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**Education of Immigrant Children at the Level of
Pre-school Class in Sweden**
an empirical study of how the education of immigrant children is conducted
in practice with the focus on language development

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Abstract

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The Title: Education of Immigrant Children at the Level of Pre-school Class in Sweden, an empirical study of how the education of immigrant children is conducted in practice with the focus on language development
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The Background: Immigrant children have become an important part of the Swedish educational system. Their teaching and upbringing represent a very complex phenomenon that requires a special approach from pedagogues and country authorities. According to the Swedish state policy, immigrant children should have the same rights for education as Swedish pupils. They should also have the right to preserve and cultivate their mother tongue, as well as their home culture. Today we cannot say that the question of immigrant children's education is answered fully. The school achievements of many immigrants remain unsatisfactory. I think that the situation around immigrant children's teaching in Sweden needs further research and elaboration.

The Purpose: This work concentrates on how the education of immigrants at the pre-school class is conducted in reality. Its main purpose is to study how the education of immigrant children at the pre-school class level in two different communes is carried out in practice with a special focus on language development.

The Research Method: To collect the data and analyse their quality, a qualitative research approach was implemented. The formulation of the investigation purpose determined the selection of a qualitative case study with practical hermeneutic interest. Within this interest an interpretation hermeneutic method was used. The research was influenced by an emancipation perspective. Within this perspective an emancipation critical method was applied.

The Results: The investigation has shown that the education of immigrant children can vary significantly at different pre-school classes. One reason for that can be the qualitative difference of the communes, where the chosen for the investigation pre-school classes lie. Another reason can be the principle difference of the personalities of the teachers, who work with immigrants, their enthusiasm, creativity and desire for self-education. The study has also proved that the learning achievements of immigrant children in the chosen pre-school classes are not lower than those of Swedes.

Key Words: Immigrant children's education, pre-school class, learning Swedish, mother tongue, bilingualism.

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Introduction

During the last decades Sweden has gained the status of a multicultural country. The number of immigrants in it comprises around one-eighth from the total population. According to the information from the Swedish Statistics Centre, the number of the newly arrived immigrants in 1999 was 49,8 thousand people (Statistics Sweden, 2000). In 2000 it became already 58,9 thousands. The prognosis for the future is that this figure will continue to increase slowly.

Immigration to Sweden has been of a heterogeneous character. It has really started in modern times with the end of the Second World War, when almost 200 000 people from Nordic countries and Baltic States fled to Sweden. During the post-war period an organised wave of labour-market immigration took place. Its highest peak occurred in 1969-1970. Then the majority of immigrants were Finns (Info about Sweden, 1995). From the middle of 1970-ies the immigration to Sweden changed its character radically. It became more refugees orientated. Large ethnic groups from Latin America, Asia and especially from the Central East had to ask for the political asylum in Sweden because of the crises in their home-countries. The Swedish government answered a great number of these requests in the affirmative. Next rise of immigration took place in connection with the political crisis in Yugoslavia during the 1990-ies. This time about 120 000 people, mostly citizens from Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, immigrated to Sweden (Immigration Institution, 1997). As far as the latest data from the mass media is concerned, more than 2500 people asked for the asylum only in august 2001 and many of these requests had to be satisfied (Sesam, 2001:36; Söndagsavisen 2001:34). To add to the labour-marked and refugee immigration, there is a small per cent of immigration based on relative connections that was continuously going on at a low pace.

I have listed these facts about immigration deliberately to stress that immigrants in their number and variety, and consequently their problems, have become a very important part of the Swedish society. The intensive immigration flood into the country has aroused a range of specific questions that continue to call for solutions. One of the most serious is the question of immigrant children's education. It is not as acute as citizenship or legalisation procedures, but it demands a lot of thinking and perhaps some improvements. Through the course of years it became clear that to study how to talk and understand Swedish is not enough for immigrant children to achieve satisfactory results at school (Skutnabb-Kagnas, T., Toukomaa, P., 1976; Johannesson, I., 1976). Many researches in the field have also shown that the mother tongue plays an indispensable role in the overall development of immigrant children (Malmberg, B., 1964; ACTFL Edition, 1970; Skutnabb-Kagnas, T., Toukomaa, P., 1976). It helps them to preserve their national identity, to communicate with their parents and to keep contacts with their native country. It has been proved that if the child's mother tongue has not been developed till the abstract level, the child runs the risk of becoming semilingual (Skutnabb-Kagnas, T., Toukomaa, P., 1976; Johannesson, I., 1976). That means that he/she would not know any language properly.

The Swedish government took the solution to give immigrant children all possibilities to educate and develop themselves. According to the immigration policy that the Riksdag formulated in 1975 and that is valid till now, all immigrant children have the

same right as Swedish-born pupils to be educated (Skollag, 1985:11). What is more, all immigrant children have the right to develop their knowledge of the home language through receiving special school training in it. I would like to underline that these democratic values are central in organising and conducting immigrant children's teaching in Sweden. The Swedish society wants to see immigrants as equal citizens with equal rights and obligations (Lemark, B., 1984).

Since it was understood that the education of immigrant children can contain problems and that it demands a special approach, a lot has been done to make it more effective. However, we cannot say that the question of immigrant children's education is fully answered. In one of the last reports that I have read on the topic (Papadopoulos, N., Vallius, P., 1999) it was underlined that about 10 per cent of immigrant pupils do not manage to get final grades in the 9th form at the compulsory school. It means that 10 per cent of immigrant children do not have any chances to continue their education at the gymnasium level. Among those immigrant children who enter the gymnasium, about 43 per cent quit their studies. Together with the authors of this report (Papadopoulos, N., Vallius, P., 1999), as well as with many others (Guillou, J., 1996; Johansson, I., 1976; Revrapport, 1990; Wikström, I., 1997) I am convinced that the situation with immigrant children's education in Sweden cannot be called perfect. From my personal knowledge I shall add that many immigrant children find it difficult to study in spite of all improvements that have been introduced, and that their school achievements remain lower than those of their Swedish peers. Because of that I have decided to concentrate on the question of immigrant children's education and problems that are connected with it. In this paper I would like to study how the work with immigrant children is conducted at present, stressing the aspect of language development, and to discuss it. My main focus will be on the second generation of immigrants, i.e. children who were born in Sweden from non-Swedish parents and who continue to live in the country. Children who have only one non-Swedish parent will be referred to this group as well.

The outcomes from the present research can facilitate the subsequent elaboration of questions connected with immigrant children's education. Certain elements of the pedagogical work with immigrants at the pre-school class, which have been studied in this paper and which seem to be effective, can be applied by other educational institutions in their practice. My commentaries and conclusions, and especially my emphasis that in the chosen for the research pre-school classes children with a non-Swedish background do not make lower learning achievements than Swedes, can be used as guidelines for everyone who works with immigrants. The sum of the most relevant specific features of becoming and being bilingual, which I have listed in my theory chapter, can be also viewed as a valuable impact into the topic.

Chapter I

The Purpose of the Investigation

Education of immigrant children is one of the numerous pedagogical phenomena that continue to arouse questions the effectiveness of dealing with them. A wide range of scientific researches have already been accomplished, that have been aimed to understand how the teaching of immigrant pupils should be carried out and how it is possible to make it more efficient (for example Johannesson, I., 1976; Skutnabb-Kagnas, T., Toukomaa, P., 1976; Arnberg, L., 1981; Lahdenperä, L., 1997; Axelsson, M., 1999). Hundreds of valid suggestions have been given and many of them have become a successful practice. Still there is much to work at because the achievements of many immigrant children in learning leave much to be desired. Besides that, immigrant children's education continues to contain some organisational problems that very often are not so easy to avoid (Revrapport, 1990; Papadopoulos, N., Vallius, P., 1999). As a rule these hindrances appear because of a very high per cent of immigrants with various national backgrounds within the Swedish educational system. All these children need an individual approach in training Swedish and their mother tongue, as well as in cultivating their communication abilities, which under certain circumstances can become problematic to arrange. The mentioned items have determined the general direction of my investigation.

The main purpose of the project is: *to study how the education of immigrant children at the pre-school class level in two different communes is carried out in practice with a special focus on language development.* To achieve it the following practical goals have been formulated:

1. to study the age specifics of six-year-old children and their needs;
2. to work at theories about special traits of bilingual immigrant children;
3. to study the present written documents of the state and the chosen communes concerning the education of immigrant children at the pre-school class;
4. to study how theoretical ideas and authority regulations work in practice on the example of two pre-school classes from two neighbouring communes;
5. to observe and compare the work of the two pre-school classes with immigrants;
6. to try to interpret and understand why the work of the two pre-school classes with immigrant children functions the way it does;
7. to discuss what is positive and what can be improved in the way the education of immigrant children is carried out in the two pre-school classes.

Frequently I have heard the opinion that explains immigrant children's unsatisfactory results in studies as a consequence from their lower intellectual abilities because of the lower intellectual and social level of their parents. This viewpoint is difficult to accept. I am not sure that in all cases of immigrants' failure it is their meagre intellects that are to be blamed. Sometimes it can be inadequate teaching materials, or an unmotivated teacher, or low expectations from immigrant pupils that decrease their desire and ability to achieve. In my work I am planning to pay some attention to this aspect, to see whether my point of view has the right to exist.

Chapter II

The Study of the Literature Sources

In this chapter I would like to explain how my work at the literature for the project has been arranged. I shall write about how I have chosen the topic for my investigation and how I have gathered the information I needed for the theory part. I shall treat the choice of the topic and the collection of the theoretic data as one unit, because in my work these two items have been closely connected.

It was not difficult to choose the topic for the present research. This paper is the continuation of my C-level project, which was about the education of immigrant children at the pre-school. So I was familiar with the subject and with the main directory line of the literature that exists, when I started at the D-level. However, this time I decided to enlarge my knowledge about immigrant children's education. I wanted to read more theories concerning the pedagogical work with immigrant pupils and problems of being bilingual. Remembering certain information gaps from my previous paper, I planned to supply this work with the data about the pre-school class in general and about the age specifics of children who go there. From the last scientific investigation I was also unsatisfied with my method chapter, so I decided to study more books about research methods and trends in pedagogics.

To find the literature I needed I used the Lovisa and the Libris Data Bases. I searched in Swedish and English the words "immigrant children", "pre-school class", "education", "mother tongue" and "bilingualism" in different combinations. Later I found it necessary to go deeper in some details, so I checked the books that were marked as references in my primary sources. I used Internet sources as well, and namely the web sites www.skolverket.se and www.riksdagen.se. On the last web site I was interested in the authority prescriptions and regulations about immigrant children's education.

Among the books and reports that I studied there were some issues dated 1970-ies that one can consider to be old. However I thought that being old does not necessarily mean being irrelevant. I knew that a very serious research around the problems of teaching immigrant pupils had been started exactly around this decade. So I was convinced that among the scientific investigations from the 70-ies there must be something of an essential importance, for instance data about some experimental works that were never repeated later. I did not fall short of my expectations and a lot of useful material was found (Malmberg, B., 1964; Lauren, K., 1973; Johannesson, I., 1976; Skutnabb-Kagnas, T., Toukoma, P., 1976; Ekstrand, L.-H., 1978).

From the literature study I understood that there are certain aspects of working with immigrants at the pre-school class, which are more important and difficult to solve than others. I can mention the organisation of training in Swedish and the mother tongue, the individual approach to the needs of a particular child, the communication of teachers with immigrant parents, etc. I decided to make an accent on these items during my empirical research. Later I used them as key points for the structuring of my empirical results.

Chapter III

The Theoretical Background to the Question of Immigrant Children's Education at the Pre-school Class

The attitudes to the way immigrant children's education should be fulfilled have undergone a well-observed evolution over the course of time. From rather a superficial understanding of how immigrant children's teaching should look like, the notion has been developed to a complex system that embraces all stages of the official education. In this chapter I would like to give an overview of the theoretical information about the education of immigrant children at the pre-school class. It is logical to open the chapter with a unit about the pre-school class. There it will be explained what the pre-school class is and what peculiar traits it contains. Then a section about developmental specifics that children of six are supposed to have will be included. This information would be of a general character. It will help to understand the behaviour of six-year-olds and to set relevant requirements to their education. After that the notion of bilingualism, its processes, forms, advantages, etc. will be considered. Bilingualism is a part of immigrant children's life. As a matter of fact it is their way of living. To understand what bilingualism means is to understand a great part of immigrant children's difficulties and needs. I shall also give some reminders to teachers who work with immigrant children. These reminders may help to create productive working conditions at a pre-school class. To continue, the content of the latest educational plans both on the governmental and communal levels will be analysed in this chapter. On the municipal level I shall choose the plans of those communes, where I am going to conduct the empirical part of my study. The purpose of doing so is to study the requirements to the education of immigrant children that exist nowadays. Finally a brief summary of the theoretical chapter will be written.

As the reader will see, I supply this chapter with some personal remarks and ideas. I do so, because I have found it illogical to postpone all my thoughts about the theory aspects till the last unit "Analysis and Discussions". It seems that sometimes it is necessary to provide commentaries or to share one's own opinion direct on the spot. I think that for the reader it is easier to follow a paper with such a structure.

3.1. The Pre-school Class as an Educational Phenomenon

In this section I shall summon up general information about the pre-school class as a separate form of Swedish education. These data will create a picture of what a pre-school class in theory is and how it should function. This will help to get a better understanding of what could be awaited from immigrants' education at this level.

The pre-school class is an optional form of education for six-year-old children in Sweden, which is aimed to stimulate each child's development and learning. It is seen as children's preparation for the compulsory school. The pre-school class should be differentiated from the pre-school, which deals with children from one to five years old. The commune is to decide in what way the pre-school class activities should be organised, though it should obey the general direction of the state regulations. Today

communal authorities are obliged to provide all six-year-olds, who would like to, with 525 free-of-charge hours of pedagogical training (Linderoth, E., 1998). Immigrant children of this age have the right for the training of their mother tongue under the condition that there are at least five representatives of the same language group in the commune, and if a suitable teacher can be found. Five-year-old children are able to enter the pre-school class only if there are unoccupied places left.

As a rule, the pre-school class combines the pre-school traditions with the school environment where it is normally located. Playing and creativity are observed as central components of everyday reality there. They are viewed as means for the child's learning and harmonious growth. Much attention is paid to the development of speech and communication abilities. Very often pre-school class teachers involve children in group discussions and dialogues with each other in order to work at the Swedish language and to train communication (Linderoth, E., 1998; Persson, S., 1995).

Children at the pre-school class are seen as active subjects of the pedagogical process. It implies that their opinions and interests are respected and that they always have some time for free activities, when they engage themselves in what they like most of all. It also means that the inter-connection between the teacher and children is not one-sided. It is not only a grown-up who teaches a six-year-old. The teacher can learn much from his pupils as well, for example to see the world from another perspective or to question everything that exists (Persson, S., 1995).

As far as the communication between the pre-school class, elementary school and pre-school is concerned, it is seen as a matter of great significance (Linderoth, E., 1998; Samuelsson, I., Mauritzson, U, 1997). It allows children of different age groups and of different developmental stages to learn from each other and to take care of the youngsters. What is more important, such a communication invites teachers of different levels and with different educational backgrounds to function as a pedagogical team (Persson, S., 1995; Samuelsson, I., Mauritzson, U, 1997). That is why more and more pre-school class activities that are introduced nowadays involve the participation of the representatives from the compulsory school and the pre-school.

Another aspect of the pre-school class life that cannot be underestimated is the communication of the teaching personnel with the children's parents. It can be of various forms, such as parental meetings, coffee parties, presentations of children's achievements in learning, etc. (Linderoth, E., 1998). If it is needed, teachers can contact parents more regularly. This communication is aimed to make the pedagogical work easier and to facilitate the child's overall development.

3.2. Age Specifics of Six-year-old Children

For a teacher who works at a pre-school class it is important to be aware of the specific features that characterise the development of a six-year-old. Knowing them makes the educational work more effective. That is why I would like to supply this unit with some general information about six-year-olds. Naturally, there cannot be any strict description of what a six-year-old child is. The variations in the personal development are endless, which is also an item that a teacher should bear in mind. For this section I have chosen

those data that I have considered more important for the question of immigrant children and their language learning. Perhaps I have been rather subjective.

As distinguished scientists have underlined, the approach that children think the same way as adults, only much inferior, cannot be correct (Piaget, J., 1926; Vygotsky, L., 1997). It leads us to observe only the drawbacks and limitations of the child's development, such as the incapacity for abstract thinking, concept formation, connected judgement and deduction (Vygotsky, L., 1997). This will not be productive in the long run. Children possess a rich variety of traits that grown-ups have almost lost, for example inquisitiveness, eagerness to learn, the abilities to ask philosophic questions and express themselves in the form of images. It can be taken as an axiom that the child's way of thinking is different, not necessarily worse than that of adults (Persson, S., 1995; Svensson, A.-K., 1998; Linderöth, E., 1998).

