From Swedish to Finnish in the 19th century: a historical case of emancipatory language shift

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Abstract

The rise of Finnish in the 19th century is an example of a concluded and successful language emancipation process. The important factors in raising the status of Finnish were language ideology, strong motivation, and the introduction of the use of Finnish into all domains. On an individual level, the establishment of Finnish language schools was more important than the choice of home language. An important feature of the language situation in Finland at the end of the 19th century was that industrialized and modernized Finnish society was developed through both Finnish and Swedish simultaneously. In contrast, the situation of many minorities today is much more problematic. They find themselves in a situation which could be described in terms of a "sociolinguistic time lag" as their language emancipation lags far behind in what has been rapid modernization. In this situation, the introduction of minority languages into the most important contemporary domains of activity is, in many ways, a very demanding task. Consequently, whilst much can be learned from 19th century Finnish language emancipation by contemporary emancipators, today's emancipatory language movements are in an essentially different situation and face new and tough challenges.

Keywords: *Fennomania; birth of nation state; language shift; emancipation of Finnish; Finnish bilingualism; historical sociology of language.*

1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to discuss a case of historical language shift which we consider to be emancipatory. At the end of the 19th century, although Finnish had until that time been only the language of the lower classes in Finland, a part of the country's Swedish-speaking upper class decided to bring up their

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children in Finnish. The study of this language shift is a part of a larger project entitled *Language Emancipation in Finland and Sweden* (Huss and Lindgren 2005) in which the rise of Finnish in 19th century Finland is compared with the measures taken for raising the status of Finnish and *Meänkieli*[1] in Sweden towards the end of the 20th century. This paper analyzes this language shift from Swedish to Finnish as an example of historical and nationalist language emancipation.

In the next section we present the history of Finland from a sociolinguistic point of view. This is followed in the third and fourth sections by a description of the development of the ideology that led to the language shift in the 19th century. The fifth section describes the creation of a Finnish medium school system and the sixth section, the shifts of surnames. Then we deal with different ways of achieving language shift in practice and finally, we discuss the characteristics of emancipatory language shift in 19th century Finland and how it is distinct from contemporary emancipation.

2. Multilingualism in Finland in the 19th century

Historically, the population living in the area which is associated with contemporary Finland has consisted of different language groups, and throughout history the relative proportions of these language groups have been in a continual state of flux. From the Middle Ages until the beginning of the 19th century, Finland was a part of the Swedish kingdom. Towards the end of this era, there were territories mainly populated by common people speaking Finnish, Swedish or Sámi. By "common people", we mean people on lower levels of the estate society of that time: craftsmen and servants, people working with primary livelihoods, e.g. peasants, fishermen, reindeer herders, and others. The Swedish-speaking population lived in the coastal areas and the Finnish-speaking people in the vast inner areas, constituting the great majority of all inhabitants. The Sámi lived in vast, but very sparsely populated arctic areas and were quantitatively the smallest group.

However, there were also bi- and multilingual areas as well as language minorities which could not be territorially defined, e.g. German, Romani and Russian speakers. During this time and until the beginning of the 20th century the population was perceived as roughly divided into two parts: upper class people and common people. Earlier, in the 16th and 17th centuries, there had been upper class and even noble people who spoke Finnish within their families. Towards the end of Swedish rule, in the 17th and 18th century, the upper classes adopted Swedish as their family language. The consequence of this was that as well as geographical language borders, an important "social language border" was also created. Within the Church, Latin was replaced by Swedish and Finnish as a result of the Reformation in the 16th century, and this also

marked the beginning of written Finnish. However, this so-called old literary Finnish had a limited use and the literature was mainly religious. The clergymen who had adopted Swedish at the same time as the other upper social groups had to prove their competence in Finnish, as did some other civil servants in Finnish-speaking areas.

In 1809 Finland became an autonomous Grand Duchy under the Russian emperor and got its own Central Government, Evangelic Lutheran Church and legislation. This meant that, while Finnish continued to be the language of common people, Swedish was kept as the language of administration, justice and of all higher education. Russian did not have any significant role in the country. Hence, the individual social rise of common people required language shift to Swedish,[2] and the following generation grew up speaking Swedish. The status of Swedish as the language of the upper class and literary culture was strengthened by the fact that Latin lost its position in academic surroundings in favor of Swedish and German during the 18th century. French, on the other hand, was the language which the administrative elite used in their correspondence and communication with the Russian authorities (Kalleinen 2004: 50).

