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Worth a like?

A case study of Swedish-speaking customers' perceptions of the Southwestern Finland Police Department's bilingual social media communications

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Master's thesis in international business operations

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Abstract for Master's thesis

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Abstract: Social media are increasingly used by governmental organisations, including the police, as an additional means of external communication, policing and customer service. The Finnish police authorities' communication has specific objectives, such as effectiveness and trustworthiness, and through communication the police intend to foster positive perceptions among citizens. However, organisations' self-representations do not always coincide with customers' perceptions, as perceptions are highly subjective. Furthermore, in a bilingual context, the issue of language in communication introduces an additional consideration in the execution of communication. Language is closely linked to identity and can significantly influence how messages are interpreted. Therefore, the choice of language in communication can influence customer perceptions. To explore the interplay between communication language and customer perceptions in a bilingual context, this study developed a novel theoretical framework. The framework assesses customers' perceptions of social media communication based on their willingness to communicate in a second language. This willingness is influenced by various factors, including linguistic and political considerations, which were also taken into account when analysing perceptions. A qualitative case study was undertaken to explore how Swedish-speaking customers perceive the social media communications of the Southwestern Finland Police Department, one of the bilingual police departments in Finland. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five bilingual individuals to assess their perceptions, and thematic analysis was employed to gain insights into the broader implications of communication language in (police) social media communications. The diverse backgrounds of the respondents contributed to a richer understanding of the issue. The results of the study indicate that the perceptions of the Swedish-speaking customers of the Southwestern Finland Police Department's social media communications were generally positive and well-aligned with the Police Department's communication objectives. Furthermore, the findings suggest that language choice plays an important role in making the police's social media communications, and the police authority itself, appear more impartial and inclusive towards the Swedish-speaking minority. However, even in the absence of Swedish content in social media communication, negative perceptions among bilingual customers may be mitigated by their knowledge of and willingness to communicate in their second language. In addition, beyond the aspect of language choice, police social media communications were perceived as an effective medium to portray the police and their work in ways that may not be possible during patrols or customer service interactions.
Keywords: police social media communications, social media, customer perceptions, bilingualism, official communications, Finland
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1. Introduction

Communication is a broad concept, but it can be defined simply as the process of understanding and sharing. The process involves interaction between two or more participants, and what is shared is meaning (Pearson and Nelson cited in Business Communication for Success, 2010). Communication may take place physically or online, and in an organisational context, it can be divided into internal and external communications. Business-consumer communications fall into the latter category. In recent years, social media has established itself among the more traditional external communication channels because it allows for more openness and transparency (Bullock, 2018). Undeniably, a significant portion of business-consumer communications take place through social media. Nowadays, many of the public administration organisations take advantage of social media in official communications, too (Koponen, 2012). Finnish governmental organisations, such as the Police of Finland, are no exception in this regard.

Communication is one of the duties of the Police of Finland (Poliisin Viestintämääräys, 2019). Therefore, every communication matters, whether it happens online or face to face, because it plays a vital role in establishing trust, managing reputation, and making law enforcement efforts more effective (ibid.). Communication contributes to a sense of security and the level of trust people have in the authorities. Furthermore, it aims at crime, disturbance, and accident prevention (ibid.). Because the police represent the government, it is important that citizens understand the information provided by the police (Tolvanen, 2017).

The Finnish police have traditionally had a presence there where the people are, and today those places include the social media (Poliisin toiminta sosiaalisessa mediassa, 2017). Although physical encounters, communication also, continue to be very important, the average citizen comes into physical contact with the police only occasionally, most often during traffic surveillance or through permit services (Puustinen, 2017). Thus, online interactions, especially social media, are valuable additional ways of conducting police duties as well as customer service.

From an organisational point of view, communications are not only an important strategic tool for keeping in contact with one's customers but also for building and/or maintaining a certain image of the organisation (Puustinen, 2017; Poliisin Viestintämääräys, 2019). In other words, communications can be utilised to create certain perceptions in the minds of the receivers. The term 'perception' is best defined as a person's subjective understanding about something (Puustinen, 2017). More specifically, that understanding encompasses thoughts and feelings (Cambridge Dictionary, 2023). In this study, 'something' refers to police social media communications. Since understanding is

subjective, it should be kept in mind that the perceptions organisations intend to transmit through the communications do not necessarily align with the perceptions the receivers then form.

Many factors affect perceptions, but in the context of communications one important aspect is language. This issue becomes even more relevant, but also more complicated, issue when more than one language is present in a communication context. Finland is a bilingual nation with two official languages: Finnish and Swedish (Oikeusministeriö, 2004). The Swedish language spoken in Finland is its own variant (Finland-Swedish) and differs from the standard Swedish spoken in Sweden (Tolvanen, 2017). However, in this study the variant is simply referred to as 'Swedish'. The linguistic rights of, and obligations towards those that have the minority national language as their native one, are stated in and governed by the Language Act (2003). Two fundamental linguistic principles are at work: the territorial principle (linguistic status of different areas, and the possibility to use Finnish and Swedish) and the individual principle (freedom to choose and register one's first language, and the right to use that language regardless of the municipality's language) (Broermann, 2007).

'Bilingualism' and a 'bilingual person' can be defined in more than one way (the definitions are explored in chapter 2, section 2.1), but in this study bilingualism refers to the use of both Finnish and Swedish. A bilingual person is defined here as someone who has Swedish as their registered native language (Heittola, 2017) but has grown up with the two languages and is thus a proactive bilingual (able to understand and produce communications in both languages) (Bhatia and Ritchie, 2013).

Bilingualism is often discussed in conjunction with linguistic and cultural identity. Linguistic identity refers to the language(s) that a bilingual person perceives as their mother tongue or the language(s) 'nearest and dearest' to them. In the context of this study, the linguistic identities can be divided into three categories: 1) Swedish, 2) Finnish, 3) bilingual (Østern, 2007). Linguistic identity does not always correspond to the language in which the person is most proficient in. Thus, having one's linguistic identity pertain to a single language does not mean that the person cannot still be defined as bilingual. Linguistic identity is not necessarily constant; it can change over the course of one's lifetime or even depending on the situation (Østern, 2007). Cultural identity refers to the central and essential parts of a society that define a person's collective ethnic identity (ibid.). Since linguistic and cultural identities are both subjective, they do not always coincide, meaning that a person may internalise a language, but not necessarily the culture associated with that language. For example, a person may identify as a Swedish-speaking in Finn in the sense of having two mother tongues, but not identify with the minority culture of the Swedish-speaking Finns (to the extent that it differs from the majority culture).

As language and identity are intertwined, language plays a role in social exclusion (or alternatively inclusion) (Piller and Takashi, 2011). Social exclusion refers to the exclusion of certain groups within a society due to a particular characteristic, such as language (Zheng et. al., 2021). Social inclusion then relates to the process of enabling inclusion for different groups of citizens in decisions taken by governing bodies (Musgrave and Bradshaw, 2014). Social inclusion also relates to subjective feelings of belonging and social cohesion (a sense of involvement or an attachment to a group or community) (ibid.). If governmental organisations, such as the police, communicate predominantly in only one language in a bilingual (or multilingual) environment, they may provoke feelings of social exclusion, and thereby affect customers' perceptions of the communications.

1.2 Objective and research questions

The objective of this master's thesis is to study the kinds of perceptions Swedish-speaking Finns have on official communications on social media, and more specifically on police social media communications. The research seeks to explore the relationships between identity, language choice, communications, and perceptions in the context of official communications in a bilingual nation. Ultimately the study aims at illustrating how these aspects play into the customers' perceptions of police social media communications. The study will predominantly focus on the social media communications of Southwestern Finland Police Department, which is one of the bilingual police departments in Finland. Because police departments provide services to the citizens within their regions, and police social media communications serve as an integral extension to more traditional customer service, the people living within the Southwestern Finland Police Department's region are referred to as 'customers' in the context of this study.

In order to fulfil the objective, the research attempts to answer the following questions:

- What role does language play in customer perceptions of organisations' social media communications?
- How does the choice of language influence the perceptions of police social media communications among the Swedish-speaking customers?
- How do Swedish-speaking customers perceive the communications by Southwestern Finland Police Department on Twitter and Instagram?
- To what extent can the Southwestern Finland Police Department benefit from more extensive bilingual social media communications?

1.3 Communications in the Police of Finland

For the police to carry out their duties safely and professionally, it is vital that citizens perceive the police as legitimate and trustworthy. Communicative efforts, in the field, in customer service situations and online, are key to reinforcing these perceptions in the minds of citizens. Police communication is based on the needs of the recipients and the strategic goals of the police (Poliisin Viestintämääräys, 2019). The National Police Board determines the vision, goals and rules for the police communications. The communications should be based on effectiveness, i.e., they should have the ability to influence people's knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour, and provide opportunities for interaction. In addition, citizens should always be able to trust the communications (Poliisin Viestintämääräys, 2019). These criteria form the basis of police communications, and every communication should fulfil the objectives, regardless of the communication channel or type of communication.

The National Police Board also lists specific attributes that further define the principles of police communications. According to the governing document (Poliisin Viestintämääräys, 2019, p. 2), police communications should always be:

- open
- timely
- truthful
- understandable
- proactive
- systematic
- impartial
- interactive and reactive (taking into consideration the specific situation)

Each police department is allowed to organise its communication activities relatively freely, as long as they comply with the overall vision, goals and rules (Poliisin Viestintämääräys, 2019). Every police department maintains a presence on social media, but there are some differences when it comes to the channels they use. Most departments are present on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. Some are even active on TikTok, and the Police of Finland has an account on LinkedIn (Poliisi.fi, 2022a). As social media differs in its character from more traditional communication channels, additional consideration should be given to open and trustworthy communication that allows for interaction (Poliisin toiminta sosiaalisessa mediassa, 2017).

1.4 Communications in the Southwestern Finland Police Department

As there are no centralised communication processes, it would not be feasible to study perceptions of social media communications for every police department. Furthermore, only half of the police departments are bilingual (which presupposes that their region includes at least one Swedish-speaking or bilingual municipality), and in fact only three out of 11 police departments have Swedish-speaking regional units (Polisstyrelsen, 2013). Figure 1 illustrates the linguistic division of police departments in Finland.
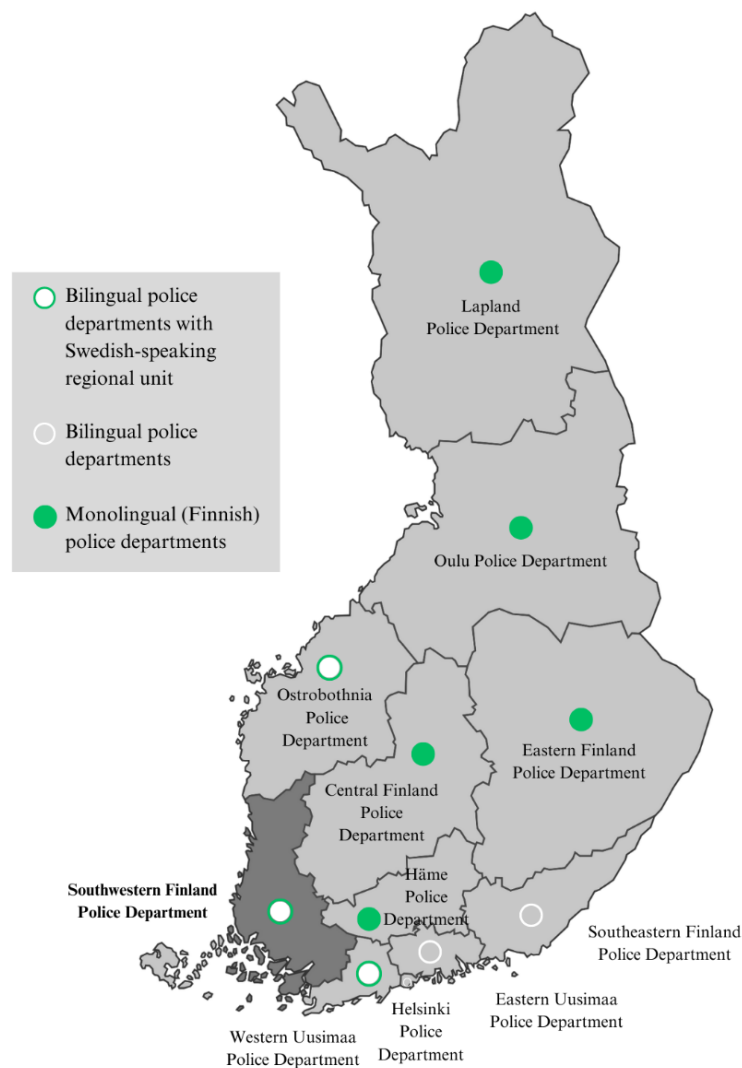
FIGURE 1. Linguistic classifications of police departments in Finland.

The Southwestern Finland Police Department (hereafter *Southwestern Finland PD* or simply *PD*) is one of the departments with Swedish regional units. The Southwestern Finland Police Department operates in the regions of Southwest Finland and Satakunta. The region consists of 43 cities and

municipalities (Poliisi.fi, 2022c), of which three are officially bilingual: Turku, Kemiönsaari and Parainen (Kuntaliitto, 2017). Approximately 4% of the inhabitants within the region of the Southwestern Finland PD speak Swedish as their first language (Stat.fi, 2023a). The Southwestern Finland PD presents an interesting empirical context as it operates in two distinct regions with predominantly Finnish-speaking population, but the PD is nonetheless bilingual.

The Southwester Finland PD is active on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook (Poliisi.fi, 2022a). In terms of posting frequency, Twitter is the most active and Facebook the least active channel. Instagram falls somewhere between the other two channels, although stories are more actively used than the feed (Saarenoja and Tammio, personal communication, 5.12.2022). In addition, there is a separate Instagram profile dedicated to K9 activity (police dogs) (Instagram, 2022d). In terms of size, all three main channels are relatively equal: the number of followers on Twitter is approximately 21 000 (Twitter.com, 2022), on Instagram approximately 26 100 thousand (Instagram, 2022c), and on Facebook the police department has approximately 24 000 likes (Facebook.com, 2022). However, this study only focuses on the Twitter and Instagram accounts. The communicative purposes and goals of the channels as well as why they were chosen are explained in chapter 4 (section 4.2).

The ultimate responsibility for the implementation of social media communications is borne by the PD's communications unit. However, ideas and content can come from anyone within the PD (Saarenoja and Tammio, personal communication, 5.12.2022). Only the communications unit posts content on Instagram, but on Twitter, content can also be published by the situation centre and the licensing services (ibid). As a result, the PD's social media communications are not particularly homogeneous, and the content published reflects the strengths of each content creator (ibid.). For example, some content creators are better at producing content in both Finnish and Swedish than others.

The PD's social media communications aim to create certain kinds of perceptions for its customers. A communication plan is followed in all communications, and this plan specifies certain regional goals in addition to the national ones (Saarenoja and Tammio, 2022). The perceptions the PD actively seeks to create on social media are

- geographical impartiality (the Southwest Finland Police serves the entire region)
- trustworthiness
- approachable appearance.

Depending on the topic, the communications also aim to evoke various emotions (ibid.). How things are communicated on social media and how they may contribute to perceptions is, of course, also

related to other communication efforts. However, social media is a mass phenomenon with a wide-scale demographic appeal (Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2016) and therefore has a broader reach compared to other communication channels. Furthermore, social media offers a more innovative and flexible channel through which customer perceptions can be shaped than, for example, press releases.

1.5 Governmental organisations and bilingual communication in Finland

Finnish governmental organisations are obliged to enforce language rights in accordance with the Language Act. If an authority is bilingual, it must provide services in both Finnish and Swedish. In addition, the authority shall demonstrate to the public that it in fact uses both languages (Oikeusministeriö, 2004). Section 32 of the Language Act regulates the provision of information by the authorities. The section stipulates that if something is communicated in a bilingual municipality, the information must be given in both languages (ibid.). If the authority is bilingual, it shall provide its announcements, such as press releases, in both languages. The authority shall respect the need-to-know principle of both Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking citizens, even if not every publication is translated into both languages. Although the Language Act regulates many forms of communication in terms of language, it does not at present explicitly regulate the language requirements for official communications on social media.

1.6 Bilingual practises in the police communications in Finland

Despite the standardised criteria for police communications in general, the guidelines do not explicitly regulate how the two official languages should be used by the police departments on social media (Poliisin toiminta sosiaalisessa mediassa, 2017). In practice, most bilingual police departments publish content on social media in more than one language. For example, the National Police Board (responsible for the communication on the national level, i.e., the social media channels of the Police of Finland) typically publishes its social media posts in Finnish, Swedish and English (Instagram, 2022a), even though English is not an official language in Finland. Helsinki Police Department also has some posts in all three languages, but most of the content is only in Finnish (Instagram, 2022b). Ostrobothnia Police Department publishes all content in Finnish and Swedish on Instagram (Instagram, 2023), but on Twitter some content is only published in Finnish (Twitter, 2023). The Western Uusimaa Police Department publishes almost all press releases in both Finnish and Swedish (Poliisi.fi, 2022b).

Currently, the Southwestern Finland PD does not consistently publish social media communications in both official languages. For reference, in 2022, 38 of the 71 Instagram posts included captions in both Finnish and Swedish (Instagram, 2022c). According to personal communication by Saarenoja and Tammio (5.12.2022), several factors influence when and why social media posts are published bilingually. When communications contain critical information that may affect people's judicial relief, they are published in both languages (Saarenoja and Tammio, 2022). The language requirements for this type of information are in fact regulated by the Language Act (Jääskeläinen and Sarja, 2018) as well as by the Police's internal handbook, Poliisin ulkoisen ja sisäisen viestinnän käsikirja (n/a). However, most police communications, in particular on social media, do not contain information that could threaten judicial relief (Saarenoja and Tammio, 2022). Other elements that either encourage or discourage the use of Swedish in social media include

- the length of the content (usually relatively short on social media)
- preparation time
- a predictable topic
- the level of comprehension (the whole of Southwestern Finland or a specific Swedish-speaking area, significant criminal cases, or widespread phenomena).

It should be noted that when Swedish is included in social media communications, it is done by translating the Finnish content (although not necessarily word-for-word) rather than culturally adapting the content (Villegas and Marin, 2022). In other words, the posts are not necessarily adapted to possible cultural differences between Swedish-speaking and Finnish-speaking Finns.

Since neither the Language Act nor the Police's own documents contain any explicit provisions regarding the choice of language on social media, it is not very surprising that there are notable differences in linguistic practices within and between the police departments' social media channels.

1.6.1 Guidelines on bilingual social media communications

However, the police departments are not entirely without guidance in interpreting the Language Act and internal policy documents. The Parliamentary Ombudsman and the Ministry of Justice have issued assessments on how the official languages should be used by the police in social media communications. In 2018, a complaint was filed regarding the lack of Swedish communication on the Helsinki Police Department's Twitter (Jääskeläinen and Sarja, 2018). In the assessment, the Ombudsman stated that police communication plays an important role in providing bilingual services,

especially when considering judicial relief. Furthermore, it is important to strive for the provision of information in both languages (ibid.). Similarly, in a decision on a complaint filed in 2013 regarding the Police of Finland's Facebook page, the Ombudsman stated that it is not in accordance with the Language Act to inform citizens on social media using just one national language (Jääskeläinen and Sarja, 2014). The decision also stated that the Language Act does not require information to be provided to the same extent or with exactly the same content in both languages, and therefore the Finnish authorities can exercise discretion when applying the law (ibid.). In 2015, the Ministry of Justice issued a recommendation on the application of the Language Act in web services (Oikeusministeriö, 2015). This recommendation stated that essential information must be provided in both national languages at the same time, and that the Language Act also applies to social media. Thus, the need-to-know principle must also be upheld there (ibid.).

1.7 The Swedish-speaking minority of Finland

Finland provides an interesting research context not only because of its bilingual status, but also because of the position of the Swedish-speaking minority. As a result of the small proportion of Swedish-speaking Finns (just over 5 per cent of the total population), Finnish-speaking Finns dominate in all socio-economic categories (Broermann, 2007). However, compared to many other minorities in the world, the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland can be considered a privileged one (ibid.). This minority is not deprived in terms of social, economic or geographical conditions.

The internationally privileged status of the Swedish-speaking minority stems from historical circumstances. Finland formed a part of Sweden for several hundred years, and Swedes made up the ruling elite during that time (Heikkilä, 2011). Swedish was never the majority language, but it was the language of administration (Broermann, 2007). Many Swedish-speaking Finns are descendants of nobles or bourgeois who were, for example, merchants, soldiers or officials (ibid.). Even today, about 50% of the Finnish nobility belong to the Swedish-speaking minority (Dutton et al., 2016). Despite the historical division of social classes, the language groups were united when Finland became independent. Today, both groups have strong national ties and the contact situation is peaceful (ibid.).

The privileged nature of the minority manifests itself in various ways. In addition to the Language Act, the rights of the minority are generally well supported by the Constitution (Volanen et al., 2006), and considerations related to the Swedish language are taken into account throughout the legislation (Broermann, 2007). Thus, minority rights are well safeguarded by law (Heikkilä, 2011). A somewhat

unique feature related to Finland's bilingual status is that learning the other national language in school is compulsory: those whose native language is Finnish must learn Swedish (and vice versa) (Opetusministeriö, 1999), which promotes contact between the official languages.

The Swedish-speaking minority is relatively visible and shares strong cultural and social traditions (Heikkilä, 2011; Broermann, 2007). There are several Swedish institutions in Finland, such as theatres, foundations and informal associations (Broermann, 2007; Heikkilä, 2011). The Swedish-speaking minority has its own school system (Heikkilä, 2011) and the Swedish language media has a strong presence in Finland, ranging from newspapers to TV channels and the possibility of consuming media from Sweden as well (Broermann, 2007). Lastly, the Swedish-speaking minority does not differ significantly from the Finnish-speaking majority in terms of physical characteristics, which in some cases may make individuals susceptible to (erroneous) identity assignments (Zolfagharian et. al., 2017).

Although the Swedish-speaking minority is quite small and is often discussed as one group, it should be noted that Swedish-speaking Finns are not a homogeneous group. This is partly because they live in different linguistic settings, which means that some members of the minority have more opportunities to interact with the majority than others (Nyqvist et al., 2021). This is because the proportion of Swedish-speakers in different regions of Finland varies: for example, in Southwest Finland the Swedish-speakers represent 5.7% of the total population (Stat.fi, 2023b), while in Ostrobothnia the corresponding figure is 60% and in the Åland Islands 85.8% (Stat.fi, 2023c; Stat.fi, 2023d). The first region is thus much more influenced by the Finnish language than the others (Østern, 2007). Another aspect that contributes to the heterogeneity of the Swedish-speaking Finns is culture. The Finland-Swedish culture is a minority culture that has been influenced by Sweden and is therefore somewhat different from the Finnish culture (ibid.). However, not all Swedish-speaking Finns necessarily identify with the Swedish-speaking minority and its culture; some identify more with the Finnish-speaking majority even though they are Swedish-speaking. Moreover, there are some regional differences within the minority culture (Heikkilä, 2011). Therefore, this study mainly focuses on the language of police social media communications and how linguistic identities may influence customers' perceptions, rather than on cultural identities and their influences.

1.8 Summary of the research problem

The previous sections of this chapter have presented somewhat arbitrary viewpoints regarding the need for and importance of bilingual police communication on social media. The main arguments are

a) the language requirements for official social media communications are vague and leave room for interpretation
b) the police rarely use social media as the sole channel for communications concerning people's judicial relief
c) most Swedish-speaking Finns have sufficient proficiency in Finnish to at least understand what is being communicated to them.

However, a closer look indicates that bilingual social media communications by the police are important and that it is worth exploring how Swedish-speaking customers perceive social media communications in their current state.

Firstly, from a legal perspective, the Ministry of Justice has indeed taken a stance on how the official languages should be used on social media by the Finnish police organisation. Furthermore, the assessment clearly states that the Language Act also applies to communications on social media, even if discretion is allowed in the practical implementation of bilingual social media communications. However, the examination of the communication from a legal perspective is a research topic in its own right, which is why it is not covered further in this study. Nevertheless, this perspective encourages more extensive bilingual social media communications by the police.

Secondly, it is not realistic to expect every police officer and civil servant in a predominantly Finnish-speaking region to be fluent in both languages. In fact, police patrolling is the most challenging service area in terms of providing services in Swedish (Polisstyrlesen, 2013). However, social media presents a more controlled and often at least somewhat less time-sensitive communication context that has a much wider reach and is more accessible than face-to-face communications. Therefore, the preconditions for bilingual communication in are better. Since social media is an important medium for customer service, which ought to be provided by a bilingual authority in both Finnish and Swedish, there is a strong case for even greater inclusion of Swedish. After all, Swedish-speakers form a relatively large share of the customers of the Southwestern Finland PD.

As previously established, one of the objectives of police communication is to fulfil certain criteria and to convey certain images (or affective appeals) of the police organisation to the public. However, the choice of communication language can play an equally influential role in shaping perceptions as the actual messages communicated. The mere ability to understand communication in Finnish may be of little relevance to Swedish-speaking customers, and the lack of content in their first language may influence their perceptions of the police's social media communication.

The criteria for police communication are all important and contribute to the trust and legitimacy of the police. However, from the perspective of language choice and its potential interplay with perceptions, it could be argued that the most relevant criteria to be met are effectiveness, trustworthiness, understandability, and impartiality. All of these can be either undermined or reinforced by the choice of language. One important criterion missing from the list is inclusiveness. Since language choices can have an impact on experienced inclusion or exclusion, this is a characteristic that should be taken into account.

The question of whether Swedish should be used more frequently on social media is not black and white, as there are many practical aspects beyond customer perceptions that the police need to consider. Despite the benefits, the use of social media in the police can create value conflicts (two or more values that are incompatible or work against each other (de Graaf and Meijer, 2018)), especially considering bilingual versus monolingual communications. Limited resources (e.g., time and language skills) must be weighed against the rights and benefits of all customers. The police certainly aim to utilise social media communications to create and shape favourable perceptions of themselves in the minds of customers. Whether or not the police succeed in this is ultimately determined by the customers and their perceptions of the police's social media communications.

1.9 Key concepts and definitions

Bilingualism – the use of two languages (in this study Finnish and Swedish) at a societal or an individual level (Bhatia and Ritchie, 2013).

