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Työn nimi
To feel at home in a new country: Integration strategies and teacher perceptions on supporting immigrant students' integration in basic education

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This thesis discusses immigrant students' integration process in basic education in the Finnish context. Integration is described from inclusive point of view as being a two-way process which is affected both by the person integrating and the surrounding society. Integration process is approached on many levels: administrational, individual, cultural, psychological, and in the light of theories of integration. Thus, the focus is on the integration happening at the school world. The aim of this research is to familiarize oneself with the concepts related to integration and find out ways to support and understand immigrant students' integration process at school. This study is useful especially for all teachers and educators in a more multicultural world and classrooms.

This study is qualitative and the data is analyzed with thematic content analysis. The data was collected as half-structured interviews. The empirical part consists of interviews with preparatory class teachers and a cultural mentor. The approach to analysis was deductive; the empirical part was researched in relation to theoretical framework. The aim is to broaden and deepen already existing theories with empirical data.

The results of the study show that integration is a process which is affected by the factors such as motivation, personality, families, cultures and background. It is important that immigrant children feel welcome and their roots are respected to be able to integrate into the new society. According to theories and the participants, there are ways to support immigrant students' integration at school. It is especially important that teachers and the whole school community work together towards multicultural atmosphere and all can feel as being respected members of the community. Also families have a huge influence on integration process of their children and teachers should take this into consideration. Teachers' intercultural competence is a considerably positive matter both in interaction with families and working with immigrant children. This is why intercultural competence should be enabled to develop during teacher education. Teachers can support their students through appreciating and utilizing different cultural backgrounds in the classroom and by using various teaching methods. Mother tongue education is an important way to support children's identities and can work as a cultural link to former home country. In addition to the themes discussed in relation to theories, the participants consider functional learning important to support social integration between all children at school and so promoting multicultural atmosphere. Multi-professional network is also experienced important. In addition, participants demand concrete statements to preparatory curriculum including skills to achieve during the preparatory education. In administrational level, the decisions for example about the location of living have to be faster to enable feelings of stability and continuation in lives to develop which are necessary for integration.

Asiasanat   Integration, acculturation, thematic content analysis, qualitative study, immigrant children, preparatory education

Tämä Pro gradu -tutkielma pohtii maahanmuuttajaoppilaiden integraatioprosessia Suomen perusopetuksessa. Integraatiota lähestytään inklusiivisesta näkökulmasta. Integraation nähdään kaksisuuntaisena prosessina, jolloin integraatioon vaikuttavat niin integroituva henkilö kuin ympäröivä yhteiskunta. Integraatioprosessia käsitellään monella tasolla: hallinnollisella, yksilöllisellä, kulttuurisella, psykologisella, ja integraatioteorioiden valossa. Huomio on kuitenkin keskittynyt integraatioon koulumaailmassa. Tutkimuksen tarkoitus on tutustuttaa lukija integraation käsitteistöön ja etsiä keinoja tukea ja ymmärtää maahanmuuttajaoppilaiden integraatioprosessia koulussa. Tämä tutkimus on erityisen hyödyllinen kaikille opettajille ja kasvattajille monikulttuuristuvassa maailmassa ja luokkahuoneissa. Tutkimus on laadullinen ja tutkimusaineisto on analysoitu temaattista sisällönanalyysiä käyttäen. Tutkimusaineisto kerättiin puolistrukturoidun haastattelurungon avulla. Empiirinen osa koostuu valmistavan luokan opettajien ja kulttuurimentorin haastatteluista.

Analyysissä käytettiin deduktiivista lähestymistapaa: empiiristä osaa tutkittiin teoreettisen viitekehyksen pohjalta. Tarkoitus on laajentaa ja syventää jo olemassa olevia teorioita empiiristä tutkimusaineistoa käyttäen. Tutkimuksen tuloksista voi tulkita, että integraatio on prosessi, johon vaikuttavat useat tekijät. Näitä tekijöitä ovat muun muassa motivaatio, persoonallisuus, perhe, kulttuuri ja tausta. Jotta integroituminen uuteen yhteiskuntaan on mahdollista, on tärkeää, että maahanmuuttaja tuntee itsensä tervetulleeksi ja taustansakin arvostetuksi. Teorioiden ja haastateltavien mukaan maahanmuuttajaoppilaiden integroitumiseen koulussa löytyy keinoja. On erityisen tärkeää, että opettajat ja koko kouluyhteisö työskentelevät yhdessä kohti monikulttuurista ilmapiiriä ja kaikki voivat tuntea olevansa arvostettuja jäseniä yhteiskunnassa. Myös perheillä on suuri merkitys lastensa integraatioprosessissa, ja opettajien pitäisi ottaa tämä huomioon. Opettajien interkulttuurinen kompetenssi on positiivisesti vaikuttava asia yhteistyössä kodin kanssa ja myös työskenneltäessä maahanmuuttajalasten kanssa. Tämän takia interkulttuurisen kompetenssin pitäisi päästä kehittymään opettajakoulutuksen aikana. Opettajat voivat tukea oppilaitaan myös monipuolisilla opetustyyleillä ja kunnioittamalla ja hyödyntämällä erilaisia kulttuuritaustoja luokkahuoneessa. Oman äidinkielen opetus on tärkeä tapa tukea lapsen identiteettiä ja se voi toimia kulttuurisena linkkinä aiempaan kotimaahan. Teorioista nousseiden teemojen lisäksi haastateltavat kokivat toiminnallisen oppimisen tärkeäksi. Toiminnallinen oppiminen tukee oppilaiden sosiaalista integraatiota koulussa ja näin edistää monikulttuurista ilmapiiriä. Moniammatillinen verkosto koettiin myös tärkeäksi. Lisäksi haastateltavat vaativat lisää konkreettisia lausuntoja valmistavan luokan opetussuunnitelmaan, määritellen esimerkiksi taidot, jotka pitäisi saavuttaa valmistavassa luokassa opiskelun aikana. Hallinnollisella tasolla päätökset esimerkiksi asuinpaikasta tulee olla nopeita, jotta jatkumon ja pysyvyyden tunne elämässä mahdollistuisivat. Nämä asiat ovat myös edellytyksiä kotoutumiselle.

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INTRODUCTION

In Finland the annual immigration rate has more than doubled from 1990 to 2012. (Tilastokeskus, 2012) Finland is along many countries getting more multicultural and so are the classrooms. This is an important reason to stop and think about the ways the educators could support immigrant students' integration to a new country and at the same time empower all students to appreciate multiculturalism. Integration is a complex concept which is dependent on multiple issues, but to put it simply, for example Berry defines integration as a process of finding a balance between the old and the new culture (Berry, Kim, 1988). The approach to integration should be inclusive which means that the integration process can be seen as a two-way process. All people who participate the integration process have to adapt to some extent; not just the immigrant child integrating to the mainstream culture.

It is important to promote the inclusive approach especially in the educational context because racism is still one of the issues immigrant students face in the schools in Finland. Yle (2013) has reported how immigrant students often face verbal racism and adults allow it to happen. Sometimes adults even question immigrant children's right to live in Finland. This affects students' integration process. Ministry of employment and economy (2014a) claims that: *"A successful integration policy requires the commitment of all administrative branches to equality, non-discrimination and the prevention of racism, as well as the promotion of positive attitudes."* This could be developed further and one could argue that integration needs not only administrational support but also support in the field. In addition, there is a need to support integration because of the results of the evaluation report concerning integration in Finland made by the Ministry of employment and the economy. In comparison with other youth in Finland, there is close to six times bigger chance that young immigrants who have finished comprehensive school get excluded from the society and labor markets (Ministry of employment and the economy, 2014b). Marginalization is not the preferred end-state of acculturation as discussed later in this research and it cannot be that for a welfare state either.

The focus of this thesis is on immigrant children studying in basic education because of our future jobs as primary teachers. The interest to the topic of integration arose because of the current need for support and attention that exists both nationally and globally. Also both of us have experience working in preparatory classes which increased the will to re-

search this particular topic. Positioning ourselves as positive towards immigration we have aimed to be critical towards our positioning as researchers. Acknowledging this starting point for research has helped us to question our choices and broaden the viewpoints during the research.

The aim of this research is to find ways to support immigrant students' integration at school. Furthermore, the aim is also to learn to understand better what immigrant students experience during integration into another country in order for us to be as teachers more prepared and sensitive to support it. The first research question is related to integration at school and is at the same time the goal of this research. This research question can be answered through two latter research questions which are related to integration in a more general level.

1. How can integration of immigrant students' be supported at school?

2. What is integration and acculturation?

3. What are the factors influencing on the integration process?

The questions are answered in the theoretical framework by discussing the integration and concepts related to it, bringing out the current situation of integration in administrational and more personal levels, and by looking at the integration theories critically. Question number two is mainly answered trough theoretical framework. The other two questions are researched through theoretical framework as well but also using empirical data. Integration is also discussed in relation to education. The questions are researched using various international and Finnish scientific articles, books, surveys and researches. The aim is to examine the questions through the latest relevant literature. Through empiric research the study can offer valuable viewpoints also from the field. Four preparatory teachers and a cultural mentor have shared their thoughts on integration. The data is analyzed from deductive point of view. The aim of the research is not just to answer research questions but to extend or emphasize certain theories by offering different viewpoints to integration.

This study is based on our bachelor's thesis which was theoretical research only. Since then the theoretical framework has been modified to reach the demands of this research. At first, the common words and concepts in this research such as integration, acculturation and immigrant are discussed. These concepts are also discussed regarding the Finnish leg-

islation and the national core curriculum. The focus of the first section is especially in the Finnish context. Secondly the theories about different integration strategies are presented and discussed. Through this, the possible factors in the integration process can be understood better. This section approaches integration process generally but takes into consideration individual factors as well. Thirdly, we discuss different methods for understanding and supporting immigrant children in their integration processes in basic education. In the 4th part the methodology used in this research is introduced and discussed. The study is qualitative and the empirical data is researched through thematic content analysis. The empirical research and the results of its analysis are presented in the 5th part. In the end, the trustworthiness and ethical issues of this research are discussed, followed by the discussion of the key findings and conclusions drawn on them.

1. INTEGRATION AND ACCULTURATION IN THE FINNISH CONTEXT

In this chapter the words immigrant, acculturation and integration are discussed in order to define the key concepts used in this research. Every country has their own laws about immigration and integration and the most relevant parts in Finnish law related to this and regarding this study are pointed out after the definitions. So the immigrant's rights and responsibilities when starting studies in Finnish school are presented here. It is also important to research how integration is considered in the Finnish national core curriculum.

1.1. The status of an immigrant

In Finland an immigrant is a common term used of people moving from one country to another. This includes everybody moving to another country, no matter what is their reason for immigration (Maahanmuuttovirasto, 2012). Other criteria are that the person immigrating is a citizen of another country and that her/his stay in Finland is rather long. For example, short term work such as a summer job in Finland does not make anyone an immigrant. In addition, people become immigrants because of various reasons. The reason for immigration can be for example a job, a marriage, war, a natural catastrophe etc. Because of the reason of immigration certain groups are called refugees or asylum seekers. Sometimes a term immigrant is also used of children born in Finland whose parent or parents have immigrated to Finland. (Väestöliitto, n.d.)

It is good to acknowledge the complexity of the word immigrant as a definition. Furthermore, it is important how the term is used; the term immigrant can also be used with prejudice and negative connotations. In this study the term immigrant is used of all immigrant groups according to the criteria mentioned above, no matter what the reason for immigration is. Immigrants' integration processes can be more alike when they share similar backgrounds and experiences but in this study we have chosen to look at the integration process more generally. Influence of the background is present in our master's thesis but individuals' impact on their integration processes is emphasized. For example: people coming from Turkey could identify themselves to be Turks or Kurds. They could come from the mountains or from the coast. They could come from big cities or small villages and be highly

educated or illiterate (Liebkind, 1994). This example emphasizes the fact that there are various cultures, people and ways of living even inside one country and it is difficult to label people based on their group memberships.