Although the upper classes in Finland were Swedish-speaking, many of their representatives could also speak some Finnish. A great deal of them lived in the Finnish-speaking countryside or Finnish-speaking cities. They met common Finnish-speaking people in connection with their duties, and upper class homes had Finnish-speaking servants. The level of their knowledge of Finnish varied. Without doubt many of them spoke Finnish fluently, but their knowledge might have been narrow covering only a small number of domains. Normally they mastered only spoken Finnish (i.e. a Finnish dialect).

During the last decades of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the language situation changed significantly. Due to a national movement, Finnish was gradually developed into a language covering all domains and became equal in status with Swedish in legislation (Rommi and Pohls 1989: 119).[3] During this period, the social status of Finnish also changed radically and it was introduced into all domains in the society. The standard language of today[4] was established both in its written and spoken form and as a language of the upper classes. Now these classes consisted of two language groups, the Finnish-speaking and the Swedish-speaking.

The Finnish-speaking upper class developed in two ways during this critical period. The first way was connected with social rise. While a language shift into Swedish had previously been a precondition for social rise, common people could now keep their own language in education due to the emancipation of Finnish. As a consequence of their increased social mobility, Finnish became the language of a large part of the upper classes in the 20th century which meant that this group expanded greatly.

The second way was through a language shift into Finnish in Swedish-speaking upper class families. This language shift was special in the sense that it was conducted, particularly during the first decades, in favor of a socially lower language. It was a political decision, which was connected with a nationalist movement among the Swedish-speaking upper classes and led to a new definition of the national identity. Since not all upper class families took part in the language shift, those who kept their Swedish language had to define their national and language identity in these new circumstances.

This led to a division of the upper classes into two language groups, both of which identified themselves with the common people who used the same language as they spoke themselves. The two groups were called the "Fennomans" or Finnish-minded and "Svecomans" or Swedish-minded. Originally all of them were Swedish-speaking, but a part of them wanted to identify themselves with the Finnish-speaking common people and consequently they adopted their language.

The Fennoman language shift took place from 1850 to 1920. Finland gained its independence in 1917. Subsequently Finnish was established as the main language of the new nation-state. A language shift from Swedish into Finnish still continues today, but it is of another character. During the 20th century, particularly after the Second World War, Swedish took on characteristics which resemble the situation of a minority language. Swedish is today one of the two national languages, but quantitatively it is a minority language with only 5.5% (2007) of the total population declaring that they speak it as their first language.

3. The ideological development behind the Fennoman language shift

In the beginning of the Russian era, the language of administration and education was Swedish. Within the church, Finnish was used in communication with the Finnish-speaking parishioners only as priests preached in the majority language of their parishes since the Reformation. Furthermore, the local administration used Finnish in its oral communication with the Finnish-speaking people. Already in the 1810s, a group of young intellectuals, the so-called Turku Romantics, began demanding that Finnish be taught in university, and in 1828 a lectureship in Finnish was established. A couple of decades later, in 1850, a professorship in Finnish was created. In 1819 and during the following few years, the same intellectuals were the first to forward the idea that the upper classes should speak the same language as the majority of the common people, Finnish. Underpinning the ideas of the Turku Romantics were those of 18th century philosopher Gottfried Herder and the romantic philosophers of the early 19th century, especially Johan Gottlieb Fichte. According to these think-

ers, a nation was united and defined by its language which was the only way to express its own unique spirit (Klinge 1980: 23; Lindgren and Lindgren 2005: 338).

The patriotic publications of Johan Ludvig Runeberg, which conveyed adoration for the Finnish people and history, and Elias Lönnrot's edited collection of folk poems in the form of a national epic, *Kalevala*, were important for the development of Finnish national feelings in the 1830s. Runeberg's and Lönnrot's publications aroused a lot of attention and even enthusiasm among university students. Behind both was an academic circle of friends, the so-called *Lauantaiseura* ('Saturday club') (Havu 1945: 28–63) many of whose members were devoted to developing Finnish culture and education. In 1831 a society for Finnish literature (*Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura*) was founded. Their main purpose was to develop the Finnish language and publish literature in Finnish (Sulkunen 2004: 15–41). The Society also functioned as a link between the as yet small number of Finnish language activists and it was also the main source of enthusiasm for the Finnish language among some student groups. The ideas of a Finnish-speaking nation and its Finnish-speaking upper classes were developed rapidly in the 1830s, but mostly in very small academic circles.