Bilingual person – (in this study) A person who has grown up speaking Finnish and Swedish and/or is able to understand and produce communication in both languages (proactive bilingual) (Dewaele, 2015; Bhatia and Ritchie, 2013).

Communication behaviour – the ways in which a bilingual person uses their languages in their everyday life (MacIntyre et. al., 1998).

Cultural identity – the culture (majority or minority) with which a bilingual person identifies the most strongly.

Customer perception – a subjective understanding, feelings, or thoughts a customer has about an organisation, or in this study, an organisation's social media communications (Puustinen, 2017).

Linguistic identity – the language a person identifies with the most and perceives as their strongest or most comfortable language (Østern, 2007).

Perceived second language proficiency – the level of proficiency a person perceives themselves to have in their non-native language (in this study most often Finnish) (MacIntyre et. al., 1998).

Social exclusion – the inability of an individual or a particular group to participate in society in economic, social, political and/or cultural terms due to a particular characteristic, such as language (Nyqvist et al., 2021; Zheng et al., 2021).

Social inclusion – the process of improving the conditions of participation in a society, either through decision-making or through individual actions (Musgrave and Bradshaw, 2014).

Social media communications – communication that takes the form of content communicated through social media platforms (mobile and web-based technologies that enable the sharing of user-generated content). In this study, the communications are firm-created i.e., the users generating social media are governmental organisations (Obar and Wildman, 2015; Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2016).

Willingness to communicate in a second language – the readiness to enter a discourse in one's second language at a particular time with a particular person or persons (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

1.10 Contributions and limitations

This study contributes to previous research on police communication in Finland (e.g., Heittola, 2017; Puustinen, 2017; Koponen, 2012) by combining the facets of bilingual communications and police social media communications and exploring them from the customers' perspective. The underlying practical implication of this study is to explore whether bilingual communications contribute to more positive perceptions of police social media communications among customers whose first language is Swedish, and hence whether it is beneficial to aim at more extensive bilingual social media communications, albeit not necessarily mandated by law. Although this study is primarily conducted in the context of the Finnish police authority, the results may also have implications for other governmental organisations in Finland in terms of language issues and social media communication. Additionally, the findings may even provide valuable insights for the social media communications of private businesses operating in bilingual environments with customer bases that do not share the same native language.

This study also contributes to the existing research on communication and language choice in bilingual settings. The topic has predominantly been studied in the American context where English and Spanish have been the languages of communication (e.g., Alvarez, 2020; Carrol and Luna, 2013; Baumann et. al., 2005). However, the current study explores the topic in a somewhat unique bilingual context where the minority can be characterised as privileged with strong linguistic rights and institutions.

Finally, the study presents a novel theoretical framework for assessing customer perceptions of social media communications in a bilingual setting by interpreting perceptions through willingness to communicate in a second language. The theoretical framework, derived from the works of MacIntyre et al. (1998) and Holmqvist et al. (2014), provides a new way to explore how perceptions can be shaped and influenced by the factors that also influence individuals' willingness to communicate in a second language (see Chapter 3).

There are, of course, limitations to this study. First, the study is conducted in the empirical context of one bilingual police department with Finnish and Swedish as the languages constituting 'bilingual communications'. As there are both regional differences within the Swedish-speaking minority (e.g. language practices and exposure) and different communication practices between police departments, the findings of this study cannot be directly generalised to the other bilingual police departments - let alone to police communications in bilingual contexts outside Finland. Second, the study focuses only on communication via social media, specifically Instagram and Twitter. For example, police press releases, which are also part of the sphere of online communication, are of a different nature and serve a different purpose compared to social media. Therefore, bilingual press releases (or the lack of them) may lead to different findings in terms of perceptions than (bilingual) social media posts. Finally, this research examines the perceptions of Swedish-speaking customers within a specific region. Having this group as the unit of analysis is most likely to produce differing findings compared to Finnish-speaking customers, not to mention customers with no or little knowledge of Finnish or Swedish living in the region.

Due to the limitations, this study presents several avenues for future research and possibilities for broadening the scope of the research. The implications for future research are discussed in Chapter 7.

2. Literature review

This chapter presents previous research that has been conducted in relation to the themes of this study. The chapter begins with an overview of the literature and research on bilingualism, identity and social exclusion. Next, the literature on the effects of language on communication is discussed. The chapter then presents some literature on the role of communication in perception creation. Finally, studies on police communication in Finland and other countries are discussed. Based on the existing research and theory, the research gap that this thesis aims to fill is identified and presented at the end of the chapter.

2.1 Bilingualism, identity, and social exclusion

In order to better understand the context of this study, it is important to define what constitutes 'bilingualism' and 'bilingual'. Bilingualism is not an easy concept to define, as it encompasses societal and individual perspectives (Bhatia and Ritchie, 2013), as well as different levels of fluency (Dewaele, 2015). Societal bilingualism, which refers to a collective bilingualism beyond the individual, varies across contexts. For example, a country may be officially bilingual, but most of its citizens are nonetheless monolingual (Bhatia and Ritchie, 2013). This is the case in Finland: the country officially recognises Finnish and Swedish as its official languages and secures the linguistic rights of the Swedish-speaking population through the Language Act (societal bilingualism). However, only about five per cent of the population is Swedish-speaking, most of whom also know Finnish (individual bilingualism). Furthermore, in mainland Finland, Swedish-speakers are concentrated in the western and southern coastal areas (Suvisaari et al., 2014). Similarly, the Southwestern Finland PD is classified as a bilingual police department (societal bilingualism), although most of the individuals in its region are not bilingual.

The definition of a bilingual person has evolved over time: previously, a bilingual person was expected to have a native-like control of two languages, which in practice meant that the person should have grown up with both languages (Dewaele, 2015). However, it is now recognised that people can become bilingual later in life, and even those bilinguals who have spoken two languages all their lives are not always equally fluent in both. This is because different languages are used for different purposes and in different domains of life (ibid.). For bilingual individuals, some concepts and knowledge are more accessible in one language than the other (Carroll and Luna, 2013). This is because bilinguals learn early on to deal with certain content areas (i.e., subject matters) in a particular

language. For example, the content areas of family and friends are typically discussed in the native or first language, while work and government are typically discussed in the second language (especially if the second language is the majority language in a given country) (Carroll and Luna, 2013). There are also more precise definitions that help to conceptualise bilingualism in a specific context. For example, a person can be classified as a receptive or productive bilingual. A receptive bilingual is able to understand a language in written and spoken form, but not to produce it, whereas a productive bilingual is able to do both (Bhatia and Ritchie, 2013). It should be noted that a person who would fit the definition of a bilingual may not perceive or identify themselves as such (Dewaele, 2015). Thus, from the individual perspective, it is quite difficult to define what objectively defines a bilingual person. Regardless of the level of fluency or the classification used, a person's first language is usually the most emotional. This becomes an important notion later when the implications for language choice in communications are discussed (see section 2.2).

Language shapes the way in which personal identity is constructed (Evans, 2018), and the use of a particular language symbolises one's social and ethnic identity (Alvarez, 2020). Language both constructs and constrains identity (Evans, 2018) and is accompanied by attitudes and judgements towards the language itself and its users (Alvarez, 2020). Bilingualism does not lead to the construction of two separate identities, but language choice may signal different aspects of a bilingual person's personality (Bhatia and Ritchie, 2013) or a change in behaviour depending on the situation (Chen et al., 2008). Furthermore, a person may affirm their social and ethnic identity more in one language than the other (Bhatia and Ritchie, 2013). In particular, those who have grown up as bilinguals may identify with two ethnocultural communities, although usually one community has psychological and emotional primacy in their identity construction (ibid.). These individuals can be characterised as bicultural, meaning they perceive themselves as having a dual cultural identity and endorse both cultures. Bicultural individuals are less prone to linguistic confusion and identity conflicts (Chen et al., 2008).

In most bilingual settings, one language is considered the majority language, which often wields greater economic, cultural and political power (Alvarez, 2020). Because language signals belonging and group membership(s), it can be used to include or exclude certain groups in a society (often groups that are considered to belong to a minority). Social exclusion is embedded in the economic, political, cultural and/or social structures of society, and the exclusion of one group always occurs in relation to another (Nyqvist et al., 2021). Social exclusion can be based on individual characteristics or intergroup processes, such as ethnicity or gender (Zheng et al., 2021). Social exclusion is not necessarily a constant or objective occurrence but is experienced (or not) differently by individuals

depending on time and situation (ibid.). Bilingualism typically links an individual to more than one ethnocultural community (Bhatia and Ritchie, 2013). Therefore, if a bilingual person's first language is the society's minority language, they may be at higher risk of experiencing social exclusion. By contrast, if the person has a strong connection to the majority language's ethnocultural community, or if the minority language's status is grounded in a strong legal and social foundation, it may mediate the risk.

Social exclusion can be mitigated by social inclusion. Social inclusion can be

- a top-down process, where government decisions enable the inclusion of all groups of citizens
- a bottom-up process, where individuals' desire to be included guides them to take action to feel included in a social sphere (Musgrave and Bradshaw, 2014).

Social inclusion encompasses belonging (becoming an insider within an entity with shared attributes or beliefs) and connectedness (participating in social organisations or networks) (ibid.). The need to belong is one of the core human personality traits (DeWall et al., 2011). In linguistically diverse societies, three factors mediate social inclusion. Language ideologies (the relationship between a language and a society, related to social, moral and political considerations (Català-Oltra and Penalva-Verdú, 2019)) determine how a given language is or is not integrated and used in a society (Piller and Takahashi, 2011). Linguistic identities (the language(s) a person experiences as their native language) and linguistic proficiencies (the level of knowledge of a language) contribute to social inclusion at the individual level (Musgrave and Bradshaw, 2014).

The core function of the police is to provide "safety for everyone" (Poliisihallitus, 2019), and the Southwestern Finland PD specifically aims at promoting the perception that the PD serves the entire region (Saarenoja and Tammio, 2022). However, considering that only some of the PD's social media communications are published in both Finnish and Swedish, it is possible that Swedish-speaking clients experience exclusion from, lack of belonging and/or a lack of connection to the group of 'everyone' or the 'entire region', even if they would be able to fully understand the Finnish content. On the other hand, if the posts are published in both Finnish and Swedish, the Swedish-speaking audience may experience social inclusion instead. In this case, inclusion/exclusion must be seen more as a top-down process, as it is the Police Department that ultimately decides in which language(s) social media communications are conducted. In order to interpret the perceptions of the Swedish-speaking customers and derive meaningful results from this study, it is crucial to first understand the language use and identification of the research participants.

2.2 How language choice influences communications

Language influences the perceived meaning of what is said and therefore the question of how it influences the perception and interpretation of (marketing) communications has become relevant in research (Carroll et al., 2007). Each language is processed in its own way, and a message may be processed and interpreted differently by the same person depending on the language in which it is received (ibid.). In addition, words in different languages carry different connotations (Carroll and Luna 2013), which in turn affect the perceptions that messages create. Cultural identification also plays a role in how messages are interpreted in different languages (Alvarez, 2020). It is therefore important to understand how messages in a particular language, whether communicated through an advertisement, official government documents or social media, can contribute to the creation of different perceptions. Most previous research on this topic has been conducted in the United States, with Americans (English) and Hispanics (Spanish) as the research subjects. Although this majority-minority context is not comparable to the Finnish context, the previous literature nevertheless provides plausible information and implications that may be utilised to interpret and understand the results of this study.

Carroll and Luna (2013) found that when the content area of an advertisement (e.g., family or work) matched the language of the advertisement, it was more accessible and easier to process, and consequently, bilinguals evaluated the advertisement more positively. Alvarez (2020) investigated the effects of advertising language on brand evaluations in terms of source credibility (trust, expertise and attractiveness). Language associations and attitudes may influence the accessibility of the advertisement and thus source credibility and brand evaluations. Alvarez (2020) hypothesised that the choice of advertisement language would affect source credibility depending on the level of identification with American culture. However, language only affected source credibility in terms of source expertise. Source trustworthiness and attractiveness were not affected by the language of the communication, regardless of the level of identification with American culture. Code-switching (i.e., mixing two languages in a single advertisement) and language 'impurity' negatively affected brand attitudes (Alvarez, 2020).

These findings would suggest that since the subject matter of government is typically discussed in the majority language (i.e., Finnish), Swedish-speaking customers' perceptions may not be significantly negatively affected, despite the fact that Finnish content dominates the social media communications.

Bauman et al. (2005) observed the effect of language on tax compliance and effective consumer communication among bilingual American taxpayers. Bilingual taxpayers are required to comply with tax obligations, although they may have difficulty understanding the obligations and processes due to a lack of English proficiency and/or cultural barriers. In order to communicate effectively with bilingual citizens, it is crucial to understand how they process messages differently in their first and second languages (Bauman et al., 2005).

Bauman et al. (2005) hypothesised that visual cues may play an important role for bilingual individuals because bilinguals can use two different words to communicate the same concept. However, the study found that including a picture in the second language instructions did not significantly improve comprehension. Rather, comprehension was best when the instructions were provided in the first language and in verbal form (Bauman et al., 2005).

Although in Finland official documents, instructions, and websites are virtually always offered in both official languages, not all governmental organisations (e.g., the police) consistently provide social media content in both languages. Even though the inability to understand official communication on social media rarely leads to serious consequences or legal problems, the posts can still contain important information. Furthermore, it should be an organisation's priority to communicate with its customers in an effective and understandable way regardless of the content. Therefore, the importance of language and providing verbal communication in a person's native language should not be overlooked, even on more visual social media channels such as Instagram.

Another notable element of language choice of communication is that language has the potential to promote inclusion and equality (Niemi, 2021). Niemi (2021) explored the translation practices of Finnish student unions on Instagram. International students represent approximately 10% of university students in Finland, and thus form a relatively large target group for student unions. English is not an official language in Finland, and thus is not protected by law in the same way as Swedish. However, the governing documents state that the communication materials produced by the student unions shall primarily, or if necessary, translate their materials into English (Niemi, 2021). The study found that of all the Instagram posts published by the student unions she studied, 84.6% were published in both Finnish and English. The majority of the posts (87.8%) were so-called iterative posts, i.e., the same information was communicated in both languages and the content of the different language versions matched each other. These findings leave room to argue that in an officially bilingual area such as Southwestern Finland, and in a bilingual police department where a portion of the customers have Swedish as their first language, priority should be given to publishing content in both languages.

The choice of communication language may also be made in terms of a certain self-presentations. Blackwood (2019) investigated how French Instagram users portrayed a multilingual identities and self-representations, by examining their social media posts from Orly airport in Paris. Although several of the posts analysed were partially or entirely in English, it should not necessarily be interpreted as evidence of widespread bi-/multilingualism (Blackwood, 2019). Rather, English (and other languages) can be used in a performative manner on social media to reinforce a desired identity or to present oneself in a certain way (ibid.). Blackwood's (2019) findings suggest a possible dilemma: prioritising bilingual social media communications in order to accommodate the citizens of the region may lead the Southwestern Finland PD to construct a bilingual 'identity' on social media, contributing to its classification as one of the bilingual police departments. However, this self-presentation may lead to a discrepancy between the perceptions created through social media and the overall ability to accommodate for bilingual customers in terms of language use.

It should also be noted that providing communication in a person's first language is not always a matter of necessity. Rather, the choice of language may be based on the fact that Swedish-speaking customers prefer to receive communication in Swedish, even though they understand the communication in Finnish. Successful communication between customers and service providers is an important antecedent of positive consumer outcomes. Therefore, Holmqvist et al. (2014) studied the effects of language choice and consumers' willingness to communicate in their second language in physical service settings. Holmqvist et al. (2014) chose Belgium (where Dutch is the majority language) and Finland (where Swedish is the minority language) as their research settings. In Belgium, language conflicts are common, whereas in Finland they are not very common. Holmqvist et al. (2014) found that perceived control plays the most significant role in defining consumers' willingness to communicate in a second language. Willingness may also vary between different service settings (e.g., an appointment at a bank versus a visit to a café). In Finland, perceived fluency in the second language also influenced willingness to communicate in that language, whereas political considerations did not influence willingness. The study indicates that bilingualism does not automatically translate into willingness to communicate in both languages. It is important to note that the minority languages (Swedish and French) are larger on a global scale than the majority languages (Finnish and Dutch), which may mediate the status of the languages (Holmqvist et al., 2014).

Social media communication differs from physical service encounters, as interactions are not as real-time and do not necessarily require reciprocity. However, as an interactive channel used as a component of customer service, similar issues may arise regarding the willingness to communicate or receive communication in a second language on social media. This may be especially true for

Swedish-speaking persons who do not follow the Southwestern Finland PD on social media (and may not want to either because the communications are mostly in their second language).

Català-Oltra and Penalva-Verdú (2019) illustrated how language conflicts can influence the language of communication. They studied the use of official languages (Spanish and the Valencian variant of Catalan) in electronic communications, such as social media, in the local administration of Valencia. Despite the existence of laws, the political positions of the provincial councils influence the language policy and the choice of language for electronic communications (Català-Oltra and Penalva-Verdú, 2019). The study found that the linguistic status of the social media channels (Twitter and Facebook) of Valencian city councils was mainly monolingual (in Valencian). The monolingual nature of the communication stemmed from the immediacy (and character constraints) of the platforms, as well as the view of social media as an informal channel, where the minority language is then preferred (ibid.). Given that language conflicts are uncommon in Finland, it is unlikely that Swedish-speaking customer would vouch for the use of Swedish on police social media communications at the expense of Finnish communications.

2.3 How communications influence perceptions

The focus of this study is to explore Swedish-speaking customers' perceptions of the Southwestern Finland PD's social media communications. Therefore, this section briefly discusses how social media communications in general may influence customers' perceptions of brands.

Before addressing how organisations can shape perceptions through communication, it is helpful to understand how perceptions are formed. Perception formation refers to an individual process of creating and internalising perceptions (Puustinen, 2017). The initial stage is a so-called 'pure perception', which is a perception that is not associated with positive or negative feelings (Puustinen, 2017). The next stage is a 'permanent perception'. In this stage, a person forms a first impression of something, after which their previous experiences, habits and beliefs influence how a communication message is received. By combining attitudes with pure perceptions, perceptions are transformed into something that is associated with feelings. The final stage of perception creation is 'inner truth'. Once a person has formed an enduring perception about something and begins to believe it, the perception becomes an inner truth that can be difficult to change. Perceptions influence how people behave and react to things (ibid.). The perceptions an organisation seeks to convey through communication are self-representations, and the way customers interpret the self-representations translates into perceptions of the communications and the organisation as a whole (Watson and Kitchen, 2010).

Therefore, those responsible for communications should avoid self-representations that evoke negative feelings (Puustinen, 2017) and instead focus on communicating positive brand associations while exploring which specific brand characteristics influence customers' attitudes towards the brand (Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2016). For the police, for example, it is important to create perceptions through both functional factors (how police duties are carried out) and perceptual factors, which relate to more abstract aspects (ibid.) and can be more easily created through social media communications. Social media communications can be used to shape perceptions of an organisation or of the communications themselves.

When an organisation produces and controls the social media communications, they are firm-created communications (Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2016). Schivinski and Dabrowski (2016) studied the overall effect of firm-created social media communications on consumer brand perceptions. The study found that firm-created social media communications had a positive effect on consumers' attitudes towards brands, thus positively influencing consumers' brand perceptions (ibid.). Firm-created social media communications are an important medium for reducing misunderstandings and prejudices about a brand, but also for increasing brand value in the eyes of customers (Yu and Yuan, 2018). In their study, Yu and Yuan (2018) set out to test how brand experience on social media affects attributes such as brand trust. Brand trust refers to the consumer's willingness to rely on the brand's ability to perform its stated function (ibid.). The analysis showed that a positive brand experience on social media has a positive impact on brand trust. From a communicative perspective, brand trust can be defined as the consumer's experienced level of satisfaction and trustworthiness in their communications with an organisation (Khadim et. al., 2018).

Trust is vital for state institutions and when referring to the police, the level of trust can in some ways be seen as equivalent to a brand. In societies with different national identities, trust may decrease if the police are perceived to represent one group better than another (Machura et al., 2020). Wales is a nation with multiple national identities and languages. Machura et al. (2020) examined the perceived trustworthiness of the Welsh police among Welsh-speaking students. Machura et al. (2020) defined trust in the police as reliance on the police to act competently, to use their authority fairly, and to provide equal justice and protection across society. The study was conducted within North Wales Police, a bilingual (English and Welsh) police force. Machura et al. (2020) found that those students who had a higher preference for speaking Welsh had lower levels of trust in the police, particularly if the students perceived that the police used too little Welsh in their everyday communication. The study by Machura et al. (2020) did not include social media as a source influencing trust, but discussed the importance of appearance, particularly in areas with large minority populations. Although the

current research does not focus on police trustworthiness per se, the appearance of the police is continually refined via social media.

Accommodation of minority consumers can also take place through online brand communities, which are virtual spaces for people to interact with a focus on a particular brand (Villegas and Marin, 2022). Recently, brands have started to create online brand communities with adapted strategies to accommodate ethnic groups, rather than simply translating content into different languages (ibid.). Villegas and Marin (2022) studied online brand communities targeting Hispanics and identified four levels of adaptation: language adaptation, identity elements, identity matching and Latino persona. The higher the level of adaptation, the more communal interaction (engagement) there was in the online brand communities. This in turn led to the brands being perceived as more legitimate (ibid.). Although the empirical context of the current study is not an online brand community, but firm-created social media communications, in both cases the target audience includes a distinct group that does not necessarily speak the same language as the organisation or the rest of its target audience. The Southwest Finland PD's social media posts that include Swedish exhibit the lowest level of adaptation, i.e., language adaptation (translating original content into another language without adding any complementary cultural identity elements). By adapting the content, even at the lowest level, the PD may increase its legitimacy in the eyes of Swedish-speaking customers.

Although previous experiences or encounters with an organisation can influence the perceptions individuals form about organisations, the literature suggests that communication, especially on social media, may have a significant impact on customers' perceptions. It is therefore valuable to study perceptions of social media communications as an end, rather than the influence of social media communications on overall customer perceptions.

2.4 Police authorities on social media

Not much research has been conducted on police organisations and their social media communication outside of English-speaking countries (Puustinen, 2017). However, examining the implications of police use of social media has become more prominent in recent years. An increasing number of police departments have adopted social media as a means of policing, because social media provides an opportunity to improve openness, accountability and engagement between citizens and their local police (Crump, 2011). Communication in any form is crucial for the police to build trust with citizens. The police need to be perceived as fair and equitable by the citizens before the police themselves can seek to improve their legitimacy (Chrismas, 2012). While trust and positive perceptions cannot be

achieved through social media communications alone, social media has become an important operational tool for police authorities in recent years (Bullock, 2018). Police use social media to improve transparency, gain more publicity, and create positive images, among other reasons (Koponen, 2012). Despite this, there is relatively little research on police use of social media and even less on perceptions of social media communications. Perceptions and expectations of policing vary among citizens (Chrismas, 2012), which is why the perceptions of diverse groups (in this case a language group) should be explored.

According to a study by Crump (2011), the police in the UK use social media as a tool for engagement in order to increase public confidence and trust. The benefits of social media for the police include the opportunity to gather intelligence and real-time information on safety issues and the use of social media as a tool for knowledge sharing between police organisations. Crump (2011) found that UK police tweets fell into four main categories: patrol, information, partners and other. Despite the active and largely successful use of Twitter, its use has been largely non-transformative: it has been used as a complementary channel of communication, but it has not enabled dialogue or more open communication with the public (Crump, 2011).

The police generally apply an affective strategy to their social communications, i.e., they try to create affective appeals that they cannot necessarily create when patrolling, serving warrants or making arrests (Walby and Wilkinson, 2021). More often than not, the images of a police authorities are created through either the news media or social media. The police cannot always control what is written about them in the media, but on the police's social media channels they can plan and execute the content in the most positive light for them (ibid.). Thus, police social media communications are partly an attempt to reclaim and manage the images of policing. Walby and Wilkinson (2021) studied how police in Canada use Instagram to construct mythical images of themselves in order to bolster their legitimacy. They found that the myths conveyed were of the police as equal representatives of the public, and of their work being free of bias and stereotypes (impartial) (ibid.).

Koponen (2012) studied young people's perceptions of the Finnish internet police. Since citizens are on social media, the police should also have a presence there. In addition, social media provides an opportunity to better reach the youth and a more convenient way for citizens to contact the police (Koponen, 2012). Internet police officers are police officers who have a personal profile on social media and who perform at least part of their duties online through social media (ibid.). The personal profiles are separate from the organisational social media profiles, but the officers nevertheless represent their respective police departments (Viestintäohje, 2021). Koponen (2012) found that the perception of police officers on the internet was generally positive, which was reflected in positive

feedback, the large number of messages on social media, and positive publicity. Young people had a high level of trust in the internet police officers and considered the officers to have a good reputation (ibid.). However, the findings on the perceptions were obtained by surveying and interviewing the internet police officers rather than having the customers (i.e., representatives of the youth) as respondents.

Although social media is a useful tool for policing, it can also pose issues. De Graaf and Meijer (2018) studied the value conflicts and coping mechanisms faced by the Dutch police in relation to social media. Social media is built on openness, engagement, and user-centrality. In the realm of governmental organisations, these key characteristics may result in value conflicts concerning transparency, participation, and equality. De Graaf and Meijer (2018) found that the Dutch police perceived four prominent value conflicts on social media: effectiveness versus efficiency, effectiveness versus lawfulness, efficiency versus participation, and lawfulness versus transparency. In other words, limited resources, certain criteria for police communication, and laws and regulations created conflicts with the elementary characteristics of social media. Most often, the police used bias as a coping strategy, that is, they chose to prioritise one value over the other (de Graaf and Meijer, 2018).

It is worth noting that all of the studies presented in this section were conducted from the perspective of the police. Even when the perceptions of the public are examined, the findings are not based on data collected from the citizens. The things that a police organisation intends to communicate through its social media do not automatically coincide with the recipients' perceptions of the communications (or the organisation). Therefore, it is important to examine the perceptions of customers by interviewing the customers. In addition, this approach may provide the police with valuable insights and guidance on how to improve communications and make them more appealing to customers.

2.5 Bilingual practices and communication in the Police of Finland

Language is one of the most important tools for the police, as order is mainly maintained through verbal communication, such as advice or orders (Heittola, 2017). However, very little research has been conducted on bilingual communication practices within the Finnish police.