1.2. Acculturation process and its phases

In 1936 the term acculturation was formally defined and legitimized by the American Council for Social Science Research as *"those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture pattern of either or both groups"* (Sam, 1994, 6). Sam (1994) argues that acculturation involves a contact, a process and a state. Between the cultures, during and after dynamic contact, there is activity. There is also a result of the acculturation process and it can be relatively stable but may continue as an ongoing process. (Sam, 1994) According to Berry's acculturation model (Berry, Kim, 1988) there are four possible ways to acculturate: integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization which are later discussed in this thesis. Clayton (2003) explains the acculturation process through the form of the letter U. 1: At the top of the U before move and few weeks after the move there is sadness about leaving the familiar and excitement about the new possibilities. 2. Attempt to become familiar with the location which can be both exciting and frightening. 3. Noticing the differences in the new culture and country and feelings of not belonging to the place. 4. At the bottom of the U. Negative feelings about being in a new country and questioning the decision of moving. 5. Coming up the other side of the U when being able to truly think about life in new environment. Clayton (2003) adds that traditionally it has been expected that the response to acculturation is to assimilate to the mainstream culture at the end. Assimilation means that the old culture is forgotten. On the other hand, she referrers to Berry's theory of acculturation and other researches about the possibility that the end-state of acculturation can be different, especially in pluralistic cultures. (Clayton, 2003, 134-135) This U model presents some possible features of acculturation but it is just a model and we think it could be different if for example the move was not your own choice.

1.3. Integration

Integration to new cultures and societies refers to development of interaction between immigrants and the society. The aim is to empower immigrants to adapt to a new society by providing them knowledge and skills needed for functioning in a new society and work life. At the same time support is given to maintain own language and culture (Finlex, 2010). Integration is a continuing process where immigrants try to adapt to a new culture and get to know the norms of it. Social justice is part of this and therefore it is important to share power and welfare between ethnic groups (Ekholm, 1994). Integration is also usually constructed from at least three different dimensions which are cultural, academic and psychological (Igoa, 1995, 10). Successful adaption into the new country is usually referred to when immigrants are able to integrate into the new society. Integration means that they accept the patterns in the new culture to be able to function in it but also maintain features from the old culture. Through biculturalism immigrants are able to reach the feeling of continuation in their lives in new settings. The quality of reception in a new country is a significant factor for possible integration. This factor does not depend on whether the person has been willing to immigrate or not. (Alitolppa-Niitamo, 1994, 25, 37) Pollari and Koppinen (2011) argue that school is a significant factor supporting immigrants in this process. They also add that possible integration is dependent on person's temper, age, education and generally on the reactions of the new society. (Pollari and Koppinen, 2011, 20-21) Integration is part of the complex acculturation process and very hard to define. Both the individual integrating and the receiving society have their impact on the process. Integration can happen in some levels or not at all. In this study integration is seen as the most favorable aim for an individual and the society.

There are also critical viewpoints toward integration where inclusion can be seen as a choice for integration. Inclusive education means that all children despite their disabilities, background or anything should have the right to study in the same classroom all the time (Naukkarinen, Ladonlahti, Saloviita, 2010). Integration can be defined as being about fitting a person to certain settings when inclusion instead as a way to help the person to adapt to the new setting and also the settings to be changed according to the needs of the person. It can be argued that inclusion is practise the individual and the whole society benefit more from. (Harman, n.d.)To conclude, integration can be seen as a one way adaption into the new settings when the inclusion instead as a two-way adaption. Though we use the term

integration in this study we acknowledge the viewpoint of inclusion in our study as an important starting point for integration. Integration as a term is used in this study because it is still the common term used in most of the literature used here. Which is the right to term to use can be argued but we think it is enough that it is revealed that we share the similar value base as in inclusion and handle the concept of integration through inclusive worldview.

We understand integration as a possible and hopeful result of acculturation where a person is able to combine patterns from the old and the new culture. There are models of acculturation but all have to be viewed from the individual's point of view because people and context are different. We use mostly the term integration or integration process in this study to refer to combined situation of acculturation and integration. This is because the terms are hard to separate from each other and also to make the text clearer to read.

Integration and legislation

Integrating education is promised to be arranged for all immigrants moving to Finland. According to Finnish law, the adult immigrants must be educated in Finnish or Swedish when they need lessons to improve reading and writing skills. Additionally Finland is supposed to offer some education for immigrants to improve chances to get jobs or increase the possibilities to educate themselves. Education should also include education about society, culture and life management. (Finlex, 2010) Under aged children have to attend the compulsory education and the city or municipality can offer preparatory education for one year. (Finlex 1, 1998). Even if immigrant students would need to use different books or teaching material they are always free for them (Finlex 2, 1998).

In 1999 a law was accepted in Finland about integration of immigrants and receiving asylum seekers (L 9.4.1999/493). The aim of the law is to advance integration and equality of immigrants by promoting actions that support getting the knowledge people need to function in a society. (Finlex, 1999) Freedom of moving to Finland became possible for job seekers in 1995 when Finland became a member of the European Union (Alitolppa-Niitamo, 2005). All citizens of member countries have a right to move from country to another and live there freely (Euroopan komissio, 2011). If someone is moving from out-

side the European Union, the receiving country decides if the immigration is approved or not (Euroopan yhteisöjen komissio, 2005).

Integration and the national core curriculum

In educating immigrant children, with no possibility to follow the general education due to language or lack of experience about education, teachers must pay attention to *the preparatory curriculum of immigrant children in basic education.* This is especially created to support integration of immigrants to a new society and to prepare students to study later in general education. . Teaching can be for example supported by learning in different learning environments. (Opetushallitus, 2009). Education must also be in line with the National Core Curriculum. The official language, Finnish or Swedish, is to be taught as a second language and learning the language is one of the biggest goals at first. This can also be supported by enabling children to study their mother tongues at the same time which is not mandatory but advisable. Individual plans of studying are good to be formed and those should include goals among learning and social integration. Children should be empowered and supported to become active and balanced members of the society by taking into account children's own cultures and backgrounds and taking the whole family into the process of social integration and learning. (Opetushallitus 1, 2004)

When making own individual plans of studying teachers should take into consideration whether students have studied before in their home country or not. It is much more difficult for students to start school in a new country if they have never studied before, comparing to other students who may have been studying already for many years. (Moped, 2002) In both cases students still usually encounter different kind of rules and habits as well as learning and teaching methods in the new classroom comparing to the rules and ways of teaching in the home country. If mother tongue is other than language used in teaching, evaluation can be verbal except in the final evaluation (Finlex 3, 1998). Individual plans should be flexible. Possibility to verbal evaluation is one example of the ways to differentiate and individualize teaching.

Integration arrangements in education

The city of residence offers students a place at school which is commonly the school closest to students' homes but not necessary. Students can apply to other schools as well but it is possible they do not get in. (Opetushallitus, n.d.) The instruction for schools considering immigrant children who have recently arrived in Finland is that their education can be arranged in preparatory teaching groups, if possible, or in mainstream education with support provided according to children's needs. Such support usually requires flexibility and resources not just from the teachers and schools but also from the administrational level. The law allows special arrangements in religion and supporting learning of national language as well as in pupils' assessment methods. Children should also be encouraged to study their mother tongue. (The Finnish National Board of education, 2010) Municipalities and cities can offer preparatory education for immigrant children for about one year before them starting the compulsory education but it is not necessary to do. Though, the preparatory education is seen useful and advisable. Preparatory education can be arranged and offered in the preparatory class or beside general education individually or in little groups etc. The goal of preparatory education is to prepare the child for basic education. Teachers must follow the curriculum made for the preparatory education. (The Finnish National board of education, n.d.) During the preparatory education the students are integrated to general education little by little according to their skills and development: according to their individual study plans (Opetushallitus, 2009). According to our experience, this usually means P.E, textile, handcraft, arts and music where the skills in Finnish are not so important for understanding the teaching. Preparatory education is also mentioned in the law (Finlex, 2009).

So there are at least two possibilities how to arrange the preparatory education for immigrant children: either in a preparatory class or in general education with preparatory education hours beside. It depends on a city or on a municipality what they can or are willing to offer for education. According to our own experience in the school world and which is logical, usually the bigger cities and bigger schools have resources to offer preparatory classes and little schools and smaller cities and municipalities try to support children's learning and integration with additional hours of preparatory education beside the general education.

2. INTEGRATION AND ACCULTURATION THEORIES

2.1.Berry's four different strategies of acculturation

Psychological acculturation can be discussed when changes happen because of cultural confronting in humans' identity, values, behaving, and attitudes. Acculturation does not mean assimilating straight to the dominant culture, there are many options. (Liebkind, 1994) John. W. Berry is one of the most famous theorists in the area of integration. Berry´s modes of acculturation (Berry, Kim, 1988) are used in this research to understand the process children go through when coming to a new country. These modes illustrate how the individuals and groups can acculturate but the nature of changes may vary a lot. (Berry, Kim, 1988) However, it is important to remember that all children are individuals and the nature of the host country also affects the acculturation (Sam, 1994). Families play big roles in the acculturation processes. As the reasons for moving have an impact on families, this causally affects the integration processes of children. If for example the families move because they are forced to leave their home countries or are in temporary acculturation situations, they might not be so eager to get to know the new culture and habits (Berry, Kim, 1988). It is also possible that parents want to maintain their own culture and children want to integrate faster to feel more comfortable in a new country (Alitolppa-Niitamo, 2004).

According to Berry there are two important questions which immigrants need to answer to, as moving to another country. Depending on the answers and thoughts, there are four different strategies which explain the integration process: integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization. (Berry, Kim, 1988)

(1) How much importance is put on own ethnic roots and cultural practices and how important it is to maintain them as they are.

(2) How important are the relations with the majority in society and how willing the immigrants are to be in contact with the locals.

Integration happens when people are both willing to keep their own ethnic heritage and adapt to the dominant culture. This is the most regarded strategy at the moment because it has been noticed to be the most beneficial one. Psychologically, integration can be demanding and there is a possibility that integration divides people into two cultural zones; in society and in public practicing the new culture and maintaining the old traditional one at home. (Berry, Kim, 1988)

If the integration happens so that it is about dividing actions and behavior into two different zones, it can be challenging for anyone. In integration the meaning would be more to mix the two cultures together. So that the old culture could be appreciated and, at the same time, parts of the new culture could be included to it by getting to know the manners and ways of the new culture and society. At home, it can be sometimes difficult if the differences of cultures are big. If for example, parents find it hard to accept the habits the new culture includes. At schools teachers should be aware of different cultural backgrounds and understand the manners students have from their own culture - in the limits of law and the rules of schools, classrooms and curriculum.

Assimilation is a strategy in which people both want to be a part of the majority culture and are willing to forget their own cultural heritage. Problems can arise if children abandon their own culture without being accepted by peers to the new one. If children become assimilated it can also cause some problems at home with parents and that can reflect to school and be seen as challenging behavior. (Berry, Kim, 1988) Different cultures are richness and keeping them alive is important - even the cultures would be minorities in a new country. Different cultural backgrounds can be beneficial and they are important parts of persons' history and own identity. If people assimilate to a new society it affects the whole life, not just the behavior at school.

 Separation means maintaining the traditional habits and trying to avoid contact with the new culture. Parents may want to try to protect their own cultural background and prevent their children from adapting to the new one. Difficulties are likely to arise inside the families if the children's ideology differs from the parents'. (Berry, Kim, 1988) If immigrants separate themselves from the majority culture of the new country it can cause troubles in their everyday life. Especially if they stay for a long period or permanently in a new country, it is important to feel a part of the society. It would be important to talk with people of

the ways to maintain important patterns of home culture when at the same time getting to know the new one. Teachers can support children to integrate by being in close contact and cooperation with the families.

Marginalization can be considered the worst end-state of acculturation. Marginalized people do not have or feel any connection to their old cultural background and they also have difficulties to be accepted as part of the new one. At schools, this situation can be seen sometimes as children using all their time for studying and not finding time to make friends. This is problematic for social life and development. (Berry, Kim, 1988) If people marginalize themselves from the new culture and do not have connections with the old one, they will most likely confront a lot of problems in social life. Teachers can do their part at schools to prevent this kind of situation from happening by guiding their students towards the ways to integration. Marginalization can be a very lonely state to be in and people in this state demand much support both from the government and people around. Even though, it is good to remember that the definitions of marginalized people can differ depending on individuals and nations. The definitions should be approached critically.

Very often the strategies change during the process. For example in the beginning families may want to assimilate into the main stream society or even separate from it but in the end they want to integrate into it. Sometimes the will is to assimilate financially, integrate linguistically and separate martially. (Liebkind, 1994) In real life the social integration process can be more problematic than just choosing one of the ways to integrate into a new society. People are never free from the influence and attitudes of family, friends and demands of the society or environment around and this can especially be the case when talking about children. It could be argued how actively children actually choose to acculturate in a certain way when for example families can be big factors affecting integration processes of their children. But as teachers it is good to acknowledge the acculturation process and its different possible forms.