It was Johan Wilhelm Snellman (1806–1881) who formulated the ideas of the Fennoman movement which were later to have a decisive importance for linguistic relations in Finland. As a student and a young scholar, Snellman had already criticized his teachers and the university authorities and demanded more freedom in the country. In 1839 he left the country and first stayed in Sweden as a writer. Next, he travelled to Germany where he visited several important universities and also met many leading philosophers of the time. When he came back to Finland in 1842 he founded two newspapers in which he introduced his views on society and his cultural program, both based on Hegel's philosophy (Klinge 1980: 28). He demanded better living conditions for the common people, but according to him nothing could be done without changing the language of administration, education and publicity in the country. Education was the prerogative for all development in the country, and if the common people were to get their share of national education and civilization, the educated classes must be an integral part of the nation. Language was the central element in this process, since the common people in the country had no share in the Swedish-speaking literature of Finland; the educated classes should therefore learn Finnish and, above all, create literature and high culture in Finnish (Klinge 1980: 31).

According to Snellman, every nation's mission was to make its own contribution to the civilization of the world. A nation did this by creating a national literature which could only be done in the nation's own language, in this case Finnish. This language reflected the nation's own, unique way of thinking and

feeling, as well as its level of education. Thus, the only way Finland could make its own contribution to the history of the world was by the creation of a Finnish-speaking civilization expressed through a national literature in Finnish (among others, Snellman [1844]).

Snellman's writings were read with enthusiasm and aroused a real national awakening among university students. For example, in 1847 a group of university students who had adopted the Fennoman ideas founded *Nuorten Suomalaisuuden Liitto* ('The Youth Union for Finnishness'), a society whose members promised to learn and use the Finnish language and to avoid using Swedish (Waris 1939: 135–146, 152–162, 167). These students made trips from Helsinki (which in those days was mostly Swedish-speaking) to the inner parts of the country in order to get to know the Finnish-speaking common people and the Finnish language. Some educated families began even to speak Finnish with their children. But of all these early enthusiasts, only very few could maintain this commitment. As the everyday language of the vast majority of the upper classes was still Swedish, there were only a couple of newspapers in Finnish and literature suitable for educated people in Finnish was almost nonexistent. Opportunities to use Finnish in upper class life were extremely limited. In addition, in 1850, all literature in Finnish was forbidden by decree, except for in religious or economic matters. Without doubt, this had a discouraging effect on attempts at language shift.

4. Fennomania and the other ideologies

Snellman's teachings also aroused opposition among Finns as not everybody accepted the idea of making the entire upper class Finnish-speaking. According to Zacharias Topelius, educated Finns should teach their children Finnish, but that did not mean that they should abandon their own mother tongue, Swedish. He feared that, in the long run, Finnish would become a language of high culture just like Swedish, and maybe one day push Swedish aside. He felt that Swedish was a valuable language as one of Finland's national tongues and as another language of Finnish civilization. Another view was that shifting to Finnish would mean moving to a lower level of civilization. Finnish was perceived as a language of the "uncivilized" common people, thus it was not viewed as suitable for arts, science and the rest of European culture yet (Lindgren and Lindgren 2005: 341; see also for example, Åbo Tidningar 83/19.10.1844; Järnefelt 1992 [1928–1929]: 310–312).

A new ideology in 1840's Finland was liberalism, reflected in a defense of the rights of an individual citizen as well as defense of what they saw as Finland's constitutional standing as an autonomy against the rising pressure from the Russians. According to the Swedish-minded liberals, languages should de-

velop and find their own place in society as a result of a natural development. However, they did believe that the Finnish-speaking population should have the same rights that Swedish speakers already had. Furthermore, they did not share Snellman's idea of a monolingual nation. Instead, according to them, a nation was defined by its history, its political institutions and civil society as well as its common culture. Thus, there was plenty of room for two languages in one nation (Lindgren and Lindgren 2005: 339–341).