The organisation of the police is based on the law and, for example, the language requirements and language rights that the police should fulfil are stipulated in the law. Therefore, these requirements should also be respected in practice. However, many Swedish-speaking Finns feel that customer service in Swedish is unsatisfactory and Swedish-speakers often have to use Finnish in these

encounters (Heittola, 2017). Even interactive external communication (social media) is part of the language services provided by the police, and therefore language rights should be protected (ibid.). Heittola (2017) found that the majority of Finnish-speaking officers do not realise the language rights in the external communication (customer service encounters), because they do not possess sufficient knowledge of the Swedish language. On the other hand, it is normal for the Swedish-speaking officials to use both Finnish and Swedish in their work. Furthermore, Finnish is also prioritised in the internal communication of the police departments, although the reason for this is that Finnish is the official internal language (ibid.). The findings leave room to argue that if the service in Swedish cannot be guaranteed in all external communication because not every officer is competent enough in Swedish, language rights could at least be protected through bilingual social media communications. The posts can often be prepared in advance (at least on Instagram), leaving time to create the content in Swedish as well, with the help of translation programmes if necessary.

Communication is an important tool for creating and shaping external perceptions of the Finnish police because the sender of a message has the power to influence the kind of perception the receiver is likely to form, but it is not only the police that create images of themself. The media is also an important contributor (Puustinen, 2017). Despite the fact that image and positive perceptions are crucial for the police and the legitimisation of their authority, the image of the Finnish police has not been widely researched either. Puustinen (2017) examined the image of the Finnish police and the differences in perceptions between the police authority (Eastern Finland Police Department) and the media. The results revealed that there were no significant differences in the perceptions regarding the external communication of the police. The external communication was perceived as trustworthy by both parties. However, the media perceived external communication to be less successful than the police in terms of volume, timeliness, clarity, openness and predictability (ibid). Once again, these results demonstrate that the perceptions organisations seek to create through communication do not always align with the perceptions of the recipients.

2.6 Summary

This chapter illustrates how identity and language are intertwined and how communications and their language can have an impact on how customers interpret communications and consequently form perceptions on both the communications and the organisations. Social media communications can help organisations to construct certain images and thus shape recipients' perceptions of them. Police authorities also take advantage of this opportunity.

A bilingual context adds an extra dimension to consider, as communications are received by more than one language group. The literature reviewed above provides sometimes contradictory findings on the influence of communication language and perceptions. Based on the previous studies, it can be argued that

a) the Swedish-speaking minority's perception of the Southwestern Finland PD's social media communications may be negatively influenced by the fact that only a part of the social media posts are published in their native language

b) the Swedish-speaking minority's perceptions might be on the positive side, even if the communication is mostly in their second language, because they are accustomed to communicating about the subject matter in that language

c) language choice is not the most important factor influencing the Swedish-speaking minority's perception of police communication on social media.

Whatever the results of this study may be, it is clear that there is a need for research on customer perceptions of police social media communications and the effects of language choice on communication in bilingual contexts outside the United States and the English language. This study aims to connect these two issues by investigating Swedish-speaking customers' perceptions of police social media communications in a bilingual context (Finland).

3. Theoretical framework

Theory or a theoretical framework aims to describe and explain a research problem (Whetten, 1989). A comprehensive theoretical contribution should answer the questions of what, how and why. What is being researched and how it is being done constitute the subject of the theory. Hypotheses or propositions can be derived from the 'what' and 'how', although not all theoretical contributions require them. Why research is conducted provides a link between theory and empirical research and explains the logic underlying the model used to study a particular phenomenon. Who, where and when explain the temporal and contextual factors of research (Whetten, 1989). They set boundaries for the generalisability of the study and provide an opportunity to consider the contextual perspective of one's own study.

If these questions are applied to the current study, it could be summarised along the lines of *what kind of perceptions (what) do Swedish-speaking citizens (who) living in the region of Southwestern Finland (where) have of the social media communications of the Southwestern Finland Police Department (who) and what factors play a role in these perceptions (how)*. That is, why do these people perceive the social media communication in a certain way? This study contributes to existing theory by applying the model of willingness to communicate in a second language to the context of social media and interpreting perceptions of social media communications with the help of the model. Furthermore, this study broadens, and at the same time limits, the concept of political considerations by integrating the necessity versus preference to receive communications in the first language and experienced social exclusion due to communication language as elements that influence the willingness to communicate in a second language and, by extension, the perceptions of the Southwestern Finland Police Department's social media communications.

3.1. A model of willingness to communicate in a second language

As this research is conducted in a bilingual empirical setting, it is necessary to consider the factors that may influence Swedish-speaking customers' perceptions of police communications on social media. The willingness to communicate in a second language may provide valuable insights for assessing and understanding why bilingual customers perceive the partly monolingual social media communications of a bilingual police department in the ways they do.

The original framework was developed by MacIntyre et al. (1998) in order to describe, explain and predict second language (L2) communication. Willingness to communicate (WTC) was originally

used in relation to native language (L1) and defined as "--the probability of engagement in communication when free to choose to do so" (MacIntryre et al., 1998 pp. 546). WTC was considered a personality trait rather than an event influenced by multiple factors related to the communication setting. MacIntyre et al. (1998) recognised that one of the most significant changes in a communication setting is the language of discourse. WTC in L1 could not be directly applied to L2 communication because of enduring and situational influences that would be largely irrelevant in L1 communication settings. Two of the issues related to WTC in L2 were L2 competence (which can range from almost no competence to full competence) and various intergroup issues. Therefore, WTC in L2 is defined as a readiness to enter into a discourse in second language at a particular time with a specific person or persons (MacIntyre et al. 1998).
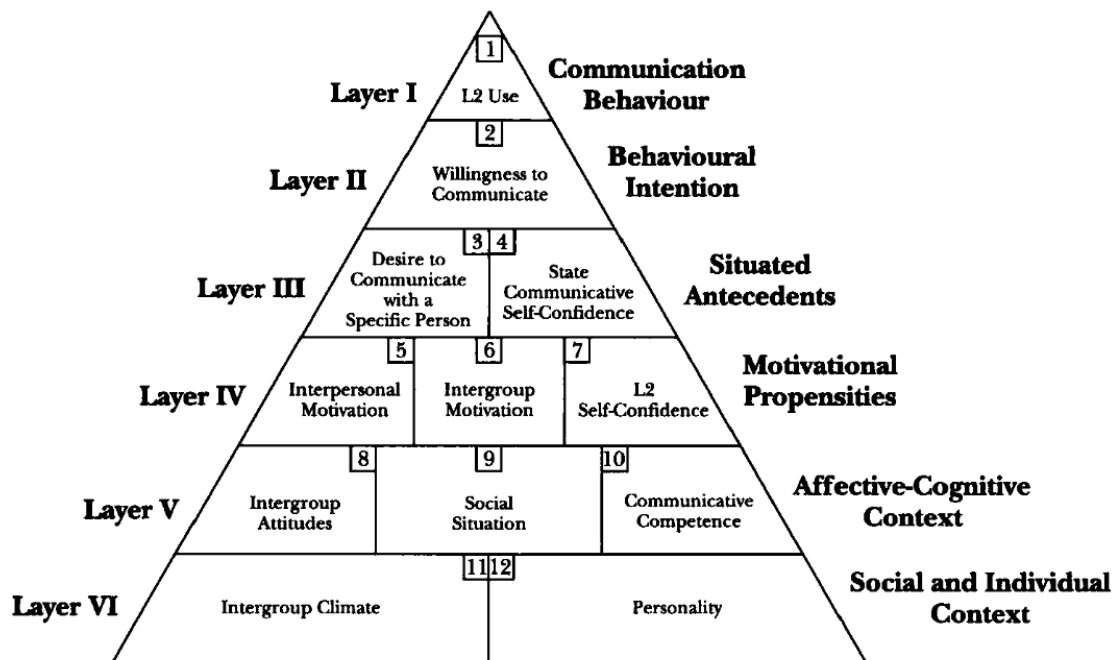
FIGURE 2: Variables influencing willingness to communicate (MacIntyre et al., 1998)

In order to conceptualise the willingness to communicate in L2 and demonstrate the variables that influence WTC MacIntyre et al. (1998) created a heuristic model, a pyramid, which is divided into six different layers (see Figure 2). Each layer is subdivided into specific influences. The top three layers of the pyramid (communication behaviour, behavioural intention, and situated antecedents) represent situation-specific influences. These influences weigh in on WTC at a given moment. The bottom three layers (motivational propensities, affective-cognitive context, and social and individual context) are stable and enduring influences.

3.2.1 Layer 6: social and individual context

Since the layers build on each other, it is clearer to explain them from the bottom up. Layer 6, the social and individual context, refers to the interaction that takes place between the society (i.e., the intergroup climate) and the individual (personality characteristics) in the context of communication. Intergroup climate is concerned with the structural characteristics of the community as well as their perceptual and affective correlates (MacIntyre et. al., 1998). Structural characteristics refer to "--the group's relative representation of the L1 and L2 communities in terms of ethnolinguistic vitality and personal communication networks" (ibid. pp. 555). Ethnolinguistic vitality is defined in terms of the relative socio-economic power of the communities and their level of representation in social institutions. Communication network refers to a group or groups with which a person communicates regularly. Perceptual and affective correlates then focus on the role of attitudes and values towards the L2 community and the level of motivation to reduce social distance between ethnic groups. Thus, intergroup context is an important building block for L2 communication in general, but it is not directly involved in determining WTC in any given moment (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

3.2.2 Layer 5: affective-cognitive context

Layer 5 represents individually based influences, grounded in prior history and broad attitudes and motives (MacIntyre et al., 1998). This layer is divided into intergroup attitudes, social situation, and communicative competence. Intergroup attitudes include the intergrativeness of the L1 and L2 communities i.e., the adaptation to different cultural groups and intergroup motivation, which relates to the majority and minority statuses of language groups. Depending on its prevalence intergrativeness may either facilitate or disrupt L2 communication (ibid.). Intergroup attitudes also reflect the overall attitudes towards the second language in question.

The second element, social situation, describes a social encounter in a particular setting (MacIntyre et al., 1998). According to MacIntyre et al. (1998) there are five factors that influence situational variation in relation to WTC in L2: the participants, the setting, the purpose, the topic, and the channel of communication. In different combinations, these factors lead to varying communication situations. The L2 proficiency level and the relationship between the participants are some of the most prevalent participant variables. Setting refers to the place of the communication. Purpose describes the intentions and goals of a communication situation. Most often, the purpose is one or more of the following:

- persuasion
- information provision
- entertainment
- self-revelation

Topic is an important factor influencing WTC in L2 because familiarity with or an expertise in a topic increases an individual's linguistic self-confidence. Lastly, communication channels refer to the medium for the communication (speaking or writing).

The third element refers to a person's level of L2 proficiency, also known as the communicative competence (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Proficiency does not necessarily refer to a person's actual competence in the L2, but rather to their perception of their competence. Communicative competence consists of five language competencies: linguistic competence, discourse competence, actional competence, sociocultural competence, and strategic competence.

3.2.3 Layer 4: motivational propensities

The last of the enduring influences on WTC in L2 pertains to motivational propensities. These are stable individual differences, and they can be divided into interpersonal motivation, intergroup motivation, and self-confidence. Interpersonal motivation deals with perceived control and affiliation related to a communication situation. Intergroup motivation relates to some of the factors discussed earlier, namely intergrativeness and intergroup attitudes, as well as a sense of belonging to a particular group (MacIntyre et al., 1998). The desire to affiliate with people who speak another language has a strong influence on communication behaviour. Self-confidence refers to an individual's overall belief in their ability to communicate in their second language in an adaptive and efficient manner (ibid.). Self-confidence stems partly from an individual's communicative competence, but it is primarily a function of the relationship between the individual and their second language. Self-confidence builds upon cognitive self-confidence (self-evaluation of L2 skills) and affective self-confidence (language anxiety, e.g., due to prior experiences or level of discomfort). In other words, it is about judgements of proficiency and feelings of apprehension.

3.2.4 Layer 3: situated antecedents of communication

The next three layers deal with situation-specific influences. Layer 3 approaches the willingness to communicate through state self-confidence. In situations where individuals with different first languages wish to communicate, it is likely that the person with higher L2 self-confidence will voluntarily use their second language. Contrary to the concept of self-confidence discussed above, state self-confidence refers to a momentary feeling of confidence that one has the capacity to communicate effectively in one's second language at a particular moment.

3.2.5 Layer 2: willingness to communicate

Layer two of the pyramid represents the willingness to communicate, i.e., to enter a discourse in one's second language at a particular time with a particular person (MacIntyre et al., 1998). The willingness to communicate itself implies a certain behavioural intention. In order to actually carry out the intended behaviour, an individual needs to believe they can successfully carry out an action and that this action will lead to desirable outcomes. This is known as perceived behavioural control. MacIntyre et al. (1998) argue that at the heart of their model is "--an individual who has some control over his or her actions and is behaving in a reasoned manner to achieve his or her goals" (pp. 548).

3.2.6 Layer 1: communication behaviour

Communication behaviour refers to the actual use of a person's second language. In this model, communication behaviour refers to a wide range of communication activities in a second language, such as working, watching television or reading a newspaper. As can be seen from the model, layers 1 and 2 are the manifestations of the willingness to communicate in a second language, but they build upon several factors at several different levels. Thus, WTC in L2 is not constant and can be higher or lower depending on the situation. However, the lower three layers provide the basis for either a higher or lower likelihood of a person being willing to communicate in a second language.

3.2. Adapted model of WTC in L2

The model developed by MacIntyre et al. (1998) is a comprehensive, multi-level construct representing the willingness to communicate in a second language. In their study, Holmqvist et al. (2014) simplified the original model to study the level of willingness of bilingual individuals to communicate in their second language in service settings in Finland and Belgium. Instead of 12

factors Holmqvist et al. (2014) analysed the WTC in L2 through three antecedents: perceived control, second language proficiency, and political considerations. Perceived control in this study referred to the preference to use one's first language when there is a risk of comprehension problems or when there is a lack of the necessary competence to achieve one's goals effectively. Despite a high level of proficiency in a second language, many people tend to avoid communicating in that language, especially when combined with a lack of control (Holmqvist et al., 2014). Finally, the use of a second language often carries some degree of political implications, and this may affect the willingness to communicate in a second language, even in situations where individuals feel in control and perceive themselves to be proficient in their second language.
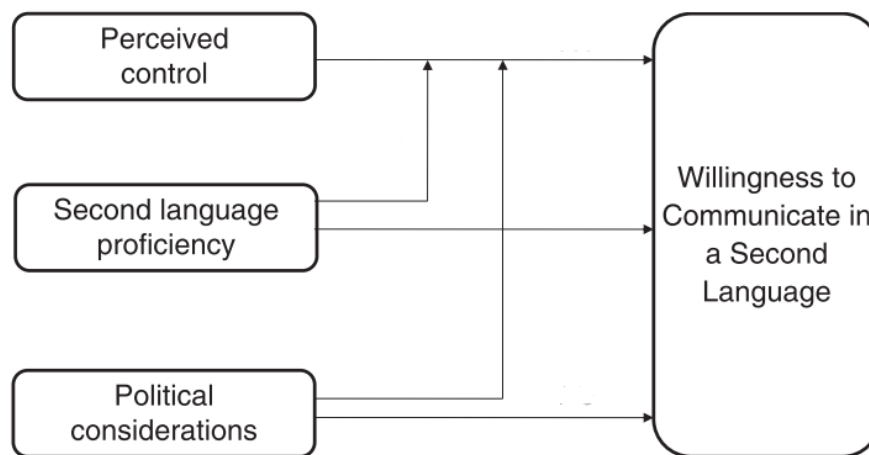
FIGURE 3: Conceptual framework of interaction effects (Holmqvist et al., 2014)

Of course, these three antecedents combine some of the factors from the original model into a simpler one. Perceived control is related to the willingness to communicate (layer 2), self-confidence, and interpersonal motivation (layers 3 and 4). Second language proficiency also relates to self-confidence (layers 3 and 4) as well as communicative competence (layer 5). Personality certainly plays a role in both factors, as some people are naturally more confident, or perhaps less afraid of making mistakes and losing control. Political considerations relate, for example, to intergroup climate (layer 6), intergroup attitudes and social situation (layer 5), and interpersonal and intergroup motivation (layer 4).

3.3. The application of the model of willingness to communicate in a second language

The original model of willingness to communicate was developed in relation to second language use in physical communication situations. Furthermore, it was developed at a time before social media existed as a communication channel. However, as MacIntyre et al. (1998) point out the communication behaviour refers to a wide range of activities, such as watching television in a second language. Furthermore, the communication channel can refer to both spoken and written communication. Thus, the conceptualisation can be adapted to analyse communication settings where bilinguals receive communication in their second language through social media.

As the aim of this study is not to assess willingness to communicate in the second language per se, but rather to analyse perceptions of (bilingual) social media communications through the framework, not all building blocks of the pyramid are relevant to this study. Hence, the theoretical framework developed for this study is based on the simplified framework of Holmqvist et al. (2014). However, it is modified to better fit for the context of this study. Figure 4 presents the adapted framework, which was developed to assess customers' perceptions of (police) social media communications.
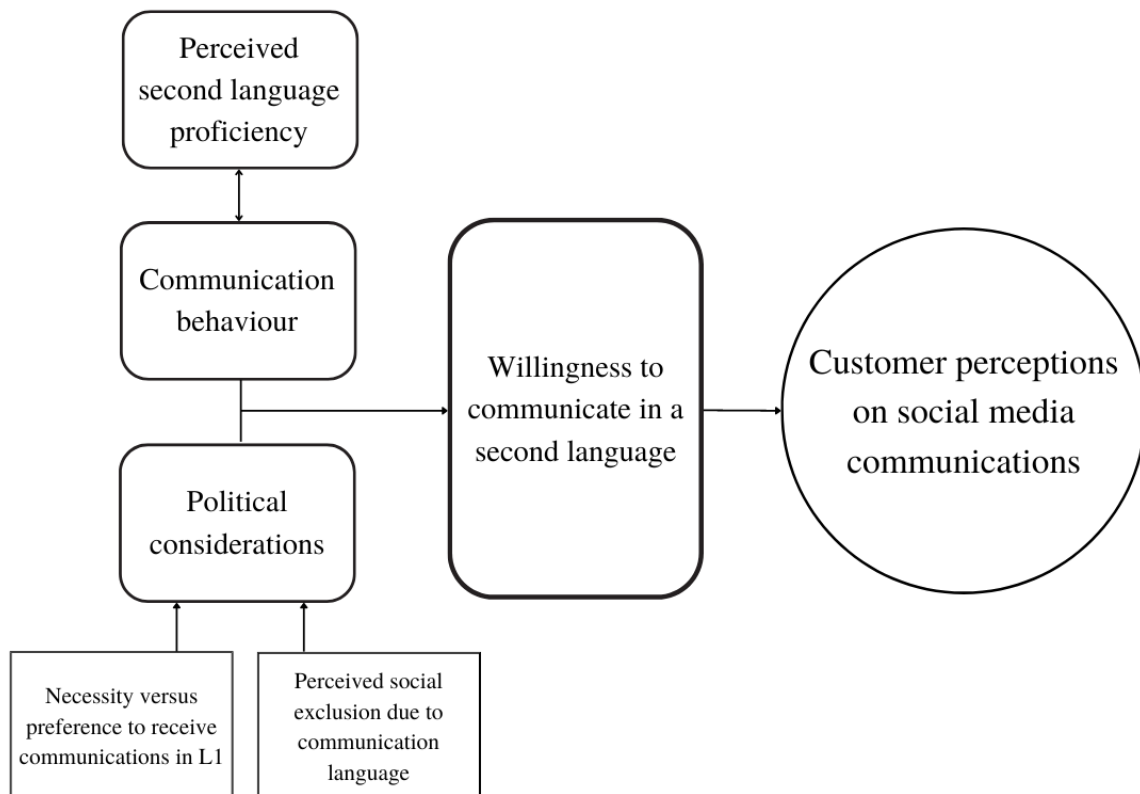
FIGURE 4: The conceptual model for analysing perceptions on social media communications among bilingual customers.

Social media communications tend not to be very complicated or require a high level of involvement (i.e., engaging in rigorous decision-making). In addition, social media communications do not require the recipient to produce any communication themselves (i.e., be interactive), and even when interaction does take place, it does not happen as real-time as in physical communication encounters. Therefore, it is not necessary to assess perceived control in the context of social media communications.

However, language proficiencies and political considerations are also relevant in this context. In addition, communication behaviour (how and to what extent a person uses the L2 in their daily life) is also an essential element that plays a role in the willingness to communicate in a second language. Perceived L2 proficiency is a fairly straightforward concept although, as noted above, it can include factors such as self-confidence and communicative competence (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Furthermore, perceived language proficiency and communication behaviour are interrelated in the sense that a bilingual person who is frequently exposed to the second language is likely to have higher L2 proficiency, and a person who perceives themselves as sufficiently proficient in the second language is likely to be more willing to engage in L2 communication in their everyday life.

Although, Holmqvist et al. (2014) did not find that political considerations influenced the willingness to communicate in a second language in Finland, political considerations may become a relevant issue when governmental organisations' communications are discussed. Political considerations form a complex entity that includes both interpersonal and intergroup factors. Because WTC in L2 is used in this study as a means of interpreting perceptions of police social media communications it is necessary to limit the number of political considerations included in the framework. Thus, the model frames political considerations in terms of two aspects:

- whether a person truly needs to receive communications in their first language due to inadequate L2 proficiency, or whether they simply prefer to communicate in their L1.
- perceived social exclusion due to the language of communication.

Sometimes the (un)willingness to communicate in a second language is simply a matter of principal (Holmqvist et al., 2014). Because the Language Act protects the linguistic rights of the Swedish-speaking citizens in Finland, the citizens have a fundamental right to use their first language in everyday life (Oikeusministeriö, 2004). Hence, a Swedish-speaker may perfectly understand the Finnish social media posts, but still feel reluctant to receive the communication in that language. If the social media content is in the person's L2, it may evoke feelings of social exclusion from the intended recipients, even though the person understands what is being communicated. Although, for

the sake of clarity, communication behaviour and political considerations are presented in this model as separate aspects influencing WTC in L2, they should not be considered as entirely separate entities. For example, if a person rarely uses their L2 in everyday life, they may perceive themselves as having low proficiency in their L2 and therefore, feel the need to be communicated to in their L1 in order to truly understand the communication.

3.3.1 Contextual influences

Although this theoretical framework can be applied to a variety of contexts, each context presents underlying circumstances that shape the implications of the framework. The circumstances at play in the context of this study are presented in this section. The factors influencing the social situation (see 3.2.2) are the setting and the communication domain, the purpose and the channel. Here, the communicator is the Southwestern Finland PD, and the communication is aimed at the citizens (the PD's customers) in their region who use social media. The communication domain is the government/legal domain (MacIntyre et al., 1998), as the study focuses on perceptions of social media communications by a governmental organisation (the police). Furthermore, the communication domain is in a private context, as the communication is received through the recipient's personal social media account. The purpose of the communication is mainly to convey information about relevant and important issues, but it could also be seen as persuasive (trying to prevent and change harmful attitudes and behaviours). The communication channel(s) are the Instagram and Twitter accounts of the Southwestern Finland PD. The communication is mainly in written form (the captions and tweets).

The intergroup climate and structural characteristics (see 3.2.1) of the context are also important to consider when assessing WTC in L2 and its influence on perceptions. The ethnolinguistic vitality in Finland provides an interesting context for this research. Although the Swedish-speaking Finns represent only about 5% of the Finnish population, they generally have a higher socio-economic position (Suvisaari et al., 2014). However, the Swedish-speaking Finns are not a homogeneous group (Nyqvist et al., 2021). Southwestern Finland is one of the areas with a concentration of Swedish-speaking population (Suvisaari et al., 2014), but the region is still predominantly Finnish-speaking and has only a few bilingual cities (Kuntaliitto, 2017). However, as the region's largest city, Turku, was once the capital of Finland during Swedish rule, the area has a long history of Swedish as the language of administration and the ruling classes (Broermann, 2007), which gives the language a prominent position in the area. As both ethnolinguistic groups (the Finnish-speaking majority and the Swedish-speaking minority) are in frequent contact with each other, it can be assumed that the social

distance between the groups is not very great and that attitudes towards the other linguistic community are mainly neutral, if not positive. According to MacIntyre et al. (1998), contact between members of the linguistic groups can mediate attitudes and distance. Therefore, both the communication behaviour (how the Swedish speakers come into contact with the two language groups in their everyday life) and their views on the political considerations are important indicators for the WTC in L2 and consequently the perceptions on the largely L2 social media communications.

Finally, there is another factor to consider when assessing perceptions of social media communications: whether the research subjects follow the social media accounts being assessed. There may be many reasons why a person decides to follow or not follow an organisation on social media. However, if they do follow an organisation, it is because they have chosen to do so. If a bilingual person has voluntarily opted to receive an organisation's social media communications, even when they often are not in the person's native language, this may have a positive impact on the person's perceptions.

4. Research methodology

This research is qualitative in its nature. Qualitative research focuses on people and words rather than numbers and quantities (Bryman, 2012). In other words, qualitative research seeks to understand phenomena by seeing things through the eyes of the research participants. Both research methodologies are grounded in epistemology (the view of knowledge) and ontology (the nature of social actors). Whether research is qualitative or quantitative dictates both the method of data collection and the way in which the data collected are ultimately analysed (ibid.). The two branches of research also differ in their approach to the role of theory in research. Qualitative research tends to approach theory inductively, meaning that a qualitative study seeks to generate theory rather than to test a pre-existing theory through research (ibid.). In order to better understand the findings of the data analysis, it is important to underline the epistemological and ontological stance of this thesis.

The epistemological approach of this research is interpretivism. According to Bryman (2012), interpretivism is a strategy that respects the differences between social actors (people and their institutions) and objects. Thus, it requires grasping the subjective meaning of social action for actors. Interpretivism seeks to understand human behaviour by examining actors' interpretations of the social world rather than explaining it. As previously established, perceptions are highly subjective, and their formation is the sum of many interrelated factors. This study does not attempt to explain how the participants came to form certain perceptions of police social media communications. Rather, the study explores what kinds of perceptions the participants have, and how their willingness to communicate in a second language (and related factors), which is also subjective, may help to interpret their perceptions. In interpretivism it is important to exclude any preconceived notions the researcher may have about the world. When qualitative data are analysed, it is done through 'double interpretation': the researcher interprets others' interpretations of the world (Bryman, 2012).