The values are something that might be the hardest thing to understand in a new country and culture. Sometimes the common values in the new country can differ a lot from the values from one's own childhood and background and the values can be difficult to reform to what is considered as "right" and "wrong" in a new country. (Alitolppa-Niitamo, 2004) In the school world, different values can cause some problems within teachers and parents

because the meaning of values, beliefs and norms can be so different. That is why it would be good to arrange a value conversation with the teacher and the parents' of immigrant students before children begin the school. There are still some values which are not to be flexible about and guidelines to base your arguments to. The Finnish legislation as well as human rights of UN are recognized as an important part of the value base of education in Finnish schools. (Opetushallitus 1, 2004)

Because multiple variables have an impact on the process of acculturation it is not possible to categorize it just with Berry's modes of acculturation. Acculturation process is more open-ended and flexible because there are many things that have an influence on it. Such as families as ethnic-groups and the way the new society welcomes the immigrants as members of the society and as individuals. These are the reasons why integration must be discussed from other perspectives as well and Antonovsky's theory of sense of coherence is needed.

2.2. Antonovsky's sense of coherence as a condition for integration

Antonovsky (1987) claims that sense of coherence (SOC) can be seen as one of the important factors in ways of surviving in a new environment. Sense of coherence is a feeling one has about the ability to manage own life. The sense of coherence is assumed to be co-operative action with the society, social environment and inheritance. Strong sense of coherence maintains individuals' health and welfare and low sense of coherence exposes to stress and other harmful health causations. According to Antonovsky (1987) there are three core components of the SOC; comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness. The meaning of comprehensibility is that one experiences the things happening in life ordered and structured, not chaotic and disordered. The happenings in life are comprehensible and one experiences life as challenging, not problematic. Manageability means that there are resources under one's control as well as resources controlled by others like friends, family, God. The happenings in life are accepted and persons do not feel victimized even if life does not go as wanted in the first place. Thirdly, meaningfulness is something that describes the things that are important in life for people and because of these things life "make sense" for them.

Mammon (2010) uses Antonovsky´s theory of sense of coherence when examining the feelings of immigrants about their abilities to manage their own lives during the social integration process. Mammon found out that the country where immigrants come from has an influence on the strength of SOC. That is why it is important to pay attention to different ways of experiencing the whole process of integration. Acculturation process is different due to different backgrounds and it should be taken into consideration when planning integration programs in the administrational level as well. Immigrants should be enabled to understand the rights and responsibilities they have in the new country from their own cultural perspective. That is how they would understand the benefits of the integration and would find the motivation to integrate. Motivation creates a base to implement individuals' own goals in life.

Background and the ways it is or it is not taken into consideration have an impact on SOC but there are also several other things that influence on sense of coherence in a new country: whether you get a job, success at school, social appreciation, and etcetera. It is easier for immigrants to understand messages coming from the new society if the new society thinks positive about integration. Environment should be complementary and it should give feedback for individuals, not abandon them. In Mammon's (2010) study, researchers Holmberg, Strienström, Ghasinour and Eisemann have argued that strong sense of coherence and individuals' flexibility influence positively on integration in a new home country. Also if thinking Berry´s acculturation theory, strong sense of coherence could for example help students to integrate into the new culture even the parents would rather maintain their old cultural habits and way of living. It is important for teachers to take the influence of SOC into consideration and to try to encourage and support students by being in caring interaction with them and giving positive feedback. Social capital also is one thing that affects the process of acculturation. Social capital is based on common social norms and values and it can be defined as the way people are able to work and function together in the society. If the social capital of the society is in a low level and the society is not concerned about its members, it is difficult for immigrants to integrate into it. The society with low social capital can be really reluctant for cooperation when instead the high social capital predicts favorable environment to integrate into. (Alitolppa-Niitamo, 2004)

The purpose for all teachers should be helping their students' integration to the new culture and so also supporting students' positive development with sense of coherence. Integration

process demands a lot of work both from the teachers and from the students. Teachers need to tell about the new culture and rules to their students and at the same time appreciate students' own backgrounds and tell that it is accepted to also practice their own cultural manners. Giving this feedback, teachers give the needed feedback for developing the better sense of coherence. Telling what students can do instead of telling what they have to do, teachers give their students the option to choose and think about their actions and that improves students' feeling of their own life management. Teachers also need to help students to understand meanings and aims of social integration and importance of integration into a new country. Understanding the abilities to affect own lives can easier and motivate students in the process of acculturation.

Berry's acculturation theory and Antonovsky's theory of sense of coherence have offered psychological and practical approach to integration. The individual and identity are more focused on in Padilla and Perez's hypothesis about social stigmatization affecting integration and this is why this theory is needed besides other two.

2.3. Padilla and Perez's hypothesis about social stigmatization being one central factor in acculturation process

The researchers Padilla and Perez (2003) introduce a new model of acculturation. In their model of acculturation there are four pillars: social identity, social cognition, cultural competence and social stigma. The authors argue that in the central stage of acculturation is social stigma. Their hypothesis is that the acculturation process is more difficult for individuals with different stigmas from the mainstream citizens because of skin color, ethnicity, language, religion etc. The authors recognize the earlier studies of acculturation but they want to give something new to it. They think their framework of social identity and social cognition allows better understanding of the processes involved in acculturation. Both personal and social identities have an effect on acculturation process. *"Some identities relate to membership in the host culture, and others reflect attachment to values of their heritage culture. Within their new social context, newcomers form perceptions regarding expectations that members of the dominant group have of them. Perceptions are likely to affect the process of redefining their identity and whether and to what extent they choose acculturation and membership in the host culture."* (Padilla, Perez, 2003)

Padilla and Perez (2003) argue that acculturation is a social process where the contact within newcomers and host culture and their thoughts of each other all affect the acculturation process. The closer the immigrants are of the dominant group with characteristics as skin color, language and ethnicity, the more difficult it is to stigmatize them and that can have an impact on how groups cooperate with each other. Social stigmas affect the acceptation of immigrants as part of the society and for immigrants that can make acculturation process harder. In the host country the adoption of a new reformed social identity might be difficult for immigrants if they do not feel welcome and are unsure about contacting people from the mainstream culture. (Padilla, Perez, 2003) Ngo (2008) discusses about the importance of the interaction between cultures and inhabitants. The locals cannot think that immigrants are the only ones who should change and integrate; the dominant culture also has to make some changes and think if they can adopt some cultural manners of the immigrants as well.

3. SUPPORTING INTEGRATION IN EDUCATION

This chapter discusses the integration process from teachers' point of view. The possibilities educators have to support children's integration to a new country are pointed out. It must be taken into consideration that schools and education have an important and responsible role to affect child's integration – in a positive or a negative way. According to Brembeck in (Kikkas, 2006) in most cases the children's lives consist of two big elements: school and home. This is due to a fact that these are the two places where children spend most of their time. (Kikkas, 2006, p.16) And this is why it is so important to think about the ways the teachers could support integration process of their students at school.

In the following multiple ideas of many experienced authors in the field of education are discussed. The focus in discussion is how to interact with children from different countries and cultures and how to support children's integration to new cultures when at the same time appreciating and supporting children's home culture and learning. The purpose of the following paragraphs is not to highlight the differences which might occur with immigrant children but to investigate the possible ways the educators could interact better with children who speak the different language and come from various backgrounds. Still this study can offer not only ways to work with immigrant kids but many aspects apply working with all children. It is acknowledged in this research that all children are individuals and this is not any model of working with children, it is more like something to keep in mind in order to understand better what feelings and experiences the children might be going through in the integration process.

Following chapters are divided so that the first chapter is more about the psychological level of integration, second about academic dimension, third one about cultural aspect and the fourth about the current situation of integration in Finland and in Finnish schools. The division of the first three parts is made according to Igoa (2005). Igoa is an experienced multicultural classroom teacher and an immigrant herself and she sees the integration process to school life and to a new country happening in cultural, academic and psychological levels.

3.1.Encountering immigrant children and their families in an educational context

Igoa (1995) points out that there are a few key points to help children to feel home and support their integration to a new society which could actually apply working with all children: the importance of listening what children are saying, appreciating children's roots and background, a true will to understand cultures and give children a feeling that they belong to something. Igoa has seen and experienced herself that it is a difficult task but not impossible to be integrated to another country and finally feel home in the level of your inner and outer self and in the world. (Igoa, 1995,p.10) Pollari and Koppinen (2011) agree with Igoa but also emphasize that the differences should not be highlighted and should be careful not to create a distinction between we and them, meaning immigrant children and children born in Finland. (Pollari, Koppinen, 2011, p.10)

Many people remember the feelings they had at the first day of school when we the doors to a new environment and world were opened. It was an important and exciting moment, a step from daycare to school life. Probably most children were experiencing excitement, some even fear - among all the other feelings. And this applies to all children. So meeting immigrant children and listening to their feelings are no exceptions from other children at school. All children are wondering how there are going to succeed and feel in the first day of school, whether it is their new school or just the first day of education at school. So taking into account everyone's feelings as well as possible and being sensitive about them are key points for teachers when meeting new children, especially for the first time. (Pollari, Koppinen, 2011, 28-30)

It is also important to remember that children are not the only ones going through the integration process and learning new things but in most cases children's families are also in the same situation. It is very important to meet and interact with families of children and take every member along to the education and to the integration process from the beginning. It is for the benefit of students', families' and teachers' if the whole family is included in the process. Parents should be listened, worries too. When families feel that they know about the things happening in their children's lives and their opinions are asked and valued, it is much easier for all, the children, families and teachers, to work together towards shared goals. (Pollari, Koppinen, 2011, 22-23) Saraneva argues (in Pollari and Koppinen's study,

2011, 23) that if the family is not properly involved in schooling, it might easily create conflicts between students and their parents and between the parents and the school.

So, teachers' role, especially at the beginning, is to be a guide and a safe area for children. It is highly important to listen what children want to say and be sensitive in a communication and interaction process. When there might not be the common language at first, teachers must be creative and remember that according to many studies the most of the communication is non-verbal. According to Kemppinen and Rouvinen-Kemppinen (1998), about 93% of communication is non-verbal. Of course translators can and should also be used if possible and dense cooperation with the children's families can be really helpful. It is a long process to build trust with children and with immigrant children this can be even a longer process due to various backgrounds of children but it is possible, it just might demand time and patience. On the other hand, teachers are also able to learn and gain so much from the integration process if just staying positive along the way.

In the past chapter the psychological side of children's integration to school was emphasized in the discussion. In the next chapter the focus is in the influence of culture on learning.

3.2.Cultural influence on learning

3.2.1.Preparedness to learn

Depending of the culture and environment, people see, hear and pay attention to various things differently. Clayton (2003, 69) points out in her book that various studies have shown that the environment where you have used to be at has sensitized you. You pay attention to particular things that you are used to focus on. Culture does not define straight what persons' learning capabilities are but it is something that needs to be taken into consideration. Also we all learn in different ways individually and that is why teachers should pay attention to different learning styles. Clayton (2003, 70-72) introduces Griggs's theory about three strands that weave together our personal learning styles: cognitive, affective and psychological.

The cognitive strand consists from different ways of person receiving, storing, processing and retrieving information. Because of different ways of processing the information, teachers should use different kind of teaching methods (Clayton, 2003). In multicultural classroom the ways of learning can even vary more. The affective strand is related to attention, control, interests, taking risks, sociability, persistence, contains emotional and characteristics of personalities. Different teaching styles are again needed. For example some students like to work in groups, some just by themselves and some need more guidelines and roles than others. (Clayton, 2003). With immigrants, teachers need to think more carefully how instructions are given because in some countries they are always written on the board and in some countries instruction can be just oral. The psychological strand involves two parts: the preferred modalities and the environmental context. The preferred modalities involve auditory, visual, tactile and kinesthetic modalities and what affects in environmental context are things as temperature, noise, light and space. Teachers should pay attention in their classroom to notice different ways of learning and take them into consideration in teaching. Some students for example find it hard to look power-point presentation and listen at the same time (Clayton, 2003). And in some cases students from different countries may have used to study in different kind of classrooms or even outside so teachers need to make them feel as comfortable as they can.