The child is able to think rationally and reasonably, but his mental processes are to a high extent *egocentric*. The consequences from that are significant. They are that the child of around six does not realise clearly that the way other people think differs from the way he thinks. At the same time the child tries to understand life around him, and first of all the world of grown-ups, their thoughts and behaviour (Persson, S., 1995). J. Piaget stated that the child's egocentrism can result in the fact that the child would not bother to know to whom he is speaking nor whether he is being listened to (Piaget, J., 1926). The child can talk either to himself or for the pleasure of associating anyone who happens to be near by with the activity of the moment. The talk of this sort would be egocentric partly because the child speaks only about himself, but chiefly because he does not attempt to place himself at the point of view of the hearer.

The child of about six, according to J. Piaget's observations, enjoys repeating words for their own sake, for the pleasure they give him, without any external adaptation and without any audience (Piaget, J., 1926). I think that pre-school class pedagogues can use this quality by organising special linguistic training for immigrant children who are weak in the majority language. To continue, J. Piaget noted that when children of the age of six are together, they seem to talk to each other a great deal about what they are doing, but for the most part they are talking to themselves (Piaget, J., 1926). In total monologues comprise from 5 to 15 per-cent of the child's speech. Because of the inner egocentrism, children between the ages of 5 to 7,5 prefer to work individually rather than in groups, even if the group consists of two members.

Obviously there are many more things that can be written about six-year-olds. One more peculiar detail is that when teaching children, one should observe the working cycle that each child has. To create an effective learning environment, it is significant to let the child work in his own tempo, to start and especially to finish certain activities when he feels like doing so. It is strongly recommended not to interrupt the child when he is playing, so that he would reach the logical end of the game (Linderöth, E., 1998; Persson, S., 1995). In that case he would be able to use his imagination and creativity fully, without being restricted by time frames. My opinion is that it is important to understand the working cycle of immigrant children, as it can be very special because of the different ethnic feeling of time.

3.3. Bilingualism

It is impossible to talk about immigrant children without tackling in the concept of bilingualism and theories around it. It is so because bilingualism and even polylingualism have become the characteristics of immigrant pupils. Today, when the number of bilingual children increases within the system of Swedish education, pedagogues should know about this concept and processes connected with it. They should be able to help bilingual children in their development. The information about bilingualism will help me as well to get a deeper understanding of immigrant children's learning during my future observations. It should be added that though I am using the expressions "bilingual" and "bilingual children", everything that I am writing here and further on can be referred to poly-lingualism and to children who speak three and more languages.

There are many definitions of what *bilingualism* is. In general sense being bilingual means using two languages in one's everyday life. It is not still clear to what degree a person should master these languages to be characterised as bilingual. Some linguists press the point that to become bilingual, a person should know both of his languages as well as a monolingual person knows his native language. Others think that some initial knowledge of one of the languages is already enough to be counted as bilingual (Skutnabb-Kagnas, T., Toukomaa, P., 1976; Svensson, A.-K., 1998). Evidently it happens rather seldom that a person knows two or more languages as well as a monolingual speaker knows his own language, because simply it is not necessary. Usually it is the case that the user applies different languages in different situations that are strictly distinguished from each other. For example, one language is spoken at work, at school and in conversations with officials. Another language is used at home and while chatting with friends.

There are two main ways for the child to become bilingual. One is called *simultaneous*, the other is called *successive* (Svensson, A.-K., 1998). The simultaneous way of becoming bilingual means that the child learns two languages at the same time. The successive way implies that the child starts to learn the second language after he has mastered the basic principles of his mother tongue. It has been observed that the child, who starts to learn the second language after the age of three, has very good chances to become a successful bilingual speaker.

The simultaneous way of becoming bilingual is typical of the families where parents speak different mother tongues. Investigations have shown that at the first stages the child from such a family usually mixes the languages of the parents (Arnberg, L., 1981). After that the period comes when one of the languages starts to prevail. Finally a sort of balance between the use of both the languages is achieved. Then the child becomes able to enlarge his bilingual knowledge considerably. It is assumed that the child starts to realise that he speaks two languages only after he learns some fundamentals of both of them.

The successive way of becoming bilingual occurs as a rule in the families of immigrants and minority groups. There the development of the mother tongue takes place before the introduction of the second language. In that case it is much easier for the child to

differentiate between the two languages. Besides that, social contacts become an extra powerful stimulus for the child to master the second language.

Both the simultaneous and the successive ways can lead to the situation when the knowledge of one language that the bilingual child has, is deeper and broader than the knowledge of the other. This can be explained by the fact that the process of learning the two languages has taken place in qualitatively different situation with grown-ups who have had different interests and hobbies. For instance, Svensson A.-K. describes a humorous episode in her book about a bilingual boy named Lukasz, who was the child of a Polish man and a Swedish woman (Svensson, A.-K., 1998). Lukasz's father was very keen on techniques and spent hours repairing electric appliances. Usually little Lukasz was near his father when the latter was making reparations. Once at the after school centre Lukasz together with his playmates was investigating how an old model of a radio was made. It turned out that he understood better than others how the radio was constructed, but he was not able to explain that to his Swedish friends, as he knew how the details were called in Polish, not in Swedish. The funniest thing was that when the women from the after school centre's personnel decided to help Lukasz in his explanations, they could not do that! They had never been interested in techniques and they did not know how the radio details were called in Swedish. I think that this episode underlines that a teacher should by all means try to understand the individual experience of her immigrant pupils and use it as a basis for her pedagogical activities.

3.4. The Development of Bilingualism

The ability to learn the second language can be developed in accordance to two basic strategies – *subconscious* and *conscious*. Usually a bilingual child learns both of his languages subconsciously by whole sentences, not by separate words (Svensson, A.-K., 1998). After listening to a sentence, he splits it into parts and by doing so he learns new words. Later the child becomes able to make up his own sentences with newly acquired words. The way a grown-up learns the second language differs in principle. When a grown-up learns a foreign language, he uses a conscious strategy, drawing a conscious parallel from the language he already knows. This is possible to do only for a personality with a developed abstract thinking. Normally children do not achieve the level of abstract thinking before the age of twelve (Piaget, J., 1926). Thus there is a well-observed difference in the way children and grown-ups fulfil their linguistic generalisations. The development of bilingualism generally follows the pattern of monolingual development, though other variants are also possible. It is important to stress that the process of learning the second language is to a high degree social in its character (because of that reason I have decided to add a special unit into my empirical part where I shall observe how immigrant children communicate with their peers and teachers). It widens the child's vocabulary much and his understanding of grammatical structures through the course of meaningful social activities. As far as mastering of the mother tongue is concerned, it is supposed to be closely connected with feelings and general intellectual development. Learning of the next language is expected to be done in another way, when a person approaches learning more as an intellectual process, leaving the majority of emotional grounds behind.

There is a viewpoint that with age it becomes more difficult to learn a language. It is really so for pronunciation learning. About other linguistic aspects I shall join the opinion of those scientists who assert that grown-ups learn the second language quicker than children, but not so profoundly (Ekstrand, L.-H., 1978; Svensson, A.-K., 1998).

Previous investigations of bilinguals were of a contradictory nature. On the one hand, there was evidence that bilingualism is harmful and that it can even result in pathological disturbances of the child's development. On the other hand, there were data that bilingualism cannot have negative effects, and if it influences the child, it is only in a positive way (Vygotski, L., 1928; Kelly, L., 1969; Skutnabb-Kagnas, T., Toukomaa, P., 1976). Recent researches have proved that bilingualism is harmless and that there is a positive correlation between the speaking of two languages and the development of intellectual abilities. It has been shown that the investigations that have discovered the negative impact of bilingualism have had some significant drawbacks and thus have not been scientifically reliable (to take an example, Arnberg, L., 1981). For instance, they have not observed such variables as social and economic situation, gender and age, or they have not taken into account the fact that minority children have been trained only in the majority language at school.

The positive effects of bilingualism have been found in different developmental areas (Svensson, A.-K., 1998). First of all, the general intellectual development of bilingual children has proved to be better than that of monolinguals. The former have a broader and deeper conception building. Secondly, bilinguals have a more conscious analytic attitude to the language. They understand earlier than monolinguals that an object and a word that names it are two different things. They realise that the word is only a symbol of the object and that one object can have several names. They can change the name of the object and understand the new shade of the meaning. Monolingual children develop these abilities latter. Thirdly, bilinguals have richer opportunities for the development of creativity and non-pattern thinking. They can choose in what language they would like to think and it is an advantage in problems solving because it makes mental processes versatile. Fourthly, bilinguals are more sensitive in a non-verbal communication. They are very attentive to communicative signals and have the ability to interpret them quickly. The teacher can use these strong sides of bilingual children in her class work when engaging the pupils into learning activities. In general my opinion is that immigrant children should be seen as a resource, not as a difficulty in the classroom. I think so because immigrant children due to their bilingual nature possess a lot of positive traits that monolingual children have not developed. The advantage from that should be by all means gained during the education process.

3.5. Mixing of Languages

There is no definite answer of how the child learns to differentiate between the two languages he speaks. The first opinion is that the child must differentiate between the lexical and syntactical systems of the languages before he is able to use them successfully. The second point suggests that the child starts with mastering of one language only and then discerns the second language from the first one. There is also a view that the child differentiates between the languages depending on whom he talks to. All the researchers agree that there exists a connection between the child's ability to

distinguish the languages and his general linguistic development (Svensson, A.-K., 1998).

It is rather unusual if the child continues to mix languages after the age of four (Arnberg, L., 1981). If it happens, it can be the sign that the child lacks the knowledge in the language he speaks at the moment. So he takes from the second language the words and phrases he does not know. Of course the language mixture can be made because of convenience and language economy, when the child does not find quickly the word combination he needs, and uses the means of the other language (Svensson, A.-K., 1998). In this case some special training of the child is needed anyway, because this language blending, especially if it occurs often, spoils the impression and comprehension of the child's speech.

If the bilingual child gives priority to one of the languages he speaks, the process of interference can take place at the beginning (Svensson, A.-K., 1998), which means that one language influences the other language involuntary. Thus the bilingual child can deviate from the norms of one language, because he would follow the rules of the second one. Interference can occur at different language levels and with different language functions. It can happen at the level of pronunciation and intonation, but even with the choice of words, expressions, word inflections and grammar. Another type of interference can be when a child prefers to talk one certain language. As a rule interference shows us that the languages of a bilingual child are not in balance and that the language that is developed better influences the weaker language. It should be added that there are many children who have never mixed their two languages.

3.6. The Connection between Learning Languages and Cultures

Many researchers note that it is important for the bilingual child to study not only two languages, but to get closely acquainted with the cultures that these languages represent (Axelsson, M., 1999; Kelly, L. 1969; ACTFL Edition, 1970). I share this opinion, being convinced that a language mirrors the customs and traditions of one's nation. Knowing them helps to understand the norms and the structure of the language itself. Besides, a foreign language can change our way of seeing the world and creating ideas. Studies of different cultures have proved that people who talk different languages build different world pictures (Svensson, A.-K., 1998). They have even shown that the vocabulary with which a monolingual person operates can influence his way of viewing the world. If he knows few words in a certain topic, he cannot talk about it in detail and consequently he would not know this topic deeply. Therefore an important assignment for teachers is to extend the bilingual pupils' vocabulary in connection with the realities of the countries, which languages they study.

3.7. A Bilingual Child and his Family

The feeling of identity that a bilingual child develops is closely connected with the knowledge of the languages he speaks and the cultures he represents. The attitude to the languages that the child has is important for him to achieve the psychological harmony. If the child cultivates negative feelings toward his mother tongue, which is not rare, it can lead to a personal conflict with serious mental and social problems (Lauren, K.,

1973). The profound knowledge of the languages and their cultures helps the child to talk about his experiences and inner thoughts, to understand idiomatic units and to maintain communication with people around. It is not only the task of the school and the school personnel to provide the child with the knowledge that is required. Immigrant parents should contribute much to the child's learning too, especially regarding the child's mother tongue and native traditions (Svensson, A.-K., 1998). They should not lose the period when an individual experiences genuine language feeling. Usually it occurs only once, in the childhood, when learning the mother tongue. The importance of the active participation in the upbringing of a bilingual personality should be explained to immigrant parents at pre-schools and schools. I hope that is the case in reality.

It is advisable for immigrant parents to talk to their child the language they know best. If they do that, they are able to transfer to him their feeling of the language and their positive attitude to it. It is also the way for the parents to transmit the cultural inheritance to the younger generation as to do that in another language is very difficult if not completely impossible (Skutnabb-Kagnas, T., Toukomaa, P., 1976). Another advantage of using the mother tongue in the family is that then parents and children achieve a better communication with each other. When they speak literary the same language there is less space left for misunderstanding and conflicts. If immigrant parents speak the majority language with the child, there is a danger that the child will learn their mistakes and use them in speech. After that it will be more difficult to make the child speak correctly than to teach him the right variants from the beginning. It should be considered too, that if immigrant parents do not speak the majority language well, but use it as a means of communication with the child, the latter, as he grows and studies at the majority school, can lose respect for them because he will start to feel their poor language abilities.

There exist various strategies of how immigrant parents can cultivate the process of language acquisition in their children. Thus, there is an approach that can be called "*one person-one language*" strategy, when there is a strict separation of languages according to the speaker among the people who surround the child. Its practical implementation has proved to bring very good results (Vygodski, L., 1928; Kelly, L., 1969). However, this approach is more acute for teaching very small children, let us say for children till the age of three-four, as its main purpose is to avoid the mixture of languages at the initial steps of the child's development. To add to this, it is not easy to stick to the "one person – one language" strategy in all life situation. It can be that an immigrant mother who has decided to talk only the mother tongue with her daughter, has her parents-in-law on a visit, who speak the majority language. Then, because of the matters of politeness, she has to switch to the majority language. On the whole it is almost impossible to use any theoretical strategies of language development without deviations in practice, because our real life is full of unpredictable situations that demand an individual problem solving. I suggest that it is more effective for immigrant parents to choose from the start what they want from their child in language terms. Then it would be more convenient for them to find better strategies to achieve the goals. It would be easier to analyse what hindrances could appear and how they could be avoided.

Among the results of learning languages, which immigrant parents can wait from their children, there can be different degrees of bilingualism. Researchers differentiate

basically between three forms: passive bilingualism, active bilingualism and absolute bilingualism (Johannesson, I., 1976; Skutnabb-Kagnas, T., Toukomaa, P., 1976; Arnberg, L., 1981). The definition of each degree is rather relative.

Passive bilingualism means that the child understands but does not speak one of the languages. It may occur because the child does not want or cannot speak it. Usually this situation happens with the minority language, where the child's knowledge turns out to be superficial. It can be that immigrant parents talk the mother tongue with their child and encourage him to use the same language. The child would respond in the majority language. It is possible that he would be able to keep a primitive conversation in the minority language when it would be necessary. The advantage of passive bilingualism is that with time the child can develop a more positive attitude to the language that he does not speak. Then his passive knowledge of the language would serve as a firm basis for further learning.

Active bilingualism means that the child understands and speaks to a certain degree both of his languages. As a rule it is that the child learnt the two languages in his early childhood and since then he has been using them actively. One or both of his parents talk the minority language with him. They try to create as many opportunities as possible for the child to speak it. They involve him in reading the minority literature and watching the minority films. There are many advantages of active bilingualism. For instance, the bilingual child will have solid knowledge of his mother tongue and will avoid interference from the majority language. Another profit can be that the child will know much about the minority culture. That will broaden his out-look and strengthen his identity feelings.

Absolute bilingualism means that the child can speak both of his languages as well as, or nearly as well as native speakers. It can happen when immigrant parents spend much time with the child teaching him how to read and write in the minority language. They use all possibilities to involve the child into contacts with the minority culture and the minority language speakers. It can be even that immigrant parents send their child to a bilingual school and help him with the training of the mother tongue. The disadvantage of achieving absolute bilingualism can be that the process of learning in this case takes a lot of time and effort from the child. It may be that the child will learn the languages instead of doing something else, perhaps something that interests and inspires him more. Evidently parents should not press the child in achieving absolute bilingualism too much. It would be more effective to observe first what kind of activities the child prefers and whether he wants to know more about the mother tongue culture and its language. It is quite possible that the child would like to focus on music, or drawing, or sports. Then it is better to let him do what he wants to do.

3.8. Changing of the Language Environment by Bilingual Children

When a bilingual child comes from his home environment to the majority school, his ability to speak the mother tongue weakens, if no special training takes place (Ekstrand, L.-H., 1978). If immigrant parents continue to practise the mother tongue with their child, the child's knowledge of this language enlarges. Still, no special training can help immigrant children to achieve the same level of the mother tongue competence, in

comparison to children, who live in the country of their origin. The mother tongue knowledge of immigrant children will be lower because they will never have the same rich opportunities to hear and speak the mother tongue, as children in the country of their origin have. Actually this is the fact that the mother tongue teachers should bear in mind when working with immigrant pupils, especially immigrants of the second generation. Such pupils can lack the basic language knowledge in areas that go beyond the topics, which are discussed in their families. The teachers should construct their lessons in such a way that immigrant children would widen their knowledge and understanding of the mother tongue (Axelsson, M., 1999).