The ontological approach for this study is constructivism. Constructivism refers to a view of social phenomena and their meanings as continually accomplished by social actors (Bryman, 2012). Constructivism implies that "--social phenomena and categories are not only produced through social interaction but that they are in a constant state of revision" (Bryman, 2012 pp. 33). Hence, qualitative research represents a specific construction of the reality rather than a definitive or pre-determined version. Constructivism is linked with postmodernism, which asserts that there is no sense of an objective reality that could be accessed even through research (ibid.). Thus, from the postmodernist perspective, the results derived from data analysis reflect the researcher's interpretations and a particular version of reality rather than a definitive or an objective representation of the matter.

4.1 Research design

The design of this research is a case study, which is one of the five prominent research designs (Bryman, 2012). A case study investigates one or more cases in order to answer a specific research question (Gillham, 2000a). A case can be a group, a community, or an institution (ibid.), which is the case type studied in this research. According to Gillham (2000a), the case study research design has two distinctive features: (1) the use of multiple sources of evidence in order to answer the research question(s), and (2) the absence of preconceived theoretical notions, because without data and context it is not possible to know which explanations are most appropriate for the particular case. This research qualifies as a case study because it seeks to answer a specific question related to an underlying meaning and implications of language choice and social media communications, and it investigates the question in a specific context (police communications and the Southwestern Finland Police Department).

4.2 The empirical setting

The Southwestern Finland Police Department's most active social media channels, Twitter and Instagram, serve somewhat different communication purposes, although, communications on both channels aim at creating similar perceptions of the Police Department. The functions of the platforms largely determine the type of communication published on them. In comparison, Twitter is a fast-paced channel, and often focuses on operational communication. Hence, it can be said that Twitter-communication focuses on topicality and public debate (Saarenoja and Tammio, 2022). Twitter is the channel where even very little information can be transmitted quickly and then easily completed over time. Twitter can be used to warn, advice, and guide people without going into detail about the underlying phenomena. The limited number of characters (280 per tweet) is one of the reasons why it is difficult to provide lengthy information on Twitter. Communication on Twitter is not only aimed at reaching the customers (the citizens of the region), but also the media (Saarenoja and Tammio, 2022).

Then again, Instagram is the most visual of the channels and therefore the visual narrative plays a more important role compared to Twitter, although visual material is sometimes included in tweets (Saarenoja and Tammio, 2022). Yet, Instagram posts also allow for long captions, which is why the communications often provide longer and more detailed advice or guidance and shed light on different types of phenomena. Instagram is also less-time sensitive. Although most of the content on Instagram is informative, some of it can be seen as brand building for the police. For example, posts

showing two police officers visiting a group of pre-school children, a puppy taking a nap at the police station, or a little boy sitting on an officer's motorcyckle (Instagram, 2022c) have more promotional than informative value.

These channels also differ in the extent to which Finnish and Swedish are used. Twitter is a much faster channel, and the content is published by several people in addition to the PD's communication unit. Therefore, it can be more difficult to ensure that there is enough time or resources to communicate in both Finnish and Swedish. On the contrary, Instagram often focuses on communication at the phenomenon level, and the communication unit responsible for these communications, often has more time to prepare (and translate) the Instagram posts. In addition, it is not possible to edit tweets once they have been published, whereas on Instagram erroneous formulations can be corrected afterwards. Therefore, the threshold for publishing communications in the non-native or second language (most often Swedish) is much higher on Twitter (Saarenoja and Tammio, 2022).

In order to keep the scope of the study sufficiently limited, only Twitter and Instagram are included as the channels for analysis, even if the PD also has a Facebook-page. The choice is based on the level of activity, and the size of these channels respectively. At the same time, their functions and the amount of Swedish in the posts are different enough to possibly generate divergent perceptions. Each social media channel is unique and requires its own empirical investigation (Walby and Wilkinson, 2021). Therefore, the perceptions of communications on each channel are analysed separately, while also highlighting any common aspects that play into the perceptions.

4.3 Data collection

The data collection method used in this study is in-depth i.e., qualitative interviews. The purpose of an interview (in any context) is for the interviewer to elicit responses from the interviewee for a specific purpose (Gillham, 2000b). Because there exists very little previous research on the topic of this thesis, this study is somewhat of exploratory in its nature. Therefore, it is important to gain an understanding of the interplay between language, identity, and perceptions in (bilingual) police social media communications through discussions with the Swedish-speaking customers. Since this study deals with highly subjective issues, it would be counterproductive to explore the perceptions using, for example, standardised questionnaires with limited space and room for reflection. Qualitative interviews can be unstructured or semi-structured, which is the structure used in this study. The semi-structured interview is the most feasible method as the research topic is quite specific and limited to

certain aspects of language and social media communications. Semi-structured interviews entail a pre-planned interview guide, i.e., a list of questions or defined topics that the interviewer wants to cover during the interview. Each interviewee is asked the same questions with the same wording. However, the interviewer can ask questions outside of the interview guide if something that the interviewee brings up sparks up an interest to further explore the respondent's thoughts on the topic (Bryman, 2012). Thus, the semi-structured interview method provides an opportunity to compare respondents' answers with each other, while allowing them to express their subjective views and elaborate on the topics of the interview.

Before the interviews were conducted, an interview guide was prepared in English and then translated into Swedish, as this was the language in which the interviews were conducted. The interview guide in English can be found in the Appendices (see Appendix 1). A total of 18 questions, which were designed with the aim of the study in mind. In addition, the theoretical framework was taken into account when constructing the questions in order to be able to use the framework in the actual analysis of the collected data. The interview begins with a few introductory questions (Bryman, 2012). These questions help to understand the interview participants linguistic identity and language use (i.e., perceived language proficiency and communication behaviour). The rest of the interview questions focus more on the communication aspects of government organisations, especially the police, the role of language, and social media. First, questions about these topics are presented on a more general level, and then the final questions focus exclusively on Southwestern Finland PD's social media communications. In connection with two of the questions (6 and 13) the interviewees are shown screenshots of several social media posts from both Instagram and Twitter, and in both Finnish and Swedish. The first screenshots are taken from various governmental organisations' social media channels: KELA (the Social Insurance Institution, the National Tax Administration, Finnish Transport and Communications Agency, the other bilingual police departments, and the Southwestern Finland coastguard). The screenshots show whose profile they were taken from, so that respondents could evaluate the screenshots in relation to the organisation. For question 13, the screenshots were taken from the Southwestern Finland PD's social media. Visual cues are especially important if an interviewee does not follow the Southwestern Finland PD on social media.

The interviews are expected to last approximately half an hour, though the duration depends on how much the participants elaborate on the questions. Once the interviews have been conducted, they are transcribed in order to code the material. Due to time constraints the transcriptions are not translated to English, but the coding and thematic framework, as well as any quotes or extracts used to support the analysis, are provided in English. A more detailed outline of the data analysis can be found in 4.5.

4.3.1 Sampling of the interview participants

An important aspect of any research, no matter the method, is the sampling of the research units. In the case of qualitative interviewing, there is no one definitive answer to how big one's sample should be. The sample size is a balancing act between making it difficult to achieve saturation and redundancy of information, and making it difficult to conduct in-depth and case-oriented analysis (Bryman, 2012). Qualitative research tends to favour a purposive sampling approach which refers to a way of sampling where "--the sampling is conducted with reference to the goals of the research, so that units of analysis are selected in terms of criteria that will allow the research question to be answered" (Bryman, 2012 pp. 418). In other words, it is a form of non-probability sampling. Although purposive sampling aids in answering the research question, selecting units of analysis based on set criteria excludes the possibility of generalizing the results of the research (ibid.). The purposive sampling can be done on contexts and/or participants (ibid.). In this research the sampling was first done regarding the context (Southwestern Finland Police Department and their social media communications) after which the sampling is easier to conduct on participants.

There are several approaches to purposive sampling. This research uses a criterion sampling approach, where all units (interview participants) meet certain criteria. There are two main criteria guiding the sampling that the respondents should fulfil in order to qualify as a participant. First, each participant must be bilingual (per the definition provided earlier, the participants should have Swedish as their registered native language but be able to produce and understand communications in both official languages). Second, the participants should live in the region of Southwestern Finland as this makes the PD's social media communications more relevant to these individuals, and hopefully encourage more thorough responses. Participants are not expected to follow the PD's social media channels, but it is beneficial if they do.

Due to the small sample size and the focus on language of communication, demographic factors such as age, occupation, or gender of the participants are not taken into account when sampling participants. While these factors may influence perceptions on the police and social media communications because they may affect the accumulated experiences and views of the respondents (Machura et al., 2020), the main focus of this study is on linguistic identity, which primarily concerns issues related to language rather than other demographic factors. Furthermore, with only 5 participants, it would be difficult to make meaningful comparisons or interferences in relation to these demographic factors. However, if any interesting findings or differences emerge, for example due to age or any other demographic factor, they are referred to when discussing and analysing the results.

Although purposive sampling does not allow for the generalisation of the findings in any case, sampling participants according to certain well-defined criteria (in this case, native language and area of residence) that are somewhat general in their nature allows for comparisons to be made between respondents.

4.4. Execution of the interviews

Five individuals were interviewed for this research (see Table 1). The respondents were found through the researcher's offline and online networks. The number of participants was limited by the scope and timeframe of this research. The interviews were conducted between 20.3.– 4.4.2023 through Zoom. Conducting the interviews online allowed for more flexibility in terms of the timing of the interview and the location of both the interviewer and the respondents. The length of the interviews varied between 25 and 40 minutes. All interviews were conducted in Swedish, as it was assumed that Swedish was the respondents' first language. However, the interview guide was also translated into Finnish in case a respondent preferred to be interviewed in that language. The language of the interviews is an important consideration when interviews are conducted in a multilingual setting, because language provides the context for thoughts, interactions, and social identities (Welch and Piekkari, 2006). The use of the interviewee's native language is likely to elicit more authentic and elaborated responses (ibid.). However, since the interviewer and the interviewees shared two languages, the respondents sometimes engaged in code switching, i.e., mixing some Finnish words into their answers.

At the very beginning of the interview, the participants were given a short introduction of the interviewer, an explanation of how their responses would be treated in terms of anonymity (they cannot be identified in the final study), and they were informed about their rights as an interview participant (for example, that they could ask questions during and after the interview if something was unclear). Lastly, the respondents were asked for a permission to record the actual interview so that it could be transcribed later on. They were also informed about how the data they provided would be processed and that only the interviewer would have access to their interview recordings.

4.5 Data analysis

In order to analyse the data from the interviews, thematic analysis was conducted. Thematic analysis is an approach to qualitative data analysis that involves the identification and categorisation of themes

from the gathered data (Bryman, 2012). A theme is a category or a recurring motif that is identified through the data and is related to the focus of the research. The themes are based codes that have been identified from the transcripts. Coding refers to identifying and recording passages or categories in the collected data so that a framework of thematic ideas about the data can be established (Gibbs, 2021). Compared to themes, codes are more specific and refer to smaller fractions. Codes should be analytical and theoretical in the sense that they do not simply describe what an interview respondent has said, but rather describe the more underlying and broader implications of what is said (ibid.). Once themes have been generated, they provide a basis for forming a theoretical understanding of the data collected (Bryman, 2012).

According to Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis can be carried out in six phases:

1. Familiarisation with the collected data by transcribing, through reading, and noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes by highlighting interesting features across the data.
3. Searching for themes by assigning codes into potential themes.
4. Reviewing themes by making sure they reflect the initial codes and the collected data.
5. Defining and naming themes.
6. Presenting the results and producing the analysis.

Once the interviews for this study had been conducted, they were transcribed (i.e., transformed from audio to text) because the text-format makes it easier to conceptualise what was said during the interviews. The material was then read through several times and important and relevant parts were highlighted. As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, it is important for the researcher to avoid any preconceived notions when analysing qualitative data (Bryman, 2012). By thoroughly familiarising oneself with the collected data, it is possible to truly see and understand how the respondents view the issues addressed in this research, and to block out any personal views.

Next, the collected data was coded using the highlighted parts. The coding was conducted as open coding, which refers to a process where no preconceived codes exist for the material. In this process, the transcripts are read through by making comparisons and asking questions (Gibbs, 2021). Since the interview questions were designed to apply the theoretical model in the data analysis, and in order to answer the research questions, it was expected that certain codes would emerge from the data. However, the codes were only assigned to the material after the interviews were conducted.

The initial coding process typically produces so-called descriptive codes, which simply reflect what the interview respondent said. The descriptive codes can then be grouped into different types of

categories. These categories help to derive more analytical and theoretical codes that describe broader themes and assist in relating the data to existing literature and theory, and ultimately, in answering the research questions (Gibbs, 2021). For example, some of the initial codes extracted from the data were:

- concern about the ability to understand communications
- important characteristics for social media communications
- use of appropriate language.

These codes were further coded into more analytical codes, which formed the basis for the final themes:

- the role of the Swedish language in social media communications
- antecedents of good official communications on social media
- the importance of language quality.

Each respondent's answers and the codes assigned to them were continuously compared in order to find important and interesting similarities and differences.

Lastly, the generated codes were assigned to broader themes that emerged from the collected data. The emerging themes were organised in a thematic map in order to refine the themes and sub-themes. In the end, 4 main themes were identified. These themes broaden the more specific topics related to the perceptions of social media communications of one police department and the theoretical framework:

- police social media communications and minority rights
- contextual awareness and inclusion
- most important functions and characteristics of police social media communications
- factors influencing language use on police social media communications.

5. Analysed findings

This chapter presents the results of the survey. The findings are complemented by an analysis of the data. The chapter begins by introducing the interviewees and providing a context for the following sections. The chapter then moves on to discuss the findings based on the interviews and how they can be interpreted through the theoretical framework. The findings are then further developed in terms of discussing broader themes that emerged from the data.

5.1 The respondents and communication behaviour

Five individuals in total were interviewed for this research. Table 1 presents information about each respondent.

	Area of residence	Native language (L1)	Second language (L2)	Linguistic identity	Follows Southwestern Finland PD	
					Instagram	Twitter
A	Turku	Swedish	Finnish	Bilingual / Swedish	No	No
B	Turku	Swedish	Finnish	Swedish	Yes	Yes
C	Turku	Finnish	Swedish	Bilingual / Finnish	No	Yes
D	Turku	Swedish	Spanish	Swedish	No	No
E	Turku	Finnish	Swedish	Finnish	No	No

TABLE 1: Summary of the characteristics of the interview respondents.

All interview respondents are located in the Southwestern-Finland region, which was one of the sampling criteria. As can be seen in Table 1, the participants all reside in Turku, which is one of the bilingual municipalities in the region. However, Turku has a larger Finnish-speaking population than the other two bilingual municipalities in the region, Parainen and Kemiö. As there is more contact between the members of the two language groups (i.e., more opportunities for interaction in the second language), this may influence the results to some extent. Then again, the common area of residence makes it easier to compare the respondents because they live in the same linguistic setting.

Only three out of the five respondents fully met the second sampling criterion: being bilingual (Finnish and Swedish) and having Swedish as their registered native language. However, all

participants considered themselves to be bilingual and able to both understand and produce communication in the national languages. Furthermore, the fact that the respondents represent three different linguistic identities (Finnish, Swedish, bilingual) (see 5.1.1 to 5.1.5) is more representative of the Southwestern Finland PD's region, as well as the Finnish society as a whole. Hence, this may provide a more complete understanding of how issues related to language choice in a bilingual context may influence customers' perceptions of police social media communications.

The following five sections introduce each respondent in terms of their communication behaviour and perceived second language proficiency, which are two of the elements in the theoretical framework (see Figure 4) as well as their linguistic identity.

5.1.1 Respondent A

Respondent A was born and raised in Turku and grew up with both Finnish and Swedish, but their registered native language is Swedish. Thus, in this context, Swedish is their first language (L1) and Finnish their second language (L2). At home, respondent A spoke Finnish with one of their parents and Swedish with the other. However, respondent A went to school in Swedish and also studied at university in Swedish. Respondent A still uses both languages on a daily basis.

> "--nowadays I speak Swedish at home with my kids and my [spouse] and some of my friends. [My] working languages are Finnish and English."

When asked about second language proficiency, respondent A considered themselves as equally proficient in both Swedish and Finnish. Hence, their perceived L2 language proficiency is very high, and there is no clear distinction between the first and second language.

In terms of linguistic identity, respondent A identified themselves as bilingual because they have equally equal proficiency in both languages.

> "--am I Finnish-speaking or Swedish-speaking, it depends a bit on with whom I am communicating and where in Finland or in the world I am travelling or located at."

However, respondent A also stated that if they had to choose between the Swedish-speaking minority and the Finnish-speaking majority, they would identify more with the Swedish-speaking minority.

> "But if I had to choose, I would actually choose the Swedish-speaking [minority] due to [Swedish] being my native language."

Here it is important to note, that it was not clear from respondent A's answer whether their understanding of the Swedish-speaking minority included only the linguistic aspect (the Swedish language) or also the cultural aspect (the culture of Swedish-speaking Finns). However, people who have grown up bilingual, such as respondent A, may identify themselves as belonging to two ethnocultural communities, though these people usually identify more with one of the communities (Bhatia and Richie, 2013). This may be the case for respondent A, who identified slightly more with the Swedish-speaking minority.

5.1.2 Respondent B

Respondent B has also lived in Turku all their life. Respondent B grew up with Swedish as the only language spoken at home, so Swedish is their native language. Respondent B was also educated in Swedish and had Swedish-speaking hobbies.

<blockquote>"Swedish [language] has been very strong."</blockquote>

However, one of respondent B's parents is originally Finnish-speaking, and thus respondent B would use Finnish with one side of the family growing up. Nowadays, respondent B has a Finnish-speaking partner and so they speak Finnish at home. At work, respondent B uses both Finnish and Swedish.

<blockquote>"It is very bilingual…I do use both languages every day."</blockquote>

Respondent B considered themselves to be almost equally proficient in both Swedish and Finnish, but still perceived Swedish as their principal language.

<blockquote>"I do think in Swedish…even if…I dare to say that I am very bilingual…I identify Swedish to be the kind of main language."</blockquote>

This is an example of the subjective nature of perceived L2 proficiency (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Respondent B said that when they speak Finnish, people cannot even always tell that they have an accent, and so objectively respondent B can be considered very competent in both languages. However, respondent B still perceived themselves as slightly less competent in Finnish than in Swedish. This may be partly due to the fact that Swedish has had a more dominant position in their life for several years, but respondent B also stated that they identify themselves with the Swedish-speaking minority.

<blockquote>"--it is the Finland-Swedish identity no matter where I am…"</blockquote>

In the case of respondent B, it is somewhat more difficult to determine their linguistic identity, they identified themselves as both Swedish-speaking and bilingual. However, since they stated that

Swedish is their main language, it can be argued that respondent B's linguistic identity is Swedish. Respondent B's answers also illustrate the interplay between the linguistic and cultural identity. Although respondent B considered themself to be bilingual, their cultural identity clearly aligned with the minority culture. Respondents A and B are very similar in terms of their background and communication behaviour, but they do not have exactly the same linguistic identity. This may be due to the fact that the Finnish language has had a stronger presence in respondent A's life since childhood.

5.1.3 Respondent C

Respondent C grew up in a Finnish-speaking family in a monolingual city in Central Finland. Thus, respondent C did not fully fit this study's definition of a bilingual person from Chapter 1 and is also the only respondent who did not grow up speaking two languages. Despite this study's definition of 'bilingual person' according to a more traditional view (Dewaele, 2015), respondent C is an excellent example of a bilingual person who fits the more comprehensive and modern definition of a bilingual person. Indeed, respondent C has been using Swedish on a daily basis for over 40 years now, ever since they started studying in a Swedish-speaking university. Thus, they are a bilingual who adopted a second language in a later stage of their life (Bhatia and Ritchie, 2013). Furthermore, respondent C only spoke Swedish at home with their children and spouse. Currently, respondent C uses both Finnish and Swedish on a daily basis at work.

"--certainly, I am originally Finnish[speaking]…[but] so I use Swedish both at home and at work also."

Having used Swedish both at home and at work for such a long time, respondent C considered themselves to have a high level of proficiency in Swedish (which is their L2, unlike some of the other respondents). However, respondent C stated that in some situations they might still prefer Finnish.

"--it is after all maybe easier for me that I use Finnish but then at work…it is totally everyday thing [to communicate in Swedish]"

However, when it comes to linguistic identity, respondent C alluded to a bilingual identity, but they also identified themselves as a Finnish-speaking person. Respondent C is also a prime example of a person whose linguistic identity has not remained constant, and of a person who has internalised another language, but not the cultural elements associated with that language (Østern, 2007).

"--when it comes to children and family, it is more Swedish, but I think that otherwise I am Finnish."

5.1.4 Respondent D

Respondent D did not fit the sampling criteria perfectly either. Although they grew up as a bilingual with Swedish as their first language, respondent D's second language is Spanish. Growing up, respondent D spoke Spanish with one of their parents, but otherwise they spoke Swedish.

> "I have attended…schools in Swedish since day-care, because my [parent] is Swedish-speaking Finn and my whole family…Swedish-speaking and then…I have had Spanish at home but not…anywhere else."

This is also an illustration of differing linguistic settings and contact situations among the Swedish-speaking minority (Nyqvist et al., 2021). In the case of respondent D, however, the linguistic setting is not defined in terms of the geographical area (where the proportion of Swedish-speakers is small compared to the Finnish-speakers), but rather in terms of their social circles.

Respondent D started learning Finnish at elementary school, but it was only during their university studies and the pandemic that respondent D made close Finnish-speaking friends who helped them to improve their Finnish. While respondent C is the only one who did not grow up speaking Swedish, respondent D is the only one who did not actively use Finnish while growing up. Thus, respondent D is another example of a bilingual (or, strictly speaking multilingual) person who has later adopted another language.

> "Swedish and Spanish are like my strong languages, and then comes Finnish".

Respondent D felt that their Finnish skills are now quite strong and that they can communicate in Finnish without any problems. However, respondent D shared that only a few years ago they would have felt nervous about speaking Finnish, for example during an official phone call. This is an example of how self-confidence (or lack of it) that influences willingness to communicate in a second language, and it involves both self-evaluation of second language skills and language anxiety (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

> "If it was something important, I should take care of I maybe wouldn't have been able to do it if I was instantly connected to someone who only speaks Finnish…my vocabulary would not have been enough [broad]".

By definition, respondent D is a bilingual as they grew up with two languages. When asked about identification, respondent D said that they have contemplated this question before:

> "This is something I have actually thought about semi-often that who am I, what is my identity in Finland as a Finnish person that does not in fact have Finnish as a native language."

Respondent D described themselves as identifying with the Swedish-speaking minority and said that they are a Swedish-speaking Finn (which can include both linguistic and cultural identity) because of

their schooling, circle of friends, and family. Although Spanish is respondent D's other strong language, they did not identify with it very much because its use is so limited. In addition, respondent D said that they also perceive themselves more as a Finnish-speaking person nowadays, mainly because of their Finnish-speaking partner.

> "--for the first time in my life I feel more like I also belong to the Finnish-speaking majority but definitely Finnish-Swedish, Finnish, and then maybe Spanish right now".

Similar to respondent C, respondent D's linguistic identity had shifted somewhat over the years (though perhaps not as much as respondent C's), but their cultural identity had not. Respondent D may consider themselves as a Finnish-speaking person, who even belongs to the Finnish-speaking majority in terms of language, but they do not necessarily identify with the majority culture.

5.1.3 Respondent E

Respondent E was born in Finland but had lived most of their life in Sweden. Respondent E has Finnish-speaking parents, but when they moved to Sweden, respondent E's parents wanted to raise their children bilingually. Thus, respondent E grew up speaking Finnish with one parent and their siblings and Swedish with the other parent.

> "Both [my] parents are actually Finnish-speaking, but my [other parent] has been in Haaparanta since they were 12 so…the Swedish language has been with [them] quite a lot in life even though [the parent] is anyway Finnish and Finnish-speaking".

Respondent E told that their registered native language is Finnish, but Swedish has had a more dominat position in their life. Now respondent E lives in Finland again, but as they study at a Swedish-speaking university, both languages are still present in their daily life.

> "Naturally when you have lived in Sweden, have grown up in Sweden, [Swedish] has of course been more dominant. Sweden Finn friends, family members, and my relatives here in Finland I have spoken Finnish with and then otherwise the society and friends…especially now during student life…has then been Swedish".

Regarding perceived second language proficiency, it was not very clear which language is actually respondent E's second language. On the one hand, Finnish is respondent E's native language, but on the other hand, the most prominent language in their life has been Swedish, and respondent E stated that they probably have higher proficiency in Swedish than in Finnish from an academic point of view. However, respondent E did not express any difficulties in communicating in Finnish either.

Respondent E is an example of a bilingual who has spoken both Finnish and Swedish all their life, but is not equally fluent in both when it comes to certain domains (e.g., studies) (Dewaele, 2015).

Due to their background, respondent E's answer regarding identification was quite interesting.

"--first and foremost, I would say I am a Sweden Finn…when I am in Finland, I definitely feel more Swedish. But if I could decide for myself, I would say that I am more a Finn than anything else."

Respondent E then said that their linguistic identity is Finnish because it is their native language and their "language of the heart". Respondent E firmly stated that they do not identify with the culture of the Swedish-speaking Finns because they did not grow up with it. Respondent E illustrated three aspects of bilingualism and identity.

- again, a person may internalise a language (although arguably respondent E speaks more Swedish as it is spoken in Sweden than in Finland) and, from an outsider's perspective, 'belong' to the linguistic minority, but still, themselves identify with the majority
- a bilingual person's linguistic identity does not always coincide with the language in which they are most proficient in (Finnish linguistic identity but higher proficiency in Swedish) (Østern, 2007)
- like respondent A, respondent E can also be said to identify with two ethnocultural communities (Bhatia and Ritchie, 2013), although in this case these communities are Finnish and Sweden's Swedish, but the Finnish (or Sweden's Finnish) community seemed to have primacy over the other community.