Teachers should also collaborate with the second language teachers and children's mother tongue teachers and with the families of children. This enables teachers to understand their students better and students to benefit from education as well as possible. Knowing students' backgrounds, talents, experiences, cultures and natures helps teachers with didactics, no matter if children are native or immigrants. It is also easier to notice possible problems in learning and integration and find out the real reasons for them when relying on many professionals working with children who can share their point of views about the difficulties. (Trotta, 2006, 134)

3.2.2.The safe learning environment

Making a connection with children is very important for the successful interaction between teachers and their students. Especially important it is when working in a multicultural classroom. Children need to feel secure in a classroom to be able to learn and children should feel that they can trust their teachers. Teachers' job is also to make their students

feel equal with all the other students. Teachers should listen to their students, talk about their homelands to get the information needed for teaching and also at the same time make students feel relaxed and comfortable. (Clayton, 2003)

To be able to learn academics at the school you will have to have a fruitful environment for learning - mentally and physically. *"For learning to occur when the class material is controversial, both tension and safety need to exist. There needs to be a safe classroom environment, so that students sense they can speak their minds. However, safety is not the only consideration. -- Tension in the classroom, when it does not get out of control or explode, can prompt learning"* (University of Wisconsin Whitewater, 2005-2009). Physically safe environment in the classroom could be created by letting children to sit where ever they feel most comfortable. Some students prefer sitting back in the corner when some like to be really near the teacher and other students. Teachers must be sensitive about finding a suitable area to sit for everyone. This kind of setting of course depends also about the way teachers are able to carry out classroom management. (Igoa, 1995) Mentally safe environment for learning is more complicated to create and demands a lot of effort both from the teachers and from their students. It does not happen in a second but needs time to build the safe environment. Teachers need to earn the trust from their students and create an atmosphere where nobody feels threatened. The rules agreed together, children knowing the expectations of teachers', non-competitive atmosphere and some daily routines help creating a safe environment for learning. Tension is part of the class when children can impress their feelings and thoughts and discuss about them – good and the bad ones and this can lead to learning new perspectives, understanding and awareness. (University of Wisconsin Whitewater, 2005-2009)

3.2.3.The role of teaching methods and teachers' competence

Interaction and communication play a big part in the classroom and a discursive atmosphere is even more complicated to create when the students and the teacher speak different languages. This is when the teaching methods, teachers' competence and the strategies to motivate students start to play a huge role. *"In order to work successfully with children of different needs and backgrounds there are several prerequisites to be met by a teacher. These prerequisites are both physical, connected to learning environment, and more per-*

sonal concerning teacher's intercultural competencies both as a private person and as a pedagogue" (Haapanen, 2000, 135).

Frisby and Reynolds (2005) state that cultural learning styles are one way to response to the need of different teachings strategies but teaching easily becomes generalizing and stereotyping. The best teaching styles are the ones all children can benefit from, usually this means a holistic approach to learning. Holistic style emphasizes visualization, reflection and cooperation (Frisby, Reynolds, 2005, 483-484). Kikkas (2006) is at the same level with Frisby and Reynolds and highlights the importance of using the social dynamics and children's will to communicate to support students' learning. *"It is essential that students should be given ample opportunities to express their feelings and emotions, to interact with peers and classmates, and to express disappointment or pride when multicultural issues are discussed "* (Kikkas, 2006, 30).

When teaching immigrant students, teachers need intercultural competence. Intercultural competence is a facility which helps to understand each other and it is needed for co-operation and interaction between people from different cultures (Jokikokko, 2002). Teachers need skills, right kind of attitude and knowledge about their own culture and the cultures the students are coming from. Teachers should be able to explain the similarities and differentials between the cultures and choose the right concepts to teach these things. Materials and learning tasks also can help students to become inter-culturally competent. Teachers should help students to relate their own culture to the new one. (Sercu, 2006). Talib (2006) summarizes the multicultural competence of teachers as being understanding of oneself, approaching the work critically, being emphatic and as a comprehension of variety of realities and ways of living.

The background of children is really important to take into account in the schooling matter because sometimes it might be a case that even older children have never been to school. Or the way of schooling has been really different in a home country. But still no one should never be defined according to their past only. Teachers must face all students as individuals with individual needs, culture, background, temper and appreciate the multiculturalism in the classroom. Teachers and the students are always on the way of learning from each other, not just what is taught by books and in a study plan but learning other

skills at the same time, like multiculturalism and socialization, and these things should be appreciated at least as much.

From this chapter and its emphasis on learning is moved to take a look into the culture of the school. What is demanded from the child to function in a new school culture and socialization? Furthermore, what is demanded from the school community which child is going to be part of?

3.3. Influence of the school culture

In this chapter the culture is discussed in a general level but it could be seen presenting the culture at schools also because schools can be seen as mini-societies, presenting and delivering the values and norms valued in a nation in a certain time. (Tolonen, 1999) *"Culture is a way to think, feel, react and function – Culture is delivered from another generation to another but it reforms on the way " (*Pollari, Koppinen,2011, 18). This is one of the ways to define culture but there are multiple ways to see it and it could even be said that there are as many cultures as there are people. But it is not relevant to go too deep defining the word culture but to try thinking about different ways to support students from different culture to function in a new mainstream one.

According to Saraneva's study, getting into a new culture is easier for children than to adult immigrants because children have not been living in the influence of their home culture that long time. (Pollari, Koppinen, 2011, 19). It is usual that children just start getting integrated to a new culture after they learn to communicate with the language of a new country. Communication is one of the basic needs of human beings'. (Pollari, Koppinen, 2011) Goal for educators is to help children in a new country to learn the ways things work in a classroom and at school, teach the norms of this culture for them to be able to function here but at the same time appreciate children's own culture and ways to function. It is not an easy task. At the same time it must be remembered that integration to a new culture takes time and multiple conflicts may occur. It demands a lot of understanding both from teachers and children. But as Clayton (2003) points out, the classroom and the school are reflecting the culture of the society in a smaller scale and children will see and learn how the system works, verbally and non-verbally, just living in the culture and the impact of the

environment. Still teachers also have a responsibility to pass on or clarify and discuss about certain values and norms which are appreciated in the culture. This can be really contradictory in some cases and discussion should be a big part of the classroom culture so that children would able to share their thoughts about how everything is working. (Clayton, 2003)

3.4. The role of mother tongue in integration

According to criteria by Skutnabb-Kangas (1988) mother tongue is about the following: language which is learnt as a first language, language which you manage the best, language you feel part of, you identify yourself with and the language that others identify you with. Skutnabb-Kangas emphasizes the points of the first language and the language you identify yourself with when defining the mother tongue. In bilingual families there can exist two or more first languages. There are multiple ways to define mother tongue according to different criteria from different researches and theorists but in this research the one from Skutnabb-Kangas is used because it emphasizes the relation of an individual to language deciding which language is a mother tongue. In real life it is usually quite clear which is your mother language, it is the language of your parents'. In the bilingual families the definition of mother tongue can be harder in some cases, mother tongue can be really context related.

Every child has a right to his own mother language and culture. Mother language is a big part of child's identity and a language of emotions and thinking. (Opetushallitus, 2010) The right of an individual to be able to maintain and develop his mother tongue is also stated in Finnish constitutional law in the section L 731/1999. (Soppi, 2006) Mother language is noticed to be important and meaningful from multiple angles, affecting various issues but personal importance of mother language for an individual is deniable. Mother tongue is a base for all our thoughts, thinking is structured through mother tongue. Only with mother tongue it is possible to express all the nuances of language. Mother tongue is also a stepping-stone for learning other languages. (Kotimaisten kielten keskus, 2009). Mäkelä (2007) points out some important reasons for studying the mother tongue, using the study of Thomas, Wayne P. & Collier's in 2003, *A national study of school effectiveness for language minority students' long-term academic achievement* as a frame work in

her arguments. And the Board of Education (2010) is on the same line when talking about issues of identity, integration and learning.

Own mother language is part of the identity and mother language education supports the cultural identities of children. Mother tongue education can help to maintain important patterns of home culture and feeling of the roots when at the same time integrating to a new culture. And this is what integration means: maintaining own cultural identity and language when at the same time adapting to a new culture and way of life. Integration to new culture and society is one of the important goals in immigrant education and this can be supported through developing skills in mother tongue. Mother tongue is an important bond between the immigrant children and their families and a way for immigrant children to follow the media in their own language and keep in contact with the relatives. Researches made around the world promote the skills in mother tongue for learning other languages. According to studies mother language studying is beneficial for the development of thinking, increases preparedness for learning overall and through this mother language studying can be seen as one important and effective tool for success in education. This has been noticed by comparing the students who are studying the mainstream language only and students who are studying both the mainstream language and their own mother tongue. (Mäkelä, 2007)

Mother language studying can be seen beneficial on both individual and societal levels. It has positive effects on individuals' identity, integration and learning as stated earlier. Mother tongue studying can also open up possibilities for individuals in the work life and be beneficial for the society in the global world. In the international markets the communication and language skills are very helpful. And promoting the importance of mother language studying can also be justified because of the value of language itself and appreciating multiculturalism. Mother tongue studying also maintains the possibility of returning to home country in the future. (Mäkelä, 2007) And if mother language can be seen as an important tool for integration, it could be argued to be economically viced for the society to make an effort at this state too. It is the benefit of both individual and the society that society enables people to study their mother tongue as much as possible and develops and supports mother tongue education.

According to the Finnish national core curriculum mother tongue teaching of immigrant students is not part of the basic education but it is complementary education supported by the government with additional funding. Mother tongue teaching is not obligatory to offer but it is advisable. (Opetushallitus 1, 2004) Handout about mother tongue education and immigrant education is sent annually to all municipalities for them to apply for funding and also published in EDU.fi. The importance of mother tongue teaching for children's holistic growth is realized like it was mentioned in the earlier chapter but the actual decision whether organizing teaching or not is left for the municipalities. Though, according to report from The National Board of Education the municipalities have been willing to organize teaching and the main reason for not arranging the education it has been the lack of language teachers. Education is organized both during the school days and after school, depending on the municipality. (Opetushallitus, 2010) Mother tongue education should still be more integrated into Finnish curriculum and society. Now it is advisable to offer mother tongue education, it is not obligatory to study mother tongue even if it is possible, teaching is many times arranged "after school" and the possibility to study the mother tongue is small compared to Finnish or Swedish. (Moped, 2002)

Mother tongue teachers have big roles in children's education. The main assignment is naturally to teach the mother tongue and the ways of using it. Other important aim is to support learning other subjects by for example enlarging vocabulary and dealing with the themes that are studied in other subjects at the time. Goal is to connect mother tongue studies to all things that are been learnt and support learning overall. Mother tongue teachers can especially help with subjects children find challenging. Teachers also have a role as being role models for children. Their task is important by being immigrants who have succeeded to enter work life in a new country and so showing children this is possible. Mother tongue teachers are also familiar with the culture children are coming from and are able to discuss and share thoughts about the home culture and understand possible conflicts occurring in a new one. This can be really important when integrating to a new culture and structuring cultural identity to a new form. Mother tongue teachers are also working as cultural and lingual interpreters and can be a great contact between family and school. (MAI, 2009) Part of the job of mother tongue teachers is to help their students to integrate to a new society (Opetushallitus, 2010).

It is very important that the mother tongue teacher and the classroom teacher of the child are cooperating. It is the most beneficial and motivational for the child if the issues studied in mother tongue are connected to general education. This can be sometimes really challenging because of mother tongue teacher's role as teaching in many schools in a city and not spending a lot of time at one school. Mother tongue teacher and the classroom teacher have to plan their teaching and meetings well beforehand. Also the classroom teacher has to be active and collect things to study during the week and share them with the mother tongue teacher. Mother tongue teacher's role is also challenging teaching students of different ages and levels in mother tongue in a same classroom and trying to offer individual and relevant education for each student and manage wide areas of things to teach. (Moped, 2002)

Finland is doing relatively well organizing the mother tongue education. Most municipalities find mother tongue education important and only the lack of language teachers can be an obstacle on the way of organizing education. There is still criticism for current administration. At the moment it makes no difference how big city or village is and how many immigrants there are and from which language groups but the rule of minimum of four students in a language group applies to all municipalities for arranging mother tongue education. In addition, there is especially a need for educating mother tongue teachers and giving them more resources to teach and there is also a big need for teaching material for mother tongue teachers (Moped, 2002).