Investigations have shown that when a child changes language environment, his abilities to speak the new language can start to develop quickly (Arnberg, L., 1981; Svensson, A.-K., 1998). An impression can even appear that the child speaks the second language better than the first one. The explanation of this phenomenon could be found in differences between active and passive vocabulary in both the languages. It can be that the child's passive vocabulary of the first language is bigger than the active one. At the same time the active and passive vocabulary of the second language can almost coincide. It does not mean that the child knows as many words in his second language as in his first one. Perhaps he knows less, but he would use all from what he knows in his speech. It can even occur that the child's active vocabulary of the second language would be bigger than the passive one. In this case the child would include some words in his speech, the meaning of which he does not know, or he would answer questions, which he does not fully understand. It is a warning for a teacher who deals with immigrant children that she should check how deep the language understanding, which her pupils have, is. This will help to avoid gaps in the pupils' knowledge.

Another aspect that the teachers should mind is that a child needs some time to understand the second language structure, when becoming bilingual successively. Otherwise he would not be able to work at texts and produce correct sentences (Arnberg, L., 1981). The teachers should see to that each immigrant child receives a more concrete support in language training, which will explain the connection between different language phenomena. There is a theory that mastering of the second language structure is influenced by the knowledge of the first language the child has (ACTFL Editon, 1970; Johannesson, I., 1976; Svensson, A.-K., 1998). If the child has understood well how the first language functions and how its components group, it would be much easier for him to get the understanding about the second language as an integrated whole. It can be recommended as a means of effectiveness not to stop the training of the mother tongue when the child enters a new language environment. There exist a variety of educational models of how the further development of the mother tongue can be combined with the second language teaching. Their choice depends basically on the purpose that the education of immigrant pupils contains. It can be the achievement of active bilingualism or just getting some extra-knowledge of the mother tongue as a support for the second language learning.

3.9. Semilingualism

In connection with the notion of bilingualism the term "*semilingualism*" has recently started to be used. It refers to a person who does not know any language properly

(Skutnabb-Kagnas, T., Toukoma, P., 1976). Of course it is rather questionable what level should be taken as a boundary between the absence of language knowledge and its presence. There is an approach that this level can be defined according to the abilities of an individual or to the demands on the use of the language, which are made by the community. Another approach states that a person is semilingual if he cannot express abstract thoughts and emotional states, as well as give reasons and arguments in both of his languages (Svensson, A.-K., 1998). Pedagogues should never ascertain that a particular child is semilingual and that it is beyond their power to help him. Semilingualism can be worked at and little by little eradicated. In contrast to different types of handicap and functional damages, it is always possible to improve and develop the linguistic abilities of an individual.

3.10. The Requirements of the State to the Immigrant Children's Education at the Pre-school Class Today

In this unit I would like to focus on the latest requirements to the education of immigrant children at the pre-school class, as they have been formulated by the state and municipality. The speciality of the Swedish educational system is that the government works out the central educational curriculum, which is valid for the whole country. In it the overall goals and guidelines that should be striven at and achieved are determined. However, the curriculum does not specify the means and methods by which the above formulated goals and guidelines could be attained. It is seen as the task of each commune to choose them. Communes are also responsible for the achievement of the determined goals in practice. Generally the municipal authorities work out their own teaching plan, which is based on the governmental curriculum, but which is more precise and which takes local peculiarities into consideration.

The state educational curriculum that refers to the work at the pre-school class today was published in 1994. It is a joint pedagogical document that is primarily aimed at the compulsory school activities, but also concerns the pre-school class and the after-school centre. Everything that is said there is about the compulsory school, but it should be relevant to the pre-school class as well. Thus when I am writing "the school" in my paper, I mean that the same information refers to the pre-school class.

There are many aspects that are emphasised in the curriculum. The importance of the democratic fundamentals, which are the basis for the educational process in Sweden, is underlined there first of all. Among other items that are stressed there is the intrinsic value of each child, the co-operation between the educational institution and home, the collaboration between different school levels, i.e. between the pre-school, the pre-school class and the elementary school, the impact of the pupil on the pedagogical process, and some others. The necessity of the individual approach to each pupil is emphasised in the curriculum too. Special attention is paid to the peculiarities of dealing with immigrant children. It is stated in the curriculum that the Swedish school in the present situation of cultural diversity has become a social and cultural meeting place (Lpo 94, p.5). It is pointed out that the today's society, which is not homogeneous culturally, demands from people to build respect and consideration for each other irrespective of one's background (Lpo 94, p.5). Pupils should cultivate the ability to live together and appreciate the values of others. Awareness of one's cultural origin and sharing of one's

cultural heritage are viewed in the curriculum as positive factors that provide a secure identity, which supports a harmonious development of an individual (Lpo 94, p.5). The last point should be especially important for immigrant children who can suffer deep crises because of identity conflicts as it has been shown in the works of Lauren (Lauren, K., 1973). The curriculum also states that the school should resist any tendency towards bullying or persecution. It must confront actively the xenophobia, using knowledge and open discussions as means for achieving that (Lpo 94, p.5). Another aspect that is related to immigrant children is that the education should be objective and encompass a range of different approaches so that the child would not be prejudiced in favour of a particular view (Lpo 94, p.6). For me this requirement implies that the religious specifics of immigrant children and their way of seeing the world should be accepted at school. Nobody should insist that these children are wrong because they follow their religious or cultural traditions.

The equality of genders should be observed at school (Lpo 94, p.6). I suppose that this aspect should be cultivated in those children, who originally belong to cultures where women take a less active position in the society. The process of learning, according to the curriculum, should be adapted to each pupil's circumstances and needs (Lpo 94, p.6). Education should be based on the pupils' background, earlier experiences, language and knowledge. It should include an international perspective so that the pupils could see their own reality in a global context, in order to create international solidarity. This will help to understand better the situation of cultural variety within the country (Lpo 94, p.8). Children at school should also get knowledge about the national minorities that live in Sweden, their languages, history and religions (Lpo 94, p.12).

Not much is said in the curriculum about the language learning that immigrant children should accomplish. One can find only general phrases that the pupils should develop the rich and varied Swedish language and understand the importance of constant working at it (Lpo 94, p.11). In general, it is obviously talked about immigrant children in the curriculum as about pupils who have special needs for help, both in terms of attention and money. That way there can be seen a certain connection in attitudes between immigrants and disabled children, as L. Lahdenperä has pointed it out when discussing the school curriculum of 1980 (Lahdenperä, L., 1997).

3.11. The Requirements of the Chosen Communes to the Immigrant Children's Education at the Pre-school Class Today

The educational plan of the first commune where I shall conduct the empirical part of my investigation (the commune A), does not contain much information about the specifics of teaching immigrant children at the pre-school class. It is in spite of the fact that it includes a separate section devoted to teaching Swedish and the mother tongue (Barn och Utbildning, 1999, p.p.17-19). In this section it is expressed that much more attention should be paid to the mastering of Swedish at all educational levels. Those children who attend the pre-school class should develop a good competence in it, so that later they would be able to write a state diagnostic test. Immigrant children who have the right for the mother tongue training should get it and acquire profound knowledge within the frames of the subject. A special programme should be worked out in the nearest future that will focus on how to improve immigrant children's learning of

Swedish. In this educational plan one can also read that there is a post of the rector for the mother tongue teaching in the commune, whose responsibility is to take care of the quality of the mother tongue education. Upon the whole, it is underlined in the plan that all children, who require special help, should get it. This can be evidently applied to immigrant children, as usually they need extra support and care. In those cases when the pupil finds it especially difficult to catch up with the school programme, a plan of special measures should be made up. It should be aimed to organise the most effective and economical support possible. To create such a plan, the school rector, the teachers of the pupil, the parents and the pupil himself should function as one working team. The rector will take the responsibility for the successful changing of the situation. It is evident that some of the immigrant children will need the elaboration of the personal plan of that kind.

The educational plan of the second commune where I shall carry out the empirical part of my study (the commune B), seems to be more detailed concerning the work with immigrant children. It contains more information about this matter (Skolplan, 1999). To start with, it is stated there clearly which commune organs are responsible for the general school education including the pre-school and the pre-school class, and which – for the mother tongue training and pedagogical work with immigrants. Secondly, it is underlined that pupils with a non-Swedish ethnic background should maintain and preserve their cultural belonging. It is important to do so because, as it is written in the plan, it will support and further their all-sided harmonious development. Educational institutions in this commune should create such an atmosphere for immigrant pupils, that they will feel safe speaking their native language and following their cultural traditions. Schools should continue to take care of the knowledge and experience, which immigrant children as representatives of other cultures have. They should work out special programmes where immigrant pupils and the mother tongue teachers will play an important role of transmitters of their cultural heritage. This will become a resource of importance in the internationalising and integrating work. Schools should also bring up the feeling of respect and genuine interest in pupils directed at the cultural differences of their classmates. However, these progressive ideas are given in the plan only in the form of guidelines, which are desirable but not obligatory to fulfil. None of them is repeated later in the list of goals that the school must achieve.

The third point in the commune B plan that deals with immigrant children is that much attention should be paid to their training of Swedish as a foreign language and their mother tongue. This will help to develop good language competence. Once again one meets an attitude to immigrant children in the educational plan as to pupils who can demand extra support. In contrast to the commune A curriculum, this plan provides richer information of help measures that could be taken. It is also mentioned there that language problems of immigrant pupils can be closely connected with communication difficulties, and to improve meagre language skills one should try to develop his communication abilities. Then, when participating in conversations, one will get an opportunity to talk and listen to the speaker more, and that should help the former to broaden his knowledge of the language. The teacher should use this connection. Evidently it would be very productive to involve an immigrant and his Swedish classmate into a dialogue with the purpose of language development that will occur in the most natural form.

In the commune B plan parents and their contacts with school play an extremely important role. There should be constant co-operation between the school personnel, pupils and their parents. When a child gets some, even minor problems at school, his parents should be immediately informed and the teacher together with them should work out a scheme of improvement if it is necessary. It can be assumed that although this particular aspect is not stressed in the plan of the commune A, it is supposed to take place there. Still it should be more productive when such details are observed in a municipal plan, as they make the work of a teacher easier. Continuous co-operation with immigrant parents and developmental conversations with them can help to increase the achievements of their children at school. Another item that has not been mentioned in the commune A curriculum, but which has the focal meaning in the commune B plan, is that the school personnel should never stop in its competence development. Some money sources should be reserved to satisfy this purpose. One of the motivations for doing so is that teachers who work with children, that experience difficulties in learning, should possess enough knowledge to understand the reasons for these difficulties and to solve them as efficiently as possible. These measures have a close connection with immigrant children's teaching. Rather often immigrant pupils have problems with their studies, but pedagogues, who lack training and experience of working with immigrants, are not able to diagnose from the start what help is needed (Lahdenperä, L., 1997).

3.12. The Municipal Educational Plans in Relation to the State Curriculum

The matter that is emphasised several times in the state curriculum and in both municipal plans is the active role of the child in the pedagogical process. This matter is basic for educating every child in general and an immigrant child in particular. In the state curriculum it is written that all pupils irrespective of sex or social and cultural background should have real influence over working methods and structures at school. This influence should increase as the pupils grow in age and maturity (Lpo 94, p.16). They should also understand and act according to democratic principles by participating in different kinds of co-operation and decision-making (Lpo 94, p.8). In the plan of the commune A it is stressed that the school should promote a more active participation of children in learning and school life as it increases their interest to studies and the quality of the received knowledge (Barn och Utbildning, 1999). Schools in the commune A should try to achieve that each pupil would have a personal responsibility for his education and for his working environment. In the commune B the pupils should even participate in special school and class meetings and discuss the acute questions of their learning there (Skolplan, 1999).

I think that it is very important to cultivate this feeling of being the subject of the educational system in immigrant children, and in many cases to teach them how to take initiative. It should be so because a large amount of immigrant children have come from less democratic environments than the one in Sweden. In many countries the autocratic way of teaching at schools prevails, and a child coming from such an environment should be taught not to be passive. Even if a child was born and has spent his early years in Sweden, his immigrant parents might bring him up according to autocratic methods that were used when they were children themselves. Children with such an upbringing need certain teaching too, before they can become active. In the latter case

the involvement of their parents into an open discussion about democratic values in Sweden should also take place. This point, that sometimes the activity of immigrant children at school should be purposefully cultivated to replace the brought up passivity, is not mentioned either in the state curriculum or in the communal plans, but it deserves special attention.

Another aspect that is connected with the idea of the child as a subject of the educational process, if we develop it, is that not only immigrant children learn from their teacher. It turns out that the teacher can learn much from his pupils with another national background (Axelsson, M., 1999). Immigrant children as representatives of different cultures can widen the teacher's knowledge of traditions, morals, folklore or even eating habits of other peoples. They can broaden the teacher's viewing of the world. They can give her an opportunity to discover something entirely new in the familiar surroundings. In this respect working with immigrant children can be seen as an especially creative process.

3.13. The Present Course Plans Requirements to the Immigrant Children's Education at the Pre-school Class

To add to what I have written above, there is another type of pedagogical documents where the requirements to children's education at the state level can be found. It is represented by *course plans*. Course plans are bound to the central educational curriculum. They express what the state waits and demands from the teaching of separate subjects. They include several sub-units such as the purpose of the course, the goals to achieve, the characteristics of the course and some others. Course plans are aimed to clarify what aspects of the subject all pupils should master. Like the state curriculum they do not indicate what methods and forms should be used. This is done to give a certain school and a certain teacher an opportunity to choose the most appropriate way of work. It is also common for all course plans that they should develop creativity and desire to learn. The last manual with course plans for the elementary school was edited in 2000. One can argue, that these course plans have nothing to do with the education at the pre-school class. However, the general opinion is that teaching at the pre-school level should be closely connected with the first steps of the compulsory school (Linderöth, E., 1998; Samuelsson, I., Mauritzson, U, 1997). It is expected that the pre-school class should help children to achieve the goals that are set for the elementary school. In such a way the pre-school class personnel should build their work bearing the requirements to the elementary school education in mind. It is very important for a pre-school teacher to be acquainted with the content of the school plans. Following this logic, I suppose that the course plans for three subjects – Swedish, Swedish as a Foreign Language (or Swedish 2) and the Mother Tongue are of primary concern for those who work with immigrant children. It should be so because these subjects deal with languages that function as means for the further acquisition of knowledge. They help immigrant pupils to express their thoughts and ideas, to communicate with people and to function normally in the Swedish society. The role of these languages in the development of one's identity feelings is indispensable. During the empirical part of my research I shall clear up whether my way of reasoning is correct. Now I would like to go briefly through the main directory lines for teaching Swedish, Swedish 2 and the Mother Tongue. This information will help me to

understand the activities at the pre-school classes and the approaches of the teachers that I shall later observe.

The education in Swedish is aimed to give the pupils an opportunity to use and develop their ability to talk, listen, read and write in Swedish, as well as to learn from the Swedish classical literature, film and theatre (Kursplaner och betygskriterier, 2000). The school in its teaching of Swedish should strive at that the pupils develop their fantasy, non-pattern thinking and the desire to acquire new knowledge. The pupils should enlarge their confidence in oral and written speech and develop their ability to work at texts using their own evaluations and the advice of the teacher. Here the word “text” is used in its wide meaning. To add to printed pieces of information, it includes recorded or pronounced speech units and even pictures. The pupils should also develop their ability to express their thoughts and feelings in monologues and dialogues according to the demands of the situation. They should get knowledge of Swedish in its constant development, of its structure, origin and history. They should understand why people write and talk Swedish differently. The subject treats the language and the literature as a unity, which opens to the pupils a new world of experiences and reflections.

The purpose of *the subject Swedish 2* is that pupils with another national background than Swedish should master the majority language so that they achieve approximately the same level of knowledge as native speakers have (Kursplaner och betygskriterier, 2000). The highest purpose of the subject is that immigrant children achieve a native competence in Swedish. Then they will have an opportunity to live and function in the Swedish society under the same conditions as children with Swedish as their mother tongue have. Swedish 2 should also help the pupils to master the material of other subjects and enter the community of fellowship with Swedes on equal terms. It is underlined in the course plan what specific traits Swedish 2 as a subject contains. It is pointed out that the preparation level of immigrant pupils in Swedish can vary immensely and that the teacher should use an individual approach in each case. It is stressed that pupils with different cultural backgrounds can understand differently the explanations of abstract notions by means of a concrete and simplified language. It is also stated that working at Swedish for immigrant children is learning of a foreign language. It means that they should train purposefully such components as pronunciation, grammar and word vocabulary, i.e. those language aspects which children with Swedish as the mother tongue acquire naturally. It is made explicit in the course plan that in contrast to the acquisition of another foreign language, the acquisition of Swedish by immigrant children takes place both at school and in the pupil’s personal environment. To make the process of learning Swedish more effective, the teacher should try to understand this world around the pupils and their cultural experience.

The Mother Tongue at school is characterised in the course plan as a subject of great significance for the personal and cultural identity, as well as for the intellectual and emotional development of immigrant children (Kursplaner och betygskriterier, 2000). Its purpose is to give immigrant children an opportunity to continue the learning of their home language. It is viewed as a possible outcome that because of the further working at the mother tongue immigrant pupils can strengthen their self-esteem and make the understanding of their life situation more precise. Besides that, the Mother Tongue is

aimed to support the development of immigrant children towards poly-lingual individuals with a multicultural identity. It is written in the plan that the general learning of a child is closely connected with the mother tongue and to fortify the knowledge of the first language is also a way to learn Swedish. It is mentioned that working at the mother tongue opens and gives life to the cultural inheritance of an immigrant pupil in its various manifestations. The school should help immigrant pupils through the subject the Mother Tongue to develop the ability to understand and express themselves orally and in writing in their native language. It should strive at that immigrant pupils would get the understanding of the mother tongue structure, so that they will be able to compare it with Swedish. Finally the school should see to that immigrant pupils learn about the history, traditions and the life of the society in the country of their origin and become able to compare it with the Swedish reality.