There was also another way of defining the nation which developed in student circles in the 1850s according to which nationality was built on two levels of identity and two home countries, a small one and a large one. Swedish speakers in Finland represented the Swedish ethnicity and the Swedish ethnic nation at the same time as they were part of the Finnish political nation and Finnish people. Swedish speakers of Finland had their "small home country" which were areas inhabited by Swedish-speaking common people and this was part of the "large home country", Finland. In the beginning, these ideas inspired research into the folklore and traditions of the Swedish-speaking population of Finland, but before the 1880s these Svecoman nationalist ideas were not yet as popular as those of Fennoman nationalism and general liberalism.

At the same time, an older view of Finnish nationality was still alive among the Finnish upper classes. This view was not connected with the language but more to the individual's place in society's hierarchy, his/her responsibilities and duties and ultimately his/her loyalty to the authorities and to God. Advocates of these ideas opposed Snellman's thoughts mainly because they were disturbing the common peace in the country, just like other national movements in Europe did. The conservative and bureaucratic ruling elite of Finland had basically a positive attitude towards the Finnish language during the time that Finland was a part of the Russian empire. For the Russian authorities, Finnish was only a language of the common people. For example, Count Berg, the general governor of Finland in the late 1850s, could not even imagine another role for it (Nurmio 1947: 224–230; Rein 1981a [1895]: 196). Nevertheless, as the Finnish-speaking upper class culture began to emerge later on, attitudes naturally changed.

When Alexander II became Tsar in 1855, discussion about public matters emerged on a new scale. The 1860s were a time for big changes. In 1863 the Diet was assembled for the first time since 1809 in Finland. In the same year, the emperor issued a manifesto according to which Finnish-speaking subjects were allowed to deal with the authorities in Finnish. A 20-year time-limit was set during which the civil servants should acquire the necessary skills in Finnish.

The establishment of the Diet also meant the beginning of political parties in Finland. The young generation of the Fennomans, led by Georg Zacharias Forsman (or Yrjö Koskinen, as he called himself in Finnish) and Agathon

Meurman, declared that the language question was the main issue in Finnish politics and the basis for party divisions. Thus, there were two parties in the country, those in favor of the Finnish language and those against it (Koskinen 1863; Rommi and Pohls 1989: 77). The 1870s were a time for bitter language struggles that divided the Finnish upper classes into two opposing camps.

The Fennomans' idea that the upper classes should speak Finnish amongst themselves like the majority of the population became combined with nation-building, and this, in a way, which made the Finnish upper classes the spear-head of this language emancipation. At the same time, a "shortcut" to developing civilized culture in Finnish was created: when the upper classes shifted language to Finnish, they translated all their upper class culture, customs, world-views and knowledge into Finnish. This proved to be a faster way to the goal of creating a Finnish language high culture than educating a totally new upper class from the common people.

Many members of the upper classes regarded their own language, Swedish, as valuable and dear. Abandoning Swedish for a language, the development of which as a civilized language had only just begun, understandably aroused opposition. The emancipation of Finnish was also seen by the upper classes of the Swedish-speaking areas as a threat to the Swedish-speaking common people and to all "Swedishness" in Finland. In the 1880s, the different opponents of the Fennoman movement united themselves into a common ethno-linguistic movement named Svecomans. It was powerful enough to prevent the elimination of Swedish in Finland.

Although the dispute about the language between the Fennomans and the Svecomans formed the main political dividing-line in the latter half of the 19th century, an absolute consensus remained that Finland was a nation of its own, separate from both Russia and Sweden (Kalleinen 2001: 287–290; Kalleinen 2004; Lille 1921: 51–53; Rein 1981b [1899]: 26–29). Both the Swedish-minded and Finnish-minded Finns were very active in building the Finnish nation, and the national high art and culture which was flourishing especially at the end of the 19th century.

The language dispute between Fennomans and Svecomans took place in an era when nationalist ideas were deeply rooted in Europe, and the prevalent attitude towards a multilingual population can be described with the phrase "the century of assimilation politics". Nationalism with its ideal of a monolingual nation state led instead in Finland to the creation of an officially bilingual state. As Fennomania had been born among the Swedish-speaking upper classes and the language dispute divided this well-to-do and very self-conscious social group in two, the Swedish language could not be treated the same way as, for example, the Sámi and Romani languages were treated during that period.