3.5. Current challenges and achievements in supporting social integration at schools in Finland

Suurpää (2005) argues that curriculum in Finnish schools mostly just tolerates "others", which in this context means immigrant students, and that raises inequality between "us" and "them". According to Suurpää a word ´tolerate` has been defined roughly in Finnish curriculum; it can refer to a good person and way of thinking on a common level or in other section especially to more and more multicultural society. Attitudes from teacher education program and experiences at schools have shown progress of getting out of this style of categorizing. The term toleration is not widely used anymore and instead the words mutual understanding and respect etcetera are in use. This can be seen as one sign of attitudes changing in the school world and in the teacher education.

It is commonly thought that there is an excellent education and teacher education system in Finland, basing the idea usually to PISA-results by OECD. In 2009 Finland was one of the top countries in the comparisons with other countries in PISA-tests. (OECD, 2009) In our opinion teacher education is rather good in Finland but there are still things to improve in the teacher education programs. Because of globalization and the growing amount of the immigrant students, especially all the teacher education programs should have more multicultural studies to help teacher students to become more inter-culturally competent.

Intercultural teacher education gives a strong basis for teacher students to understand and take into consideration different worldviews, different ways of learning and needs of children who come from variety of conditions. Cultural knowledge and positive attitude towards other cultures are important. Information about cultural-, equality- and gender sensitive -pedagogic is needed to make a professional identity stronger. Intercultural teacher education also prepares students to manage in their future jobs as teachers in more and more multicultural classrooms. (Helsingin yliopisto, 2010)

Räsänen (2000) writes that Finnish schools organize theme days, multicultural events and other special education arrangements for immigrant students to feel more comfortable. This is something we have not noticed in the schools anymore now after one decade of difference and this could also be seen as positive development. Nowadays schools, at least should, focus more for integrating immigrant students to general education and take the multiculturalism as part of the everyday life. The goal is not to differentiate the immigrant students from others but appreciate everybody's individuality and background.

In Saeed Warsame's Master Thesis *"School for All? Somali parent's views on their children´s education, multicultural education and integration in Finland"* (2009) author writes about how Somali parents feel about Finnish school system and their children education. In Warsame´s Master Thesis most of the Somali parents agree about not wanting their children to be in special classes or in special education even if the children had have some learning difficulties because they feel it segregates children from the rest of the class. The challenge for the teachers is to give the right kind of impression of the special education for the parents and the students. If special education or working in small group is needed to help the students to keep up with the rest of the class, how could teachers make the families and students feel good about it?

Kilpi-Jakonen (2012) brings up current issues which came up in her research about factors affecting the differences occurring in the achievements of immigrant students' at the end of the compulsory education. It seems that parental resources have a strong effect to immigrant children's success at school. By parental resources, Kilpi-Jakonen refers to education and income of parents'. And income seems to have a stronger value affecting children's education. This can be explained for example by the following: with money, it is possible to hire someone to support children's studying and learning in a new country. So, according to this research, generally immigrant students achieve lower grades than student than native students but this is strongly explained by parental resources. This is an important fact because according to this research, adult immigrants are facing big problems in the integration to the labor markets in Finland. And as parental resources, especially the income of parents' affects highly to immigrant students' success in education, this can be seen as a big challenge in making the possibilities of all people in Finland more equal. So, one of the current challenges in Finland is to increase the possibilities of adult immigrants getting jobs. It is a big issue when reaching for the equal possibilities for all students to succeed in education.

Ministry of Education and culture (2012) also reports about the difference of immigrants and majority people presented in higher education. The language proficiency is seen as one of the key factors to this. There are some preparatory programs, mainly by institutes of liberal adult education, which are especially customized for immigrants' needs to help entering education after the compulsory education. And there are results that this liberal adult education is a motivator to participate education. But as for now, this option is more used by adults. (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2012)

Equality is something what is highly praised in Finland. One of the main goals of the Finnish national core curriculum is to provide equal chances for everyone. (Opetushallitus 1, 2004) Providing equal chances for all people and decreasing inequalities is also seen as one of the main goals reaching the development goal of ministry of education by 2020. The aim is Finland to become the most competent country in the world, in the means of success in education and emphasizing equal opportunities for all people. Equality in education is seen as one of the key factors to Finnish welfare (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2012). *Equal opportunity in education is realized when all, whatever their background,*

have the possibility to pursue education without their background predetermining partici-
pation of learning outcomes" (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2012, 10).

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

At first, it is justified why this research is qualitative instead of quantitative. Secondly, the half-structured interview as a data collecting method is discussed. And at last, the thematic content analysis is introduced to understand the way data is handled.

4.1. Qualitative research

Qualitative research can be understood as describing issues. Qualitative research is about describing the shape of the material so it differs from quantitative methodology which is more numeral. Qualitative resource is a tool which can be used to inspect an empiric phenomenon. In qualitative research the speculation of the conceptual subject is highlighted. Features of the qualitative research are for example the way material is collected, that there is no hypothesis, the aspect of the examinee, the way results are introduced, the role of the researcher and narrative. Qualitative research should be a process and it should be taken into consideration that results are not timeless; they are combined to the place and time that changes historically. That is why the plan of the research is usually open. (Eskola, Suoranta, 2005)

Like in this research and in qualitative research is common, the studied material can be small but it is examined very precisely. That is why the scientific criteria for material is not the quantity but quality. In qualitative research sample can be discretionary so it would give answers to studied case. If the case is not known before, then it is different. The material should be thoughtfully limited because in some cases the material will never end. In qualitative research not having the hypothesis of the research results is very common. It can be even prohibited to have some kind of preconception of the results. It still needs to be taken into consideration that the studies made before might have an impact on the discoveries. With the help of the research material, the researcher should find new perspectives, not just prove something that already exists. The position of the researcher is very different in the qualitative research than in quantitative. Researcher has a lot of freedom and that gives an opportunity to have a flexible planning and execution. (Eskola, Suoranta, 2005) Especially Creswell (1998) emphasizes the role of the researcher when defining the qualitative research: *"Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based*

on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting." (Creswell, 1998, 15

This research can be justified to be qualitative because the reasons discussed above. To conclude some of the issues argued and justify the qualitative nature of the study the two following things can be brought up: 1. The theme of study is teachers' perceptions on integration and acculturation and the aim is to describe it and find new perspectives to it which is the goal of qualitative research. 2. The researched sample is small but researched very precisely which is also according to definition of qualitative research.

4.2. The half-structured interview and the participants

The method used to gather data in this research is interviewing the participants. Interview is always interaction and both the interviewer and the interviewee have their own impact on the end product. The interview itself used in this research is a half-structured one which means that the questions asked are the same with all the participants but the interviewee has freedom of forming the answer. If comparing to structured interview, there the participants choose from certain possibilities to answer and the interview is so more guided and structured. (Eskola, Suoranta, 1998, 86-87) The half-structured interview can also be referred as a theme interview (Hirsjärvi, Hurme, 2000, 47). The goal of interviews was to find empirical data and new perspectives on the basis of the theoretical framework. The order of questions was changed in some of the interviews because of the will of the participant but the questions asked remained the same in all interviews. Furthermore, the data was first tried to collect through questionnaire but it failed because not enough participants answered. When using questionnaires as a data collecting method it can be challenging to motivate people to fill in the forms (Hirsjärvi, Hurme,2000, 36).

The interview was chosen as a method to collect data for the research about teachers' perceptions on integration and the ways to support it at schools. There are five participants in this research. Four of them are class teachers who have experience on working with immigrant children. One of the participants is a teacher's coworker, cultural mentor. Before the interview the questions were given to participants one to two weeks in advance so that the participants would have enough time to take a look into the questions and be more pre-

pared with their thoughts. The interview took from 45 minutes to one hour and all four interviews were fluent and fruitful considering the research theme. We recorded each interview and all recordings were fluent and successful. The interviews took place in teachers' own classrooms which was a natural setting. The data was collected in the autumn 2013.

4.3. Thematic content analysis

The research approach in this study is a thematic content analysis. Content analysis is commonly used in qualitative research. It is referred as a method suitable for all traditions of qualitative research and can be understood as a loose part of the theoretical context. It can be even argued that most of the researches with different methodological terms are based on a content analysis. (Tuomi, Sarajärvi, 2002, 93) There are different approaches to content analysis and there are for examples features of directed content analysis in this research. Directed content analysis means that the theory is guiding the analysis. (Hsieh, Shannon, 2005) Generally, the research which is based on a theory is usually defined as deductive research (Tuomi, Sarajärvi, 99). The goal of the directed content analysis is to extend the already existing theory or to find some variety to it. Theory can also be used as a guide to form the research questions for empirical research. Directed content analysis allows interviews with open questions as a data collecting method. (Hsieh, Shannon, 2005) Thematic analysis consists of identifying the themes in the data and analyzing them. The aim is to describe the organized themes thoroughly (Braun, Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis can be defined as a way to categorize data in qualitative research. It is a tool to develop deeper understanding of the theme and be able to explore different patterns of data. Researches disagree on thematic analysis being enough as data analyzing method. (President & Fellows Harvard University, 2008) We think that the combined method of content analysis and thematic analysis as a thematic content analysis is a sufficient approach in this research because it suits the data collecting method as interviewing and can be seen suitable for most of the qualitative research. In addition, the aim is according to directed content analysis, to find something new related to theories. There is also a strong theoretical background as a base for empirical research which is used as a tool for analysis as well so we

do not think that it is necessary to apply another method in the analysis. In addition, thematic content analysis suits our way of processing the data according to themes.

Tuomi, Sarajärvi (2002) claim that content analysis usually consists of the following phases: 1. Narrow down a certain phenomenon, 2. transcribing or coding the data, 3. Construct themes, categories or typing. The data analysis method used in this research is similar to this model. The data was first transcribed and then coded according to different themes picked from the theoretical framework. These themes were related to research questions as well. In addition, different codes were also added to different participant's answers. Afterwards, larger themes were chosen according to theoretical framework. Coded text was then divided into big groups according to these themes. Emphasis is on what is said when constructing the theme groups (Tuomi, Sarajärvi, 95). After the themes were formed, the analysis was constructed so that the theory was discussed through similarities and different viewpoints to it by participants. The interpretations are supported by the samples from data which have been translated and narrowed down to essence of the sample related to theoretical framework. The data was in Finnish so the samples have been translated into English. Different names are given to participants for the analysis to maintain their anonymity but also to clarify and give structure to the analysis. The participants are named Tiina, Anna, Liisa & Hanna and Maria. All names are common Finnish names and do not refer to participants' real names.

The chosen themes
Defining acculturation
Defining the concept of integration
Legislation and the attitudes of the new society in relation to integration process
Motivation and family affect the integration process
Teachers' intercultural competence and the school culture
Multi professional network supporting integration
Mother tongue education as one factor affecting the integration process
Curriculum and integration

The phases of analysis in this research

1. Transcribing the recorded interviews

2. Reading through the data and choosing the themes from the theoretical framework

3. Coding the transcribed data according to themes

4. Categorizing the data according to themes

5. Choosing parts from the theoretical framework related to theme

6. Analysing all the samples regarding the theme

7. Similar and different viewpoints in the data marked

7. Condensing and translating the samples of different viewpoints

8. Reporting examples of different viewpoints as samples regarding the theme

9. Interpreting all samples related to theoretical framework

The example of the analysis phases

Theme in the example is acculturation process. Theoretical framework is Clayton's theory of different stages in acculturation. First the original and translated condensed samples are presented and after this the actual way the analysis is done.

The original sample from Tiina. Part which could lead to identifying the participant has been removed. *Jollakin on honeymoon menosa vielä päällä ja kaikki on vielä iha-naa.[...]Sitte voi olla jo sitä agressiovaihetta, että vaikka kuin mää teen niin asiat ei mee etteenpäin ja mää en kuitenkaa opi tätä suomen kieltä. Sitte taas joku voi olla siinä vai-heesta perheestä, että on semmonen seesteisempi aika, että kyllä tästä selvitään ja kyllä kaikki tulee sujumaan. Että aletaan hyväksyä tätä tilannetta.*

The translated and condensed version. Tiina talks about the honeymoon phase and about the following aggression phase. *"everything is still lovely [...] no matter what I do, I do not get anywhere and do not learn this Finnish language"* She also adds that someone can be in the phase of accepting the situation. *"We will survive and everything is going to be fine"*

The theme from the theoretical framework is combined with the perspectives on the matter found in the empirical data. The samples are presented by discussing with the theories in between. The straight quotations are used to promote the interpretations made related to theories.