Summary

In this chapter the theoretical ground to the question of immigrant children's education in Sweden has been provided. The main focus has been made on the pre-school class level. The notion of the pre-school class within the Swedish educational system has been dwelt upon. The question of age specifics of six-year-olds has been tackled in. There some of the developmental peculiarities that a child of six can possess have been mentioned. After that the author has concentrated on bilingualism and its features. The definition of the term bilingualism has been given and the ways of becoming bilingual have been named. It has been written about the strategies of developing bilingualism and the effects they can have. It has been explained when the blending of languages should be treated as a problem. It has been emphasised how important the role of immigrant parents and their influence on the upbringing of a bilingual child are. It has been underlined what can happen when a child changes the language environment. It has been reflected over the problem of semilingualism. In the end the attention has been paid to the latest requirements to the education of immigrant children at the pre-school class, both on the governmental and on the municipal levels. The contents of the state curriculum and the educational plans of the two communes, where I shall conduct the empirical part of my study, have been studied. It has been written about the content of some course plans. I hope that the theoretical information that has been gathered in this chapter will help not only me in my empirical research, but also other people, who deal and work with immigrant children.

Chapter IV

The Method of the Investigation

In this unit I would like to provide the methodological grounds for the empirical part of my investigation. I shall name my research method and give reasons why I have used it. I shall also explain in what way the empirical part of my study has been conducted.

4.1. The Method, the Character and the Ethical Grounds of My Investigation

To fulfil my study I selected *a qualitative approach*. This choice was not made at random. The thing is that a quantitative approach is generally based on the research of large groups, when the scientist collects the data aiming to study the relations between different variables. Then the gathered information has a relatively objective character. It is usually summarised in the form of numbers and tables, as it helps to draw visual conclusions. The measurement of the quality of the collected information, and that was what I needed according to the purpose of my research, is left beyond the frames of such an investigation. To measure the quality of the gathered data the qualitative approach should be implemented. The qualitative approach is also able to gain an insight of experiences that individuals have. Some researchers (Bell, J., 2000; Merriam, S., 1994; (Repstad, P., 1993), and I share their opinion, see this point as a considerable advantage, because when we study such a complicated notion as a human being, it is not enough to analyse figures and statistics only. The results from a qualitative research are more or less subjective, as an investigator becomes involved into the environment of the investigated object (Holme, I., Solvang, B., 1997).

The main purpose of my work determined the selection of a *qualitative case study*. I decided to fulfil a case study because of several reasons. Firstly, I was eager to find how such a complicated phenomenon as educating immigrant children functions in reality. Secondly, knowing how theory differs from practical implementation, I was curious to study how theoretical ideas about immigrant children's teaching, as well as about their development as bilinguals, find their implementation in practice. Thirdly, I was interested to see what forms and approaches this practical implementation can have if it is arranged by two different communes, and to compare these experiences. Fourthly, I wanted to understand and interpret why the education of immigrant children functions the way it does in practice. The information about qualitative studies from Miles and Huberman (Miles, M., Huberman, A., 1994), as well as from Bell (Bell, J., 2000) and Repstad (Repstad, P., 1993) assured me in my choice.

In my investigation I pursued *practical hermeneutic interest*. As the theory of this methodological term goes, it strives to understand the meaning of a pedagogical phenomenon or an individual in a concrete situation (Leino A.-L., Leino J., 1992). The practical hermeneutic researcher should draw conclusions from the practical event that he has investigated, and try to interpret them. That was what I intended to do. Within the frames of the practical hermeneutic interest I chose *an interpretation hermeneutic method* (Leino A.-L., Leino J., 1992). I needed this method to get a profound understanding of the educational phenomenon I studied, and to achieve a deep-rooted

interpretation of it. I intended with the help of this method to bring to the surface the hidden rules, connections and tendencies that influenced the education of immigrants at the chosen pre-school classes. My research was also influenced by *an emancipation perspective* (Leino A.-L., Leino J., 1992). It was characterised by the desire to reveal the drawbacks of teaching immigrant children and to suggest the possible ways of improvement. Within the frames of this perspective I used *an emancipation critical method* (Leino A.-L., Leino J., 1992).

I chose *the pre-school class* as an educational level for my investigation. On the one hand, I did so because the pre-school class, though it is not obligatory and teaching there is done mostly in the game form, plays a very important role in the development of the child's personality and in his preparations to school. On the other hand, with this paper I continue my investigation of the C-course, when I concentrated on the pre-school environment. I am convinced that there should be something in the Swedish system of educating immigrant children that could be arranged more effectively, at least because there is always some room for improvement. That is why I decided to study step by step how immigrant children are taught in Sweden, analysing each level of the pedagogical work with them.

Because of ethical reasons I am anonymous in my project. I do not name the pre-school classes and the communes where I have conducted the empirical part of my study. This allows me to remain more objective and critical. When omitting the names, I am able to give negative commentaries without being afraid to spoil the reputation of the pre-school classes and the communes.

4.2. My Procedures of Collecting the Empirical Material and Working at It

To conduct my research I go basically from theory to practice, following *the deductive pattern* of investigation (Wallen, G., 1993). Thus, there are two central parts in my paper - theoretical and empirical. I applied different means of collecting data for them. For the theory part I used library sources, as I have explained in Chapter II. For the empirical part I implemented a combined method of *observations* and *interviews*, basing my choice on the methodological grounds of Bell and Repstad (Bell, J., 2000; Repstad, P., 1993). I realised that observations only would not be enough to answer the questions that my theory chapter had raised. I needed the opinion of specialists who have the experience of working with immigrant children and personal reflections about it.

I was going to observe the pre-school class environment in the two chosen places and to complement them with the interviews of the personnel. I thought that it would be the best way to collect the material that would answer the purpose of my investigation. To choose the pre-school classes, I followed the criteria that they would belong to two different communes and would be located in districts with a high per-cent of immigrant population. To organise interviews, I engaged those teachers who were working in the selected pre-school classes. It turned out that there is a division of the personnel, who work with the pre-school class children, into the Swedish-speaking teachers and the mother tongue teachers. The Swedish-speaking teachers are as a rule Swedes by origin. They work directly at the pre-school classes, teaching the children Swedish and other activities. The mother tongue teachers are usually immigrants. They belong to another

educational organisation. Their duty is to come to different schools and pre-school classes and to give lessons of their mother tongue. I understood that it would be important for my research to interview not only the Swedish-speaking teachers, but some of the mother tongue teachers as well, because it would cover different angles of the problem I investigated. So, I organised meetings with the Swedish-speaking teachers first. I came many times to both the pre-school classes, around one week and a half to each. During my visits, I observed the environment of the pre-school classes and interviewed the teachers.

At home I had prepared a detailed list of questions to the Swedish-speaking teachers (see Enclosure I) and I brought it to the interviews. This list contained a lot of questions concerning various aspects of working with immigrants and just being a pre-school class teacher. My attitude was that if I got more information, even general information about the pre-school classes, it would help me to understand the atmosphere and teaching specifics of each particular place. I splitted the questions for the Swedish speaking teachers, so that it would take for me several days to talk them over with one teacher. I needed full answers and I did not want the teachers to hurry. At both the pre-school classes I interviewed fully one Swedish-speaking teacher, going through all the questions that I had prepared. There was no selection, who this teacher would be. Usually it was the one who had spare time at the moment. When I talked later to other teachers from the same pre-school class, I asked a limited number of questions, choosing only those, which I had marked as the most important. After that I organised meetings with one mother tongue teacher from each commune. I chose those mother tongue teachers who had pupils at the pre-school classes, which I had visited. Otherwise I did not use special tactics to select them. Again I had prepared the interview questions, which I asked during our conversation (see Enclosure II), at home. To each mother tongue teacher I came twice, combining the time of interviews with the observations of their working activities. Finally I interviewed the municipal rectors, who were responsible for the mother tongue training in the chosen communes (for the prepared questions see Enclosure III). I found this procedure necessary to get a broader picture of the pedagogical work with immigrant children that took place there.

During my observations I made brief notes directly at the pre-school classes. When I came home, I wrote down what I had seen, using the brief notes as guidelines. This writing took the form of an observational diary (for an example of the page from it, see Enclosure IV). During my interviews I wrote down the answers of the informants as fully as I could. Shortly afterwards, when I was at home, I used my memory to add some interview details, which I had failed to note in the class. To make a structure of the results from the observations and interviews, I made up a scheme of titles. These titles corresponded to the aspects, which I had defined as the most important for the topic of my investigation. I sorted the collected data according to the themes the titles introduced and wrote them down. There were certain places left that I needed to make clearer. I prepared a new set of questions and went to the pre-school classes' personnel to get the answers. Then I added the information I had got to the empirical chapter, and the impression appeared that my research was almost completed.

4.3. Personal Reflections over the Method of Investigation

It is evident that if my research objects had been different, I would have gathered other data and my final results would have been of another sort. It is very likely that if my informants had been different, they could have provided me with other facts and it would have changed the outcomes from my project. This kind of reservations a researcher of a qualitative approach should not forget. It is also possible that if I had used other strategies of collecting and working at the qualitative material of my investigation, the final results of my research could have been different. It is probable too that if I had supplied my paper with some details that I have omitted because of its restricted size, the general impression from my work could have been different.

Chapter V

The Results from the Empirical Investigation of Immigrant Children's Education at the Pre-school Class Level

One of the main problems with almost all pedagogical ideas is that even if they sound very good in theory, it is not easy to make them function smoothly in practice. In real life one can face hundreds of hindrances that prevent a pedagogical notion from functioning as well and efficient as it should. Being aware of that, I have decided to study how the education of immigrant children at the pre-school class, an extremely complicated phenomenon, is organised and conducted in reality. To cover a broader area of the topic, I have made my research comparative. Two pre-school classes in two different communes in Skåne have become the object of my investigation. To ease the understanding of what I am writing, I call the first commune "the commune A" and the second commune "the commune B". As a consequence the pre-school class in the commune A takes the name "the pre-school class A" and the pre-school class in the commune B – "the pre-school class B".

The aim of this chapter is to provide the results of how the education of immigrant children is carried out in the chosen pre-school classes. I shall stress those factors that I have characterised as most important in the topic. I shall also supply this chapter with a few personal commentaries, which I think cannot be neglected.

5.1. The General Information about the Communes and the Pre-school Classes where the Empirical Research Has Taken Place

The commune A where the first pre-school class is located is a commune of about 28500 inhabitants. It is in Skåne. The commune B where the second pre-school class lies is also in Skåne, but it is much bigger. There are around 100000 people who live there. The commune B is a large cultural and industrial centre. It is a place of vivid international communication. Because of its bigger size, it contains many more schools and pre-school classes, if we compare it with the commune A. The commune A is a more provincial one. It does not possess such deep-rooted educational and cultural traditions as the commune B has. Recently the commune A has been selected the most boring commune of the year, though at present the situation has changed for the better.

The chosen for the empirical research pre-school classes are located in such communal areas, which have the reputation of "immigrant regions" with high percentage of immigrant population. In the pre-school class A, there are totally eighteen children. Five of them are immigrants from such countries as Iran, Poland, Macedonia and Bosnia. In the pre-school class B, there are twenty children, and twelve of them are of a non-Swedish origin. They are from Africa, Iraq, China, Russia, Israel, and some other places. The peculiarity at the pre-school class B is that among the twelve immigrants there is no predominating ethnic group, as each child represents a separate nationality.

Immigrant children in the two classes are of the second generation. Some of them have parents who are both not Swedish, others come from families where one of the parents

is a Swede. It is not generally restricted that immigrant children of the same nationality use their home language at the pre-school classes. It is only that the teachers do not want the children speak their mother tongues during the activities, when the whole group participates, as it prevents normal communication. Otherwise, it is acceptable that immigrant children with the same mother tongue use their language when, for instance, playing with each other in a mini-group.

In the pre-school class A there are two female teachers, both of the Swedish origin. In the pre-school class B there are three female teachers. Two of them are engaged only part-time. One of the teachers in the pre-school class B is of a Polish origin; the other two are Swedes. In the pre-school class A, there is only one five-year-old child, and she is Swedish. In the pre-school class B, all the children are six-year-olds. According to the law both the classes are obliged to accept those six-year-old children from the neighbouring districts, who want to start their pre-school class studies. Thus it is not possible to control what proportion of immigrant children will study in a class. I was told that the proportion of immigrant children in a group is not a problem at the pre-school class level. Ideally it should be not more than fifty-fifty, so that it would be easier for immigrant children to learn Swedish. This proportion is observed at the pre-school, where children learn the fundamentals of the Swedish language. At the pre-school class, in contrast, children have already mastered the essentials of Swedish and, if we talk about immigrants, the bases of the mother tongue. There is no much danger that immigrant children will start to mix languages, and it is easier for them to continue the development of Swedish. So, the proportion when immigrants take two third in a group is acceptable at a pre-school class. It is only important that not all the children in a classroom are immigrants. There should be some Swedes for sure, who will transmit the Swedish culture and give examples of the Swedish speech.

The developmental needs and peculiarities of six-year-olds are strictly under consideration in both the pre-school classes, and this is relevant for Swedish and immigrant children. It is always remembered that six-year-olds cannot sit still for a long time, so short breaks are made every now and then, when the children are engaged in some quiet activities. The childish desire to learn and happiness to acquire new knowledge are used as stimuli for further explanations and the revealing of the unknown. The personnel at both the pre-school classes do their best to satisfy the inquisitiveness of six-year-olds. They give detailed answers to the questions that the children state and choose such topics for class-work that correspond the cognitive interests of the pupils. The working cycles that the children have are also respected. Naturally, it is not always easy to let the child play his game till the end when, for example, the whole group should go and have lunch. Especially this is the case in a big school institution, where there is a large number of groups, which should come to the canteen at a fixed time. The teachers see one way out in planning the pre-school class work in such a way, that they should have some common activity that will finish approximately around the time when the children should go to eat. Another way out is that the children may leave their unfinished games and return to them without hindrances after having the meal. As far as the working cycle of immigrant children is concerned and my supposition that it can be special because of another ethnic feeling of time (see Chapter III, Unit 3.2.), no teachers noticed that it is really the case. However, the teacher at the pre-school class B noted that my idea is rather interesting, and if she

were more observant to this matter, it would be very probable that she could see the peculiarities of working cycles caused by the different national grounds. I think that this point needs future scientific investigation.

5.2. The Achievements of Immigrant Children in Learning

The achievements of immigrant children in learning was one of the most acute questions that interested me, as it was directly connected with the problem setting of my research. From my observations and interviews I found out that it would be wrong to state that in average the achievements of immigrant children in studies are lower than those of Swedes. The level of preparedness that immigrant children have varies greatly. There can be found such immigrants whose intellectual and linguistic abilities are higher than those of certain Swedes. There are many immigrant children who talk Swedish as well as native speakers of their age. The clue to understanding lies in two main reasons. They are the intellectual level that immigrant parents have and the approach to the upbringing of the child that they choose. If immigrant parents are smart and educated, they usually have high aspirations for the future of their child. They spend much time with their youngster, teaching him how to read and write in the native language, reading stories, discussing their content and giving explanations to the questions that the child asks. They plan how the child should continue his learning and what educational level he should acquire. The desires of parents regarding their child's achievements are connected with the social status that the parents have. As the teachers at the pre-school class A gave an example, if immigrant parents had been illiterate before they came to Sweden, it is already a big deal for them if their child studies at a Swedish school and knows how to write and read in Swedish. If immigrant parents had higher education from their home country, they plan for their child to enter a Swedish university in the future, and do their best to prepare the child for this career.

If an immigrant child comes from a family where parents do not wait much from his education, he should not be seen at school as a person with low perspectives. The teachers at both the pre-school classes are very conscious about this matter. One of the teachers at the pre-school class B was making up written individual programmes for immigrant children whose knowledge of Swedish was poor. She observed a certain child for some time, writing down his problems of development. Then she offered him tests of general and speech character. Basing on the total results, she created units of exercises, the aim of which was to eliminate the child's weak points. The enthusiasm with which she worked and her belief that she would higher the knowledge of that particular child were remarkable. Her attitude corresponds with the outcome in my theory chapter that it is always possible to improve the linguistic abilities of an individual (compare with Chapter III, Unit 3.9.).