In summary, even though the group of respondents is not as heterogeneous as it was intended to be based on the criteria sampling, they provide a much broader representation of the PD's customers due to their diverse backgrounds and linguistic identities. This may contribute to more interesting and representative results. Although every participant fits the definition of a bilingual person (albeit in a slightly different way), and even a productive bilingual (Bhatia and Ritchie, 2013), only respondent A and respondent C identified themselves linguistically as bilingual. The other respondents acknowledged that they are bilingual, but still mostly identified with one language. The respondents clearly demonstrate how bilingualism can be a very subjective concept and how it can encompass different levels of language proficiency (Dewaele, 2015). The respondents also exemplify the diversity that exists within the Swedish-speaking minority (Nyqvist et al., 2021).

5.2 Political considerations

The third element influencing the willingness to communicate in a second language in the theoretical framework is political considerations. In this study, political considerations were formulated as two explicit considerations: necessity versus preference for communication in the first language and perceived social exclusion due to the communication language. This section presents the respondents' views in relation to these considerations. Furthermore, the first two themes that were derived from the thematic analysis, are discussed in this section.

5.2.1 Necessity of first language communications

Perceived second language proficiency relates to whether it is necessary for a (bilingual) person to receive communications in their first language (Bauman et al., 2005). Since all the respondents perceived themselves as having good, if not excellent, proficiency in Finnish, none of them felt that they should be communicated with Swedish on social media or otherwise.

"--I am maybe so used to it that I do not even really expect to see posts in Swedish and because I have such strong Finnish it does not bother me personally…" – Respondent A

"--I don't react so strongly to it; it does not bother me if there is not content in Swedish." – Respondent B

As the communication domain in this study is government/legal (MacIntyre et al., 1998) and this subject matter is typically discussed in the majority or second language (Carroll and Luna, 2013), it could be argued that this reduces the respondents' need to communicate in their first language. This of course requires the person to be bilingual, and if a person is not proficient in the majority language, this is unlikely to be the case.

Another aspect that contributes to the respondents' proficiency in Finnish and thus reduces the need for communication in Swedish is the ethnolinguistic vitality of the area of residence and the respondents' personal communication networks (MacIntyre et al., 1998). As explained in section 3.3.1, all respondents live in a city with a predominantly Finnish-speaking population, which often encourages regular communication with both Swedish-speakers and Finnish-speakers. As the previous sections of this chapter demonstrate, the respondents do indeed communicate regularly with people from both language groups. In this context, the ethnolinguistic vitality and the personal communication networks promote the use of the second language (Finnish) and contribute to the level of proficiency.

However, the respondents also recognised that this is not always the case in practise, as not all Swedish-speaking Finns are bilingual, even if the ethnolinguistic vitality of the area where they live would create the conditions for contact with Finnish-speakers.

"There are still Swedish-speaking municipalities in Finland that…have the Swedish language at home and in the society and…when it comes to for example authorities." – Respondent E

Indeed, respondent D is an example of this: growing up, their personal environment and communication networks were predominantly Swedish-speaking. Although they have studied Finnish, until recently they did not feel that they had enough vocabulary to discuss the government/legal communication domain in Finnish. Social media communications do not require the customer to participate in the 'discussion', but in order for the police or other governmental organisations to reach the customer, the customer needs to understand the language of the communication.

"But they should at least write something shortly in Swedish also, so everyone has the opportunity to understand what [a post] is about…and in any case point to some Swedish website where you can read more" – Respondent A

5.2.2 Police social media communications and minority rights

The discussion about second language proficiency and the need for first language communications relate to a broader discussion about the the rights of the Swedish-speaking minority, and the role that police social media communications can play in this. Language mediates access to different institutional sites (Musgrave and Bradshaw, 2014), but in the case of (police) social media communications, it often mediates access to information. Even if police social media communications most often do not contain information that threatens customers' judicial relief (Saarenoja and Tammio, 2022), a large part of the content may still contain information that would be good for any customer to know. Therefore, the respondents had some concerns about those Swedish-speaking Finns who do not have such a strong knowledge of Finnish, and the possible impact on the effectiveness of the communications if the police or other governmental organisations do not communicate in Swedish on social media.

"It feels like [the police] cannot assume the whole Finland will…know things…because there are actually places in Finland where you only speak Swedish." – Respondent D

"--for some it's just that if they do not understand Finnish the information just totally goes past [them]." – Respondent B

--I know that [lack of posts in Swedish] can cause problems for many others that are maybe entirely Swedish-speaking so where are they going to find the information that they would otherwise see on social media." – Respondent A

In general, the Swedish language and the Swedish-speaking minority are well protected by the Language Act (Oikeusministeriö, 2004), although, as noted earlier, the regulation of language use on social media is somewhat ambiguous, which may have contributed to the respondents' concerns. Legal protection is also something that respondent C mentioned in relation to communication.

"--of course, the language act says what…we shall communicate in both languages, that you cannot avoid."

Despite the strong legal protection and the prominent cultural and institutional position of the Swedish language and the Swedish-speaking minority, all respondents (except respondent B) mentioned that there are sometimes discrepancies between the Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking citizens when it comes to the inclusion of the Swedish language.

"--it is such a shame that a language is in some way so loaded…in this country it is like a big no no that it is always like the war and having been part of Sweden and [the Swedish language] is like a reminder of that time and that's why we should get rid of Swedish here…" – Respondent D

Respondent D's comment refers to the shared history between Sweden and Finland, which has really shaped the position of the Swedish language in Finnish society today (Broermann, 2007). According to the respondents, the legal protection of the Swedish language contributes to the sometimes-negative attitudes towards the language.

"--unfortunately, there is a little attitude towards Swedish that it is kind of 'forced Swedish' and 'compulsory bun' [obligatory task that is reluctantly carried out]." – Respondent C

Actual conflict between language groups is not necessary for the language groups to perceive that there are discrepancies between them, which in turn can lead to prejudice (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Language conflict in Finland is generally low due to the legally protected rights and social representation (Holmqvist et al., 2014), and the contact situation between Swedish-speakers and Finnish-speakers is peaceful (Dutton et al., 2016). According to Broermann (2007), there are occasional debates between the language groups about the position of the Swedish language and how much it should be promoted, which is the issue the respondents also referred to.

According to the respondents, the police and their social media communications (among other governmental organisations) play an important role in promoting the Swedish language and shaping attitudes towards it. Contact between two language groups can mediate the attitudes between and among them (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Although there are laws that should of course be followed when

it comes to language choice, a bilingual police department in particular could and perhaps should go beyond the legislation when deciding how much Swedish to include in its social media communications.

"--it is [the authorities] that have to make the choice when they do posts or when they make corrections to their…guidelines regarding language and communication that are we going to do this." – Respondent E

"--it is maybe something that the police could work on their socials or authorities…in this case in Finland so if you want to easily show that you are inclusive, language is certainly a place to start from and quite simple also I think." – Respondent D

Affiliation (maintaining a rapport with a member of another language group due to different group membership (MacIntyre et al., 1998)) is an important motivator, and the police can demonstrate affiliation by communicating in their second language (Swedish) on social media because some of their customers belong to the other language group. Language has the potential to promote inclusion (Niemi, 2021), and inclusion is largely enabled by the authorities' decisions on language choice (Musgrave and Bradshaw, 2014), as expressed by respondents E and D.

Even if the respondents had some problems with the amount of Swedish in police social media communications, the shared sentiment among the respondents was that the inclusion of Swedish is always positive and whenever it happens, they value it.

"It feels very good, it warms my heart…it feels like you are welcome to be with in this whole thing [social media communications]" – Respondent D

"I think it is very good, it is nice…every post that is in both languages…you think like 'yay'…" – Respondent B

When the police publish content in both Finnish and Swedish, they involve the Swedish-speaking customers in the social media communications. In a way, the police are promoting Swedish as the other national language and giving recognition to the Swedish-speaking minority. These sentiments were particularly expressed when discussing the social media communications of the Southwestern Finland PD.

"--I assume that…if there are posts [on police's social media] about these kinds of fun small things, it can happen that many Finnish-speakers would also read the Swedish version and maybe hopefully learn a little Swedish and maybe maintain Swedish." – Respondent A

"…even if…angry Finnish-speakers come and start discussing [the inclusion of Swedish on police's social media posts], it is like yeah but be quiet…there still lives Swedish-speaking people in Southwestern Finland…I think it's really good to still [include Swedish] and it should be continued with." – Respondent E

Thus, the inclusion of Swedish in the social media communications of the police and other officials carries value beyond the compliance with the law and the need to communicate in Swedish. By choosing to use Swedish on social media, the police can create social cohesion (Musgrave and Bradshaw, 2014) and a sense of inclusion for the Swedish-speaking customers. This aligns well with the overall objective of police communication, which is to prevent potentially harmful attitudes and behaviours (Poliisin Viestintämääräys, 2019).

"It is definitely important to continue to work so that both languages exist…language is just a richness…" – Respondent D

5.2.3 Preference for first language communications

While perceived second language proficiency and the need for communications in the first language are intertwined, linguistic identity and preference for first language communications are not so clearly linked across the respondents. The use of a particular language may symbolise one's social and ethnic identity (Alvarez, 2020), which in turn may contribute to a preference for communication in one language over another. In Finland, the individual principle guarantees the right to use Swedish regardless of the language of the area of residence (Broermann, 2007). Thus, bilingual people may in some cases assert their rights as a matter of principle (Holmqvist et al., 2014) and use their first language in a variety of situations, even when they would be able to communicate in their second language just as well. While the respondents collectively advocated the inclusion of (more) Swedish in the police's social media communications, not everyone did so out of personal preference.

The respondents were not explicitly asked whether they preferred to communicate or receive communications in Finnish or Swedish, and although the respondents discussed their preferences when it came to different customer service encounters, the preference regarding the language of social media communications was not raised as much very much by the respondents. However, when the respondents were asked about their personal expectations regarding bilingual social media communications by the police and other governmental organisations, some indications of preference could be detected.

"As a general rule [I would expect social media communications] in both languages…" – Respondent A

"No, not at all and I understand that there are reasons for [not always having bilingual content]…"
– Respondent B

"Both [languages] are fine...it does not really matter to me…" – Respondent C

"--if you anyway [post in Swedish] sometimes then why not do it all the time…there is no reason to [skip Swedish] in my opinion, then you are just being lazy." – Respondent D

"I think I am actually quite happy with how [the language on social media] has been and how [the PD] has taken care of it." – Respondent E

Although language can be used to assert one's identity (Alvarez, 2020), this is not entirely the case when looking at the respondents' linguistic identities and preferences for Swedish social media communications. Respondents C and E did not express a strong preference for Swedish, or Finnish, which is reasonable given their strong identification with Finnish, but both speaking Swedish as their other language. Then again, respondent A, who identified themselves a bilingual, and respondent D, who identified as Swedish-speaking were quite adamant about consistent bilingual communications. Lastly, respondent B, who also identified themselves linguistically as Swedish, was not personally bothered at all by the lack of Swedish in police's social media communications. However, bilingual persons may change their communication behaviour in terms of language choice depending on the situation (Chen et al., 2008), which may indicate that receiving police social media communications in the second language is not a situation in which a bilingual feels the need to assert themselves through their first language. In fact, respondent B told that they have occasionally started to communicate in Swedish during customer service encounters simply because they also speak Swedish.

Personal preference may be partly related to perceived social exclusion. Social exclusion is a subjective phenomenon, and therefore proficiency in a second language (often the majority language in this context) does not mean that a person cannot still experience social exclusion (Zheng et al., 2021). Respondent D was the only one to report that they had experienced social exclusion due to communication language.

"--otherwise, you feel yourself quite excluded your whole life…that the Swedish language is actively left out. So, you have always felt very much like an outsider."

There are a number of factors that mediate social exclusion, which may explain why the rest of the respondents did not mention having experienced social exclusion because of the language of communications. If a bilingual's first language is a minority language in their society, this may increase the risk of feeling socially excluded (Bhatia and Ritchie, 2013). Linguistic identity and proficiency also impact the risk (Musgrave and Bradshaw, 2014). Finally, strong links to the ethnocultural communities of both languages mediate the risk. Respondents A, B, and E also exhibited an increased risk of experiencing social exclusion because respondents A and B have the

minority language as their first language, respondent B identifies linguistically as Swedish-speaking, and respondent E's dominant ethnocultural community was in another country. However, compared to respondent D, these respondents' linguistic identity (respondents A and E), language proficiency (respondent B) and ties to both ethnocultural communities (respondents A, B, and E) mediate their risk.

Social exclusion of one group always occurs in relation to another group (Nyqvist et al., 2021). Respondent D had experienced social exclusion due to the language of communication on social media in relation to the Finnish-speaking majority, and possibly even to the Swedish-speaking Finns who are less at risk due to various factors, such as respondents A, B, and E.

"There is a huge difference…I am that person who is like I can [Finnish] yes, but it is always a little bit like a knife in the heart you know when you feel like you are being reminded that hey you are not as important as we [Finnish-speakers]".

Although respondent D did not directly refer to police social media communications, let alone the social media communications of the Southwestern Finland PD, as contributors to their feelings of social exclusion, respondent D nevertheless commented on how police social media communications can scale down social exclusion.

"--these kinds of small things like writing an Instagram-post in both languages…it feels immediately like 'yay okay we are one', we are not like separated so it is…very important."

Although a person may experience exclusion, this does not mean that cohesion cannot exist (Musgrave and Bradshaw, 2014). Whilst the lack of bilingual social media communications may make to some Swedish-speaking customers feel that the police are not as inclusive as they should be, it does not necessarily mean that these individuals perceive the police as an authority that does not serve and protect them as citizens.

Respondent D's remark relates to the earlier section on the role of police's social media communications and language choice in being considerate of all customers. However, it is also important to note that for these respondents, the inclusion of Swedish has more to do with it being a bonus that makes the communications feel more welcoming to the Swedish-speakers in general, rather than something that makes them personally feel excluded from the communications or the information. If the respondents were customers with little or no knowledge of Finnish, the social exclusion would be much more closely related to the necessity-aspect and exclusion from information.

5.2.4 Contextual awareness and inclusion

Possible perceived social exclusion is not only related to whether a language is used in police social media communications, but also to when it is used.

> "--Just typical posts…the kind of general things that you already write in Finnish, they are of course interesting…to read in Swedish as well."

> "Definitely those kinds of serious [situations] but also some nice news, like positive [ones]…." – Respondent D

The use of Swedish only for certain types of posts may reduce the level of inclusiveness. As Villegas and Marin (2022) found in their study of online brand communities, the higher the degree of adaptation for minority groups, the more legitimate the brand was perceived to be. While police social media communications do not necessarily require a higher degree of adaptation than simply translating the content, the level of adaptation in this context could be seen in terms of the type of content that is published in both languages. Publishing a wider variety of content in Swedish, may help to make the communications, and the police, perceived as more inclusive, and possibly even more legitimate.

However, when Swedish should or could be used in police communications on social media communications, is not only related to mediating the possibility of Swedish-speaking customers experiencing social exclusion due to communication language, but also to contextual awareness. The importance of context for the language choice was something that respondent E highlighted several times during their interview.

> "--it is really important to talk about context quality, meaning what is the context of the post, what is it…you are trying to say or communicate through this post. Especially on social media it is very important…that there is a context for where [to what kind of customers] you post."

Respondent E went on to say that they think language is important, but that it is not absolutely necessary to have both languages in all situations on social media. With the exception of respondent E, the other respondents expressed that in an ideal situation a bilingual police department would communicate everything on social media in both languages.

> "--if it would be like that that every post is always in Finnish and Swedish that would really be optimal…" – Respondent B

> "Well, I definitely think…that everything definitely should be in both [languages]…" – Respondent D

However, the respondents also recognised that there could be many reasons why the police, and Southwestern Finland PD, cannot necessarily always ensure that both languages are used on social

media. Thus, even though respondent E was the only one who explicitly referred to context, the other respondents also implied that it is important to be aware of the context of social media posts. Furthermore, based on the respondents' answers, context can refer to situations, target customers, and even the different social media channels.

"--if it is something that everyone should understand then [the post] should be in Swedish too." – Respondent C

"So definitely [the things] that…concern everyone in both [languages] and then the kind of smaller incidents maybe do not have to be in all languages." – Respondent D

***

"--maybe it is more just that that [if] it is about the archipelago…then it is nice that [the post] is in both Finnish and Swedish…it can be a bit regional." – Respondent B

"If it concerns a specific municipality that is 100% Finnish-speaking, maybe you do not need to in that case use the Swedish language in those posts." – Respondent E

"…if you think that Swedish-speaking Finns maybe do not…benefit from the information then it maybe isn't so important." – Respondent B

***

"But I think the most important on Twitter is that if something serious has happened the information comes quickly…I don't miss the Swedish information as long as there is some information." – Respondent B

When comparing the factors mentioned by the respondents with those that influence the PD's decision on language choice (Saarenoja and Tammio, 2022), only the level of comprehension of the post (i.e., which area(s) or how broad a phenomenon the post concerns) was referred to by both parties. However, as mentioned earlier, the threshold for publishing on Twitter in Swedish is higher because the content cannot be edited once it has been published, and therefore grammatical errors or incorrect wording cannot be corrected, which undermines the quality of the content (Saarenoja and Tammio, 2022). Thus, respondent B's point about contextual awareness when sharing information on Twitter relates to this factor.

Respondent A was the only one who did not really distinguish between different contexts regarding the use of Swedish because as mentioned, they thought that in general Swedish should always be included in the posts. However, they said that the Swedish content does not have to match the Finnish content perfectly.

"--Finnish is allowed to be stronger [on police's social media] or be more visible…"

Again, the choice of language is not necessarily always about whether Swedish is used or not, but rather when it is used. In addition to enabling the inclusion of Swedish-speaking customers, especially when the communication also concerns them, contextual awareness relates to aspects such as resources, which are discussed in section 5.4.3. Even if the context of the post does not always necessarily require the use of both Finnish and Swedish, it is important to consider that the more extensive inclusion of Swedish may lead to higher customer satisfaction with the police's social media communications.

5.3 Willingness to communicate in a second language

The previous sections have addressed the factors (perceived L2 proficiency, communication behaviour and political considerations) that help to determine each respondent's WTC in L2. Even though the respondents expressed numerous views on the use of language in police social media communication - some more positive, some more negative - their willingness to communicate in a second language can help to interpret how and why their personal perceptions of the Southwest Finland Police social media communication (see section 5.4) are what they are. Bilingualism and/or proficiency in a second language do not automatically translate into a willingness to use both languages (Holmqvist et. al., 2014). However, based on the analysis of the respondents, all of them show a general willingness to communicate in a second language.

Again, willingness to communicate in a second language describes a person's readiness to enter a discourse in a second language at a particular time with a specific person. Thus, WTC in L2 and its level can vary depending on the situation and the interlocutor (MacIntyre et al., 1998). The communication context in which personal perceptions are studied comprises of the following elements that influence WTC in L2:

- the discourse here refers to social media communications, and even more specifically receiving social media communications (i.e., 'to communicate' is rather 'to receive communications')
- the second language refers to Finnish (although, strictly speaking it is not the L2 of every respondent)
- the specific person is the Southwestern Finland Police Department.

Respondents C and E exhibited a very high willingness to communicate in a second language. This is mainly due to the fact that these respondents expressed that it does not really matter to them

personally whether they are communicated to with Swedish or Finnish. It should be noted that, strictly speaking, WTC in L2 in the case of respondents C and E refers to Swedish, as this is their second language. On the other hand, these respondents also showed a very high willingness to communicate in Swedish which is why their official second language is not very relevant to the level of WTC in L2.

Respondent B exhibited a high level of WTC in L2. Even though respondent B has Swedish as their first language and even linguistically identify themselves as a Swedish-speaking person, from a personal perspective they were not very rigid about receiving police's social media communications in Swedish. This may be partially due to the fact that respondent B expressed satisfaction with the amount of Swedish content. Moreover, they even mentioned on a few occasions that they do not personally require or expect content in Swedish.

Finally, respondents A and D exhibited a moderate level of WTC in the second language. Both had rather strong opinions about the lack of Swedish and the extent to which it should be included in their opinion. Respondent A was not very happy with the amount of Swedish on the PD's social media and was hoping to see more of it. Respondent D was happy to see many posts in Swedish, but at the same time pointed out how the choice of language can contribute to either exclusion or inclusion of Swedish speakers. Neither expressed that Swedish content should prevail over Finnish content, but Swedish should be used as well. However, it should also be acknowledged that both respondents explained why they did not follow the PD's social media and their reasons were not related to language use, which moderates the level of WTC in L2.

"--I think that there were not so many posts lately so that led to me not starting to follow them." – Respondent A

"I could think of following them, but I don't because I'm not personally so super interested…" – Respondent D

The statements and perceptions that the respondents held in relation to language choice and social media communications at a more general level may be influenced by their overall display of WTC in L2 or any of the individual factors that influence their willingness, but the three levels presented above, and their potential influence on perceptions, should be considered only in relation to the social media communications of the Southwestern Finland PD.

5.4 Customer perceptions of Southwestern Finland Police Department's social media communications

Only respondent B followed the Southwestern Finland PD on both Instagram and Twitter at the time of the interviews. Respondent C followed the PD on Twitter. Thus, respondents A, D, and E's perceptions on the social media communications were predominantly based on the exemplary posts presented during the interviews. Respondent A and D, however, disclosed that they had browsed the Instagram-channel prior to the interview in order to familiarise themselves with the communications. Considering that this study revolves around the perceptions of the PD's social media communications, it would have been ideal to have more respondents with prior experience on the PD's social media communications, which would have help them to provide more elaborated responses for some of the questions. At the same time, it may also be beneficial to have both followers and non-followers in order to gain a more holistic understanding of the Swedish-speaking customers' perceptions. Individuals who follow the PD on social media (and have done so for many years) may be more inclined towards positive perceptions because a) they have voluntarily chosen to follow the channel(s) and b) they may have developed a friendly relationship with the PD through the social media communications. The inclination to more positive perceptions also relates to the different stages of perception formation (Puustinen, 2017). Respondents A, D, and E based their perceptions on first impressions (pure perceptions), whereas respondent B and C have formed much more lasting perceptions that are difficult to change.

In general, the respondents, whether they followed the PD's channels or not, seemed to be satisfied with the communications and have (or form) generally positive perceptions of the Southwestern Finland PD's social media communications.

"--I like both …everything works on those channels…I mean I think it is really nice to get a glimpse of…the valuable work the police do…" – Respondent B

"I think both [channels] looked really nice, I could totally think of following the police now that I have seen that it is for real informative…so very nice." – Respondent D

"--I think they [the channels] look good…to be totally honest." – Respondent E

The respondents' positive perceptions were driven by a variety of aspects. The respondents expressed appreciation for the amount of informative content about current events and, for example, safety that is featured on the PD's social media channels.

"--[Twitter] is useful and matter-of-fact I would say…what is at issue is topical." – Respondent C

"--[the channels] are such that I check carefully…because I get current information or…maybe not always current information, but the kind of new information…and then the kind of practical things…they remind of things…now the pupils start school, be careful or remember reflectors." – Respondent B

Respondent D and E found the channels to have a professional feel. Furthermore, respondent E was satisfied with the way information was provided and said that it is obvious that the social media channels are managed by professionals.

"--information management…it looks good, you can clearly see that…they have communication coordinators there and that they know what they are doing, and they know what they are posting…"

Besides the professionalism, respondent D was very complimentary about the atmosphere the PD seemed to foster on their social media, which they thought was a great characteristic because the police do not always evoke necessarily warm feelings.

"--[the social media] seems to have quite a light-hearted atmosphere, they have tried to use a little bit of like humour which I think is nice, that maybe…encourages people to have more contact with the police in some way…"

Social media is an important medium for reducing misunderstandings and prejudices (Yu and Yuan, 2018), and based on respondent D's remark, people may have some prejudices against the police, for example, based on experiences during traffic surveillance, which is one of the most common ways that citizens come into contact with the police in Finland (Puustinen, 2017). However, through social media the police are able to present themselves in different ways than they may be able to do during assignments and operations (Walby and Wilkinson, 2021). It seems that, at least in the eyes of respondent D, the police's social media communication manages to do both. Respondent D continued that they also appreciate that some of the Instagram posts seemed to be aimed at reaching and informing younger people about different issues.

"It is nice that there are a little bit of emojis here and there…those [posts] you showed feel like they are there to inform younger people also…it is very nice that [they] try to reach out to them for real, and teach them hey how you are allowed to do, how you are not allowed to do…"

The only respondent who did not have an overtly positive perception of the PD's social media communication was Respondent A. While they thought the posts were interesting, and the PD also had some very good content, the PD was a little too passive in posting to their liking, at least on Instagram.

"'Yeah, they are interesting posts…I like the [Instagram] posts but it should just be more active…"

– Respondent A

The respondents also perceived the two social media channels to be somewhat different in their communications and appearances. However, only Respondent B was able to really elaborate on their perceptions of the communications on each channel, while the other respondents could generally describe how they perceived the communications, but were not able to give very detailed answers regarding the channels. It was therefore somewhat of a disadvantage on this occasion not to follow the PD on both channels. In any case, most respondents perceived Twitter as the more serious of the two channels, where posts more often contained current and even real-time information and updates.

> "--Twitter, it looked maybe a bit more serious, but there was also a picture about an…event which was like 'hey something's going on' so that was quite nice as well…" – Respondent D

Respondents B and C described the communication on Twitter as relevant, useful and topical. Respondent C noted that most of the content on Twitter tends to be of a more tragic nature, but that it is always nice to see more cheerful tweets, for example about bicycle auctions. Respondent C also noted that it is always pleasing to see pictures on Twitter, even though it is not very common.

> "I have to say that always when there is a picture with like…there was one…picture of a passport…that was something that was relevant for me so I would right way like to see what it is that they say under [the picture].

Respondent B described Twitter as often focusing on acute and urgent things, such as an ongoing traffic accident. Thus, respondent B said that they use the two channels for different purposes.

> "--they have some totally different functions those two channels…I consider myself to use them for a bit different purpose."

Having followed both channels for a longer period of time, respondent B was able to identify how the communicative purposes might be different. The two channels do indeed follow different communication strategies to some extent (Saarenoja and Tammio, 2022). Twitter focuses on operational communication about events, assignments, and so forth that are unfolding, while Instagram relies on visual narrative and longer content that provides more in-depth background and information on diverse topics (ibid.).

Respondents A, D and E, who based their perceptions on the exemplary posts, did not elaborate much on their perceptions regarding Twitter communications specifically. Respondent A mentioned that they do not even use Twitter personally. In addition, the short posts, which are mostly in plain text and matter-of-fact, might make it more difficult to form elaborate perceptions of the communications based on only a few screenshots.