Defining acculturation

These three samples support the theory of Clayton's (2003) that acculturation process consists of certain phases. In three of the interviews the phases of acculturation process arose into the discussion. All agreed that first there is the honeymoon- phase and secondly the aggression phase or culture-shock. Tiina and Anna also mention that the third phase is to accept or get used to the new culture. Anna adds that the way acculturation process goes is not depending on the reason of immigration or of whom you have immigrated with. The acculturation process proceeds similarly with all students: "*No matter what is the reason for immigration, whether you have come with the family, alone, because of the marriage or work, you can still see it the same way in students*". Maria brought up that the form of the acculturation process is not always in the shape of U but the form can vary: *"There are ups and downs. At times, it is so lovely and easy to be and the language goes. At other times, you feel tired and like you can not say anything or be able to be with the others and you feel irritated."* From this, it can be concluded that there are similarities in the acculturation process but students are also individuals and this affects the acculturation process.

5. THE RESULTS

The results of the data analysis are presented in this section. Results are constructed from teachers' perceptions on integration compared to theories. All viewpoints considering the themes are brought up. The first theme considers the research question 2: What is integration and acculturation? It is important to know if teachers understand these concepts similarly to theoretical background in this study to be able to take into consideration possible differences in defining the concepts for later discussion. The latter themes are focusing on answering the research question: 1. How can integration of immigrant students' be supported at school? And 3: What are the factors in the integration process?

Defining the concept of integration

Integration is defined in the theoretical part as a complex process and is explained due to multiple factors and theories. Tiina also brings up the complexity of defining integration: *"I understand it as an extremely complicated process which is affected by multiple issues"*.

Maria does not want to think about integrating actions being just about forcing upon the cultural ways here *as: "You have to now pick up (the cultural ways) and you are welcome here when you learn and accept all this"*. Maria views integration from the inclusive point of view because she strongly opposites the definition of integration as a one-way road where the immigrant is the only one who has to adapt. These both issues are discussed especially in a section 1.1.

Liisa explaines integration as an ability to function in a society and find joy from these actions: *"Get (joy) from the library, swimming hall and from these kind of things. That you learn to find things from everyday life which make you feel better here."* Liisa describes integration in a concrete level and supports Antonovsky's (1987) theory about manageability as part of the sense of coherence.

Anna defines integration according to Berry (Berry, Kim, 1988) as finding the balance between the old and the new settings: *"Get used to and adapt to some level into the environment you live. But on the other hand, it is probably necessary to maintain something*

from that own (culture). That is also essential part of integration in my opinion". She adds that trying to hide or forget the background where you come from can be a big problem later on: *"It could even come up as joining some extremist movement or becoming extremely patriotic"*. Letting one's old culture behind can be understood as assimilating into the new culture. Berry states that assimilation can be especially problematic when one is not yet totally accepted as part of the new culture by peers but does not feel as being related to the old culture neither anymore (Berry, Kim, 1988).

Legislation and the attitudes of the new society in relation to integration process

There are issues that are nationally supporting integration like possibility to preparatory education (Finlex 1, 1998) and integrating actions for all immigrants who need support for example in the official language (Finlex, 2010). However, Maria hopes there would be more humanity when public officers are organizing the integrative actions. When immigrants have once been placed to the new city it would be good that they would not have to move many times. Otherwise they again and again need to settle down to the new place and get to know the new bus timetables and etc. Maria thinks the system should be more effective*:" I think every individual who has to stay waiting for something is too much."* Maria also feels integration plans do not make sense every time: *"I think there are many roads that are closed because of bureaucracy. We could use some common sense."* Maria also adds that it is important that the school path is coherent and the goals should be set to reach preferably employment in the future. This can be hard to reach if the family or a person must move many times.

Furthermore, it is not enough that the legislation would support integration but also the attitudes of the new society towards immigrants affect. New society and environment can support integration or make it more difficult. For example, Alitolppa-Niitamo (1994) claims that the way new society contacts with the immigrants, affects the integration process. New society should be able to give feedback for individuals (Antonovsky, 1987). All of the interviewees agreed on society and every individual in it affecting the acculturation process. As Tiina states: *"Everybody carries own piece to the palette. Individuals affect but also society"*. Maria argued it is important to feel welcome in new country but also to feel that it is possible to be yourself in new country: *"I would like students always feel that*

they are welcome as themselves.” Padilla and Perez (2003) claim that it is hard to integrate socially if you do not feel welcome in a new society. Liisa´s opinion is that everyone wants to be a part in some group :*“I would like to be a part of this group and be the same as all others, but if the kind of echo is not coming from the other side..”*. This is why the new society has to be welcoming.

Motivation and family affect the integration process

Own internal motivation is a base for integration. When having motivation and goals in life people can have a feeling of their own ability manage their lives and that can affect integration (Antonovsky, 1987). Anna has encountered children with negative feelings when children have moved to Finland without their own will. At this point the feeling of being able to manage own life can disappear and this can be harmful for integration. Maria supported the importance of motivation from other angle because she gave an example of two girls who moved to Finland and appreciated a lot the opportunity to study here. They were open and motivated for learning and that supported their integration.

Based on Berry´s acculturation theory (Berry, Kim, 1988) it also affects on integration whether the families try to understand the new culture and Maria had noticed that happening at school. Maria thinks family can even slow down integration process of their children if they try to maintain their own cultural habits too strictly.

Anna argues that family can affect integration both in positive and negative ways. Children coming without their parents can be unwilling to integrate: *“Quite a lot, the affection of the family, that what is, what is the situation you have come with, that affects [...] Many times, it* (a child immigrated alone) *kind of slows down the integration”*. On the other hand, Anna thinks that immigrating with the family can also slow down the integration process. It can be even a conducive factor if you do not have family supporting you and have to make connections to society around you: *“If you think for example learning the language. If you have come with your family it easily goes like there is school and then you go home and then you are with your family. Parents might not know the possibilities for hobbies. She adds that school of course tries to inform about different kind of possibilities but im-*

migrants who have come alone are offered more support to find hobbies etc.". This could be the case when there are no connections to Finnish speaking people and nobody in the family speaks Finnish as his/her mother tongue. Anna adds that the family situation can affect motivation to integrate as well: *"If they have married, mom or dad with Finnish and then moved here, then sometimes objection is very hard with the kid and she/he has not wanted to leave at all. [...] you do not have a motivation to the language or environment or to get to know the environment and making any contacts. She/he is just thinking that I am leaving right away from here anyway".*

Liisa agrees on family's impact on motivation and adds that the age of the child affects as well: *"If their family or dad has stayed in a home country or all their friends remained there, if you left a little older, they can be very sad and depressed and they miss their home country. They reject this, do not want friends".*

In addition, families' backgrounds can have a significant role in the acculturation process related to motivation to integrate. As it is brought up in the theoretical part, families can have different reasons for moving to a new country and that affects the acculturation process of theirs (Berry, Kim, 1988). Interviewees agreed on this. Anna, Liisa and Maria felt the reasons for immigration affect a lot on integration. The starting point for integration differs if you have for example come as a refugee or if one of the parents is Finnish. Liisa thinks that connections to local people can help to integrate to environment as well: *"If you have some relatives and they are Finnish and they visit you, then they usually learn faster how to be in other places too than at school".* Maria argues that difficult past can affect integration. *" A: this permit of residence is still not handled, B: the family has been evicted already from some country. And the starting point is that you have had to move million times away because of different threat or persecution. [...]* The ability to balance between new and old culture affect integration as well. *"Or how you balance between your own culture and Finnish culture. To what you should invest in, what you should hold on tightly, what you can give up a little bit. You can see all that in how the student receive things."*

Tiina and Anna also bring up the impact of the family and local connections on learning the new language. Anna thinks that family can affect the process of learning the new language in a positive way as well. If one member of the family is Finnish, usually the child is

in contact with the Finnish language at home as well: *"If they speak Finnish consistently at home, and mother speaks her own mother tongue, vocabulary appears richer"*. Tiina agrees on this but adds that the Finnish speaking contact can be outside the family as well. *"Language skills develop the best way if immigrant person knows people from the new culture and can use the new language"*.

Also future plans have an impact on integration. Liisa has noticed the difference between the ones who are living in the reception centers and the ones who are living in own apartments in the city centre. If person is living in the reception center it means all the future plans are still open and it might be difficult to live normal life and proceed in the acculturation process. Uncertainty about the future might also affect behavior and attitudes: *"If future is unsure, people keep tight on what they have."* Liisa adds it has a huge impact where a person lives: *"That you live in some city center and go shopping in a local store and there are services and there are children who to play with in the courtyard . That is a really big thing"*.

Teachers' intercultural competence and the school culture

Clayton (2003) argues for the importance of school to introduce students the ways to function and behave in new country. School is kind of a miniature of the surrounded society. Maria also thinks that it is important children are educated at school about the norms and expected behavior in everyday life in the new country. Maria finds it important to practice different kind of everyday situations at school so that children would be able to function for example in the store: *"We practice different kind of situations, how we can be customers in different places [...] This is a step closer to everyday life. Thoughts about where to head at and what should be done - how to behave"*. Maria and Anna highlight, as Igoa (1995), the fact that teacher´s intercultural competence is important in supporting students to adapt into the new settings. Anna: *"Students have huge skills and different potential.[...] How much information can we get, information about different countries or languages or religions. If we just make an effort to ask from the expert in the classroom"*. Teachers should realize, not just to teach things of the new culture but also learn and be interested in the multiple cultures of students' which can also support integration and improve the con-

nection with students (Clayton, 2003). Liisa also views teacher having a very important place at children's lives: *"Preparatory class teacher is probably the key person in the acculturation process. She/he is very important. The next important person after parents",* as does Kikkas (2006).

Pollari and Koppinen (2011) emphasize the importance of the cooperation between teacher and parents which Liisa has noticed to be helpful at school. Pollari and Koppinen (2011) also argue school being a significant factor in supporting integration; Liisa considers especially the cooperation between school and family supporting integration:*"Cooperation between home and school and open relationships are very important when thinking about the integration of the child".* Maria has usually used interpreter when meeting with parents. She thinks it is necessary to have a meeting first time when student start the school and after that once or twice a year. In everyday communication, she uses a notebook with pictures that travels in students' bags between home and school. Maria adds that she also speaks English with parents who are able to speak it.

Sercu (2006) argues for the importance of teachers to have an ability to include cultural education in their teaching and support students to relate to both cultures. Maria thinks the same and she highlights that for example at schools we should talk about traditional Finnish celebrations but also pay attention to celebrations in students' home countries and cultures. Tiina agrees but wants to proceed further so that different big celebrations should be equal, no matter if they are traditionally Finnish or from the culture or religion of students' home countries: : *"When suddenly there is some celebration and they say you can not come, the child does not necessarily understand why she/he can not attend. I think it is useless at that point to make some difference between those children".* Tiina hopes we could celebrate all celebrations together.

Anna thinks the school is an important place to meet with the same age people and that supports integration. Social integration is a big challenge and immigrants often integrate socially just with other immigrants. She would like to see more cooperation with teachers to get social integration happen with other students too at the school:*" The whole school community needs to do something to get it started".* Maria agrees and adds that both who take apart into the interaction should make something to develop it in the first place: *"Both give and both get. And then it succeeds if both are ready for it."* Peer support is important

for all students. Topping (2000) argues parents and teachers are strong models for students but as important are the other students, peers, at school (Topping, 2000, p.185). In peer assisted learning students learn from each other by modeling them but also through students teaching each other. Status equals support each other, teaching each other without being professional teachers. (Topping, 2000, p.1). Tiina also mentions that it is important that education includes functional learning and guided games. That way students take more contact with each other: *"We have tried to guide especially in the beginning that take others to your games. But without guided action it does not work out that easily. That should be invested more to."* Tiina and Liisa argue that playing games helps in integration especially if there is no common language. Anna adds that teachers can also support integration by discussing with the students about their proceeding in learning overall. She argues teachers must inform their students about possible ups and downs in learning during the integration: *"Now you can be kind of tired, because many times, sometimes learning can somehow stop or go even backwards".* Students need to acknowledge that sometimes they proceed faster and sometimes learning is harder

Pollari and Koppinen (2011) claim that temperament of children affects integration process. Tiina, Liisa and Maria had noticed the same. They thought extrovert persons take more contact to locals and that way they also have to use new language more. They agreed that if the person is shy, it is not so easy to integrate into a group. Individuals' skills also stand out strongly from the answers of all these three teachers as factors which have an impact on integration. Tiina thinks skills have an impact on free time activities and that influences integration: *"It is so much easier to get along into this kind of hobby, activity, if a person is good at sports".* Liisa argues skills can make getting to know new people easier: *"If you have that kind of skill with which you have reached.. got little adoration".* Freetime has a huge impact on acculturation process. Tiina adds that free time clubs in the afternoons can be one way to get to know Finnish children better. Anna has noticed that if students have hobbies on free time it supports integration. If students for example play in the same sport team, it is easier to get to know them at school too. Maria says the same: *"Whether there is some football team to hang with or finds a youth center as a second living room and has got some social circle from there."* Tiina and Maria added that students can also have some kind of individual challenges, for example depression or motoric disa-

bility. Then they might need special help. In addition, Pollari and Koppinen (2011) argue that also age has an influence on acculturation process. Tiina, Liisa and Anna all think for younger students it is easier to take contact with others and this affects integration. Anna´s opinion is that when students are younger it is easier to get into the new group when group dynamics still change: *"Not all of the groups are necessarily tightly formed there."*

Multi professional network supporting integration

The cooperation between the own mother tongue teacher and class teacher is important in making learning at school as beneficial for the child as possible. (Moped, 2002) Trotta (2006) claims that many professionals working together can more easily notice possible difficulties in integration or learning. Importance of cooperation can be seen in other directions as well. Tiia, Anna, Liisa and Maria share the appreciation towards multi professional network but also bring up the still occurring challenges related to it.