5.3. Training of Swedish for Immigrant Children at the Pre-school Classes

Learning Swedish and training the mother tongue are the main activities for immigrant children at the both pre-school classes, though leaning Swedish takes much more time. One can say that working at Swedish is the central activity for all children at the pre-school class, and training the mother tongue with a special teacher is a complementary important activity for immigrant children. As long as the education at the pre-school

classes is not compulsory (see Chapter III, Unit 3.1.), the system of lessons that follow one another does not exist there. Teaching and learning at the pre-school classes are conducted mostly in a light game form, which does not have strict time frames. That is why it is difficult to control how many hours have been officially spent at Swedish per day or per week. The personnel at both the pre-school classes, however, do not bother themselves counting the time when they have been engaged in teaching Swedish. Instead, they try to use each situation at the pre-school class as a learning situation for mastering Swedish. At the pre-school class B even such activities as music, drawing and sports, have a practical goal to deepen the knowledge of Swedish that the pupils have. When the teachers measure the achievements of the children at the pre-school class, they choose the child's knowledge of Swedish as the focal point for their evaluations.

The teachers at both the places do not differentiate immigrants as a separate educational group that needs extra-support in training Swedish. It is not necessary to do so because some immigrants have good and very good knowledge of Swedish (see also Chapter V, Unit 5.2.). The teachers observe all children in the class and start to give extra-help to those, whose achievements are lower. Among these pupils there could be Swedes.

The teachers I observed never treat immigrant children as a burden in the class from the educational point of view. They never see any connection between immigrants and disabled children, which I tried to create in the theory chapter (see Chapter III, Units 3.10 and 3.11.). What they want to do is to apply an individual approach to the needs of each child. If they teach an immigrant child Swedish, they try to train those linguistic aspects with him that are not acquired naturally by the second language learner, i.e. such elements as the grammatical structure, prepositions or particle verbs. When the pronunciation of Swedish words that immigrant children have calls for improvement, the teachers invite speech pedagogues to their classes. These pedagogues provide professional and effective help in most cases. If the child's problems of speech are more severe, the pre-school classes have to contact logopedists-pathologists. Collaborating with speech pedagogues is quite an ordinary practice in both the pre-school classes, though dealing with logopedists takes place less often. The problem of mixing languages is such a rare thing at both the pre-school classes that the teachers hardly remember a case when it has happened. It might be so because the age of children who come to the pre-school classes is rather high already. If they had the problem of mixing languages, it occurred earlier in their pre-school period. Then the pre-school pedagogues noticed it and applied an individual training program to extend the language knowledge, and consequently to get rid of the language blending that a particular immigrant child had.

I observed many forms of training Swedish, which are implied at the pre-school classes. Generally the choice of the form depends not only on the learning situation, but also on the teachers and their preferences. That is why the forms of working at Swedish that usually dominate at the pre-school class A differ from those at the pre-school class B. At the pre-school class A the emphasis is laid on the learning of object names and the description of pictures. As one of the teachers at the pre-school class A explained, they had noticed that many immigrant children, especially those children who come from families where both the parents are not Swedish, lack the knowledge of basic everyday things. For example they do not know how the food in the fridge or articles of dining sets are called. Because of that the teachers want to train these names with immigrant

children. To describe pictures they purposefully choose those portrayals that depict notions from the surrounding reality. At the pre-school class B, the teachers are more concentrated on reading to children loudly and then on the discussions of what they have read. They are convinced that this way of working at a language is very effective. They do not forget to train object naming and description making skills from time to time. The personnel at the pre-school class A do not skip reading fairy-tales and discussing them either. It should be underlined that as a rule the activities of learning Swedish are organised for both Swedish and immigrant children. Sometimes the teachers work with immigrant children individually, eliminating their linguistic drawbacks. Sometimes they create a mini-group of immigrant children only and do some language exercises with them. These variations in the size and quality of a learning group are practised at both the pre-school classes.

5.4. The Personnel's Attitude to the Mother Tongue. The Mother Tongue Training at the Pre-school Classes

To get detailed data for this unit, I had to interview the mother tongue teachers themselves and to observe some of their activities at the pre-school classes. In contrast to the commune B it was very difficult to get in touch with the mother tongue teachers in the commune A. In the commune B, all the information about the municipal mother tongue teaching can be found on a web site. There one can see personal presentations of the mother tongue teachers, their contact addresses and phone numbers. In the commune A, there are no similar web sites. What is more, the information concerning the contact numbers of the mother tongue teachers is treated as confidential there, and it is almost impossible to reach any of them. I managed to get acquainted with a teacher of Polish though, who has two pupils at the pre-school class A. She expressed an opinion that it is imperfect that it is so difficult to come in touch with the mother tongue teachers in the commune A. The mother tongue teaching is not obligatory in Sweden. The number of pupils who study the mother tongue depends much on the advertising, which the mother tongue teachers make for their subject. It is very desirable that they, being experts in their field, could explain popularly the significance of the mother tongue learning to the public. From this point of view, an easily accessible web site or a manual with the general information about training the mother tongue could be of a great practical help to the communal education. The commune A lacks this.

At both the pre-school classes the personnel respect the mother tongue training and see it as a significant help for the immigrant child's linguistic and overall development. This opinion is shared without reservations by the Swedish teachers and their mother tongue colleagues. The personnel observe the connection between the knowledge of the mother tongue and Swedish that immigrant children have. If an immigrant child has problems with learning Swedish, his teachers at the pre-school class try to contact firstly the mother tongue teacher to see how the child's success in mastering the home language is. Often there can occur similar difficulties in learning the two languages, for example in their grammatical structure. The pre-school class personnel are aware of the importance, which the mother tongue for immigrant children has. This attitude makes the pedagogical work with immigrants more effective. However, it became evident that the Swedish teachers are not acquainted with the deeper theoretical aspects concerning bilingualism. In contrast to their mother tongue colleagues, they lack special education

about teaching immigrants and general difficulties that can be connected with it. Both at the A and B communes they have never had any courses that would be devoted to the questions of becoming and being bilingual.

In spite of the importance and the free-of-charge character, which the mother tongue training has, not all immigrant children at the pre-school classes attend the hours of its official duration. It should be understood that at the level of the pre-school class it is not the six-year-olds mostly, but their parents, who decide whether the mother tongue as an additional subject should be chosen. Sometimes immigrant parents think that there is no use in studying the mother tongue at school, so they do not send their child to the mother tongue classes. It is difficult to say what reasons lie behind such a decision. Almost all pedagogues, whom I interviewed, think that it is erroneous.

Nowadays the mother tongue teachers do not experience many difficulties in their work, especially if we talk about organisational hindrances, which actually do not exist anymore. This was what I heard from the mother tongue teachers in both the communes, as well as from the rectors of the mother tongue education, and what I saw during the observations. In the question of organisational hindrances much depends on the personality of the mother tongue teacher. If she is active, friendly and responsible, she will always reserve a room for her classes, will have a key from it and will know in what place extra-pens for the blackboard lie. She will maintain contacts with the personnel of the schools, where she comes. She will even attend some of the lessons where her pupils study to learn the environment that surrounds them.

The mother tongue teachers in both the communes have the opportunity to work out the time schedule of their classes themselves. They are able to make up a comfortable week plan, which will suit them and their pupils. For instance, it is possible to organise the mother tongue activities so that one day they will take place in one school only, embracing all age groups that study there. The next day the mother tongue teacher can work in another school, and after the dinner-break go to the neighbouring third one. The only serious difficulty that the mother tongue teachers from the A and B communes mentioned is a very different level of preparedness among the immigrant pupils of the same age, who have to attend one learning group. This variety in the language knowledge is easy to understand. Some immigrant children come from families where both the parents speak the mother tongue, some from families where the mother only uses this language, others from families where the father, who spends less time with the child, talks the minority language. Already these factors make it clear that immigrant children of the same age will know their home language differently. Still, they should come to one group and work together, because the size of their language minority within a commune does not allow other group variations. The mother tongue teacher in the commune A remains rather optimistic about this matter. She says that she should continue to improve the methodological part of her work, finding more effective forms of the individual teaching approach. After all there are not more than four-five pupils in an average group of hers, and it is very possible to observe the personal needs of each child. The mother tongue teacher in the commune B actually joins this opinion saying that she manages to combine teaching methods during her lessons so that they satisfy the demands of each particular child. She wishes though that the level of the language preparation in her groups had been more homogeneous.

The mother tongue teachers in the A and B communes use a lot of ways of training the mother tongue with their six-year-old pupils. Their approaches do not differ principally. They read stories to the children and ask to retell them, memorise poems, proverbs and limericks, describe pictures and sing national songs. The common theme in the work of these teachers is that they want to acquaint their pupils not only with the structure of the language itself. They are eager to open to them the richness of the culture that this language represents too. If they choose pictures for descriptions, they take those that depict the reality of the country, the language of which they study. If they read fairy-tails, they select the most popular ones, where favourite folk heroes are the main characters. They explain to their pupils the meaning of the words that name peculiar national phenomena. They give examples of how traditional holidays are celebrated. Here I see a parallel between their way of teaching and the outcomes from my theory chapter, where it was underlined that there is always a close connection between the language and the culture it represents (compare with Chapter III, Unit 3.6.). Very often the mother tongue teachers ask their pupils to compare the notions from their national culture with the Swedish culture, and to find what is similar and what is absolutely different about them. Such comparisons have an important value. They make immigrant children more attentive to the cultural nuances of both the countries.

The mother tongue teachers, whom I interviewed, mind that the mother tongue knowledge that immigrant children in a foreign country have, will never be as good as the language knowledge of those children, who live in the country of their origin (compare with Chapter III, Unit 3.8.). They use this formulation as a pedagogical rule. For instance, they cannot follow a textbook that is studied at schools in their native countries without any changes. They must select what material in this textbook is necessary, what material is difficult to understand and will need explanations, and what book parts can be omitted because of their irrelevance for immigrant children. The best way in their work, as the mother tongue teacher at the commune A formulated, is to combine various textbooks and books for pleasure reading, taking into consideration the desires of children and wishes of their parents. Another detail is that both the teachers in the A and B communes stick to talking only the mother tongue during their lessons. It happens that immigrant children want to continue talking Swedish during their mother tongue classes. Then the teachers engage them in talking the mother tongue, as during the mother tongue classes children should practise their home language, not Swedish. Rarely the situations occur, when the mother tongue teachers themselves have to switch to Swedish. It can be when they explain some complicated grammatical phenomena, the corresponding names of which are familiar to the pupils in Swedish.

5.5. The Activity of Immigrant Children in the Pedagogical Process at the Pre-school Classes

The atmosphere in both the pre-school classes is that immigrant children and Swedes are equally important in the pedagogical process. They are seen as active subjects and are treated according to the requirements of the latest educational curricula (see Chapter III, Units 3.10. and 3.11.). Their personalities are respected and their needs are taken into view. Their desires and interests are treated as the basis for choosing the pre-school class activities. It means that before planning, the Swedish teachers ask children,

immigrants, as well as Swedes, what they will prefer to do. The answers form the pre-school class schedule. The mother tongue teachers follow the same procedure, using the desires of pupils as guidelines for the content of their lessons.

Another evidence that immigrant children play an active role in the pre-school class life is the fact that their cultural and religious differences are always observed. It is like that for both the pre-school classes. The menu of Muslim children is prepared in such a way, that they will never be offered pig's meat. If everyone is going to visit a church, what is usually done when the Easter approaches, immigrant parents will be asked if their children can join the activity, and what they should do, if they cannot. When all six-year-olds go to the beach, there would be often some Muslim girls, who would not be able to swim because of the prohibition from their parents. Then the teachers would respect the opinion of the parents. They would not give any comments on the matter. Like at the pre-school class B, the teacher can say that at that moment the girl should listen to what her parents say. Later, when she becomes an adult herself, she will decide whether she should swim, or not. These examples show that the chosen pre-school classes build respect and consideration to the cultural values and needs that immigrant children have, like it was advised in the governmental curriculum (compare with Chapter III, Unit 3.10.). The pre-school classes help immigrants to maintain and preserve their cultural belonging, like it was mentioned in the plan of the commune B (compare with Chapter III, Unit 3.11.). It is interesting that although not much is said in the plan of the commune A about respect and understanding toward immigrant children's cultural differences (see Chapter III, Unit 3.11.), the personnel at the pre-school class A do their best to cultivate these feelings in their working environment.

All the Swedish teachers, with whom I talked, agree that the process of working with immigrant children is very creative. This opinion reflects the active role in education that immigrant children at the A and B pre-school classes have. It is not only immigrants, who take from their teachers, but the teachers take from their immigrant pupils as well. The Swedish teachers, as representatives of the Swedish culture, learn a lot new about other cultures, their customs and traditions. The pre-school class B teacher put it that if there were no immigrant children in her group, her work would not be so fascinating. She said that to educate an immigrant child effectively, she has to read literature about his country of origin. She should try to understand the norms and values that surround him. She should open a two-sided dialogue between her and the immigrant child, and consequently a two-sided dialogue between her and his culture. These procedures stimulate her self-learning and self-development. They call for non-pattern decision-making, creativity and imagination. They bring to her work a great deal of new elements, which she otherwise would not have. I did not meet such a deep approach at the pre-school class A, but the teachers there also like to work with immigrants and get acquainted with their perspectives of the world. What is connected with the above mentioned is that at the A and B pre-school classes immigrant children are seen as a resource in education. They are a resource for teachers, and they are also a resource for their Swedish peers.

It is worth mentioning how the positive sides of the different cultural knowledge, that immigrant children possess, are used in the pre-school class A. The teachers there like to share the game experience of children from different countries. They ask immigrants

to tell the group about their native games. After that they suggest they can play one of the most interesting games together. At the pre-school class B the teachers ask immigrants to retell some of the fairy-tails from their native cultures, or to describe their national heroes. In general I was told that if a teacher, who works with immigrant children, has imagination and broad knowledge of the world, is interested in her job and is motivated to make it more effective, she will find the ways to use the cultural differences of her pupils as a significant pedagogical profit.

In my theory chapter I have suggested that some immigrant children who come from autocratic societies and families will perhaps need certain training before they would be able to become active and take initiative (see Chapter III, Unit 3.11.). The interviewed pre-school class teachers assured me that it is not really the case, at least not at their educational level. It is probable that later, when the personal philosophical concepts are intensively formed, immigrant children can develop the feeling of social passivity, or lack of desire to participate in the decision making, under the strong influence of their home and cultural environment. It is not like that at the age of six. At the age of six children are children. They are open and direct, and when the teacher offers them to express their opinion about the work, or asks what they want to do next, they are eager to answer. There are no problems about that. This was the answer that I got with some minor variations at both the pre-school classes. I do not fully agree with it. My opinion is that already by the age of six some personality principles and ideas have started to form, and they lay their imprints on the behaviour of the child. It cannot be that all children, especially all immigrant children, react with the same openness and eagerness to the suggestions of the teacher. There must be space for personal variations. My attitude is that this question demands further elaboration.

5.6. The Communication of Immigrant Children with their Swedish Peers and Teachers

Usually many children at both the pre-school classes, Swedes including, have communicational problems, and there is nothing unnatural about that. If the teachers notice that a child, immigrant or Swedish, have social difficulties in communication, they try to help him get rid of inner complexes that prevent him from being a good companion. If the problems are too serious for the teachers to solve, they call for a psychologist who is a specialist in this area. Immigrant children can also experience linguistic difficulties, which may prevent them from participating in conversations with Swedes on equal terms. From the observations at both the pre-school classes it became evident that many immigrant children have these language problems, though not all of them. Those immigrant children, whose Swedish vocabulary is narrow, find it difficult to express themselves and to preserve conversations with Swedes. As they often fail to find the right words, they prefer to be silent or to use body language to show what they want or feel. Some immigrant children produce a very poor impression, when they are engaged in dialogues with their teacher. It can be mostly the teacher who asks guiding questions all the time, and she receives either silence or primitive “yes” and “no” as an answer. The teachers at both the pre-school classes diagnose these linguistic problems of immigrant children correctly. They see the way out in the increasing of language training and broadening of the Swedish vocabulary. The personnel do their best to involve immigrant children into dialogues with Swedes, so that the former can develop their second language and desire to talk in the most natural way.

5.7. The Role of Immigrant Children's Parents in the Life of the Pre-school Classes

Parents play an active role in the life of the A and B pre-school classes. They are welcome to spend some hours there, taking part in the activities and just observing their children. The same is true about the lessons of the mother tongue, which I attended. The visits of parents and their participation in the events of the pre-school classes are seen as an opportunity for them to feel the atmosphere of these institutions and to understand the inner world of their children. There is no much difference observed between the activity of Swedish and immigrant parents, and their engagement in the pre-school class processes. In this question the nationality does not matter much. Everything depends on the personal qualities of a particular parent. Sometimes it can be noticed that immigrant parents, especially women, feel shy and uncertain conducting the pre-school class personnel, because they think their Swedish is not good. The situation can be that an immigrant mother will listen to what the teacher of her child says, agree passively, and will not add anything to the point before she is asked directly. Of course this matter does not hinder the communication between the pre-school class personnel and immigrant parents seriously.

As a rule the A and B pre-school class teachers have an opportunity to meet the parents of their pupils almost every day, when the parents come to take their children home. If it is necessary, the teacher can come up to a certain parent then and talk to him about the subject that has become acute. There also exist the so-called developmental conversations with parents, which take place about once in a term. During them the teacher talks about the results of the child in learning, and advises how the parents can help their youngster in his further development. If the situation demands, the developmental conversations can be arranged more often. Besides that, parents can become spectators at special parties, where the children together with the teachers show what they have achieved during their studies. This practice is especially popular at the pre-school class A. There they like to prepare small performances at the end of big topic works and introduce them to the invited parents. Especially for immigrant parents it is organised at the pre-school classes A and B that they come and talk about the country of their origin, show photos and videos about their culture, sing national songs and explain how some of their traditional dishes should be cooked.