However, it seemed that the respondents were better able to elaborate on their perceptions of communications on Instagram. As mentioned, respondents A and D said that they had browsed through the profile before the interview, so they already had some awareness of what is communicated on Instagram and how. Furthermore, the content on Instagram is often in a longer format and the captions include emojis that help make the texts more visual, which may make it easier to form perceptions of the communications even with limited exposure. The screenshots presented did not include any visuals (images, videos) from the posts, but respondents A and D had certainly seen some of those when browsing the profile.

Similar to Twitter, most respondents found the communication on Instagram to be informative, but compared to Twitter, Instagram was seen as a more informal and light-hearted channel. Respondent B said that the communications on Instagram go to a grassroots level and that they are informative but in a nice way. Respondent D echoed this sentiment to some extent.

"--it is not like…patronising…not like 'you must do like this' but like 'take this into consideration' and that 'we encourage you'…" – Respondent B

"--the Instagram posts are really nice…it feels like the atmosphere on Instagram is good." – Respondent D

The perceptions of Instagram as a more light-hearted channel may be explained by the fact that the topics covered on Instagram tend to be less serious than on Twitter. For example, information about traffic accidents or potentially grave assignments are rarely communicated on the Instagram feed (Instagram, 2022c).

According to respondent B, images play an important role on Instagram, which is in line with the emphasis on visual narrative by the police on Instagram (Saarenoja and Tammio, 2022). In addition, visual materials may also contribute to the more light-hearted atmosphere. In respondent B's eyes, the PD has managed to choose good images that make her want to read the text in the post as well.

"--there are maybe pictures of police [officers] and you see police cars, or they have been to the archipelago to patrol so pictures from there [are posted], I think that is nice."

Respondent C echoed this, saying that it is enjoyable to see the police display their day-to-day work, and that Instagram is a good channel for communicating even more informal content.

"It is nice if you show…a police [officer] in the picture so you can see that they are not scary…and what their work is about." – Respondent C

Interestingly, respondent D also mentioned how the use of emojis (as there were no pictures in the sample posts) can be used by the police to reduce the 'scary factor' and show that the police are not

all serious or threatening. This aspect of again relates to the power of social media to reduce misunderstandings (Yu and Yuan, 2018) and to engage in communications that convey certain perceptions about the police.

Respondent A commented that the police could share even more about their daily operations and duties on Instagram (to the extent that it is possible and allowed), as these are something that many people would be interested in. Respondent A also said that posting more often could be balanced by making the posts shorter. Respondent C had a similar thought regarding the content.

> "--short posts---that are informative, and they do not need to be gloomy, I mean they can be fun too."

The PD is more active in sharing information about current tasks, such as traffic surveillance, on their stories (Saarenoja and Tammio, 2022), but since stories as content were not considered as part of this study, respondent A's comment concerned the PD's Instagram feed.

5.4.1 Perceptions about language use

When respondents were asked to describe the social media communications of the Southwestern Finland PD or, alternatively, to share their thoughts on the exemplary posts, only respondents A and E commented on the use of Swedish in the posts.

> "Namely, it looks good that you do [social media communications] in both languages as much as possible…and [they] do it quite well at least what I could read." – Respondent E

> "--the amount of Swedish is minimal…" – Respondent A

Respondents B, C and D elaborated on their perceptions of the use of Swedish when specifically asked about it. This is fairly surprising given the respondents' willingness to communicate and especially their views on language choice/use discussed in the earlier sections. On the other hand, given that they were overall willing to communicate in their second language, it may be that other aspects of social media communications were more important to them personally when it came to their perceptions of communication.

However, respondents B, C, and D also had comments about the use of Swedish on the PD's social media channels. In general, the respondents were happy to see the PD using Swedish and expressed that it is positive to see posts published in both languages.

> "--there were actually very many posts in both languages so that feels very inclusive in this case and that is very good." – Respondent D

"I think it is very good that they still do [posts in Swedish] and they should continue to do it…" – Respondent E

"--I think that there is a lot of Swedish…I am very happy [with the language use]." – Respondent B

Respondent D expressed that the PD's social media communications generally felt welcoming as both Finnish and Swedish were used in the posts.

"--it is very nice that they for real think about everyone and show that they welcome Swedish-speaking Finns also."

At the same time, the respondents encouraged the PD to use Swedish even more frequently, as the PD seems to have good prerequisites for using the Swedish.

"--if it is possible that you could get some of the posts a bit more often in Swedish…their language is anyway so Finnish-Swedish…that the language is well-written in Swedish." – Respondent B

"--they should put more effort into being more active…in doing Swedish posts." – Respondent A

Respondent B did not specify what type of posts they were referring to, but respondent A had some thoughts on what type of content the PD could work towards publishing more often in Swedish as well.

"--the topics could be about…something else, meaning the topics written about in Swedish could be the same as in Finnish. Write more generally about something."

Respondent B noted that although the PD has a lot of posts in Swedish, they are mainly on Instagram and not so often on Twitter. In addition to the higher threshold for publishing in Swedish, the larger number of people who have the responsibility to post on Twitter (Saarenoja and Tammio, 2022) and the immediacy of the platform (Catalá-Oltra and Penalva-Verdú, 2019) could be additional reasons for the lack of Swedish tweets. However, respondent B clarified that they do not necessarily miss Swedish content on Twitter, but rather noticed the difference because they themselves work with social media for a bilingual organisation.

In Finland, bilingual authorities are required to demonstrate to the public that they use both national languages (Oikeusministeriö, 2004). Undoubtedly, the Southwestern Finland PD demonstrates the use of both Finnish and Swedish in its social media. However, the differences between the respondents' perceptions of how much Swedish was used and whether they perceived it to be adequate enough illustrate that the notion of 'demonstrating to the public the use of both languages' may also be very subjective from a customer perspective.

On the one hand, it may have been reasonable to expect that these bilingual customers would have had more to say about the use of Swedish in the Southwestern Finland PD's social media and that

language may have played a more significant role in their perceptions, as many of the respondents were quite vocal about the inclusion of Swedish and how the police can help to promote Swedish in its social media. On the other hand, some of those earlier statements could also partly be true for this particular police department. Nevertheless, it is misleading to assume that minorities would have a problematic relationship with the police from the outset (Machura et al., 2020) and that this relationship would in turn negatively influence their perceptions of the police or their communications.

When asked whether they would describe the social media communications of the Southwestern Finland PD as effective, trustworthy, understandable, impartial, and inclusive, respondents A, B, C, and D answered that they found these adjectives were appropriate. Given how respondents B, C and D perceived the communications overall, this is view is quite suitable.

However, respondent A's overall perception was quite neutral, and they were not entirely satisfied with the PD's use of Swedish in their social media. Therefore, it is somewhat surprising that they still considered the social media communications as impartial, inclusive and even effective. Respondent A did not elaborate on the reasons behind their assessment of why the adjectives were appropriate, so it is not possible to draw conclusions on how they arrived at this opinion despite their views especially regarding the use of Swedish in social media.

Respondent E was a little more hesitant in their answer, as they could only base it on the exemplary posts presented during the interview. Respondent E stated that the communications were understandable, and they seemed impartial to the extent that some posts tried to include the Swedish-speaking customers, for example by adding Swedish flag emojis to indicate the use of Swedish in the post. Respondent E also pointed out that the trustworthiness of the communication would probably depend on the general trust that people have in the police.

"--I think there absolutely is this kind of overarching trustworthiness to the Finnish police and what they do…no matter if they do it on social media or not, so I think there is absolute trust for the Finnish police and their…function."

It seems that the language of the social media communications did not influence the trustworthiness of the communications among the respondents, even though they had different linguistic identities and even cultural identities. This is similar to what Alvarez (2020) also found among bilingual American customers in relation to advertisement language.

On the other hand, it is not necessarily mutually exclusive to have opinions about the use of Swedish on social media and its necessity, while at the same time having positive perceptions about the

communications. This is where the WTC in L2 and the different levels may come into play. Very high-level respondents C and E and high-level respondent B all had positive perceptions of the communications. Respondent A's moderate level of WTC in L2 may have led them to have rather neutral perceptions of the social media communications, which may also have been influenced by their views on the somewhat insufficient amount of Swedish content. On the other hand, the level of WTC in L2 cannot fully justify the nature of the perceptions. Respondent D, who had a moderate level of WTC in L2, also had very positive perceptions of the social media communications.

In this case, it does not seem that the choice of communication language had as much influence on perceptions as what was communicated. Thus, other aspects than language may have a greater impact on perceptions, at least if the respondents have Finnish proficiency and are willing to communicate in this language. The generally high level of trust in the police among citizens in Finland (Machura et al., 2020) may also contribute to positive perceptions, even if there is some room for further improvement in terms of the inclusion of Swedish in police's social media. At the same time, beyond the respondents' personal perceptions of the social media communications, the respondents can still recognise the importance of communicating in both languages in the region of a bilingual police department, as this can in increase their effectiveness and improve sense of belonging (Musgrave and Bradshaw, 2014) among Swedish-speaking customers.

The respondents were even asked whether language plays a role in their perceptions of the police outside the context of social media communication. Respondents B and D linked their answers to social media communication saying that the inclusion of both languages there positively influenced their perceptions of the police. Respondent C said that in their opinion it is generally positive when the police use two languages. On the other hand, respondent E said that for them personally, language does not really play a role, but that they have a positive perception of the Finnish police altogether.

"--me [coming to Finland]…from Sweden… I have always seen…the Finnish police as…Finnish-speaking…the Finnish police take it very seriously to be able to…respond in Swedish…so I take a very positive stance when it comes to the Finnish police, how they have taken care of these kind of [language-related] things."

5.4.2 Most important functions and characteristics of police social media communications

"--there has absolutely been an improvement on how governmental organisations…and above all the police…reach people through social media." – Respondent E

The perceptions of the Southwestern Finland Police Department's social media communications can be connected to a more general discussion about the main functions and characteristics of police social media communications from the citizens' perspective. Two core functions could be identified from the respondents' answers: to inform and to reach as many people (customers) as possible.

All respondents shared, to some extent, the view that the main function of police social media communications, and often those of other governmental organisations, is to inform citizens about various issues and occurrences.

"[The social media communications] should be informative and matter-of-fact…" – Respondent A

"The responsibility of governmental organisations is to inform…" – Respondent B

"--overall social media is about information…" – Respondent E

The type of information the police share on their social media, according to respondents, can range from information about a traffic accident so that people can re-route, to a post about what the police have been up to on a typical summer evening. The information does not always have to be about something that is happening at the moment, but the police can also use social media to share information about general matters that people may not be aware of for one reason or another. Moreover, not all information has to be relevant to people's safety.

"--most often if is unfortunately so that when it concerns the police an accident or something has happened…" – Respondent C

"--they have also…these kinds of nice-to-know posts, for example…they had the bicycle police which are like fun posts…you do nothing with the info, but they are like 'mood booster'. So, it is also nice to see that kind of [stuff] and understand that police's tasks and assignments can…be quite different…they can also be like…nice workdays." – Respondent A

The desire of customers to see many types of posts on social media provides an opportunity for the police to present themselves in ways that they may not always be able to do in physical communication settings, and to present their work more comprehensively and to a wider audience. This may also help the police to be perceived as more approachable and, as mentioned earlier, to dilute perceptions of the police as scary. The informative nature of social media communication was valued by respondents, but by including many types of informative posts into their social media, the police can encourage more positive attitudes towards them among the public. As argued by Schivinski and Dabrowski (2016), it seems that the social media communications created by the police organisations have the opportunity to influence customer perceptions in a positive way.

For the police to be able to keep customers informed, it is important that this information actually reaches the intended recipients. It is not enough to simply post information on police social media channels and expect it to reach all (relevant) customers. How well the police reach people is a matter of using the right channels and the right language (see 5.4.3) depending on the situation and the target audience. Social media has the potential to reach a wide range of customers (Yu and Yuan, 2018), but at the same time it can make it more difficult to reach the right people in some situations.

"The most important thing is that…the information is correct…and then just the right channels so that it reaches people…" – Respondent C

"--that you reach as many as possible…that you do not like see social media anymore as…kind of youthful aspect of society or that it is only young people [there]" – Respondent E

"--in certain cases, it is very important that you reach people…"- Respondent B

Many respondents highlighted the length of the social media posts, especially the Instagram captions, as tweets are short by default due to the limited number of characters. In general, posts should be relatively short so that people have the patience to read them.

"--if it is too much information it is a bit heavy like people do not bother to read certain posts…" – Respondent B

"--I would rather…look for more information via link…if there is a lot of text it is a bit like do you bother to read…if it is something that I am specifically interested in then I read…" – Respondent C

In addition to keeping the amount of information sufficiently limited, there are other important characteristics. The information provided on social media should be topical, timely, and truthful.

"--the information is correct and…timed right…that it is accurate, that it is the whole truth they tell that is the most important…clear and…true and then the rightly timed." – Respondent C

"--I expect more of those informative like factual posts." – Respondent A

Moreover, police social media communications should be clear and explicit, so people understand what is being communicated to them. Thus, posts should be easy to read, and as respondent C pointed out, keeping sentences in the texts short enough is one way to help achieve this.

"It should be really easy to read like…very clear and straightforward what they want to communicate." – Respondent D

Respondents also commented on the importance of images, particularly on Instagram, as they can be an effective way of attracting customers' attention and complementing the information shared in text.

"It is very good to use pictures…for example [with] police's colours…and then a header or two sentences or something so that you actually…quickly see that ok now this is something important. In the caption you can then elaborate further…what it is about." – Respondent D

"--I think that there should be a good picture and informative text…it is something that people bother to read, they react to." – Respondent B

"And then just that…pictures…or videos…they tell more than 1000 words…" – Respondent C

Visual narratives do not only make social media communications more enjoyable for the customers, but through images and videos, the police can curate certain appeals and perceptions they want to convey to the customers (Walby and Wilkinson, 2021).

While it is important for the police to use their expertise and authority to ensure the truthfulness and trustworthiness of the information they share on social media, they should not do so in a patronising or judgmental manner.

"The authority [communicated through social media] does not need to be a negative one, but rather the police should be seen as an authority that benefits the people and benefits the state."
– Respondent E

"--keep people informed…and not point fingers at people…" – Respondent D

5.4.3 Factors influencing language use on police social media communications

During the interviews, the respondents brought up several additional aspects that influence the choice of language for police communications on social media and whether Swedish should or could be included.

Although all respondents encouraged the use of Swedish and even considered it the police's responsibility, respondents A and B brought up the importance of publishing Swedish content in proper language.

"--if you write in Swedish…it is really important that the person writing the post can Swedish so that there aren't many spelling mistakes or other errors because that irritates the Swedish-speakers…you do not have to write many sentences…but they should be correct language-wise" – Respondent A

"--I think the most important thing is that the quality is good; it is better to have fewer posts in Swedish and make them good than have everything always in Swedish and have bad language in them." – Respondent B

Both respondents also expressed that if the language of the Swedish social media posts was not enough well-written, they would prefer not to receive the communications in Swedish at all.

"--if…you do it a bit Google-translate [style] or a bit haphazardly then then it would have been better without the Swedish translation." – Respondent B

"--then it is maybe better to not write in Swedish at all…" – Respondent A

This indicates that in a bilingual communication situation, the interlocutor with higher L2 confidence is likely to voluntarily use their second language (MacIntyre et al., 1998). As respondents A and B are able to understand communication in Finnish just as well, they would rather use this language than have the police communicate in their second language and compromise the quality of the communications. It could even be argued that receiving social media communications in their first language may in some cases increase the respondents' willingness to communicate in a second language, which is rather absurd. The other respondents did not indicate whether the quality of the language was important to them, but it could be suggested that if a bilingual person has sufficient skills to understand communication in their second language, they may prefer good quality communication in their L2 to poor quality communication in their L1.

The quality of the communication language has been found to influence how bilingual recipients perceive communication (Alvarez, 2020). Among bilingual Hispanics, language purity and correctness in communication were highly valued (ibid.). This was also the case for respondents A and B, to the extent that they emphasised the use of correct language. However, the quality of the language did not influence their perceptions of the social media communications of the Southwestern Finland PD. Rather, they brought it up as a general consideration regarding the topic of language choice.

Respondent C touched on this issue when they noted that sometimes organisations do not have strict enough language requirements to ensure that social media communications could be done in Swedish, let alone in a high-quality way.

"--it's a shame that there doesn't exist those kinds of language requirement that should exist…"

Respondent A echoed this by saying that the police should probably have at least one person responsible for communication who can communicate in Swedish as well. Writing content using high-quality language (whether Swedish, Finnish or another language) is important because good language contributes to the understandability of communications and may also make them appear more professional, trustworthy, and legitimate. At the same time, the language must allow for a

certain degree of humanity, because the police officers involved in the content creation are not professionals in communication or linguistics (Saarenoja and Tammio, 2022).

The internal language requirements of organisations are beyond the scope of this study, but the comments of respondents C and A relate to the findings of Catalá-Oltra and Penalva-Verdú (2019) on bilingual online communications in the Valencia region. In areas where the majority of the population was Spanish-speaking, communications in the majority language dominated, as officials knew that citizens would understand the communications. On the other hand, in areas where the proportion of majority and minority language speakers was more balanced, officials usually had sufficient resources to translate content into the other language as well. The fact that the region of the Southwestern Finland PD is predominantly Finnish-speaking may to some extent ease the pressure to communicate in Swedish on social media, but it may also have an impact on the resources available to do so.

Some of the respondents also recognised that the lack of resources may be a factor that influences the amount of Swedish used on the police's social media, even in bilingual regions. Respondents B, C, and E mentioned that even if the police should use as much Swedish as possible in their social media, it may not always be a matter of choice. The resources the respondents referred to were not only employees with sufficient knowledge of Swedish, but also time and money.

"--often it is like you save money, you save manpower, and you simply save time by not using several languages in these kinds of communication contexts." – Respondent E

"--if there aren't enough resources to do it in Swedish…I don't know…it is surely the same thing with the police that you should but…I can imagine that it depends on the lack of resources." – Respondent C

"--that every post would always be in Finnish and Swedish…would be optimal, but I don't know if there are enough resources there for that. I know that it's not always so simple…if you want to have information out quickly during the same day, maybe there isn't anyone who can tell the information in Swedish so…maybe that kind of requirement…cannot be fulfilled." – Respondent B

Considering the respondents' views on the most important functions of police social media communications and the actors influencing language use, there is a potential for value conflicts (de Graaf and Meijer, 2018). Unlike in the case of the Dutch police, the value conflicts in the Finnish context do not arise from a mismatch between the core characteristics of social media and police communication (ibid.), but rather from the Swedish-speaking customers' expectations towards police social media communications and the factors influencing the ability to communicate bilingually on social media. Similar to the Dutch police, a potential value conflict is between effectiveness and

efficiency (ibid.). Effective communication requires that the communication reaches the intended persons and that these persons are able to understand the communication, so that the communication can fulfil its purpose. As discussed, not all bilinguals, let alone monolingual Swedish-speakers, are necessarily able to understand the police's social media communications in Finnish. However, the police do not always have the time or ability to ensure that what is communicated in Finnish is also communicated in Swedish. In addition, communication in Swedish may promote inclusiveness and impartiality as well as a sense of belonging among the Swedish-speaking customers, but in some cases, it may be more important for the police to get important information out quickly, even if this means communicating it only in Finnish. In this case, the value conflict is between inclusiveness and efficiency. A third possible value conflict is between lack of resources and lawfulness, in the sense that the police must comply with the Language Act and certain language requirements, but not having sufficient resources to communicate in Swedish may limit the ability to do so properly.

Interestingly, respondents seemed to have higher expectations of bilingual communication and the use of Swedish in relation to customer service providers and traditional service encounters than in relation to social media. When respondents were asked about their expectations of bilingual organisations' communication, only respondent B mentioned of their expectations outside the context of traditional customer service.

> "--when it comes to communication, if you highlight that you are a bilingual organisation or a police authority, then I do expect that that the communication also…would be [done] so that you see that messages are externally communicated in both languages."

All respondents expected to be able to communicate in either Finnish or Swedish with bilingual organisations, but the other respondents did not state off the top of their heads express that they would expect these organisations to communicate in Swedish beyond traditional customer service, such as on social media

> "If an organisation alleges to be bilingual then I do expect that I can take care of my business in either Finnish or Swedish and then I do expect that the person in customer service actually can both of those languages" – Respondent A

> "--it is very important that everything is in Finnish and Swedish…For me it is important that if I am customer…I am very happy if someone notices that we have spoken Swedish with the girls [daughters] if I have been to town but I do not require service in Swedish." – Respondent C

> "Well if you say that you are bilingual…then I expect that I can without any problems get help in Swedish as well. If I call somewhere then I want that someone can attend to me in Swedish…if you say you are bilingual, then you should be able to get service in Swedish." – Respondent D

"--language-wise I would say that there are not many problems…I can both languages on a native language level…it has been really clear [where Swedish can be used] I would say. Sometimes…official or for example like businesses…are more Finnish-speaking…but then everything that concerns diplomacy…has always been in Swedish…never had any problems, it has then maybe more been about the official themselves [but] language-wise it has been perfect I would say." – Respondent E

One factor that may explain why the respondents seemed to place more importance on the possibility to communicate in Swedish with a bilingual organisation in traditional customer service situations compared to social media is the perceived level of control (Holmqvist et al., 2014). As social media communication is less time-sensitive and does not require dialogue, the threshold for communicating in a second language may be lower. In addition, Swedish-speaking Finns tend to switch to Finnish when communicating in a linguistically mixed group (Broermann, 2007). Since the social media communications of the police, for example in the region of Southwestern Finland, are aimed at linguistically mixed customers, it could be argued that bilingual customers may be more open to receiving communications in the majority language. Bilingual authorities have an extensive obligation to provide services in both languages (Heittola, 2017), which may also explain the prevalence of physical customer service over social media in the minds of the respondents. However, as social media is an extension of police customer service, it is debatable whether the same obligation should apply to social media communication as well.

Finally, respondents E and D pointed out that effective police communication on social media should use appropriate language in order to reach as many people as possible and to meet the aim of keeping customers informed. Appropriate language may refer to the use of Swedish or another language, but it may also refer to the use of the type of language that appeals to customers who are part of different demographic groups.

"--if the information shall be noticed…it is very important to be able to…reach as many as possible and that means that…you should use as many languages as possible." – Respondent E

"--depending on what is communicated, you should use the right language for that specifically." – Respondent D

As mentioned earlier, respondent D said that it could be viable to use emojis and humour in police social media communications (when appropriate) to reach younger people. Social media is indeed an effective way for the police to reach even younger citizens (Koponen, 2012), but as respondent E mentioned earlier, it is no longer exclusively used by younger people, which can sometimes make it more challenging for the police to target their communications effectively, for example on Instagram (Saarenoja and Tammio, 2022).

"--for older age groups, it can be difficult to keep up when there are so many different styles and languages…so it is maybe really important to stick to one or depending on what you do [communicate]…" – Respondent D

As respondent E noted earlier, the effectiveness of the police social media communications may depend on whether they are also trustworthy, understandable, impartial, and inclusive. These objectives can be achieved by communicating in a way that is perceived as such by different customer groups, beyond the use of Swedish. Bauman et al. (2005) found that it is important to understand how bilinguals process communications differently in their two languages in order to communicate as effectively as possible. However, a similar approach could be adopted to other groups and their processing of different types of communication in order to improve the overall effectiveness of police social media communications.

6. Discussion

6.1 The perceptions of the Swedish-speaking customers versus the communication objectives of the Southwestern Finland Police Department

The Southwestern Finland PD has three main regional objectives that relate to the customer perceptions the PD desires to create through its social media communications (Saarenoja and Tammio, 2022). In addition, the communication should be carried out in accordance with the broader objectives and criteria for police communication. The self-representations of the police on social media contributes to customer perceptions of both the communication and the police authority as a whole (Watson and Kitchen, 2010). However, as perceptions are subjective and influenced by a number of factors, the customer perceptions may not mirror the PD's self-representations. By comparing the communication objectives and intended self-representations with the Swedish-speaking customers' perceptions, one can reflect on how well the PD has succeeded in its social media communications.

The first regional objective of the PD is geographical impartiality, which means that the Southwester Finland's police should be perceived as serving and representing its entire region (Saarenoja and Tammio, 2022). The perception of geographical impartiality may be influenced by the use of language or the prominence of different areas in social media communication. Some respondents referred to the Southwestern Finland PD as 'Turku police' or 'Turku region police' during the interview. Since the respondents associated the police with a region with a significant Swedish-speaking minority, the inclusion of Swedish on social media has the potential to contribute to improved perceptions of geographical impartiality. Through language choice the police can signal that it cares about the whole region, including the Swedish-speaking areas.

The use of the abovementioned terms may be due to the fact that the respondents live in Turku, or because Turku is the largest city in the PD's region (Poliisi.fi, 2022c) and is therefore often given precedence in the visual narrative, for example on Instagram (Instagram, 2022c). However, Turku is only one of the 43 municipalities in the PD's region, so while the respondents may not have perceived the police as particularly geographically impartial, customers outside of Turku or the other bilingual areas could have a different take on the fulfillment of this objective. When respondents discussed the situations and contexts in which Swedish should be used, they mentioned taking into account regional characteristics (for example, the archipelago outside Turku which is predominantly Swedish-speaking). However, in order to turly foster geographical impartiality, the same should be applied to

other areas within the PD's region. This may then imply a possible value conflict for the PD: how to increase the amount of Swedish social media communications and thereby better involve Swedish-speaking customers (who live in a relatively small area within Southwest Finland), while ensuring that this does not result in perceptions of gepgraphical bias or 'favoritism' among the Finnish-speaking customers or those customers in Finnish-speaking municipalities. Apart from the aspect of language choice, the PD could perhaps try to create a somewhat more diverse self-representation on its social media in order to avoid being perceived as the "Turku police".

The next regional communication objective is trustworthiness, which refers to being able to rely on the truthfulness and accuracy of all information. Trustworthiness also contributes to a certain level of objectivity and pertinence (Saarenoja and Tammio, 2022).