Tiina experiences cooperation with immigrant office very fruitful. She feels people who are working there really listen and support her: *"Sometimes they even support financially some activity if you can explain how it supports development of child´s or youth´s self-esteem."* However, she also feels that the families who have no problems and have moved to the country some other way than being in contact with immigrant office or reception center, she finds cooperation rather difficult.

Anna feels she would need multi professional network and more support in difficult cases like when there is some trauma in child´s past, torturing or etc. Liisa says the development has happened and there are routes to support from multi professional network like student´s own social workers with teachers can work together with. She argues preparatory education teachers need to work together with other teachers, especially with students' future general education teacher. She finds other cooperation models also important like Tyttöjentalo in Oulu or physical education projects: *"Related to that project our students had the opportunity to get to know different opportunities of hobbies here in Oulu."* She has had good experiences working with the mother tongue teachers as well. She feels sometimes and some things are good to explain to students in their own mother tongue as well. MAI (2009) argues for the importance of own mother language teachers for students' integration. Related to this, Liisa feels that she gets the same kind of help from the cultural

mentor as well than from own mother tongue teachers. She feels it is important that children notice adults agreeing with each other and have a common policy. Liisa: *"It has been wonderful to have Hanna here with me this year."*

Maria thinks support from coworkers is important all the time. She feels that support from other preparatory class teachers is especially important. She argues they would need more time to talk with each other for example about how to proceed with students. She thinks the whole work community would need more support from inside and outside. Sharing information and communication is also important: *"That you deliver things actively and verbally forward in this working community to other teachers. That supports integration."*

Mother tongue education as one factor affecting the integration process

Mother tongue education is considered having an influence on integration process in the theoretical framework. The interviewees agreed and found mother tongue education important. Although Anna does not think mother tongue education connects that much on learning Finnish, she argues that by giving students opportunity to use and study their mother tongue the new society supports both the learning the new language and culture and also to maintain parts of their former culture: *"As funny as it feels, that (*own mother tongue*) does not really connect to Finnish but to the integration it connects a lot. It is important, that we also accept student's background and respect it, it has a value"* Anna also thinks it is kind of a relief if other parent speaks child´s own mother tongue; child can give a rest for the brains ones in a while.

Mäkelä (2007) argues for the importance of mother tongue education for learning Finnish. Maria had noticed the same: mother tongue education has a positive impact on learning Finnish: *", so I try to say for everyone that if possible, study it [...] I have tried to advocate for mother tongue education which can help in learning Finnish. Toughest it (*learning Finnish*) is for students who can not read or write with their own mother tongue. They rely so much on memory.[...] In addition, mother tongue expresses your own identity."* Maria understands mother tongue education not only affecting on learning Finnish but she also considers mother tongue as part of the identity, as does Skutnabb-Kangas (1988).

In addition to this, Maria finds mother tongue education important because it is a language of emotions. Liisa ja Hanna agree with Maria, all emphasize the role of mother tongue as a language which students can impress their feelings with. This is supported by the national board of education (Opetushallitus, 2010). Hanna adds that if possible, it is better to communicate with the parents with their mother tongue: *"Cooperation with parents with their own mother tongue is very easy. Children rely on me, they even tell me issues related to their emotions"*. Mai (2009) shares the similar view.

Curriculum and integration

Own mother tongue education is not obligatory but it is advisable to arrange (Opetushallitus, 2004). Anna considers own mother tongue education very important and she thinks it must be mentioned in the curriculum. The importance of individual planning is also referred to by the national board of education (Opetushallitus, 2009). Maria considered that as one of the things that supported integration.

Learning environments are something that Tiina, Liisa and Maria all feel very important. The different learning environments as factors supporting learning are mentioned in *the preparatory curriculum of immigrant children in basic education* (Opetushallitus, 2009). Maria specified the importance of extending learning environments out of the school yard. For example going to the library or swimming hall can be very beneficial if the student or the whole family continues using those services on free time as well. It is stated by the national board of education (2004) that individual study plans could be created for immigrant children to support integration. (Opetushallitus 1, 2004) Anna considers important that students can learn on their own level. That way it is easier to avoid situation where student would frustrate and feel incapable of doing things. Maria highlighted the importance of individualism and small group sizes. She added that it is important to look every child individually. Children need different amount of time and support in preparatory education and offering individuality supports integration. She argues every student would need individual planning: *"In our country this problem has not just been hidden basing it on principle of equality. So that it is fair to give everyone with the same ladle, [...] We really try to be flexible with everybody."* Tiina agrees with Maria and thinks that equality is not giving

everybody the same but supporting children individually that they would be even near to equal starting points.

Integrating education is another important factor in the curriculum. This means that students in preparatory class are little by little integrated to general education by empowering them to the transition on the way. (Opetushallitus, 2009) Maria hoped that if a student has completed some studies during preparatory education it would be possible to mark that credit straight to the diploma. At this moment it is not possible because student needs to show all learned things at the basic education. The city of residence makes the decisions about setting every child a place at school which is not necessary the closest school. In addition to this, students can apply to different school. (Opetushallitus, n.d.) Maria states in some cases integration to the general education is better to focus on students' closest school and not there where the preparatory class is. This is because the closest school is many times the best option for a student after preparatory education because all the children from the neighborhood area are there. At school it is easier to get to know them. Liisa also experienced it very problematic if home is in a different place than school: *"Friendships can not be formed the same way because on free time you can not be here"*. She wondered if children know that they are not going to stay in the particular school and if that also affects children not wanting to attend the integration lessons. Anna thinks that especially social integration is dependent on the time spent in a different group. Anna feels that integration to general education should happen rather fast: *" The less time in some different group, the better"*. Integration to general education is organized according to students' own development and the individual study plans (Opetushallitus, 2009). Maria thinks the transition to general education should be sensitive about and teacher should be sensitive in ways to handle the integration*: "Think about the dynamics of teaching groups in integration subjects, size."* Hanna adds that it is good if the teacher would arrange so that the new students would sit in the classroom next to someone able to help her/him.

Tiina has noticed god students helpful with supporting the immigrants' integration: *"If thinking about for example god students and the way it is practiced in our school, it includes also excellent elements for supporting integration"*. Hanna as a cultural mentor feels that she is especially important for students' when they are integrating to general edu-

cation. She is helping there for example with language. She argues that the cultural mentor needs to be sensitive about the time to decrease her support with students. Sometimes student can say it by herself/himself. Hanna tells about her support to students at the beginning: *"They do not have the courage to answer before they have asked me. But little by little it has to be noticed that I have to make myself invisible."* Hanna also experiences her own immigrant background as a help at work: *"I can help these children through my own experience."*

Tiina still thinks there are some improvements that could be made to the curriculum: *"When they start to make the new curriculum, it would be good to acknowledge and point out, if thinking about values and this operational environment, that they include some elements which really support integration. At least they would discuss about them and really think how it can be supported. It is not enough just to pass it with couple of sentences but there should be some concrete action."* Maria also wants improvements to the curriculum. She thinks curriculum should include more long distance planning and it would need to be flexible but also more strict: *"Sometimes it would be nice to have even some obligatory text there. Like when a student goes from preparatory education to general education, what should student then be capable of."* Concrete statements are needed in the curriculum about the skills to achieve and ways to support integration at school.

6. TRUSTWORTHINESS AND ETHICS

Comparing to quantitative studies where the reliability of research is usually seen more dependent on the success of the measurements, the researcher usually includes more interpretations of her own in qualitative research. Therefore, the starting point to evaluate trustworthiness in qualitative research is to reveal the subjectivity of the researcher which affects the whole research process. (Eskola, Suoranta, 1998, 211-212) Viewpoints and reasons for choosing to research this theme are written in the introduction. They are also presented every now and then during the research - this openness as researchers gives the study trustworthiness. The goal was not to be objective but to be honest of the starting points in the research.

There are multiple terms for evaluating trustworthiness in qualitative studies. The commonly used reliability and validity in quantitative researches are seen unsuitable to evaluate qualitative studies by many researchers. It could be argued though if the term matters that much or what is the meaning of the word. (Eskola, Suoranta, 1998, 212) Anyway, referring to this argument the word trustworthiness was chosen to evaluate this research. The term is specially created to meet the standards of evaluation in qualitative research. Lincoln and Guba (in Creswell's study, 2007, 202-203) present the term trustworthiness in evaluation of qualitative research. This applies especially to studies which have a naturalistic approach in research. To evaluate trustworthiness the researches must consider credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability in research.

Credibility can be reached trough triangulation of experience in the field, methods, data, sources and researchers. (Creswell, 2007, 202, 204). Successful triangulation can be defined as approaching the research topic through multiple methods which strengthens the value of findings (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara, 1997, 233). The sources in this research are mostly the latest relevant publications related to theme and both international and Finnish. The chosen theories are also discussed critically with different viewpoints to theme. This is why there is a strong theoretical background in this study. There is also empirical data which was collected from experienced teachers in the area of immigrant education. The role of the researcher has been earlier discussed but it could be mentioned that both of us have experience in the field and have made earlier studies related to this theme. These

could be seen as strengthening factors related to credibility. In addition, there are two researches to share their ideas. The method used to analyze the data was the thematic content analysis which was suitable in this study because through it we were able to reach the aim of bringing up new viewpoints to theories. The interview was a half structured interview which could be called theme interview as well and the thematic content analysis can be seen justified as a logical choice from this point of view as well. The analysis was deductive and it was easy to identify the themes for research from the theories. All interpretations in the analysis were followed by samples of data which strengthen the value of interpretations (Hirsjärvi, Hurme, 2000, 194). According to all mentioned, it can be concluded that the credibility of this study is quite high because of justifiable choices and multiple viewpoints. In addition to this, Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2000) present that the quality of data from interviews is dependent for example on the functioning recorders and of preparing to interviews by having a structure of interview questions. Successful audibility in recorded data and the similarly oriented transcriptions improve the trustworthiness of the research. In addition, it could be added that it is deniable that the data from the interviews is created in the cooperation with the interviewee and the interviewer. (Hirsjärvi, Hurme, 2000, 184-185, 189) This could be seen both as strength and a weakness but as the subjectivity of the researchers has been admitted, it could be argued that it is natural that also participants affect the research results.

Transferability consists of an ability to describe the research so that the findings could be applied to other researches as well. (Creswell, 2007, 204) In this study the research has been described to detail and supported by experienced theorists in the area of integration. The phases of analysis and a way to interpret the samples have been revealed to maintain transferability. Dependability and confirmability both can also be evaluated by revealing a detailed description of the research process. Dependability is about admitting or not that the research is dependent on the context and time. Confirmability referres to openness in evaluating the value of the data. (Creswell, 2007, 204) The time and place of the research have been revealed and the findings have been admitted to be context related. In addition, the data collecting process has been described as thoroughly as possible. These issues give credit to this research which has been open throughout the research process.