Historian Max Engman (1989, 1995) has compared the history of the Baltic countries, Bohemia and Finland during the period in question. There were

similar language struggles in the Baltic countries and in Bohemia as in Finland. The conflicts between linguistic groups were more embittered in those countries than in Finland, and the only place where an effectively functioning bilingualism was developed was in Finland. A crucial point in the development of relations between Finland's languages was that during the process of modernization, both groups were building a nationalist and modern society together through their own languages. Thus, the education system, mass media, economic, cultural and social institutions were developed simultaneously in two languages.

The result of the language struggle between the Fennomans and the Svecomans can be placed in the context of Johan Galtung's (2003) "win-win" principle as both parties reached their goal: Fennomans achieved the emancipation of the Finnish language and made Finnish the dominating language in the country, whilst Svecomans in turn could keep Swedish as an official language in Finland. The result was accomplished together, so the language struggle was ultimately beneficial for both groups.

5. The development of the Finnish school system

Especially important for nation building in Finland was the creation of a Finnish-medium school system. First of all, in the Finnish schools the pupils adopted a form of Finnish which was suitable for all purposes, and secondly, they went to school with school-mates who had the same attitudes concerning language policy as they had themselves. The first Finnish schools were single-sex secondary schools for boys and girls, but from 1886 mixed-sex secondary schools were also established. The pupils often found their future husbands and wives in these schools and this undoubtedly strengthened their Finnish language identity.

During the period of Alexander II (1855–1881), the secondary school system was thoroughly reformed at the same time as other reforms concerning politics and languages were introduced. A professorship in pedagogy was established in university in 1855, and a new school system was prescribed in 1856 consisting of many didactic and organizational reforms. The church and the school system were separated in 1869, and education and qualification requirements for secondary school teachers were defined. During the same period, the matriculation examination was reformed (Halila 1980: 175–185).

The decision to establish a Finnish secondary school for boys in Jyväskylä, a then new city in the middle of Finland, was taken in 1857. The school was to be bilingual at first, and later instruction would gradually change to Finnish. Pupils in the first two years were to be taught in their own mother tongue, either Finnish or Swedish, and Finnish was to be used in later years in one or

more subjects according to needs and possibilities. The school started in 1858, but it turned out that the orders concerning the languages of instruction were difficult to interpret. According to the teachers, bilingual instruction led to mere language training and bad quality with regard to content. There was a complete consensus among the teachers that all instruction should be given in Finnish (Jalkanen 1908).

The emancipatory language policy of the Fennomans developed gradually through a step-by-step revision of former goals for practical language policy efforts among the Fennomans. Thus the practical realization of the language policy was further radicalized in every Fennoman generation. Snellman's generation did not yet begin to carry out language shift in their own families — the achievement of that practical goal, as well as the creation of a fully Finnish-medium school system was part of the more radical language policy of the following generations.

Snellman himself took part in the debate that arose about the language question in Jyväskylä. According to him the school should remain bilingual — and in fact, that all schools in Finland should be bilingual. Some of his arguments were the following:

> After all, in the 19th century, no European people can start anew from the state of savagery. A literature which, like that of Finnish today, consists of some pages on the elements of knowledge, is too close to savagery and cannot alone form a foundation for the spiritual cultivation of people. . . . It would also be a disaster for the success of the national struggle if a result of this kind was ever reached. Because in spite of how well schoolwork within this purely Finnish instruction could be done and afterwards academic degrees taken, the lack of a Finnish national literature would rank this kind of education below the education which is given in Swedish. (Snellman 1859: 182–186)

These quotes from Snellman reveal how radical the emancipation of the Finnish language was at that time and old Snellman's arguments were not respected in this debate. The language of instruction soon became exclusively Finnish to Snellman's great disappointment.

For girls, there were only Swedish schools in the six provincial capitals. During the first general teacher's assembly in 1863 this question was taken up and the unsatisfactory situation discussed. There was a consensus that Finnish language schools for girls should be established in the same cities where such schools for boys already existed. The result was that only one year later, in 1864, a private Finnish language school for girls was established in Jyväskylä. One year earlier, in 1863, a Finnish teacher training seminary was established in the same town. Consequently, during a short time, this small town was the centre of Finnish-speaking education in Finland as well as a Fennoman stronghold.