Usually the pre-school class personnel advise immigrant parents to use the mother tongue in the conversations with their children at home. The reasons for doing so are numerous. The most important of them is, firstly, that immigrant children should develop the knowledge of their home language, as it influences the development of Swedish in a positive way. Secondly, when speaking Swedish with mistakes of grammar and pronunciation, immigrant parents give the wrong example of the Swedish speech to their children. If the teacher notices that an immigrant child has problems in his development, for example in reproducing the Swedish sounds or Swedish intonation, she contacts the child's parents, explaining the matter. According to the seriousness of the problem the teacher suggests that the child needs extra training or even a support of a doctor. Then the parents decide whether they should accept the suggestion. There were cases at both the pre-school classes when parents insisted that everything was right with their children and refused any help, though it was offered free of charge.

During the empirical part of my investigation I was trying to understand how the pre-school class personnel view the role of immigrant parents in the upbringing of their child. To do that I asked the pre-school class teachers detailed questions concerning this matter. It turned out that the personnel of the pre-school classes expect much from immigrant parents, though these expectations are not specially underlined in the course of everyday work. Immigrant parents are to decide whether their child should learn the mother tongue at all, and if the child does, whether he should attend the official hours of the mother tongue training. In the latter case immigrant parents are to think over, what degree of bilingualism their child can achieve, and how they can help him to do that. This aspect was especially stressed by the mother tongue teachers I talked to.

The Swedish teachers at both the places explain to parents, taking the specifics of their child into consideration, what they should do to develop the child's language abilities. At the pre-school class B it is almost obligatory that once a week all parents, immigrant parents including, should read a story to their children, so that in class the children will be able to retell the story's content to the group. For immigrant parents individually the Swedish teachers advise to spend more time developing the child's knowledge of the mother tongue through reading, singing and involving in conversations. Later in class the teachers would ask the child what kind of activities he has been doing with his parents and what new things he has learnt. Judging from what has been done at home, the teachers would give new pieces of advice to parents. At the pre-school class A, the teachers ask all parents to let their children watch some child's TV programmes in Swedish. In class they would discuss the TV events, which the children have watched. There is a special task for immigrant parents in this case to explain to their children certain places in the content of the programmes, if the children fail to understand them. These minor tasks to parents in general and to immigrant parents in particular, build a very important participation of the second generation in the upbringing of their children. The ways it is organised at the pre-school classes A and B seem to be very effective.

When immigrant parents are not able to communicate in Swedish, a professional interpreter is invited to help organise the communication between the parents and the pre-school class personnel. The conversation becomes little different with the participation of the third person. It takes more time, it is not so vivid and the translation of some peculiar Swedish phenomena can raise certain difficulties. The interpreter should be a real specialist in his field and he should promise to keep the subject of the conversation confidential. The cases when an interpreter is needed are very rare nowadays at both the pre-school classes, because immigrant parents from the regions, which surround these educational institutions, have been living long in Sweden. They have already mastered the basic level of the Swedish language.

5.8. Teaching Staff and their Preparation to Work at the Pre-school Classes

There are two teachers at the pre-school class A and three teachers at the pre-school class B; two of the teachers from the pre-school class B work part-time. The teachers at the pre-school class A have worked at their places for about 6 years each. At the pre-school class B, one teacher has worked for 3 years, the other two for around 5 years. I also interviewed two mother tongue teachers, one from the commune A, the other from

the commune B. The mother tongue teacher from the commune A has worked for 4 years, and the mother tongue teacher from the commune B – for 7 years. I shall include information about these teachers and their work in this unit.

The teachers, whom I have contacted, have pedagogical education that enables them to provide children of the pre-school class age with support and instructions that are demanded. These teachers produce an impression of competent specialists who know well how to organise and carry out children's education. They are open and eager to help. They create an atmosphere of friendliness and co-operation. They do their best to stimulate children's interest in acquiring knowledge and in broadening their out-look. They hurry to solve all conflicts that occur. In short, their work has a positive impact on children's development. However, the character of my study is comparative, and it gave me a unique opportunity to compare the work of the personnel at the two places.

Much in the class work depends on the personality of the teacher and her individual traits. The correctness of this statement became evident after I had visited the pre-school class A and then the pre-school class B. At the pre-school class B everything is more vigorous and energetic. The teachers and children there have time to fulfil more assignments and to cover a broader spectrum of learning activities. It is not always better to do everything in a quicker tempo, but my impression was that the working atmosphere of the pre-school class B was more interesting and stimulating. It suited the developmental specifics of six-year-olds, who can be tired without physical movements and who need the change of activities very often.

As I have already stressed (see Chapter V, Unit 5.4.), no Swedish teachers, neither at the pre-school class A nor at the pre-school class B, received special training in how they should deal with immigrant children (I do not count the one-day course about cultural diversity, which the teachers at the pre-school class A passed, because it cannot be evaluated as a sufficient education in the area). This matter is a considerable disadvantage. The process of teaching immigrants has some specific features that should be known by an educationalist. It is possible that through the course of work with immigrants the teacher learns what is needed from her, but it is always better to know everything in advance, and to have this knowledge in a structured form. When a teacher learns from practice only, there is always a risk that she can miss something.

The pre-school class B personnel understand that they have gaps in the theoretical knowledge about teaching immigrants, and they try to cover them by means of self-education. They said that they had organised a solid pedagogical library at their institution. They use books from it, as well as books from other libraries and private collections in their work. Two hours every week they have an official time for planning their pedagogical activities. Often they spend a certain part of this official period on the discussions of the educational literature, which they have recently read. Literature about immigrants takes a significant place there. They make notes about methods and ideas that are worth trying, and then plan how to apply them successfully in practice. These procedures help to achieve a high quality education. They are necessary to find the correct approach to how immigrant children should be trained. At the pre-school class A, the Swedish teachers do some planning and preparation to their work as well, but it is not as deep and profound as at the pre-school class B. At least they do not read and

then do not discuss the acquired information as much as the teachers at the pre-school class B do. Here one can see a considerable difference between the ways the pre-school classes A and B function. It underlines the disadvantage of the pre-school class A.

The picture of education is different, if we talk about the mother tongue teachers. Both in the A and B communes, they have received special training of teaching immigrant children their mother tongue in the country of immigration. They were not able to start their pedagogical work in Sweden without this education, even in case they had graduated from a pedagogical university in their home country. The mother tongue teachers I talked with said that the courses about educating immigrant children, which they had passed, help them immensely in their work. These courses gave them knowledge about the basic methods and tools that can be used when teaching an immigrant child his mother tongue. The courses made clear what goals the mother tongue education in Sweden contains and how these goals can be better achieved. The further improvement of the mother teachers' competence does not stop. It is the responsibility of the rectors of the mother tongue education in both the communes to see to that the municipal mother tongue teachers develop their knowledge and learn new aspects of working with immigrants. There are many short time courses, as well as seminars and discussion meetings that are regularly offered for the mother tongue teachers in the A and B communes. From time to time the rectors of the mother tongue education visit the lessons of the mother tongue teachers and give them pedagogical and methodological advice.

Another difference in the work of the personnel at the pre-school classes refers to the communication between the Swedish-speaking teachers and their mother tongue colleagues that come to various pre-school classes with lessons. This difference stresses the weak point of the pre-school class A. The matter is that usually it is very difficult for the Swedish and the mother tongue teachers to keep contacts with each other. The mother tongue teachers are not members of a particular school or a pre-school class. They have to work at different places, and often they do not have time to get acquainted closely with the staff of each school. However, the communication between the Swedish and the mother tongue teachers is necessary, simply because they work with the same children. To build an effective education, they should know what their pupils are good and bad at. In the commune A, everyone understands that the communication between the Swedish and the mother tongue teachers is important, but the responsibility for its achievement lies fully on the mother tongue teachers, and the mother tongue teachers do not have enough time. The contacts between the Swedish and the mother tongue teachers there concerning the results in studies or linguistic problems of an immigrant child are very rare in practice. In the commune B, on the contrary, much is done at all levels, and especially at the level of the mother tongue rector, to preserve and improve the communication between the Swedish and the mother tongue colleagues. Two years ago they started a project that was devoted to this question. The project included that the mother tongue teachers came to schools and pre-school classes with the observations of how their common pupils worked, talked with the staff of their pedagogical difficulties, introduced the culture of the countries, which languages they teach. Now it is the time to summarise the preliminary results of this pedagogical campaign, but they say at the commune B that they are satisfied with what they have achieved. One of the Swedish teachers at the pre-school class B told me that it is rather

usual that some of the mother tongue teachers come to their place earlier than the mother tongue activities start. They would greet the Swedish teachers, ask them about the news of their work and sit in the classroom, watching what and how the children are doing. It is obviously an advantage of the commune B that so much is done there to improve the communication between the Swedish and the mother tongue teachers. It influences the quality of education that immigrant children receive there positively.

As I intended in the theory chapter (see Chapter III, Unit 3.12), I investigated whether the pre-school class personnel I contacted use the manual of course plans for the compulsory school in their work. I made a supposition, that if this manual is applied at the pre-school class level, the teachers should differentiate three central subjects in it – Swedish, Swedish as a Foreign Language (Swedish II) and the Mother Tongue, as the most important for educating immigrant children. The research showed that the Swedish teachers at the pre-school class A use the manual of the course plans in their practice. They distinguish exactly as I supposed Swedish and Swedish II as the nuclear points when working with six-year-old immigrants. It is not the case at the pre-school class B. The Swedish teachers there base their work on the state and municipal educational curricula for the pre-school class, thinking that it is enough for good results. The mother tongue teachers at both the places know the Mother Tongue course plan for the compulsory school by heart. When they work with six-year-olds, they always bare its content in mind, because they should work in perspective to prepare their pupils for good achievements in the future school studies.

Summary

In this chapter the empirical results have been presented of how immigrant children's education at the two pre-school classes is conducted in practice. No special tactics has been used to choose the objects of the investigation except that the pre-school classes should be located in two different communes in the areas with high per-cent of immigrant population. In the chapter the attention has been paid to the aspects, which have been found especially important in the topic. Thus, some general facts about the pre-school classes have been given. The achievements of immigrant children in learning have been investigated. The question concerning the training of Swedish and the mother tongue for immigrants at the pre-school class level has been dwelt upon. It has been mentioned what forms of teaching these two languages are usually implemented at the chosen pre-school classes. It has been noted what difficulties the Swedish speaking teachers and their mother tongue colleagues can experience in their work, and how they have got used to solve them. It has been shown that the personnel, who work at both the pre-school classes, respect the mother tongue teaching and understand its significant role. The activity of immigrant children in the pedagogical process has been researched. The fact that immigrant children are treated as active subjects at both the educational institutions has been emphasised. The quality of communication between the immigrant children, their Swedish peers and teachers, has been observed. The material about the role of immigrant parents in the life of the pre-school classes has been collected. Finally the questions about the teaching staff of the chosen places, their education, working experience, competence improvement and preparation to the everyday pedagogical activities have been considered.

Chapter VI

Analysis and Discussion

In this chapter I am going to summarise the most important outcomes from the theoretical and empirical parts of my investigation. I shall compare, analyse and discuss the experiences of the A and B pre-school classes in the way they conduct the education of immigrant children in practice. As the key points for these procedures I shall use those aspects, which I have defined as central in the area. They will correspond the sub-unit titles of my empirical chapter (see Chapter V). I shall try to understand and interpret why the process of teaching immigrants functions the way it does at the places of my research. I shall analyse my work at this project and suggest what could have been done differently. I shall formulate the scientific relevance of my paper and give guidelines for the further exploration of the topic.

6.1. General Outcomes from the Theoretical Part of My Paper

After the Second World War Sweden has rapidly become multicultural. The reason for that was an intensive immigration flood into the country, which was of a heterogeneous character. Some of the arrived immigrants had a labour-market orientation. Another large group comprised political immigrants, who searched Swedish asylum because of the crises or wars in their home-countries. Only during the 1990-ies, when the political conflicts in Yugoslavia took place, around 120 000 citizens from Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo immigrated to Sweden. Such a big amount of foreigners in the country needed special solution making from the part of the government. Among the most serious questions that had to be considered was the question of educating immigrant children. It was proved that by only learning Swedish, immigrant children failed to achieve satisfactory results at the Swedish school and in consequent studies. Then the indispensability of the children's mother tongue development came into view. The mother tongue was needed because it served as a very good foundation for mastering Swedish and for life-long learning. It was also needed for immigrant children to preserve their national identity, to keep contacts with their native culture and to talk literally the same language with their parents. That was how the mother tongue training became an important part of immigrant children's teaching in Sweden. It took the form of the Mother Tongue lessons, which nowadays represent an optional school subject for immigrant pupils. The official hours of the mother tongue training can be started for an immigrant child when he enters the pre-school class at the age of six.

The pre-school class is an optional educational institution in Sweden that has an aim to prepare six-year-olds for their studies at school, as well as to develop their personalities and learning abilities. Normally a pre-school class is located at the same building as the compulsory school, and combines the pre-school traditions with the school environment. Playing and the child's creativity are seen as the most important aspects of the pedagogical work there. Another significant point is that all children at the pre-school class should be treated as active subjects of the pedagogical process. Their opinions, ideas and desires should be respected. The communication between the pre-school class personnel and the children's parents is also viewed as an important part of

the pre-school class life. This communication has a goal to make the work with children more efficient and to facilitate their overall development.

A great number of immigrant children, who study within the Swedish educational system, are bilingual or even poly-lingual, because they can speak two or more languages. Educationalists, who deal with such children, should have a deep understanding of what bilingualism is and what linguistic processes are connected with it. For example, they should know about the simultaneous and successive ways of becoming bilingual, and the peculiarities that each way contains (see Chapter III, Unit 3.3). They should be aware of the patterns of bilingual development that an immigrant child can follow, and of the possible positive influence of bilingualism on his personality (see Chapter III, Unit 3.4). The knowledge of such nuances will help pedagogues to organise and carry out immigrant children's teaching effectively. It is necessary that the personnel, who work with immigrant pupils, are able to advise immigrant parents what are the best ways of bringing up a bilingual child in each particular case. It is very helpful if the teachers can explain argumentatively what language is preferable in the communication with the immigrant child at home. It is useful, if the teachers can recommend what learning activities immigrant parents can organise to stimulate their child's development of the linguistic abilities and the mother tongue. It is also advisable for the teachers to know about the concept of semilingualism that is referred to a person who does not know any language properly (see Chapter III, Unit 3.9). They should not forget that semilingualism could be worked at and little by little eradicated, as this knowledge will help to improve the language learning of many immigrants. I am convinced that the material I have gathered in my theory chapter can help everyone to enrich their understanding of the pedagogical work with immigrant children with the stress on the latter's linguistic development.

6.2. Critical Remarks about the State Teaching Documents and the Municipal Educational Plans

I got some critical remarks about the educational curricula at the state and communal levels, including the municipal plans of the A and B communes. As far as the *state curriculum (Lpo 94)* is concerned, its strong point is that much is said there about the situation of cultural diversity at the Swedish school that should be taken into account by teachers and their pupils. Another strong point is that it is emphasised there that the education should be based on the children's background, experience and language. This aspect is not mentioned in the state educational plan for pre-schools at all (Lpfö 98).

I think that some important ideas are missing in Lpo 94. There should be a separate unit there that would be devoted to the needs and specifics of immigrant children. My opinion is that immigrant children deserve that because, firstly, their number within the Swedish educational system is not small. Secondly, their teaching differs from that of Swedish pupils. It is desirable for immigrant children to continue their mother tongue development and to train those aspects of Swedish that Swedes acquire by nature. It is not necessary that immigrants are treated as a separate learning group in the state curriculum, but their special needs and goals in education should be underlined, as long as they exist in reality. The state curriculum should also include a definition of what children should be treated as immigrants, because this aspect remains rather vague.

At the municipal level, *the communal A educational plan* lacks basic information about immigrant children's teaching. While reading it, one can hardly understand how the pre-school class education of immigrants should look like in this commune. It is in spite of the fact that a municipal plan should contain details about how the goals and guidelines from the state curriculum should be achieved. The authorities of the commune A need to elaborate their educational plan considerably, including much more material about immigrant children's education. Perhaps they should explain what the aims of immigrants' teaching are, what is so special about them, and how they can be possibly reached. As in the state curriculum, it could be better done in a separate logical unit.

The educational plan of the commune B, in contrast, provides richer information about working with immigrants. It stresses important aspects of this pedagogical process. It makes clear that pupils of a non-Swedish origin should maintain and preserve their cultural belonging, giving the reason why it is significant. It says that schools should work at special programmes, where immigrant pupils and the mother tongue teachers will function as transmitters of their unique cultural heritage. The drawback of the commune B plan is that the numerous progressive ideas of teaching immigrants are given only as guidelines there. They are not repeated in the list of obligatory goals to attain (compare with Chapter III, Unit 3.11). There is always a possibility that when certain items are formulated in the form that they are desirable but not compulsory, it is easy to avoid treating them seriously. It should be more effective if some aspects of the pedagogical work with immigrants in the commune B are expressed in a more affirmative way, possibly in the form of "must".