According to issues discussed before it can be argued that our work establishes trustworthiness quite well. It can be admitted that different participants could have given us differ-

ent findings because the sample is so small and therefore the particular individuals affect a lot to findings. On the other hand, the aim was not creating a new theory which could be applied largely but finding different viewpoints related to theories, which was successful. Extending the already existing theories can be seen as one of the aims in qualitative research (Creswell, 2007, 37). This study has can also be claimed to have value because experienced teachers in the area of immigration were able to bring up different viewpoints into discussion related to theoretical framework. Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2000, 194) argue that the research has more value if the data has been collected from people who are familiar with the theme or their status could be seen as strengthening the value of the research. This work is also valuable because the reason of research has been justified and the research process establishes trustworthiness. In addition, Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2002, 135) claim that logicality and textual coherence are emphasized when the research is evaluated as a big picture. This study is logically structured because theoretical framework gives basis for the empirical study to follow. Theories are also discussed when interpreting the empirical data which brings these parts closer to each other. There are also little introductions and conclusions in every chapter throughout the research to make it clearer and easier to read.

Ethically the research was made scientifically which can be seen as one way to evaluate the believability of the research. This means that the arguments and sources are marked so that the honor about referred texts is given to researchers and authors who have written them. The referred texts must be able to track. The quality of the research is also dependent on what kinds of sources are chosen. (Tuomi, Sarajärvi, 2002, 124, 129-130) As already mentioned, the references were chosen to present multiple viewpoints to studied theme. The identities of participants are maintained anonymous because of the ethical reasons as well. Only the issues that are necessary for justifying participants' attendance in this research are revealed to maintain their anonymity. The participants were told from the beginning that the anonymity would be maintained throughout the research and this might have been a factor to help them to freely open up related to the research topic. Because for example Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2000, 35) claim that one of the weaknesses of interviews as a data collecting method is the possibility that the interviewee could end up giving socially accepted answers.

7. DISCUSSION

Purpose of this research was to find and discuss factors which influence on integration and through it ways to support immigrant students´ integration at school. In the theoretical part, the theories regarding the integration process were discussed both in a more general level and in a Finnish context. The school context was present as well. Factors affecting the integration such as background, personality, motivation and family were brought up. Through this the knowledge about integration process increased which worked as a base to reflect the following empirical research. Through empirical research this study could support theoretical part but also offer new perspectives to the integration process related to theories.

One of the aims of this study was to discuss the concepts of integration and acculturation. Furthermore, find out if teachers´ perceptions were in line with the theoretical definitions, to make sure that the possible difference in defining the concepts could be taken account in data analysis. As it has been stated earlier, integration and acculturation are hard to separate from each other. Anyhow, acculturation can be seen as the process and the integration as a possible result of it. Integration can also happen just in some levels or hardly at all. In our opinion, integration process is a suitable term to be used of combined process of acculturation and integration. Teachers agreed about acculturation process consisting from certain phases as stated by Clayton (2003). Though, it was also noted that the acculturation process does not always proceed in a linear order and there is more variety in it. It is important to keep in mind that students are individuals and that affects acculturation process as well. All teachers agreed integration being a complex process to define as is stated in the theoretical framework. One of the teachers highlighted that integration should not be only immigrants adapting into the new culture but integration should happen so that all learn from each other. This is the inclusive way to approach integration and in our opinion the way to promote multiculturalism in a positive way.

It has been noted in the theoretical part that the family background influences integration. The same issue was discussed in the interviews as well but in addition the structure of the family was brought up into discussion as one factor affecting the integration process. If one member of the family or some friend is Finnish, it is easier for others to integrate because

they have a connection to the new culture and people right away. The motivation to integrate into the new society affects the success of integration process which is stated both in the theory and by the participants in empirical research. In relation to motivation, in the administrational level it would be important to make fast decisions concerning possibility of immigrants to stay in Finland and about their placement etc. The feeling of stability and certainty of future plans, for example knowing the place you are going to live in and which school children are going to study in, helps starting the integration process. The need to feel continuation in lives to have the motivation to integrate arose into discussion both in theory and in the interviews.

Preparatory classroom teacher´s role is huge in immigrant children's' lives. Teachers' intercultural competence is needed for communicating with the students and introducing them everyday life here in Finland. Nevertheless, teaching should respect and utilize students' own culture and background and the different cultural ways of learning. The different backgrounds should be utilized as a part of teaching, at the same time showing the appreciation for different cultural roots. Teachers' intercultural competence was respected by the participants and considered important also for example in situations like discussing equality related to school celebrations and religions. Multicultural teacher education is needed in order to enable the intercultural competence to develop. This is naturally part of the approach into the issues studied in the intercultural teacher education program. In other teacher education programs there is only one short course of multicultural education and the knowledge and preparedness to work in a multicultural classroom can be more challenging and even frightening. The awareness of multicultural issues and the responsibility of finding information are mostly then dependent on the individuals themselves and their possible interest to research these issues further on their own time. Furthermore, the preparatory education and the way it functions and ways to support integration at school should be introduced and discussed more in all the teaching programs.

One important factor affecting the integration process both at school and in the whole society is the way the new society welcomes the new comer. Enabling the integration process, the whole society and the school culture need to be welcoming. Immigrants need to feel that they can be themselves in the society and their cultural background is valued as well.

An individual and society both have an impact on integration process. Teachers emphasized the importance of the whole school acting like community, by working together, transferring information actively, supporting each other and making plans together. In theoretical part, the cooperation of many professionals was especially seen favorable for children's learning. The participants argued that cooperation with other teachers and office workers is very important in supporting integration. For example immigration office can support some projects financially and teachers can also get help from children's own social worker. Especially in cases like trauma in children's past, multi professional network was considered needed. It is beneficial if preparatory education teacher, own mother tongue teacher and future general education teacher work together so they can share their thoughts and responsibility. The whole school and everyone working there should share a common policy. Cooperation with other preparatory teachers and support from them was experienced important by the participants as well. Interviewees hoped they would get more opportunities and time to meet up more often. Also working together with the parents was considered important. It supports integration if parents are cooperating with teachers and taken a part into the process.

Appreciating individualism is seen as one of the most significant factors for integration in this research and teachers had taken that into account also in their teaching. Teachers emphasized the importance of having opportunities for learning on one's own level. Small teaching groups which were seen as one of the important ways for enabling it. Every student should also have their own individual curriculum including the goals to aim at. At present, integration is mentioned in the national core curriculum in addition to the preparatory curriculum and for example the individual study plans are seen favorable in them but the participants hoped some improvements as well. Curriculum should include concrete statements which would clarify the kind of knowledge and skills student should have before the transit phase to general education. Integration to general education also has to be acted out individually. Students must be given time to internalize all the new information and feel comfortable in the new settings. This should all happen little by little. Teachers' pedagogical skills are also needed to utilize the dynamics in the teaching groups to support integration and especially social integration. If a child is for example shy, it may be harder and then teacher can also think about sitting arrangements.

This research supports earlier research findings such as the importance of mother tongue education advancing students' ability to learn the new language. The impact of the immigrant's own mother tongue on learning new language and other things seems definite both in participants' opinions and in the theory. Mother tongue enables expressions with own language and mother tongue is part of the identity. Mother tongue teachers can be a huge support in integration at school by discussing with the students about the possible concerns in a new country. Mother tongue education can also offer holistic support to learning when helping with the challenges in other subjects in own mother tongue. The impact of the own mother tongue could be studied further in doctoral thesis because the reasons behind its effect remain quite invisible in this study. From our own experiences living in a foreign country we have noticed the importance of own mother tongue. It is frustrating when you are not able to express your thoughts, feelings and opinion in your own mother tongue. Based on our own feelings while studying in a foreign country with a foreign language, it is hard to be yourself when you are not able to express yourself as before. Learning the new language can also be tiring and it was a relief to be able to speak your mother tongue once in a while. According to our own experience the skills in mother tongue also affect the ability to learn the new language. It is easier to understand for example the grammatics when you are capable to relate studied issues on your mother tongue.

There are a few issues that are not present in the theoretical framework because these issues arose from the empirical data as important factors affecting the integration process. These factors are the location of the school, free time and functional learning. The location of school and home were seen as one factor affecting the integration, by the participants, and the placements and schools arrangements should be decided individually when possible. Teachers felt it affects integration if family is living for example in a reception center which is very isolated from normal life and these people do not get to know Finnish people easily. In addition, the school where students go to preparatory education is not necessary the closest school which can cause problems making friends. To support integration, it is important for the child to get to know children from the new culture and school to make friends. In addition to this, hobbies and the free time clubs are one good way to make friends as well, which was brought up in the interviews. One of the participants pointed out that interaction might not always just happen and the social integration needs to be guided

at the beginning. Younger children can make friends through playing but older children can need some organized actions like working in groups or guided games to get the friendships started. Teachers felt functional learning and different learning environments are a good way in supporting social integration to new group and new settings. These are also mentioned as supportive actions in the preparatory curriculum. Social integration was considered happening mostly with other immigrant students by the participants. They wanted that teachers would concentrate more on the group dynamics and supporting the interaction with all students. Cultural mentor was experienced as an important link in the interaction of teachers and students. Cultural mentor, herself, thought her own immigrant background is helpful and experienced herself to be important for students during integration process.

Integration is a process which takes time, maybe never ending in a way. But it is possible to be integrated and feel home in a new country, become bicultural, multicultural. There are examples like Cristina Igoa, whose statements were used in this thesis, an educator and an immigrant herself, who feels integrated to the new culture and wants other immigrants to feel the same way. Furthermore, teachers have ways to support students in the integration process if just effort is made to understand feelings children might be going through and the responsibility of the work is taken seriously enough. It helps already that educators are familiar with phenomena of acculturation and integration and what kind of phases they might include. Knowledge increases preparedness to act according to needs in the situation. Educators have methods to support their students culturally, psychologically and in an academic level. Teachers need intercultural competence to support integration at school. This can be enabled through multicultural teacher education where teacher students are given opportunity to develop it. The cooperation with the family and other teachers and coworkers is also important in supporting integration. Teachers should also be able to create an atmosphere in the classroom where multiculturalism is appreciated. Furthermore, this should be spread to whole school community where also issues concerning equality would be discussed together. Teachers can also support integration by taking into account social integration and using functional teaching methods with support social integration at school. But in the end, beside all the other methods, the best thing educators can do is to listen what the students are saying. Children will tell what they need in some form or another if teachers are just patient and sensitive to listen and respond to messages and ready to open up to children.

To conclude, this research helped in forming a picture of the features affecting integration and of the ways integration is taken into consideration in administrational and in more individual levels. Especially, the focus was finding ways to support integration at school. Furthermore, there are ways to understand and support immigrant students' integration better and help they in their path. The task of educators, to support child's integration into a new society while at the same time taking into account the curriculum for learning, is not an easy one. But education is not, has never been and never will be easy. But what citation could maybe bring belief for all the educators struggling with these issues and with education over all: *"All learning and change involves some degree of culture shock to the degree that they challenge our basic perspectives. Much can be learned through culture shock that cannot be learned any other way"* (University of Wisconsin Whitewater, 2005-2009). So all the children go through integration and acculturation in some sense, it should not be a scary thing but a challenge, privilege and a thing that educators and the whole school community can and want to learn from.

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APPENDIX

The interview:

Avoin kysymys:
Kerro vapaasti kokemuksiasi maahanmuuttajaoppilaiden sosiaalisesta integraatiosta ja kotoutumisesta koulussa.
Feel free to tell about your experiences immigrant students' social integration and integration process.

1. Miten kotoutumisprosessi näkyy oppilaissasi koulussa?
How is integration process seen with your students?

2. Kuvaile sitä, miten ymmärrät maahanmuuttajien sosiaalisen integraation ja kotoutumisen.
Describe the way you understand immigrant students' social integration and integration process.

3. Millaisten asioiden olet huomannut vaikuttavan oppilaittesi kotoutumisprosessiin?
What kinds of issues have you noticed to have an impact on integration process of your students'?

4. Millaisia haasteita ja millaisia mahdollisuuksia olet kohdannut oppilaan kotoutumisprosessiin liittyen? What kind of challenges and what kind of possibilities you have encountered in relation to student's integration process?

5. Mitä keinoja sinulla opettajana on tukea oppilaan kotoutumista? Koetko, että tarvitsisit lisää tukea? Jos, niin millaista? In which ways you are able to support student's integration process as a teacher? Do you feel that you would need more ways of support? If, what kind of support?

6. Kuinka kotoutuminen on otettu mielestäsi huomioon opetussuunnitelmassa? How is integration process taken into consideration in the curriculum, in your opinion?