A few years later, Finnish schools were established in other parts of Finland too. Joensuu, a small town in the eastern part of the country, got a lyceum for boys and a girl's school in 1865, Helsinki a private girls' school in 1869 and Hämeenlinna, in the southern part of Finland, a lyceum for boys and a teacher training academy in 1873. At the same time, three Swedish language schools were transformed into partly bilingual schools. In the 1890s, the number of Finnish language schools was higher than the number of Swedish language schools, whilst, already in the 1880s, the number of pupils in Finnish language schools was higher than in the Swedish language schools (Halila 1980: 180).

6. Nationalist name-shifts

As a consequence of the Finnish nationalist movement, many citizens changed or "shifted" a Swedish or a Latin surname or a surname of foreign origin to a Finnish surname. Very many did so in 1906 when the 100th anniversary of the birth of Snellman was celebrated, and in 1935 during the centenary of the national epic *Kalevala*. Some of the families who shifted language took part in the surname shift, whereas others kept their non-Finnish family name. Many totally Finnish-speaking families who had a Swedish surname also took a Finnish surname in 1906 and in 1935. However, the language shifting and the surname shifting groups of families were not the same and there are many families in Finland today who are clearly Finnish-speaking, but have a Swedish surname. Therefore, the origin of a surname is frequently not indicative of the mother tongue or language identity of an individual or family.

7. Fennoman language shift in practice: How was it achieved?

According to Klaus Lindgren (Lindgren and Lindgren 2005) about half of the upper class at the end of the 19th century shifted language from Swedish to Finnish. There were proportionally more people who shifted language in the regions where common people were monolingual Finnish speakers. Also in the capital, Helsinki, there were quite a number of Fennoman language-shifters. Although in the early 19th century a great majority of the population was Swedish-speaking, the share of Finnish speakers increased during the last decades of the century in all social classes through, among other things, industrialization (Lindgren and Lindgren 2005).

In this section we will describe the manifestation of language shift in practice through qualitative data concerning 13 families. Most of the material comes from written documents, e.g. letters, diaries, memoirs, biographies etc. There are also data emanating from interviews carried out between 1996 and

2002 with elderly descendants from language-shifting families. These families were founded in the period from the 1850s to 1890s and most of the children in these families were born in the 19th century with only a few of the youngest born early in the 20th century. The language shifts in question took place during a period of strong modernization and industrialization when the transition from an estate society to a class society took place in Finland. The fathers and the mothers in the families had all grown up in upper class families who belonged to the estates of clergy, nobility or burghers. The families lived in different parts of Finland and moved from place to place when the father of the family changed workplace.

The fathers in all 13 families were Swedish-speaking Finns who had decided that their children be brought up with Finnish as their main language and with the identity of a Finnish-speaking Finn. The mothers were, in most families, Swedish-speaking Finns, except for four women who came from the neighboring countries and had moved to Finland for marital reasons. One of them was a Swede, one a Russian and two were Germans from St. Petersburg. Parental knowledge of Finnish varied from family to family. Some of the Swedish-speaking Finnish mothers and fathers grew up in surroundings where the common people, among them the servants in the family, spoke Finnish, so that they had already learned to speak Finnish quite well during their childhood. People who grew up in upper class families in Helsinki or in other places where most of the common people spoke Swedish usually could not speak Finnish before they began to study it as young adults. There is evidence in the material to the effect that in some families both parents, or one of them, studied Finnish intensively and developed their competence throughout the years. The foreign-born women began to study Finnish when they became engaged or married to their husbands. The Russian and the Russo-Germans did not know Swedish either before their engagement with a Finn.

In all of these families, a decision was made to raise the children to become Finnish-speaking. However, the practical language choices at home among the families varied greatly. Evidence shows that only two families used Finnish as the sole home language. Documents related to one family showed that the couple had already decided when they were engaged that they would speak Finnish with each other, and the letters from the time of the engagement confirm this as they are written in Finnish. Another couple's marriage proposal letter in Finnish has also been preserved which suggests that Finnish was also the language which that couple spoke between them. In some other families, the parents spoke Finnish to the children, but they spoke Swedish, Russian or German with each other. Their children spoke Finnish among themselves. In the family with the Russian mother they first spoke Russian, but after some years the father and then the mother began to speak Finnish to the children. During the following couple of years, the two oldest children continued to speak Russian

with each other, but later on all the children spoke Finnish with each other. In one family, the father spoke Finnish and the mother Swedish to the children, the servants were Finnish-speaking and the children learned both languages simultaneously. In a few families, the parents spoke Swedish with each other and with the children, and the children spoke Swedish with the parents and, for at least a number of years, they also spoke Swedish with each other.