> "--I trust on the information that is on social media completely…I think that trustworthiness is surely the most important." – Respondent B

The respondents' perceptions of the trustworthiness of the PD's social media communications have already been discussed in section 5.4.1. All respondents considered the communications to be trustworthy, i.e., they experienced a certain level of satisfaction and credibility in the communication (Khadim et al., 2018). Hence, with this objective in mind, the PD has been successful in translating its self-representation into customer perceptions. Positive brand experiences on social media have been found to have a positive impact on overall brand trust (Yu and Yuan, 2018). Thus, if customers perceive the PD's social media communications as trustworthy, it can be assumed that they are likely to trust the PD overall. Trust is crucial for governmental institutions (Machura et al., 2020), which is why it is very important that customers trust police communications. Then again, general trust in the police authority may also contribute to the perception of communications as trustworthy i.e., the credibility of the source translates into trust in the communication (Alvarez, 2020).

The final regional objective of the PDis to appear approachable. This self-representation is conveyed by occasionally communicating in a more relaxed and light-hearted manner on social media. These posts are intended to evoke positive feelings (Saarenoja and Tammio, 2022). Furthermore, social media allows content to be directed at the recipient, for example by addressing them on a first-name basis, in contrast to press releases, which are much more formal. This more relaxed approach is particularly evident on Instagram, but at times also on Twitter. The approachability is also reinforced by the strategic choice to involve a variety of 'content creators' in the social media communications. These 'content creators' can, for example, contribute to visual material, Swedish captions, or tweets

in verse. Having a 'mishmash' of content that represents the different strengths of different contributors helps the communications to appeal to a broader audience (ibid.).

The approachable appearance and how the police can enforce it was also raised by some respondents. As mentioned earlier, respondent D was very appreciative of the light-hearted atmosphere on Instagram, including the use of humour and fun captions with emojis. Respondent C said that the police could have some fun posts when it is appropriate and that the police become more approachable if they do not take themselves too seriously.

"--I mean if they can laugh at themselves if something happens…they are people, and we are people so…humane news…"

Both respondents said that these factors would help reduce perceptions of the police as scary. However, it may not only be the light-hearted and positive posts that make the police appear more approachable. Respondent B said that sometimes the police also have to communicate about more unfortunate topics because dealing with such things is part of their job.

"--sometimes there are also bad news…if a serious accident or something has happened, but at the same time it is like a little reminder, hey be careful…it is not always just positive things the police do…" – Respondent B

By communicating about shortcomings and unfortunate events or phenomena that may sometimes even weaken the citizens' sense of security, the PD encourages openness in communications (Saarenoja and Tammio, 2022).

Regarding the communication objects for each individual social media channel, to the extent that the respondents were able to elaborate on their perceptions, the perceptions corresponded quite well with the communicative purposes of the channels. In particular, the visual aspect and the informativeness in the form of longer captions were mentioned by the respondents. On the other hand, Twitter was perceived as informative, but in a more serious, fast-paced and timely sense. Timeliness not only benefits customers but is also important for police work, as citizens can contribute with eyewitness observations if they know what is going on (Saarenoja and Tammio, 2022). In addition, customers can use Twitter to obtain information about possible disruptions or accidents and take action accordingly. However, communication on Twitter is not only intended for customers, but also for the media (Saarenoja and Tammio, 2022). This was even mentioned by interviewee C during the interview. The expanded target 'audience' on Twitter emphasises the importance of professionalism, timeliness and factual information, as the media plays an integral role in shaping perceptions of the police (Puustinen, 2017).

6.2 How social media communications can help the police to create positive perceptions

Even if the police cannot build positive perceptions and increase their trust and legitimacy on social media alone (Bullock, 2018), creating affective appeals (Walby and Wilkinson, 2021) and giving attention to the realisation of communication objectives can certainly help the police to improve their trust and legitimacy.

The Police of Finland is not considered a brand per se, but the police logo and colours, for example, are highly recognisable and thus can be exploited in social media. In fact, the communication objectives and criteria serve to some extent to build and strengthen the police 'brand' (Poliisin Viestintämääräys, 2019). The police can also use different affective appeals to 'brand' themselves. In addition, these appeals can be further strengthened by using, for example, hashtags. As with any other brand, if these components are used consistently in social media communications, customers learn to associate them with the 'brand' (the police), which in turn may contribute to more favourable brand perceptions in the minds of customers (Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2016).

> "--that [the police communications] feel the same overall that…[police] have their values…you remember that this is the police, this is trustworthy...their operations are trustworthy…you start to combine these, I think it is important and good." – Respondent C

> "--have certain guidelines about how you communicate externally…a brand…can be visible to the outside world in so many different ways." – Respondent B

Adopting an appropriate tone and voice for social media communications can also improve the perception of police communications. The respondents seemed to be open to both a more serious and a more light-hearted tone, depending on what is being communicated. Thus, by finding a balance between using language that asserts the police as professional, authoritative and legitimate, but also indicates that they are humane, humorous and considerate of different customer groups, the police could further enhance their social media communications.

The affective appeals are to some extent linked to communication objectives. In regions with significant minority populations, the police can increase the level of trust by appearing inclusive and impartial (Machura et al., 2020). Furthermore, if the police are not perceived as fair and equitable, any efforts to increase legitimacy will be in vain (Chrismas, 2012). Inclusiveness and impartiality do not only apply to minority or language groups, as the chapter has illustrated, but in Finland the more extensive use of the minority language in the police's social media communications can be one beneficial way of demonstrating fairness and inclusivity as well as improving trust and legitimacy. It is therefore important for the police to display openness and caring towards different groups through

their communications. Furthermore, the realisation of communication objectives and these 'branding' processes should be supported by governing documents.

"--it might be important to…brand yourself as a bit more open towards…language and…cultural encounters and it does not have to be only Swedish-speaking Finns…but even other cultures…but that is maybe not about branding then, but more about policy" – Respondent E

"--not point fingers at people but show that everyone is important." – Respondent D

Impartiality and inclusiveness can be seen as interrelated objectives and, failure to establish one may undermine the other, thereby undermining trust and legitimacy.

"--if you think about…inclusive and impartial it can be kind of like a question of if they choose to exclude the Swedish language, then they are not very inclusive, because then they are a bit partial, that you choose…a certain side in the political climate…if you show that [the language] is not so important…" – Respondent D

Although there is generally a high level of trust in the police in Finland (Machura et al., 2020), the police should not take this trust for granted and remember that trustworthy communication alone may not be enough to maintain and improve this trust. For example, the police may use Swedish in their social media communications in a performative manner to present themselves in a certain way (Blackwood, 2019), but the inclusion of another language on social media does not necessarily make the police more inclusive as a whole (Piller and Takashi, 2011). The same may be true for any of other self-representations that the police seek to achieve through online communications. This underlines the importance of adapting official policies and guidelines in support of practical efforts. The guiding principle of the police is to do things and communicate them, and therefore in order to appear legitimate and trustworthy, social media communications should reflect policing and vice versa.

"--if there isn't enough inclusion or…trustworthiness from governmental organisations, it becomes very very difficult to be able to communicate and in fact be taken seriously or…be trusted." – Respondent E

Although, information sharing was seen as one of the most important functions of police social media communications, the police may also utilise social media to communicate about things that have little informational value but support affective appeals. For example, respondent A brought up a post on Southwestern Finland PD's social media where the PD was advertising an internship position. While the post has no informative value for most customers, it can be very appealing to younger people and plant a perception of the police as a potential employer in their minds.

While creating and reinforcing the positive affective appeals, the police should actively seek to avoid customers associating negative perceptions with them. What someone perceives as negative is of

course subjective for each individual, but based on the perceptions and thoughts of the respondents, some of the negative perceptions that the police should avoid are:

- appearing scary and unapproachable
- communicating and/or asserting authority in a condescending and/or hostile manner
- being partial and not looking out for the best interests of all customers
- coming across as overly serious or 'superman'.

6.3 The research questions

Now that the results of the study have been analysed and discussed, it is time to address the four research questions that this study was designed to answer. The first research question (*What role does language play in customers' perceptions of organisations' social media communication?*) is a theoretical question and is answered based on the literature and theory presented in chapters 2 and 3. Whether language plays a role in customer perceptions depends on the context in which social media communication takes place. When discussing language from the perspective of bilingual customers, it is important to consider which of their languages contributes to most effective social media communications in a given context. Consideration should be given to the subject matter of the communications, as matching the choice of language to the appropriate subject matter can make the communications easier to process and therefore contribute to more positive perceptions. Furthermore, if an organisation is using the first language of a customer group, but it is not the organisation's (or rather the communicators') native language, it is very important to ensure the quality of the communications language. Merely communicating in a particular language does not automatically contribute to positive perceptions of the communications (or the organisation) if it is not done well enough.

Another important consideration in determining what role language plays in customer perceptions, and to what extent, is the customer's willingness to communicate in a second language. If a customer is willing to communicate in their second language with a particular organisation, it is quite likely that their perceptions will not be negatively affected by the choice of language used in social media communications. However, willingness to communicate is influenced by several factors, such as second language proficiency and political considerations, so an organisation should not blindly assume that simply because their customers are bilingual, communicating in their second language will not have a negative impact on their perceptions. Furthermore, in some contexts, social media

communication may require a higher degree of adaptation than merely translating original content to more languages in order for the communications to truly appeal to (bilingual) customers and influence their perceptions positively.

Language is a valuable tool for promoting social inclusion among different language groups. Therefore, even if an organisation does not necessarily need to communicate in more than one language, taking the influence of language into account can increase customers' sense of inclusion and belonging in the organisation's social media communications and lead to more positive perceptions of them. Social inclusion in the context of organisations' social media communications is enabled or hindered by the choices the organisations make about which language(s) to use. Organisations should therefore use their discretion when assessing the impact of language choice for their social media communications and adjust their policies accordingly, if necessary.

Finally, it should be borne in mind that many variables other than language may play a role in an individual customer's perception of social media communication. In relation to the police, for example, these variables include general trust, past experiences or political concerns. These variables may or may not interact with the language aspect, depending on the customer or the communication. It is therefore important to consider the role of language in relation to the specific context in which customer perceptions of (police) social media communications are being studied.

The second research question was: *How does the choice of language influence perceptions of police social media communication among Swedish-speaking customers?* In the context of this study, the choice of language of police social media communications among Swedish-speaking customers does not seem to be the most influential factor in shaping perceptions. However, the influence of language choice should be considered in the light of the characteristics of the Swedish-speaking customers, i.e., their level of second language proficiency, their position on political considerations, and their willingness to communicate in a second language. If Swedish-speaking customers are also able to understand the police's social media communications in their non-native language, the communications are able to fulfil at least some of its objectives and convey the information they intend to convey, despite the language of the communications. Therefore, the language of communications may not have such a significant influence on perceptions. The willingness of Swedish-speaking customers to communicate in a second language may compensate for negative customer perceptions even when communications are predominantly in the majority language.

However, the police's social media communications are based on a number of characteristics that play an important role in customer perceptions. Impartiality and inclusiveness are characteristics that

Swedish-speaking customers seem to appreciate, and language is a valuable means of conveying these characteristics to the Swedish-speaking customers. Even if Swedish-speaking customers do not have a strong personal preference for police social media communication in their first language, language choice and bilingual communication can contribute to and reinforce positive affective appeals of the police and their communications. While language may not play a significant role in the perceptions of Swedish-speaking customers with a high level of Finnish proficiency and willingness to communicate in this language, language choice should still be seen as a valuable means of developing police social media communications overall and thus contribute to improved trust and legitimacy of the police.

Therefore, language choice differs in its degree of influence when considering the perceptions of Swedish-speaking customers on a personal level and when considering the influence of language choice for police social media communications on a more collective level. In other words, the choice of language may not have such a significant influence on the individual's opinion of the police's social media communications, but at the same time these individuals may still recognise that language choice may be influential to the Swedish-speaking minority and improve the overall perceptions of police's social media communications and the police authority in general.

It should also be remembered that language choice may not only refer to language, but also to a particular way of communicating or a certain tone of voice. In such instances, the choice of language and its potential influence on perceptions is not so much determined by whether the customers are Swedish-speaking, bilingual, or Finnish-speaking, but rather by other demographic characteristics such as age. The topic of a particular post may also mean that the language needs to be adapted to make the post more understandable and therefore more effective.

The third research question (*How do Swedish-speaking customers perceive the communications of the Southwestern Finland Police Department on Twitter and Instagram?*) aimed to explore the perceptions of specific social media channels of a specific police department. The Swedish-speaking customers of the Southwestern Finland Police Department perceived the communications on Twitter and Instagram as informative and expressed a high overall satisfaction with both channels. The customers perceived the communications to present the Police Department as more approachable. Furthermore, the channels were seen as an opportunity to showcase the diverse work of the police department in an interesting way. In addition, the Swedish-speaking customers perceived the social media communication as appealing to a broad audience, ranging from citizens living in Swedish-speaking areas to citizens of young age.

Among the customers who did not follow the police's social media accounts, Twitter seemed to be perceived as the less attractive channel and it did not elicit as intricate perceptions among them. On the other hand, the customers who had personal experience with the Twitter communication found it very valuable in terms of receiving timely information and being able to keep up to date with current events in their region. Conversely, Instagram seemed to be more compelling in terms of perceptions, as it was characterised as somewhat more relaxed and light-hearted compared to Twitter. The option of visual storytelling was perceived as complementary to written communication and contributed to positive perceptions. In addition, Instagram was perceived as having great potential to reach younger customers who might not otherwise be as interested in the police as an organisation.

Regarding the perceptions of the use of Swedish in the Police Department's social media channels, the customers were overall satisfied with the amount of Swedish included, although there was still some room for improvement. The bilingual social media communications were seen as a welcomed addition to the content, and the customers perceived it as an indication that the Police Department was keen to include the region's Swedish-speaking minority in its communications. Although the use of Swedish was unarguably positive, it did not seem to influence the customer's motivation to follow or not to follow the PD's social media channels.

Finally, the fourth research question (*To what extent can the Southwestern Finland Police Department benefit from more extensive bilingual social media communication?*) is a normative question and aims to provide the Police Department with practical implications for its social media communications, language choice, and customer perceptions. More extensive bilingual social media communications could help the PD to better achieve its communication objectives in the eyes of its Swedish-speaking customers, whether bilingual or monolingual. In addition, more frequent use of Swedish in social media communications more often could help the PD to convey a more bilingual self-representation and thus 'brand' itself as a bilingual PD in accordance with its linguistic classification.

While the PD should still use their discretion when deciding when to communicate bilingually on social media, an awareness of contextual factors may help them determine where and when more extensive bilingual social media communications will be most beneficial and effective. At the same time, the PD should not get too caught up in contextual factors and only communicate bilingually when it is deemed 'necessary'. In particular, publishing more light-hearted and less informative content in both languages could certainly improve the perceptions of the PD's social media communications.

However, there are a number of issues that the PD will need to consider if and when engaging in more extensive bilingual social media communication. Increasing bilingual content should not be at the expense of the quality of the it. A greater amount of bilingual content may be desirable, but not at the expense of lower standards of communication. Furthermore, when presenting itself as a bilingual police department on social media, the PD should be careful not to create discrepancies between its social media 'identity' and its overall 'identity'. Social media is a great tool for incorporating more Swedish and increasing the value of the communications in the eyes of (the Swedish-speaking) customers. However, there may be a risk of bilingualism becoming 'too prevalent', to the extent that it may then negatively affect the overall perceptions of the PD, if bilingual communications cannot be implemented to the same extent in other communication contexts, whether online or physical.

More extensive bilingual social media communications may require a trade-off between limited resources and the opportunities offered by bilingual social media communications. Ultimately, it is up to the PD to decide whether more extensive bilingual social media communications are worth the extra effort and to how much value they add to achieving of the PD's communication objectives. When considering the possibility of more extensive bilingual social media communications, the PD could use the results of this study as a guide to do so in the most appealing and effective way.

7. Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to explore how Swedish-speaking customers perceive the social media communications of the Southwestern Finland Police Department, and what implications these perceptions may have for bilingual police and official social media communications on a more general level. The study was interested in the interplay between identity, language and perceptions. The study took a novel approach to assessing customer perceptions of social media communications through the concept of willingness to communicate in a second language. Furthermore, the study sought to fill gaps in previous research by assessing customer perceptions in the context of a bilingual nation and a relatively privileged minority, as well as in the context of (bilingual) police social media communications.

The study found that while the language choice of police social media communications may not significantly influence the perceptions of Swedish-speaking customers who exhibit a willingness to communicate in a second language on a personal level, the choice of communication language has the potential to positively influence perceptions of the police authority and its communications in a broader sense, especially in terms of impartiality and inclusiveness. The choice of language was also perceived as an important factor in making social media communications more understandable for those Swedish-speaking customers who do not have such a good command of Finnish. By including more Swedish in their social media, the police can contribute to shaping attitudes towards the Swedish language and show respect for the Swedish-speaking minority.

Overall, social media was seen as an important medium through which the police can present themselves as more approachable and humane, which they cannot always do in the field or in customer service. In addition, social media is a great way for the police to portray the many different sides of their work that citizens may not otherwise have the opportunity to see. If customers are satisfied with the police social media communications, the communications likely achieve their objective and contribute to the overall trust and legitimacy of the police.

7.1 Theoretical contributions

In order to ground this research in the marketing literature rather than in the field of linguistics or the like, the theoretical contributions of this study focus mainly on aspects related to branding and social media communication. As police social media communication has not previously been studied from

a customer or language choice perspective, the study provides novel perspectives on police social media communication and the implications for overall customer perceptions of the police.

In terms of language choice in social media communications, language can positively influence customer evaluations of both the communications and the police as an organisation. In particular, language choice and bilingual social media communications can enhance the perception of the police as inclusive and respectful towards their customers belonging to the Swedish-speaking minority. The findings also illustrate how the affective appeals that the police communicate via social media in order to construct a certain image of themselves (Walby and Wilkinson, 2021) can indeed shape customers' perceptions of the police, even beyond the aspect of the communication language. However, police should not assume that the affective appeals and the image they seek to create will automatically translate into certain (positive) customer perceptions. It is therefore important for the police to assess customer perceptions in order to gauge how successful their communications are in creating desired perceptions.

The concept of willingness to communicate in a second language has not been studied before in the communication context of social media. Furthermore, in this study the concept was used as a means of assessing customer perceptions, rather than examining how WTC in L2 influences customer preferences for the language of the communication (Holmqvist et al., 2014). Firstly, in contrast to the study by Holmqvist et al. (2014), political considerations seem to be more prevalent in the context of official communications and they influenced customers' WTC in L2 to some extent in addition to their general views on choice of language. This could be due to the difference in the perceived role and status of Finnish authorities compared to (private) service providers. Secondly, regarding the influence of WTC in L2 on customers' perceptions of police social media communications, this study found that bilingual social media communications may positively influence customers' perceptions. However, it seems that the lack of bilingual social media communications does not necessarily lead to negative perceptions, provided that customers are overall willing to communicate in a second language. Thus, language choice and level of WTC in L2 are not the only factors influencing bilingual customers' perceptions of police social media communications and their successfulness.

In terms of language choice and overall brand (or, in this context, organisation) evaluations, the findings are consistent with those of Alvarez (2020) in that the language of social media communications did not appear to have a significant impact on overall assessments of source credibility. However, contrary to the findings of Alvarez (2020), the choice of communication language seemed to have some influence on the attractiveness of the source, which is one of the three individual characteristics that make up source credibility. The use of Swedish seemed to make the

police (source) more attractive overall in terms of inclusiveness and impartiality. This was the case regardless of the respondents' linguistic or cultural identification. On the other hand, source trustworthiness and expertise were not affected by the language of communication, and therefore the choice of language did not affect overall evaluations of the trustworthiness or expertise of the police. This differs from Alvarez (2020), who found that the choice of advertising language influenced perceived source expertise among bilingual Hispanic consumers. The difference in which individual source trait was influenced could be due to the source (government versus private business) or the type of communication (social media versus advertising). However, it appears that bilingualism (i.e., the ability to understand communication in either language) could moderate the effects of communication language on overall source credibility.

Some of the findings add to previous literature on social media communication and its impact on brand evaluations and customer perceptions. Based on the findings, it appears that social media communications by governmental organisations, such as the police, can also create positive associations about the organisations and help shape customer attitudes towards them. Schivinski and Dabrowski (2016) found this to be the case for firm-created (commercial companies) social media communications Positive brand associations on social media contribute to positive overall perceptions of the organisations. However, the findings of this study also suggest that the positive associations communicated through social media can also help to shape attitudes towards and create more positive perceptions of the communications themselves.

The findings also show that the police can use social media to reduce prejudices and misunderstandings about the police and their work. This is consistent with Yu and Yuan's (2018) findings on how customers' brand experiences on social media can improve brand perceptions. One of the brand elements that Yu and Yuan (2018) found to be enhanced by a positive social media experience was brand trust. However, the results of this study did not find that positive social media experiences significantly contributed to higher levels of trust in the police. This may be due to the fact that the respondents perceived the social media communications to be inherently trustworthy, or due to the already high level of trust in the police among Finnish citizens. However, the positive experiences of social media communications also seem to have an impact on other elements that can improve perceptions of the police 'brand'. For example, respondents' perception of the police as more approachable and pleasant overall was enhanced by the social media communications.

Finally, the results reflect previous findings on the influence of language correctness on customer evaluations of bilingual communications (Alvarez, 2020). Language correctness and quality of the Swedish social media communications were considered important. However, not only did correct

language contribute to potentially more positive perceptions of the communications, it also influenced respondents' willingness to communicate in a second language to some extent. Bilingual customers may be more willing to receive high quality social media communications in their second language, or to receive fewer first language social media communications with correct language, than to receive first language social media communications with incorrect language, or to receive a greater number of first language communications. However, potential issues with language correctness did not appear to influence the overall evaluations of the communications.

7.2 Managerial implications

Social media communications can be a very powerful way of shaping customer perceptions of the communications as well as the organisation overall and if an organisation has a significant bilingual customer base, language can further enhance the creation of those positive perceptions. However, when bilingual social media communications are done it is important to consider the specific bilingual context in which the organisation communicates. In order to benefit from bilingual social media communications and make them as effective as possible, the organisation should consider language-specific aspects such as customers' second language proficiencies, linguistic identifications, and willingness to communicate in a second language. In addition, the organisation should take into consideration the contact situation between the language groups their customers represent as well as the possible language These considerations can help organisations to determine when, how often, and to what extent the organisation should communicate bilingually on social media in order to positively influence customer perceptions.

For bilingual police departments and other (bilingual) governmental organisations it is important to weigh the legal obligations and language requirements against the composition of one's customers and the value of bilingual social media communications to those customers with the minority language as their first language. Even if the stipulations on bilingual social media communications in Finland are somewhat ambiguous and the organisations are allowed to use some discretionary power regarding language use, more extensive bilingual social media communications may be a very valuable means of shaping customer perceptions of the communications and the organisations and contribute to for example, a higher level of perceived inclusiveness among customers. This is especially important for governmental organisations and authorities since they are supposed to represent every citizen, and in addition citizens cannot usually choose whether they want to have contact with these organisations unlike with private businesses.

Even though this study was conducted on bilingual police social media communications and in the context of Finnish governmental organisations, it may carry managerial implications even for private businesses and beyond the aspect of bilingual social media communications. From the perspective of language choice and social media communications, private businesses may be similarly able to enhance the perceptions and possibly even the effectiveness of their social media communications if their target customers or potential target customers feature prominent groups with different first languages. Even if the communications by private business in Finland are not governed by the Language Act the same way than official communications, the inclusion of Swedish (given that the businesses communicate in Finnish) may make the social media communications more appealing to Swedish-speaking consumers, and thus improve the attractiveness of their brand which may lead to a broader customer base.

7.3 Suggestions for future research

At present, bilingual social media communications are a relatively little researched area from the perspective of both governmental and private organisations. Therefore, future research could focus on further exploring bilingual social media communications in different contexts (organisations or countries) in terms of customer perceptions, but also their influence on other aspects such as customer engagement or retention on social media, attractiveness of communications, or their influence on overall brand perceptions. The bilingual context of future research should not be limited to Finland or the use of Finnish and Swedish, but other bilingual contexts outside the USA could also be explored.

In terms of future research on police social media communication, especially bilingual communication, studies on Swedish-speaking customers' perceptions of other bilingual police departments' social media communications could provide interesting points of comparison. Furthermore, conducting similar studies in different bilingual environments could shed light on differences within the Swedish-speaking minority and how regional and other aspects may play a role in the way language and customer perceptions relate to each other.

Furthermore, given that the theoretical framework used in this study represents a completely novel approach to assessing perceptions of social media communications, it would be interesting to see how the framework could be applied to different linguistic groups and types of (social media) communications. Future studies could exemplify how WTC in L2, and its antecedents, might

influence perceptions differently in linguistic groups with backgrounds and demographic characteristics different from those of the respondents in this study.

Finally, the specific context of this study, the Southwestern Finland Police Department and its social media communications, offers several avenues for further research. It would be interesting to see whether perceptions of social media communication differ among different language groups, such as monolingual Swedish-speakers or monolingual Finnish-speakers, or customers with an immigrant background. In addition, the perceptions of social media communications could be studied among different regional groups within the PD region. Future research could also examine perceptions among different customer groups in comparison to the PD's communication objectives apply a similar approach in relation to other governmental organisations. Finally, future research could include other forms of police communication (within this PD or any other) and study bilingual customers' perceptions of these.

Summary in Swedish – Svensk sammanfattning

Värt att gilla?

– En fallstudie om svenskspråkiga kunders föreställningar om hur
Polisinrättningen i Sydvästra Finland kommunicerar i sociala medier

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Inledning

Under de senaste åren har sociala medier etablerat sig bland de traditionella externa kommunikationskanalerna i kommunikationen mellan företag och konsumenter. Jämfört med andra medier för extern kommunikation, möjliggör sociala medier mer öppenhet och transparens (Bullock, 2018). Ett stort antal offentliga förvaltningar och statliga organisationer drar också fördel av sociala medier för myndighetskommunikation.

En av dessa organisationer är Polisen i Finland. Eftersom den genomsnittliga medborgaren endast träffar polisen av och till, är sociala medier ett värdefullt verktyg för utförandet av polisens uppgifter och kundservice. Utöver Polisstyrelsen finns det elva polisinrättningar i Finland (se *Figure 1*) och var och en av dem har närvaro i flera kanaler på sociala medier (Poliisi.fi, 2022a). Varje polisinrättning tillåts att organisera sin kommunikation fritt, så länge som kommunikationen följer de övergripande visionerna, ändamålen och reglerna gällande poliskommunikation (Poliisin Viestintämääräys, 2019).