If we put the educational plans of the A and B communes together, it becomes clear that the plan of the commune B covers much more angles of working with immigrant children. It is deeper and more profoundly elaborated than the commune A plan. It contains even information, which is not directly connected with immigrant pupils, but which will have a positive influence on the quality of their education in the long run. Here I mean the constant co-operation between the school pedagogues and parents, as well as the development of the personnel's competence. None of these aspects is underlined in the plan of the commune A.

The state course plans that I have chosen as the most important in the pre-school class work with immigrants, and the content of which I have rendered in my theory chapter, are very solid and profoundly written. They cover all significant aspects of the subjects they deal with. I suppose that they help teachers in their work much.

6.3. A Comparative Discussion of the Work with Immigrants at the A and B Pre-school Classes

I have several aspects to compare and to comment on from the empirical part of my research. *First of all*, there are more immigrant children at the pre-school class B than at the pre-school class A. At the pre-school class B immigrant children prevail in the group. In spite of their large number, the teaching staff there do not experience difficulties in conducting pedagogical work. The situation at the pre-school class A seems as if they do not have serious problems of dealing with immigrants either, but the climate at the pre-school class B is more lively. The class work there is organised in a

vivid and energetic way, which is more interesting and stimulating, and which answers the developmental needs of six-year-olds.

Secondly, at both the places the teachers do their best to observe the age specifics of their pupils, such as the pupils' desire to learn and to ask inquisitive questions. The personnel at the A and B pre-school classes take care of the working cycles their children have, and try to let them play their games till the end.

Thirdly, the teachers at both the pre-school classes do not think that the results of immigrant children in studies are in average lower than those of Swedes. The teachers do not have low aspirations for the achievements of immigrants in their groups. This helps immigrants to acquire a relevantly high level of knowledge. The teachers I interviewed do not see any immigrant child as a failure in learning, especially in case the child's linguistic understanding is bad. They seem to be correct to anticipate that persistent training of such a "bad" immigrant pupil will bring positive results.

Fourthly, mastering of Swedish is conducted at a high competent level at both the pre-school classes, including the individual approach to the needs of a particular child. It is carried out in a variety of forms that are exciting and efficient for children. At both the places the game and the educational aspect are integrated successfully, so that the children enjoy the activity and learn from it at the same time. It happens that the teachers at the two pre-school classes work at Swedish with immigrant children only, eliminating the latter's language gaps. This way of teaching looks very effective. It helps immigrants to catch up with the knowledge of Swedish that native speakers have.

Fifthly, speaking about the organisation of the mother tongue training in the A and B communes, a considerable problem of the commune A is that it is so difficult to come in touch with the mother tongue teachers there. The authorities of the commune A should do something about this matter. They can create a web site or publish a booklet, where the guidelines for the mother tongue training and its importance for immigrant children would be emphasised. The contact addresses of the mother tongue teachers could be included in this public issue, so that if immigrant parents want to ask questions concerning the learning of a particular language, they would be able to do that. The way the similar question has been solved in the commune B can be an example to learn from. The web site of the mother tongue teaching in the commune B is organised competently. It is very convenient to be used and it contains a wide spectrum of information on the topic.

Sixthly, at both the pre-school classes not only the mother tongue teachers, but their Swedish-speaking colleagues too understand the value of the mother tongue training and treat it with respect. The mother tongue teachers I talked with managed to organise their work so, that they do not experience organisational problems.

Seventhly, the forms and methods of mastering the mother tongue, which the mother tongue teachers I interviewed choose, seem to be very effective. Their ways of connecting the learning of the language with the introduction of the culture it represents are especially remarkable. These mother tongue teachers also mind the vocabulary

limitations, which their pupils might have because of the development of the home language in a foreign country. This should be viewed as a strong point.

Eighthly, immigrant children are treated as active subjects at both the pre-school classes. Their interests and cultural differences are considered. The recommendations from the state curriculum, such as to cultivate respect to immigrant children's national background and their special needs, are taken into account at both the places. Immigrant children are viewed not as a burden, but as a resource in education there. Swedish people can learn much from them, for instance about other cultures and other ways of looking at the world. The Swedish teachers at both the places are aware of this aspect and take care of it. However, the level of preparation, which the personnel achieve to meet immigrant children in the classroom, is more profound at the pre-school class B.

Ninthly, there is no essential difference between the two pre-school classes in the way immigrant children communicate with their Swedish peers and teachers there. All children can have problems with starting and maintaining contacts. At the same time those immigrants, whose Swedish is poor, experience linguistic difficulties while communicating with Swedes, and their place of studies, whether it is the pre-school class A or B, does not matter. The Swedish teachers at both the places see the solution of the linguistic communicational hindrances in the increase of language training for immigrant children and in the widening of their Swedish vocabulary.

Tenthly, the communication of the personnel with immigrant parents at both the pre-school classes is satisfying. The teachers at the pre-school classes A and B keep contacts with immigrant parents all the time, inform them about the learning progress of their children, give tips about the upbringing of a bilingual personality and engage the parents into the pre-school class activities. It is a very efficient pedagogical practice.

Eleventhly, talking about the staff of the two pre-school classes, none of the Swedish teachers has a special education for working with immigrant children. It is a drawback of both the places. At the pre-school class B they have found the way out in self-preparation, self-learning and in joined discussions of what they have studied. At the pre-school class A, the Swedish teachers lack such a depth of preparedness. This is an obvious disadvantage. The Swedish teachers at the pre-school class A should spend much more time on working with literature that deals with the specifics of educating immigrant children. On the other hand, the mother tongue teachers at the A and B communes have received education about the specifics of working with immigrant children. As the interviewed mother tongue teachers stated, the knowledge they had got from these special courses helps them immensely in their class activities.

Twelfthly, in contrast to the pre-school class B, the communication between the Swedish and the mother tongue teachers at the pre-school class A is poor. The situation about this matter should be improved, because it tackles in very serious aspects of immigrant children's teaching. Evidently, they should start to solve this question at the level of municipal authorities. The rector of the mother tongue education can take the initiative, like it has been in the commune B. He can prepare a programme of collaboration between the mother tongue teachers and their Swedish colleagues. He can discuss it with the rector who is responsible for the general education at the pre-school classes and

make necessary alterations. Then the rector of the mother tongue education can present the project to the meeting of the mother tongue teachers and analyse with them how various project items can be fulfilled in practice. Later the mother tongue teachers will come to pre-school classes and schools with concrete ideas of what they should do to maintain close contacts with the Swedish teachers and why it is so important. This exemplary way of the communicational improvement looks efficient.

6.4. The Reflections over the Empirical Results and their Discussion

I have discussed what was good and what needed some improvement in the way the two pre-school classes in two different communes conduct the education of immigrant children. One can see that there were a lot of strong sides and positive moments in the way the A and B pre-school classes carry out immigrants' education. Still, not everything was equally good there, and I have evaluated the experience of the pre-school class B higher than that of the pre-school class A. I found the working atmosphere at the pre-school class B more productive, though this impression could be subjective. What is more serious, the municipal educational plan in the commune A does not contain many important goals and guidelines for working with immigrants, if we compare it with the municipal plan of the commune B. The advertising of the mother tongue teaching is not organised at the commune A at all, and the communication between the Swedish teachers and their mother tongue colleagues is poor. There is a drawback for both the pre-school classes, which is that the Swedish teachers do not have special education for working with immigrant children. The personnel at the pre-school class B try to overcome this gap by means of profound self-learning. It is not the same about the teachers at the pre-school class A. I am convinced that if the teachers at the pre-school class A prepared for their pedagogical activities with immigrant children more, the results from their work could have been considerably better. In general self-education plays an indispensable role in the teacher's work.

It is not easy to interpret why the work with immigrant children at both the pre-school classes functions the way it does. I can suggest that the Swedish-speaking teachers lack special education of working with immigrant pupils because of the shortage of financial resources that their educational institutions have. It is also probable that there are not many courses in Sweden that are aimed to teach Swedish pedagogues the difficulties and peculiarities of working with immigrants. On the latter argument I can contradict saying that as long as they have special courses in Sweden that prepare immigrant teachers to work with immigrant children, it is not difficult to organise similar courses for Swedes, because many important ideas and conclusions will coincide. On the former argument I shall underline that ideally each commune should take care about its teaching staff and the development of their competence. Each commune should spend some money sending school, pre-school and pre-school class teachers to the courses that will raise their qualification. This matter was underlined in the commune B educational plan (see Chapter III, Unit 3.11.). I think that among the courses, where teachers should be sent, there could be courses devoted to the topics of bilingualism, immigrant children's teaching and cultural diversity.

It is more difficult to understand why there is such an evident difference between the two pre-school classes that are located in two different communes in the way the

education of immigrant children is conducted there. Several items of working with immigrants that function satisfyingly at the pre-school class B need improvement at the pre-school class A. I suppose that this difference could be explained by the qualitative difference of the communes, where the chosen pre-school classes lie. The commune B is bigger in size, it is an important cultural centre, and it possesses richer educational traditions than the commune A. It is very likely that the commune A, because of its provincial character and less deep-rooted pedagogical traditions, lacks experience of educational work in general and of educational work with immigrants in particular. The commune A should start to study how other communes solve the question of immigrant pupils' teaching and learn new ideas from them. This should help the commune A to organise the education of immigrant children that will answer high quality.

Obviously, not all the drawbacks of the pre-school class A, about which I have written in the paper, are explained by the periphery location of the commune. By comparing the two pre-school classes, I understood that much in the success of pedagogical activities depends on the personalities of the teachers who work in the classroom, their motivation and enthusiasm. The Swedish teachers at the pre-school class A are less energetic and spend considerably less time on self-preparations. Perhaps they need a change of the working environment for a while or some communication with teachers from other pre-school classes, so that they could share the experience of other pedagogues and learn new ideas.

In contrast to the pre-school class A, I estimate the quality of work with immigrants at the pre-school class B as very high. I cannot say what could be done better there. The only drawback I mentioned referring to this class was that the Swedish teachers do not have education for dealing with immigrant pupils, but they do their best to compensate that through self-learning. The future of the pre-school class B should be very promising, because the personnel there do not stop in their self-development. Their approach to teaching is very creative. My opinion is that even if a pedagogical phenomenon functions rather smoothly at the pre-school class B, the teachers there are interested to find more effective ways of managing it.

6.5. The Most Important Conclusions from My Total Work

So, in the present investigation I have studied, analysed, compared and discussed how the education of immigrant children at two different pre-school classes is carried out. I have tried to interpret and understand why this education is conducted the way it is. Briefly the most significant conclusions from the whole of my research are:

- The education of immigrant pupils is a very serious phenomenon that cannot be neglected. Only learning Swedish is not enough for immigrant children to achieve satisfactory results in studies. Cultivating of their mother tongue knowledge is indispensable for their over-all harmonious development.
- Pedagogues, who teach immigrant children, should be aware of the theoretical grounds around bilingualism and other connected concepts. Otherwise they would not be able to educate immigrant pupils successfully.

- Immigrant parents play an especially important role in the upbringing of a bilingual personality. It actually depends on their decision whether their child will become bilingual at all, and if he will be, what level of bilingualism he will achieve.
- The achievements of immigrant children in studies at the chosen pre-school classes are not lower than those of Swedes. The results of immigrants in learning can be very high. There are no hopeless semilinguals, whose language knowledge cannot be improved.
- The state and the municipal curricula, that are in force now, and especially the educational plan of the commune A, should contain more detailed information about the requirements to the education of immigrant children at the pre-school class. As far as the course plans are concerned, the content of which I have rendered, they seem to be full and very helpful.
- Many aspects of educating immigrants, such as training the mother tongue, making immigrants active in the pedagogical process, helping them to obtain contacts with their Swedish peers, communicating with immigrant parents, I have found to be conducted professionally and productively at both the pre-school classes.
- The main drawback of the work with immigrants at the A and B pre-school classes is that the Swedish teachers there have not received any special education about dealing with immigrant children. The personnel at the pre-school class B try to compensate this gap by means of self-learning.
- In comparison to the pre-school class B, the work with immigrants at the pre-school class A has more drawbacks. Among them there is a poor communication between the Swedish teachers and their mother tongue colleagues, as well as the absence of the advertising for the mother tongue teaching in the commune.
- The reason for differences in the work of the pre-school classes A and B with immigrants can be seen in the qualitative difference of the communes, where the chosen institutions lie. It can also be the principle difference between the personalities of the teachers, who work at the pre-school classes, their enthusiasm, creativity and desire for self-education.
- I evaluate the experience of the pre-school class B in working with immigrant children highly. If any pre-school class teachers would like to enrich their knowledge of educating immigrant children, they can take an example from this pre-school class.
- There are some items in the work of the pre-school class A and the commune A, that can be improved. The commune A can study how other communes deal with the phenomenon of immigrant pupils' teaching and learn new progressive ideas from them. The Swedish teachers at the pre-school class A can obtain professional contacts with the personnel from other pre-school class institutions, so that they can learn the approaches of other educationalists to the pedagogical work.

6.6. Critical Reflections over My Project Work and Ideas for the Future Research

The scientific value of this investigation can be seen in the fact that it has added knowledge to the elaboration of the topic of educating immigrant children. It has proved that pupils with another national background than Swedish possess rich potential in learning, and in average their achievements in studies are not lower than those of Swedes. The research has shown that the pre-school class education in different communes can vary considerably, and it would be better if the communes could share

their experience of working with immigrants. The exchange of the municipal pedagogical experience, as far as immigrant children's teaching is concerned, will make the education of immigrants more productive. The present project work has underlined that there is a common aspect at the pre-school class level that can be improved. It is a lack of special education about dealing with immigrants and bilinguals from the part of the Swedish teachers. The study has also provided examples of how certain parts of the work with immigrants can be efficiently organised and carried out. These patterns can be used by other pre-school classes in their practice. The most important specific features of becoming and being bilingual, which I have summarised in the theoretic chapter, can be of much help for those, who teach immigrants.

The subsequent extension of the topic of this project can be seen in the research of how, to take an example, immigrant parents help their children of the pre-school class age to develop the knowledge of the mother tongue and Swedish at home. For achieving this, interviews with immigrant parents can be organised together with the observations of how immigrant parents communicate with their children in ordinary home situations. It is also interesting to continue the research by investigating how the education of immigrant children is conducted at the level of the compulsory school in different communes. The third possibility is to compare how the instructions of immigrant pupils are conducted in Sweden and other multicultural countries.

I realise that there should be certain nuances in my paper that are far from being perfect. Perhaps it was not enough to interview one mother tongue teacher from each commune only, in order to get an objective understanding of how the municipal mother tongue teaching functions. It could have been better if I had talked to a larger number of mother tongue teachers from each commune and had observed their class activities. Then I would have been able to create a broader and more objective picture of the mother tongue training at the A and B pre-school classes. It is also possible that if I had interviewed other people about teaching immigrants, who had other, probably absolutely negative, attitudes to the pre-school class education, the outcomes from my study could have been different. I certainly feel that I have learned much from working at this project and I would like to use the experience I have gained in my future investigations.

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Enclosure I

The Preliminary Questions to the Swedish Speaking Teachers at the Pre-school Class

A. General Information

1. Is it the only one pre-school class that is located in this school?
2. How many pre-school classes are there in your commune?
3. How many children do you have in your class?
4. How many children from them are immigrants (immigrants of the second generation are included into this group)?
5. Do you observe that there should be a certain proportion of immigrant children in your class or are you obliged to accept all six-year-old immigrant children who would like to study?
6. What do you think is the best proportion of immigrant children in a class? Why do you think that way?
7. From what countries have the immigrant children in your class come (or their parents if we talk about immigrant children of the second generation)?
8. Is it acceptable that immigrant children from one minority group use their home language during the class activities?
9. What is the age of the children with whom you work? Are all of them six-year-olds?
10. Do you have any handicapped children in your class?
11. From where do the children come who study in your class (from home being with their parents, from the pre-school, from home being with a governess = "dagmamma")?
12. Have all the immigrant children that study in your class attended the pre-school?
13. What is the duration of the pre-school class year (in what month do the studies start and in what month do they finish)?
14. At what time do the studies at the pre-school class daily begin and at what time do they daily finish?
15. Do you work with your pre-school class five days a week?
16. Do you apply any tests to observe the developmental level of your pupils?
17. Is it that each year a new group of six-year-old children come to you?
18. Do you work in this class alone or do you have a colleague?
19. What is the communication between your pre-school class and other educational levels (the pre-school and the compulsory school)?
20. Do you collaborate often with the teachers from the pre-school and the compulsory school as one working team?
21. Have you worked together with your colleagues at the local educational plan?

B. The Achievements of Immigrant Children in Studies

1. Do you isolate immigrant children as a separate learning group?
2. What do you think about the achievements of immigrant children at the pre-school class (in comparison to Swedes)?
3. Do immigrant children study worse than Swedes?