It was usual that the parents try to develop the family knowledge of Finnish by hiring Finnish-speaking servants and by spending summers in regions where the peasants were monolingual Finnish speakers. In a few cases, private family tutors were hired to teach the children standard Finnish, and in one case the foreign-born wife as well.

If the home language choice was varied, the common thing for all was that the children were sent to Finnish schools. It appears that the school language also influenced the language that the children used with each other. There are many letters preserved from one family where the mother wrote in Swedish and the father in Finnish to the children. Only the letters between the parents and the letters from the mother to the adult children are in Swedish, whereas the children have written to each other and to both parents in Finnish. In the families where both parents spoke Swedish with the children, the children have at some stage begun to speak Finnish among themselves. Later in life, in most cases, Finnish dominated, but in one case three sisters spoke both Finnish and Swedish with each other. There is no data which indicate when children from these families changed over to use Finnish, but there is ample evidence showing that they spoke Finnish among themselves when they were adults. Data show that they used Swedish with their parents as long as they lived.

All children of the language shifting Fennoman families had very good oral and written competence in Finnish as well as in Swedish, and some of them were trilingual or multilingual. Even if the home language varied greatly, the Fennoman project to raise the children to become Finnish-speaking seemed to have succeeded quite well. Most of the children of the Fennoman families who were part of this case study adopted a Finnish language identity and they spoke Finnish with their own children. Indeed, in most cases, the home language in the next generation was Finnish and the grandchildren of the couples who started the language shift learned Finnish as their first language. However, there are a few cases in the material where children of a language shifting family as adults became Svecomans. They spoke Swedish to their children and sent their children to Swedish language schools. Characteristic of these cases is an ideological choice which was in the opposite direction to the choice of their parents. In another case, a child of a language shifting but Swedish-speaking Fennoman family married a person with a Swedish language identity and spoke Swedish to his spouse. Nevertheless, he spoke Finnish to the children and put the children in a Finnish language school. This can be seen as a

conscious choice with the intention of continuing the language shift to Finnish. The majority of the descendants of couples who started the language shift are today Finnish-speaking. There have been marriages with Swedish-speaking Finns, which have in later generations led to a family with either Finnish, Swedish or both as home languages, and there have been some marriages with foreigners, which have led to either a bilingual family or a family where the only home language has been the foreign language (in this case, the family has lived in another country). Nevertheless, non-Finnish-speaking Finns are very clearly a minority among the descendants. In the Fennoman case, the language shift was additive rather than subtractive. An especially good competence in Swedish was characteristic for the first two language shifting generations, but diminished gradually during the next generations. However in most cases, it never totally disappeared.

As mentioned above, the language choice was in all cases a result of an ideological choice made by the father of the family, while in many cases, the mothers actively cooperated. However, in one case the mother used Swedish with the children while her husband spoke Finnish with them, so that the choice of home language was in this case not the same for both parents. In another case, in addition to Swedish, the mother also spoke Finnish to the children with the intention of ensuring that they would not have difficulties in the Finnish language school.

The fact that the choice of language was an ideological choice is also manifest in differences among siblings in the upper class families. It was usual that some of the siblings of the same families choose a language shift to Finnish, while others continued to use Swedish and to maintain a Swedish-speaking language identity. The consequence of the different ideological/political choices in the language issue is that there are today both Finnish- and Swedish-speaking branches of those families.

When we look at the process of the Fennoman language shift, we have to make a difference between language identity, language competence and language choice in different situations. In the period of the Fennoman language shift, the question of being either Finnish-speaking or Swedish-speaking was very much a political, ideological and individual choice about which language group a person wanted to identify with. Our data show that in the 19th century, many Fennomans had indeed better competence in Swedish than in Finnish.

When the Fennomans started the language shift in their families, they also started speaking Finnish with each other. But it seems to have been difficult in the beginning of the process. During the first decades, the Fennomans spoke more Swedish than Finnish among themselves, and as late as in the 1900s and 1910s some of the Fennomans still spoke Swedish with each other. With the Svecomans, the language shifting Fennomans continued speaking Swedish.

