessment studies are under way and likely to be started in the near future. Our knowledge concerning the need of modern languages, including the other national language, will then be quite up-to-date.

Conclusion

Finland offers an interesting case study of a nation trying to come to grips with the realities

of language needs both within the nation itelf and in contacts with the rest of the world. Being a small and culturally quite a homogenous country, in spite of its two officially recognized languages and its officially not recognized Sâmi language minority, Finland has tried to respond to its language needs by systematic planning. Being also a centralized country, with a national policy in many areas of culture, the chances of implementing systematic plans are better than in larger countries, especially if they have a federal system and a large degree of decentralized decision- making. It will have appeared from the above, however, that in spite of attempts at rational planning, different interest groups have at critical times managed to influence developments more than their relative sizes would give rise to assume.

An explosion in international contacts and international communication, and the technology to record and transmit images and sound have caused a profound change in the linguistic situation in Finland. From an essentially rural society in the periphery of Europe with limited contacts with the rest of the world, Finland has become a modern and relatively affluent society (17th in terms of national wealth according to UN statistics) with lively contacts with the outside world. The growing contacts have essentially meant the growing influence of English and the growing impact of Anglo-American cultural models. This trend has been so distinct that at present, and more so in the future, the linguistic situation in Finland is such that most Finnish-speaking people are more comfortable in using English rather than Swedish and most Swedish-speaking Finns will be trilingual with a good command of both Finnish and English. Whether one likes it or not, Swedish is fighting for its position as a vital and viable language in Finland, and German, Russian and French are, even with an official support of the government, similarly working hard to carve a niche in the language teaching program and will have a hard time doing so.

Finland is one of those countries which have a clearly established language policy concerning people's language and cultural rights. Yet, the Finnish experience seems to suggest that questions related to a country's language policy and language teaching policy will never be settled once and for all, but will keep coming up in somewhat new guises.

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