4. Does it occur often that immigrant children need some extra help from the pre-school personnel?
5. Do you think that some of the immigrant children in your class need special support in their studies from the side of the teacher?
6. How do you plan to help those immigrant children in your class who have problems with studies?
7. How do you usually help immigrant children when they have problems with their studies?
8. Is it needed often that an individual teaching programme should be worked out for an immigrant child, so that he would be able to catch up with the group?
9. What is your opinion? Do immigrant children have lower intellectual abilities in comparison to Swedes?
10. Are lower intellectual abilities that immigrant children have and a lower social status of their parents the reasons for the low achievements of immigrants at school?
11. How are the results of immigrant children at the pre-school class measured and evaluated?

C. Teaching of the Mother Tongue

1. How many immigrant children in your class receive the mother tongue teaching?
2. What should immigrant children do in order to get the mother tongue teaching?
3. Do you think that immigrant children need the mother tongue teaching when they study at the pre-school class?
4. What do you think about the role of the mother tongue for immigrant children?
5. What do you think the advantages of the mother tongue development for immigrant children are?
6. Have you observed the connection between the knowledge of the first and the second language that immigrant children have?
7. Does it occur that immigrant children in your class start to mix languages?
8. What do you usually do when you see that some immigrant children have problems because of mixing the languages?
9. How is your communication with the mother tongue teachers?
10. Do you contact the mother tongue teachers often?
11. Does it happen that you co-operate with them, for example when making up an individual plan of working with an immigrant pupil?
12. Do you think you need this co-operation with the mother tongue teachers? Why?
13. Can you give an example of how you use the developmental specifics of six-year-olds (inquisitiveness, desire to learn, the ability to express oneself in the form of images, etc.)?
14. How do you observe the working cycle that immigrant children have?
15. Have you happened to notice that immigrant children have a different working cycle because of their different feeling of time?

D. Other Pre-school Class Activities and Teaching of Swedish

1. Do many immigrant children have problems with learning Swedish?
2. If they have some problems with learning Swedish, why do you think these difficulties occur?

3. What are the learning activities at your pre-school class?
4. Who and how chooses the learning activities at the pre-school class?
5. What is an approximate schedule of the pre-school class activities?
6. Which activities have the priority at the pre-school class?
7. Do six-year-old children have the ability to learn and develop their knowledge of a foreign language quickly?
8. How many hours of training Swedish do you officially have every day?
9. Do you try to use all possible situations at the pre-school class to practise Swedish with your children?
10. What forms of teaching and working at Swedish do you use? Please give detailed examples.
11. What role does TV play for learning Swedish in your class? Why is it so?
12. How does the teacher at the pre-school class observe the individual needs of each child?
13. How do you observe the individual level of mastering Swedish that immigrant children have?
14. Do you give any extra training of Swedish to the immigrant children in your class?
15. Do you teach immigrant children anything about the Swedish culture? Why?

E. The Activity of Immigrant Pupils in the Pedagogical Process

1. What do you do as a pedagogue to help immigrant pupils to function as active subjects in the pedagogical process?
2. What will you do if some of the immigrant children in your class are passive? If they have difficulties to take the initiative?
3. How do you cultivate the equality of genders in your pupils?
4. Has it ever happened that immigrant pupils have had difficulties with accepting the equality of genders?
5. How do you observe the national, cultural and religious specifics of the immigrant children in your class?
6. Do you learn anything from your immigrant pupils?
7. Is it interesting and enriching for you to work with pupils from different cultures?

F. The Communication of Immigrant Children with their Swedish Peers and Teachers

1. Do the immigrant children in your class have any problems to communicate with their Swedish peers or teachers (linguistic/social problems)?
2. What do you do if you see that immigrant children have communication problems?
3. What do you do if some of your pupils have conflicts because of their different cultural or religious backgrounds?

G. The Communication between the Pre-school Class Personnel and Immigrant Parents

1. What role do immigrant parents play in the life of the pre-school class?
2. Is it acceptable that immigrant parents come to the pre-school class and participate in some of its activities?
3. Are immigrant parents active in the pre-school class life if we compare them with Swedish parents?

4. How is the communication between the pre-school class staff and immigrant parents achieved?
5. How often do you meet the parents of a particular immigrant child?
6. Do you try to engage immigrant parents into the pre-school class activities?
7. What is done if immigrant parents do not understand Swedish well?
8. Do you give immigrant parents advice in what way they should develop their child?
9. What can you advise immigrant parents concerning the development of their child's language knowledge (both Swedish and the mother tongue)?
10. What language do you advise immigrant parents to use at home when communicating with their child (Swedish or the mother tongue)?

H. The Pre-school Class Personnel and Work Planning

1. How long have you been working as a teacher at the pre-school class?
2. What kind of education do you and your colleague have?
3. Have you got any special education regarding the teaching of immigrant children?
4. Do you think that you need some special training to work with immigrant children?
5. Do you think that immigrant children need special teaching methods or specific pedagogical approaches in comparison to Swedes?
6. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of being bilingual?
7. Do you see immigrant children as a resource in your classroom? If "yes", then what kind of resource?
8. How do you carry out the work planning?
9. How do you choose topics for your work at the pre-school class?
10. What special literature do you use to get ready for your work?
11. Do you apply the manual about the course plans for the compulsory school in your work?
12. Do you want to improve anything in the working conditions with immigrant children that you have?
13. Do you think that the situation around the education of immigrant children that you have is quite satisfactory?

Enclosure II

The Preliminary Questions to the Mother Tongue Teachers Who Work in the Chosen Pre-school Classes

To create a more precise picture of the immigrants' education at the pre-school class level I decided to interview two mother tongue teachers in both the communes. I wanted to get their perspective on the question of immigrant children's teaching and on the difficulties that are possibly connected with it. I would have liked to know their opinion about the role of the mother tongue for the minority children in the country of immigration. Particularly I was interested here about the immigrants of the second generation. I was also eager to clear up about the specifics of working as a mother tongue teacher in a foreign country. These items formulated the general line of my interview questions.

A. General Questions

1. Why do you think immigrant children should know their mother tongue?
2. When do you think the teaching of the mother tongue for immigrant children should be started (at the pre-school, at the pre-school class, at the elementary school)? Why?
3. Is not it late to start the mother tongue teaching at the pre-school class?
4. Do you think that in general immigrant children are motivated to study their mother tongue?
5. Does it happen that immigrant children can be completely unmotivated to study their mother tongue? What do you do in such a case?
6. In how many schools and with what age groups do you work?
7. How many hours a day do you approximately work?
8. How many children are there in an average educational group with which you work?
9. Do you find your working schedule convenient?
10. Do you experience any organisational problems in your work?
11. Do you experience difficulties of any other kind in your work?
12. How is your communication with the pre-school personnel?
13. Do you contact the pre-school class personnel often?
14. Does it happen that you collaborate with them as one working team, for example when making up an individual plan of teaching an immigrant pupil?
15. Have you worked together with the pre-school class and the compulsory school personnel at the local educational plan?
16. Do you think you need the co-operation with the pre-school class personnel?
17. Can you give an example of how you use the developmental specifics of six-year-olds (inquisitiveness, desire to learn, the ability to express oneself in the form of images, etc.)?
18. How do you observe the working cycle that immigrant children have?
19. Have you happened to notice that immigrant children have a different working cycle because of their different feeling of time?
20. Do you teach immigrant children anything about the Swedish culture? Why?

21. Do you help your immigrant pupils to solve the conflicts with their Swedish peers if any occur?
22. Do you think that your pupils enjoy communicating with you also because you represent the same nationality and culture?
23. What is the age of the pre-school children with whom you work? Are all of them six-year-olds?
24. Do you apply any tests to observe the developmental level of your pupils?
25. Is it that each year a new group of six-year-old children come to you?
26. Do you have any colleagues who teach the same mother tongue in the commune?

B. The Achievements of Immigrant Children in Studies

1. What do you think about the achievements of immigrant children at the pre-school class?
2. In general do you think that immigrant children study worse than Swedes?
3. What is your opinion? Do immigrant children have lower intellectual abilities in comparison to Swedes?
4. Are lower intellectual abilities that immigrant children have and a lower social status of their parents the reasons for the low achievements of immigrants at school?
5. How are the results of immigrant children in the mother tongue learning measured and evaluated?

C. Teaching of the Mother Tongue

1. What do you think about the role of the mother tongue for immigrant children?
2. What do you think the advantages of the mother tongue development for immigrant children are?
3. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of being bilingual?
4. Have you observed the connection between the knowledge of the first and the second language that immigrant children have?
5. How many hours of training the mother tongue do immigrant children at the pre-school class receive officially from you every day?
6. Do six-year-old children have the ability to learn and develop their knowledge of the mother tongue quickly?
7. What forms of teaching and working at the mother tongue do you use? Please give detailed examples.
8. Is all teaching during the Mother Tongue classes accomplished in the mother tongue?
9. Don't you use Swedish for some of your explanations from time to time?
10. Is it acceptable that immigrant children in your group use Swedish during the class activities?
11. Does it occur that immigrant children during your classes start to mix their mother tongue with Swedish?
12. What do you usually do when you see that some immigrant children have problems because of mixing the languages?
13. What role does TV play for learning the mother tongue in your group? Why is it so?
14. How does the mother tongue teacher who comes at the pre-school class observe the individual needs of each child?

15. Do many of your pupils have problems with learning their mother tongue?
16. If they have some problems with learning the mother tongue, why do you think these difficulties occur?
17. Do you give any extra training of the mother tongue to immigrant children who have fallen behind the group?
18. How do you usually help those children who have fallen behind the group?
19. Is it needed often that an individual teaching programme should be worked out for an immigrant child, so that he would be able to catch up with the group?
20. Do you teach immigrant children anything about the culture of the country of their origin? Why?
21. How do you observe the fact that immigrant children in Sweden have a more restricted mother tongue vocabulary than those children who live in the country of their origin?

D. The Activity of Immigrant Pupils in the Pedagogical Process

1. Is it difficult for immigrant children with the same national background as yours to take the initiative or to observe the gender equality (in comparison to Swedes)?
2. What do you do as a pedagogue to help immigrant pupils to function as active subjects during your classes?
3. What will you do if some of the immigrant children in your class are passive? If they have difficulties to take the initiative?
4. How do you cultivate the equality of genders in your pupils?
5. Do you learn anything from your immigrant pupils?

E. The Communication between the Pre-school Class Personnel and Immigrant Parents

1. Do you communicate with the parents of your pupils?
2. How do you build this communication?
3. How often do you meet the parents of a particular immigrant child?
4. Do you try to engage immigrant parents into your pedagogical activities?
5. Is it acceptable that immigrant parents come to some of your classes and participate in them?
6. Do you give immigrant parents advice in what way they should develop their child?
7. What can you advise immigrant parents concerning the development of their child's language knowledge (both the mother tongue and Swedish)?
8. What language do you advise immigrant parents to use at home when communicating with their child (the mother tongue or Swedish)?

F. The Mother Tongue Teacher herself and Work Planning

1. How long have you been working as a mother tongue teacher?
2. What kind of education have you got in your home country and in Sweden?
3. Do you think that you need some special training to teach immigrant children the mother tongue?
4. Do you think that immigrant children need special teaching methods or specific pedagogical approaches learning their mother tongue in the country of immigration?
5. Do you see your immigrant pupils as a resource for the Swedish culture?

6. How do you carry out the work planning?
7. Do you collaborate with someone to make up a plan of your activities?
8. How do you choose topics for your work at the pre-school class?
9. What special literature do you use to get ready for your work?
10. Do you apply the manual about the course plans for the compulsory school in your work?
11. Do you want to improve anything in the conditions of teaching the mother tongue that you have?
12. Do you think that the situation around the education of immigrant children that exists in Sweden is quite satisfactory?

Enclosure III

The Preliminary Questions to the Municipal Rector of the Mother Tongue Teaching

From the municipal pedagogical documents I understood that the rector, who is responsible for the mother tongue teaching in the commune, plays an important role in the education of immigrant children. Because of that I decided to organise interviews with the rectors who had this post in the chosen communes. I was convinced that it would help me to get a better understanding of the pedagogical work with immigrant children at the communal level. The central idea of my interviews was to collect information about the work that these rectors fulfil. I wanted to know about their responsibilities, assignments and tasks. I was interested to find out what documents they work with and what decisions they take. These aspects determined the direction of my interview questions.

1. For what education area are you responsible?
2. With what questions and problems do you work?
3. Are there any other rectors in your commune who work with the questions of immigrant children's education?
4. What sort of education do you have?
5. How long have you been working as the rector for the mother tongue teaching?
6. How do you take decisions in important questions? Do you come to conclusions alone or do you collaborate with your subordinates as a working team?
7. Who has worked out the educational plan of your commune? Have you participated in this process?
8. How many minority language groups are there in your commune?
9. How many immigrant children do you have in your commune?
10. How many immigrant children in your commune choose the subject "the Mother Tongue", which is not obligatory?
11. How many pre-school classes do you have in your commune?
12. How many mother tongue teachers work in your commune?
13. How do you evaluate the situation around the education of immigrant children in your commune?
14. Are you satisfied with the quality of immigrant children's education in your commune?
15. Are there any weak points in the way the education of immigrant children in your commune is arranged? Could they be improved?
16. What are the advantages in the way the education of immigrant children in your commune is organised and carried out?
17. What do you think about the achievements of immigrant children at school (in comparison to Swedes)?
18. Do immigrant children study worse than Swedes?
19. What kind of the mother tongue help can immigrant pupils get when they start at the pre-school class?
20. Do you think that the help in the mother tongue that immigrant children can get from the commune is enough to learn the first language successfully?

21. Does it occur often that immigrant children need some extra help from the pre-school personnel?
22. Is it needed often that an individual teaching programme should be worked out for an immigrant child, so that he would be able to catch up with the group?
23. What is your opinion? Are lower intellectual abilities that immigrant children have and a lower social status of their parents the reasons for the low achievements of immigrants at school?
24. How are the results of immigrant children at the pre-school class measured and evaluated?
25. Do you think that the teachers in your commune who deal with immigrant children are competent enough to fulfil their work successfully?
26. What kind of education do the teachers that deal with immigrant children have?
27. What is done in the commune to improve the competence of the personnel that work with immigrant children?
28. What do the teachers who deal with immigrant children, especially the mother tongue teachers, think about the organisational side of their work?
29. Is the timetable of the mother tongue teachers convenient?
30. Do the mother tongue teachers work in well-equipped classrooms?
31. Do they have enough of teaching material? Is this material adequate? Does it satisfy the demands of immigrant pupils?
32. How can you help the teachers if they lack important teaching material, for example textbooks or audio-equipment?
33. How many mother tongue teachers work at N's pre-school class (the class which I have chosen as an object for my empirical investigation)?
34. How much does the commune pay for the education of an immigrant child?
35. Does the commune pay more for the education of an immigrant child than for the education of a Swede?

Enclosure IV

An Example of Notes I Made During My Interviews and Observations at the Pre-school Classes

October 29th, 2001

Today it has been my third visit to the pre-school class A. The purpose of it was to observe the educational activities there, and to talk to the same teacher I had talked to last time. Let us call her Iren. I planned to ask Iren the questions, which aroused after I had worked with the material of our first conversations. Mainly, I wanted to clear up how she prepares for her work at the pre-school class, what pedagogical literature she uses and how she fulfils the work planning. I also wanted to hear how her relations with the mother tongue teachers are organised.

When I came to the room, where the pre-school class A is located, I found that the children there were busy with some group activity. They were playing, some of them with a building set, some – with sheets of paper. Five of the children were sitting with one of the teachers, Sandra, at the table, making a puzzle. The immigrant children were divided among the three playing groups: two girls sitting near Sandra, two boys playing the building set and a boy making some figures from a sheet of paper. The second teacher, Iren, met me and explained that the children were engaged in a free playing activity, and everyone chose what he or she liked to do. At the same time Sandra suggested that she would like to make a puzzle, so some children joined her. Before I came, Iren had sat at the table near Sandra, but she had kept watching other playing children. I took the place at the very back of the class and started my observations, writing down briefly what I saw. Iren returned to her seat. When the puzzle was finished, the teachers congratulated the children, who had been making it, and suggested that they all should have a usual gathering meeting. Those children who had not finished their games were asked to leave them as they were. Iren said that they could return to their play after lunch. As far as the meeting is concerned, they explained to me before hand, that it is a usual activity for them on Mondays, when they all gather and tell each other what they have been doing during the weekend. It takes as a rule about 20-25 minutes. The children and the teachers sat on the sofa and chairs, so that they formed a circle and could see each other's faces. Iren started retelling that during the weekend she watched TV, did some cooking and visited her friend. Then it was the turn of the boy, who sat to the left of her. Then again of the boy who sat to the left, and so on. Some of the children, 2 immigrant boys including, produced long and detailed stories about their weekends. Other children made their stories short, mostly answering the guiding questions of the teacher. Among them there was one immigrant boy. The third group, as I differentiated it, made a very poor performance. These children hardly spoke at all. To the teachers' questions they answered "yes" or "no" with much difficulty, thinking hard before the answers. They talked in very low voices. In this group there were 2 immigrant girls. One Swedish girl refused to talk at all. After the meeting had been over, the time came for the children to go to the canteen and have lunch. For me it was the time to stay with Iren and to ask her the questions I had prepared.