With regard to the emancipation of the Finnish language, the Svecomans began to study standard Finnish and to appreciate good competence in Finnish more than before. Many of the moderate Svecomans also recognized the importance and the need for the emancipation of Finnish, even if they did not want to shift the language of their family. Moderate Svecomans did not oppose Finnish getting the status of an official language, but they demanded that there must also be a place for the Swedish language and Finland-Swedish culture in Finland. As a result of the emancipation of Finnish, a tradition of very good oral and written competence in Finnish as well as Swedish developed among the Finland-Swedish educated classes. In this way, the serious disagreement between the Fennomans and Svecomans in fact resulted in both groups becoming functionally bilingual on a high level for a certain period.

When we consider how the language shift was carried out, it is noteworthy that the most decisive factor was not the choice of home language, but the choice of the school language. The school not only provided linguistic competence, but also established a Finnish-minded ideology and a contact network among Finnish speakers in the same generation. A precondition for such a situation is that the choice of the school language exists and this was the case in the Grand Duchy. Parallel Swedish and Finnish medium education institutions at all levels were developed and Finnish was introduced in all sectors of public, administrative and cultural life. Without a large scale emancipation of Finnish in the whole society, it would have been impossible for people to have the option of school and university education in Finnish. Many of the fathers of the language shifting families took part in creating the Finnish education system from the primary to the tertiary levels.

8. Conclusion: The changing contexts of language emancipation

Collective language shifts have taken place throughout history, but they have mainly been in favor of languages with a higher status. The Fennoman language shift can be considered as emancipatory as contemporary language shift reversal in connection with the revitalization of minority languages because in both cases, the language shift takes place in favor of a language with a lower status in society. During the first decades of the Fennoman language shift (1850–1870), it was particularly radical. According to our data, one family became socially isolated because they put their children in a Finnish school meant for common people (Järnefelt 1992 [1928–1930]: 308–312). In another case, a clergyman got a notice to quit because of his Fennoman attitudes, and he and his family had to move to another parish (Gulin 1915: 303).

One motto of the Herderian nationalism was “one nation — one language — one state”. In this context, the status of Swedish in Finland is an exception

since Finland became officially bilingual when Finnish was made an equal language with Swedish. From the end of the 19th century on, nationalist language policy in the Nordic countries was assimilationist with regard to minorities. In Finland, the assimilationist ideas targeted other groups, not Swedish speakers. A bilingual society was created through the introduction of separate monolingual school systems for Finnish speakers and Swedish speakers respectively. Here we have an important difference with regard to the current minority movements where the goal is a functional bi- or multilingualism, both individually and at the state level.

The rise of Finnish in the 19th century is an example of a concluded and successful language emancipation process. In our view, the important factors in raising the status of Finnish were the political language ideology, a high level of motivation, and the introduction of the use of Finnish into all domains. On an individual level, the establishment of Finnish language schools was more important than the choice of home language.

As we already mentioned at the end of the second section, an important feature of the language situation in Finland at the end of the 19th century was that industrialized and modernized Finnish society was developed through both Finnish and Swedish simultaneously. In contrast, the situation of many minorities today is much more problematic. They find themselves in a situation which could be described as a "sociolinguistic time lag": their language emancipation lags far behind in what has been a rapid modernization (see Introduction to this issue). In this situation, the introduction of minority languages into the most important contemporary domains of activity is, in many ways, a very demanding task. Consequently, whilst much can be learned from 19th century Finnish language emancipation by contemporary emancipators, today's emancipatory language movements are in an essentially different situation and face new and tough challenges.

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Notes

1. *Meänkieli* is a language spoken in the Torne valley in Sweden and is linguistically close to Finnish.
2. The only exceptions were the Swedish-speaking peasants and fishermen. However, a kind of language shift was required from these people as well because their language was a local dialect and very much different from the Swedish standard language of the time.

3. The first language law, according to which Finnish and Swedish were equal in status, was approved in 1902.
4. In the description of the Finnish language, the years 1810–1880 are called the Early Modern Finnish period, and the time after 1880 the period of Modern Finnish (Häkkinen 1994: 13–15).

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