Kommunikation är inte endast en av polisens fundamentala plikter, utan ur ett organisatoriskt perspektiv är kommunikationen ett viktigt strategiskt instrument för att hålla kontakten med medborgarna samt för att skapa och upprätthålla vissa föreställningar om den finska polisen (Poliisin Viestintämääräys, 2019; Puustinen, 2017). Föreställning är en subjektiv förståelse om något som innefattar tankar och känslor (Puustinen, 2017). Sociala medier är en effektiv kanal för att skapa och upprätthålla föreställningar eftersom sociala medier har en omfångsrik räckvidd och är tillgängliga. Det är dock avgörande att medborgarna förstår den informationen som kommuniceras till dem för att polisen ska uppfylla sin plikt och lyckas skapa positiva föreställningar hos medborgarna.

Kommunikationen kompliceras när mottagarna inte har samma förstaspråk. I tvåspråkiga stater som Finland, med två officiella språk, borde alla medborgare åtminstone i princip förstå kommunikationen på majoritetsspråket. Språk och identitet är dock sammanflätade, och tvåspråkighet associeras ofta med språklig identitet (det språket som en person identifierar sig mest med och betraktar som sitt mest tilltalande språk). Den språkliga identiteten är subjektiv och har inte nödvändigtvis något att göra med personens faktiska språkkunskaper (Østern, 2007). Valet av kommunikationsspråk kan således spela en lika betydande roll för skapandet av föreställningar som kvaliteten på de faktiska budskapen som kommuniceras. Om den språkliga identiteten och kommunikationsspråket inte harmonierar med varanandra kan man drabbas av social utslagning (Piller och Takashi, 2011). Social utslagning refererar till uteslutning av vissa grupper inom samhället på grund av en viss egenskap (Zheng et. al., 2021). Därför, i en tvåspråkig kontext, är frågan om valet av språk i poliskommunikation och dess påverkan på föreställningar viktig.

Syfte och ämnesmotivering

Syftet med denna magisteruppsats är att undersöka myndighetskommunikation i en tvåspråkig kontext och mer specifikt hurdana föreställningar svenskspråkiga finländare har om poliskommunikation på sociala medier. Uppsatsen syftar till att utforska förhållandet mellan identitet, språkval, kommunikation och föreställningar. I slutändan syftar uppsatsen till att illustrera vilken roll dessa aspekter spelar i de svenskspråkiga finländarnas (kallas *kunder*) föreställningar om en polisinrättnings kommunikation på sociala medier. Undersökningen fokuserar framför allt på föreställningarna om de sociala medierna som Polisinrättningen i Sydvästra Finland använder. Polisinrättningen i Sydvästra Finland är en av de tvåspråkiga polisinrättningarna i Finland.

För att uppfylla syftet avser uppsatsen att svara på följande frågor:

- Vilken roll spelar språket för kundernas föreställningar om organisationers kommunikation i sociala medier?
- Hur påverkar språkvalet svenskspråkiga kunders föreställningar om polisens kommunikation på sociala medier?
- Hur uppfattar de svenskspråkiga kunderna hur polisinrättningen i Sydvästra Finland kommunicerar på Twitter och Instagram?
- Hur kan Sydvästra Finlands polisinrättning dra nytta av mer omfattande tvåspråkig kommunikation i sociala medier?

Det finns få studier om poliskommunikation i sociala medier, och den befintliga forskningen studerar inte ämnet ur kundernas perspektiv. Dessutom beaktar dessa studier inte hur tvåspråkighet påverkar föreställningar om kommunikationen. Däremot har tvåspråkighet och språkvalets effekter på kommunikation studerats, men mestadels i en amerikansk kontext med engelska och spanska i fokus.

Finland och den svenskspråkiga minoriteten där, som utgör cirka 5 procent av befolkningen, erbjuder dock en unik forskningskontext. Den svenskspråkiga minoriteten anses internationellt sett vara privilegierad, eftersom minoriteten är relativt synlig i samhället (Heikkilä, 2011), då dess rättigheter är väl skyddade i den finska lagstiftningen och Finland har en stark kultur av svenskspråkiga institutioner och medier (Broermann, 2007). Sydvästra Finland är ett av områdena med stor koncentration av den svenskspråkiga minoriteten (Suvisaari et al., 2014) och polisen i Sydvästra Finland har en tvåspråkig regional enhet med svenska som majoritetsspråk (Polisstyrelsen, 2013). Trots detta kommunicerar polisinrättningen inte allting på både finska och svenska på sina sociala

medier. Även om det svenska språket är välskyddat i lagen, finns det inga entydiga regler för användningen av de officiella språken på polisens (och andra myndigheters) sociala medier.

Lagstiftningen är dock kanske inte den mest avgörande indikatorn på frågan huruvida polisen borde kommunicera oftare på båda språken i sociala medier. Det finns förstås många praktiska aspekter som polisen måste ta hänsyn till när det gäller valet av kommunikationsspråk på sociala medier. Faktum är ändå att poliskommunikation bör uppfylla vissa kriterier (till exempel vara effektiv, pålitlig och opartisk) och även om Polisstyrelsen inte har utfärdat någon uttrycklig instruktion om språkanvändningen på sociala medier, kan valet av kommunikationsspråk i tvåspråkiga sammanhang vara lika inflytelserikt för föreställningarna som den faktiska informationen som kommuniceras. Huruvida poliskommunikationen i sociala medier är framgångsrik eller inte avgörs i slutändan av de kunder som tar emot kommunikationen.

Metod och material

Denna undersökning fokuserar främst på kommunikation i sociala medier hos en polisinrättning, Polisinrättningen i Sydvästra Finland, vilket gör den här studien till en fallstudie. Beslutet att fokusera på endast en polisinrättning berodde på skillnader i hur olika polisinrättningar kommunicerar på sociala medier samt regionala skillnader inom den svenskspråkiga minoriteten. Den empiriska kontexten begränsades ytterligare genom att avgränsa sociala medier till att endast omfatta Instagram och Twitter, eftersom dessa är de mest aktiva kanalerna för Polisinrättningen i Sydvästra Finland (Saarenoja och Tammio, *personlig kommunikation 5.12.2022*). Båda kanalerna har också innehåll på svenska, men kanalerna har olika kommunikativa syften, Twitter används mer för kort och snabb operativ information, medan visuella material och längre texter är i fokus på Instagram.

Eftersom denna studie behandlar subjektiva ämnen som språklig identitet, viljan att kommunicera på ett andraspråk och föreställningar är detta en kvalitativ studie. För att observera svenskspråkiga kunders föreställningar om hur Sydvästra Finlands polisinrättningen kommunicerar i sociala medier genomfördes kvalitativa intervjuer. Urvalet av intervjudeltagare gjordes enligt två kriterier (en form av avsiktligt valda element som kallas för kriterieurval):

- deltagaren bör vara "proaktivt tvåspråkig" (kunna förstå och kommunicera på både finska och svenska samt helst ha svenska som registrerat modersmål)
- deltagaren bör vara bosatt i Sydvästra Finland.

Deltagarna hittades genom personliga nätverk och till slut intervjuades fem personer. Den slutliga intervjumetoden var semistrukturerade intervjuer och en intervjuguide följdes under alla intervjuer

(se *Appendix 1*). Även om forskningsrapporten är skriven på engelska, genomfördes intervjuerna på svenska eftersom modersmålet är mer sannolikt att framkalla känslomässiga och mer utförliga svar.

För att tolka föreställningarna utvecklades en teoretisk inramning (se *Figure 4*). I denna inramning analyseras föreställningar om kommunikation via sociala medier genom viljan att kommunicera på ett andraspråk. Viljan att kommunicera bygger på flera interpersonella och intergrupp faktorer. Denna teoretiska inramning bygger på arbeten av MacIntyre et al. (1998) och Holmqvist et al. (2014), men inramningen är anpassad för att bättre lämpa sig för en onlinekommunikationskontext (sociala medier) snarare än interaktioner ansikte mot ansikte. Själva dataanalysen utfördes genom en tematisk analys (Bryman, 2012). Analysprocessen består av sex faser (Braun och Clarke, 2006), under vilken dessa insamlade data läses, granskas och kodas noggrant. Denna process ledde till identifieringen av tre huvudteman (se avsnitt *4.5*).

Undersökningens resultat

Även om urvalet av intervjudeltagare gjordes enligt vissa kriterier, blev den slutliga deltagargruppen tämligen heterogen. En detaljerad sammanställning av intervjudeltagarna (A, B, C, D och E) finns i tabell 2 (*Table 1*). Alla fem respondenter är bosatta i samma tvåspråkiga stad (Åbo), men endast tre (A, B och D) har svenska som modersmål medan de andra två (C och E) har finska som modersmål. Deltagare D har vuxit upp med spanska som andraspråk (i stället för finska) och deltagare C har blivit tvåspråkig först när hen började studera på universitet. Deltagare E har bott större delen av sitt liv i Sverige, där det finska minoritetsspråket inte har samma status som det svenska språket har i Finland. Alla deltagarna klassificerar sig dock som tvåspråkiga (finska och svenska), vilket gör dem kvalificerade deltagare för den här studien.

Innan deltagarnas föreställningar om hur polisinrättningen i Sydvästra Finland kommunicerar i sociala medier utreddes, analyserades varje deltagare enligt den teoretiska inramningen. Rörande kommunikationsbeteende uttryckte alla deltagare att de använder både finska och svenska dagligen antingen hemma, på jobbet eller i studierna. Deltagarna tillfrågades också om sin språkliga identitet. Deltagare A och C identifierar sig som tvåspråkiga, men deltagare A nämnde att om hen var tvungen att välja mellan finska och svenska skulle hen identifiera sig med svenska. Däremot deltagare C berättade att utanför familj sammanhang är hen mer finskspråkig. Deltagare B identifierade sig som svenspråkig fast hen har starka kunskaper också i finska. Deltagare D identifierade sig framförallt som svenskspråkig, men numera har hen i sistone känt sig ibland som finskspråkig människa också. Deltagare E identifierade sig som finskspråkig.

Även när en persons språkliga identitet endast består av ett språk, kan hen fortfarande klassificeras som tvåspråkig (dvs. att ha förmåga att kommunicera på två språk) (Østern, 2007). När det gäller den upplevda andraspråksförmågan, ansåg alla utom deltagare D att de hade nästan lika bra kunskaper i sitt första- som andraspråk. Deltagare E påpekade dock att hen har bättre akademisk svenska än finska. Deltagare D berättade att även om hen nuförtiden har mycket goda kunskaper i finska (som egentligen är hens tredje språk), hade hen inte för några år sedan ett tillräckligt ordförråd för att sköta till exempel ett polisärende.

Därefter bedömdes deltagarnas åsikter om två politiska synpunkter. Dessa synpunkter gällde nödvändigheten respektive preferensen av att ta emot kommunikation på förstaspråket (svenska) och upplevd social utslagning på grund av kommunikationsspråket. Alla deltagare uttryckte att de inte anser det nödvändigt att ta emot kommunikation på svenska. Samtidigt uttryckte de också en viss oro för sådana svenskspråkiga personer som inte har lika bra kunskaper i finska. Den främsta oron var att informationen inte når dessa personer om den endast kommuniceras på finska. Det rådde tydlig konsensus om att det alltid är positivt om en statlig organisation, såsom polisen, publicerar innehåll även på svenska på sociala medier. Även om deltagarna A och B berättade att deras kunskaper i finska är så bra att de inte behöver kommuniceras på svenska uttryckte de också att de föredrar att ha innehåll oftare även på svenska.

Deltagare D, som återigen var den enda deltagaren som inte harde finska som modersmål eller andraspråk, hade starkare åsikter om svenskspråkig kommunikation och hur mycket svenskan borde användas av statliga organisationer. Deltagare D var också den enda som rapporterade att hen har personligen upplevt social utslagning på grund av kommunikationsspråket. Hen hänvisade dock inte specifikt till Polisens kommunikation, men hen berättade att när statliga organisationer kommunicerar på sociala medier endast på finska, framstår det som en påminnelse om att den svenskspråkiga minoriteten inte prioriteras.

På basis av dessa aspekter kan man underbygga att deltagarna C och E visade en mycket hög grad av vilja att kommunicera på ett andraspråk (finska), vilket främst berodde på att deras språkliga identitet var strakt kopplat till finska. Deltagare B skulle kunna karaktäriseras som villiga att kommunicera på ett andraspråk, men eftersom deras språkliga identitet lutade mer åt det svenska språket var de ofta mer angelägna om att polisen skulle kunna inkludera svenska språket mer i sin kommunikation i sociala medier. Slutligen visade deltagarna A och D måttlig vilja att kommunicera på ett andraspråk. Deltagare D uttryckte hur språkvalet ibland bidrar till känslan av social utslagning och hen uppgav också att det inte borde finnas några skäl för att inte använda mer svenska, eftersom språk är en ganska enkel åtgärd för att förbättra kommunikationen och göra att alla känner sig inkluderade. Deltagare A

tyckte att statliga organisationer borde i princip kommunicera allt på både finska och svenska i sociala medier.

Förväntningar på användningen av svenska i Polisens kommunikation i sociala medier

Några tydliga teman framkom om de svenskspråkiga kundernas förväntningar på användningen av svenska språket i polisens kommunikation i sociala medier. Den gemensamma inställningen var att inkluderandet av svenskan är mycket positivt och uppskattat. När svenska används är det dock viktigt att se till att språket är rätt och grammatiskt korrekt – såsom det finska innehållet som polisen publicerar är. Även om svenska bör användas så mycket som möjligt i kommunikationen på sociala medier, kan man säga att kvaliteten på inläggen är viktigare än kvantiteten när allt kommer omkring. Även om finskspråkiga finländare ibland uppvisar negativ attityd mot inkluderandet av svenska språket, bör polisen inte låta detta påverka sina beslut om kommunikation på svenska i sociala medier.

Språket är ett utmärkt verktyg för att få polisen att framstå som mer inkluderande och för att leva upp till sin slogan "tryggar alla i alla tider". Även om vissa inlägg publiceras på svenska gör det inte automatiskt att de svenskspråkiga kunderna känner sig nöjda med de svenska inläggen. Även om endast en av deltagarna i den här studien rapporterade att hen hade upplevt social utslagning på grund av språkval, var en allmän önskan att polisen skulle publicera även muntra och vardagliga inlägg på svenska. Det vill säga att inte bara publicera på svenska när inlägget innehåller viktig information som alla behöver förstå för att deras rättssäkerhet ska skyddas eller när inlägget handlar om ett svensktalande/tvåspråkigt område. Genom att publicera kvalitetsinnehåll på svenska på sociala medier, erkänner polisen det svenska språkets ställning som det andra officiella språket i Finland och visar respekt för den svenskspråkiga minoriteten. Även om polisen ansågs kunna publicera oftare på svenska, verkade inte mängden av svenska minska polisens pålitlighet eller legitimitet i deltagarnas ögon. Detta kan bero på att sociala medier endast är ett medium för polisens kommunikation och/eller att människor i Finland tenderar att ha ett högt förtroende för polismyndigheten.

Kontexten är viktig

Även om det skulle vara idealt för en tvåspråkig polisinrättning att publicera all kommunikation i sociala medier på svenska, måste man också inse att det kanske inte är möjligt på grund av begränsade resurser. Det kanske inte alltid finns tid att översätta information till svenska eller så kanske de som arbetar med kommunikationen inte har tillräckliga kunskaper i svenska för att göra bra innehåll. Därför är det viktigt med kontextuell medvetenhet. Tre typer av inlägg bör alltid läggas ut på båda språken oavsett situation:

- inlägg som innehåller viktig information, till exempel om medborgarnas säkerhet

- information som av en eller annan anledning bör förstås av alla i polisinrättningens region

- information som berör områden med ett betydande antal svensktalande personer, såsom skärgården.

Å andra sidan kan det ibland vara viktigare att få ut förstahandsuppgifter om något så fort som möjligt i stället för att fördröja dem genom att använda tid till översättning och förmedla informationen på båda språken samtidigt. Eftersom resurserna ofta är begränsade, samtidigt som det är viktigt att sträva efter tvåspråkig kommunikation, kan detta leda till värdekonflikter inom polisen som måste lösas. Det betyder att polisen måste göra val om vilka värderingar är viktigare att främja.

Kontextuell medvetenhet gäller inte bara frågan om val av språk, då inte varje inlägg från polisinrättningen i sociala medier riktar sig till alla medborgare inom området i fråga. Ibland är inläggen avsedda att informera äldre personer, alternativt ungdomar. Vissa inlägg innehåller information för dem som kör bil och andra för dem som går eller cyklar. Dessutom är varje polisinrättningars regioner olika när det gäller kundernas demografi, och därför är det viktigt att anpassa kommunikationen – även om temana skulle vara riksomfattande – i sociala medier till den kontexten som inrättningen kommunicerar i.

Förutsättningar för framgångsrik poliskommunikation i sociala medier

Den viktigaste aspekten av polisens kommunikation i sociala medier är att den är informativ. Den information som meddelas ska vara sanningsenlig och korrekt. Särskilt Twitter sågs som en viktig kanal för informationsdelning. Det är också viktigt att polisen förmedlar informationen i rätt tid. En annan essentiell aspekt var räckvidden för poliskommunikationen i sociala medier och hur polisen bör sträva efter att nå så många människor som möjligt i sociala medier – även om det inte är nödvändigt att nå alla med varje inlägg. För att göra detta är det viktigt att använda ett lämpligt språk – oavsett om det innebär att publicera inlägg på svenska (eller ibland även engelska) eller att skriva inlägg på ett sätt som tilltalar till exempel yngre människor.

Det går en fin linje mellan att använda en ton som får polisen att framstå som lättillgänglig och tilltalar en bred kundkrets utan att äventyra sin auktoritet, trovärdighet och saklighet. Särskilt för en yngre publik kan användningen av olika emojier och humor (när det är lämpligt) göra polisen mindre skrämmande samt mer tillgänglig och därmed mer tilltalande. Samtidigt handlar mycket av det som polisen kommunicerar på sociala medier om frågor som säkerhet och att informera människor om till exempel hur man undviker trafikolyckor eller bedrägerier. Dessa typer av ämnen måste kommuniceras med lämplig grad av allvarlighet. För att kunna kommunicera på ett övertygande sätt,

måste polisen dessutom uppfattas som en legitim och auktoritativ aktör i medborgarnas ögon. Denna auktoritet behöver dock inte framhävas på ett negativt sätt i sociala medier, utan polisen kan snarare utnyttja kommunikationen i sociala medier för att skapa en bild av polisen som en auktoritet som gynnar både individer och samhället i stort. Kunderna bör kunna uppfatta polisens kommunikation som effektiv, pålitlig, begriplig, opartisk, inkluderande, öppen och sanningsenlig.

Med dessa tankar och förväntningar i åtanke, hurdana föreställningar har de svenskspråkiga kunderna om hur polisen i Sydvästra Finlands kommunicerar i sociala medier? Endast deltagare B följde polisinrättningen på både Instagram och Twitter, och deltagare C följde deras Twitter. De övriga deltagarnas uppfattningar var baserade på exempelinlägg som visades för dem under intervjuerna. Därför var deras föreställningar inte lika genomarbetade.

Den allmänna föreställningen om kommunikationen i sociala medier var positiv och innehållet ansågs informativt och intressant. Många deltagare kommenterade att det är mycket positivt att polisinrättningen ganska ofta publicerar innehållet även på svenska – åtminstone på Instagram. Eftersom Twitter är en kanal för snabb informationsdelning i ett kort format, verkade det mindre antalet svenska inlägg dock inte störa deltagarna särskilt mycket.

Under intervjun nämnde deltagare A och D varför de inte följer polisinrättningen på sociala medier (eller på Instagram för att vara exakt). Deltagare A tyckte att polisen inte publicerar innehåll tillräckligt ofta – även om inläggens innehåll är intressanta. Deltagare D sade å andra sidan att hen inte ansåg att polisens sociala medier är relevanta för hen, men efter att nu ha sett att polisen lägger ut mycket informativt och användbart innehåll kunde deltagare D faktiskt tänka sig att börja följa polisinrättningen. Vidare uttryckte deltagare D att hen blev förvånad över att se att den allmänna atmosfären var ganska lättsam och välkomnande, särskilt på Instagram,

Intressant nog kommenterade endast deltagarna E och A på användningen av svenska språket i (exempel)inläggen när de ombads att beskriva kommunikationen eller dela med sig av sina tankar kring exempelinläggen. De övriga respondenterna utvecklade sina tankar om svenskt innehåll i polisinrättningens sociala medier endast när de uttryckligen tillfrågades om det. Det faktum att båda kanalerna hade innehåll på även svenska uppfattades dock som en mycket bra sak och något som polisinrättningen bör fortsätta med. För det mesta uppfattades kommunikation av polisen i Sydvästra Finland i sociala medier som effektiv, trovärdig, begriplig, opartisk och till och med inkluderande.

Således kan man hävda att i denna undersökning medverkade språklig identitet och viljan att kommunicera på ett andraspråk till föreställningarna som svenskspråkiga kunder har om poliskommunikation på sociala medier. För de svenskspråkiga kunderna som har bra kunskaper i

finska (och till och med identifierar sig som finskspråkiga eller tvåspråkiga) verkade språkvalet och användningen av det andra inhemska språket inte vara den mest framträdande faktorn som påverkar positiva föreställningar om polisens kommunikation på sociala medier. Att inkludera svenska i kommunikationen så mycket som möjligt uppmuntras dock, eftersom alla som tillhör den svenskspråkiga minoriteten inte är lika bra på att förstå finsk kommunikation. Dessutom uppskattas det att polisen erkänner den svenskspråkiga minoriteten i deras område. Att publicera informativt innehåll som är trovärdigt men ändå tillgängligt verkar dock uppskattas ännu mer.

När man granskar vad polisinrättningen i Sydvästra Finland önskar att förmedla genom kommunikation i sina sociala medier (nämligen geografisk opartiskhet, pålitlighet och ett tillgänglig utseende), kan man påstå att denna polisinrättning har lyckats med att skapa dessa föreställningar bland sina tvåspråkiga kunder. Men det är alltid värdefullt att sträva efter en mer pålitlig, legitim och inkluderande poliskommunikation i sociala medier.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: The interview guide in English

Background questions:

- Where do you live?
- What is the native language of your parents?
- Could you describe your use of Swedish and Finnish in your daily life? How did you use the languages growing up (e.g., at home, at school)?
- Do you identify more with the Swedish-speaking minority or the Finnish-speaking majority, or both? Why and does it differ depending on the situation?

Questions about bilingualism and official communications:

- If an organisation is classified as 'bilingual' what does that mean to you? What expectations do you have regarding their communications to you as a customer/audience?
- (Demonstration through a few examples) What kind of reactions and/or thoughts do these posts bring in you? (Focus on the language, not so much on the visual elements)
- Are there any specific situations you would expect communication to be in both languages or perhaps just in Swedish? Are there specific organisations that in your opinion should communicate in both official languages on social media?
- Do you think it is important for governmental organisations, such as the police, to have a brand and reflect that brand on their social media?
    - Does the language play some kind of role in your perceptions about the police?
- What is your stance on a governmental organisation such as the police mainly using only the dominant official language in their social media communications?
    - Would you expect bilingual communication throughout the different social media channels?
- What kind of qualities are important for official communications and more specifically police communications? Are there specific qualities you think are important considering social media communications?

Questions about Southwestern Finland Police Department's social media:

- Do you follow Southwestern Finland PD on social media, and if yes, in which channels. How did you come to follow them? And why do you follow them?

- (Demonstration with a few example posts, focus on the language, not so much on the visual elements) Could you describe the Southwestern Finland PD's social media communications on Instagram? How about on Twitter? What kind of thoughts these posts bring about?
- How does it make you feel when Southwestern Finland PD publishes a post in Swedish?
  - Are there specific type of posts or situations where you would wish that the posts were also made in Swedish? (e.g., when it is about the Swedish-speaking municipalities, there is a traffic accident or a bigger operation etc.)
- Do you think it is fair to characterise social media communications in general as effective, trustworthy, understandable, impartial, and inclusive? Why/why not?
  - How about governmental organisations', such as police's, social media communications?
  - And what about Southwestern Finland PD's social media communications?
- Do you have any additional thoughts regarding language and Southwestern Finland PD's social media communications that you have not been able to bring up during this interview?

Appendix 2: The interview guide in Swedish

Bakgrundsfrågorna:

- Var bor du?
- Vad är dina föräldrars modersmål?
- Skulle du kunna beskriva hur du använder svenska och finska i ditt dagliga liv? Hur använde du språken när du växte upp (t.ex. hemma, i skolan)?
- Identifierar du dig mer med den svenskspråkiga minoriteten eller den finskspråkiga majoriteten eller båda? Varför och beror din identifiering på situationen?

Frågorna om tvåspråkighet och myndighetskommunikation:

- Om en organisation är klassificerad som 'tvåspråkig' vad betyder det för dig? Hurdana förväntningar har du gällande deras kommunikation åt dig som en kund/publik?
- (bilder) Hurdana reaktioner och/eller tanker dessa inlägg väcker i dig?
- Finns det några särskilda situationer i vilka du skulle vänta dig att du kommuniceras på båda språk eller kanske endast på svenska? Finns särskilda organisationer som borde kommunicera på båda officiella språk på sociala medier?
- Tycker du att det är viktigt för statliga organisationer, som polisen, att ha en brand och återspegla den i sociala medier?

- o Spelar språket någon roll i dina föreställningar om polisen?
- Vad är din ställning gällande det att statliga organisationer som polisen använder för det mesta endast det dominerande språket, alltså finska, i deras kommunikation på sociala medier?
    - o Skulle du vänta dig tvåspråkig kommunikation alltigenom de olika SoMe-kanaler?
- Hurdana egenskaper är viktiga för myndighetskommunikation och mer specifikt för poliskommunikation? Finns det specifika egenskaper som du tycker är viktiga när man tänker på kommunikation på sociala medier?

Frågorna gällande sociala medier av Polisinrättningen i Sydvästra Finland (fr.o.m. nu SF-polisen):

- Följer du Sydvästra Finlands polis på sociala medier och, om ja, på vilka kanaler? Hur började du följa dom och varför följer du dom?
- (bilder) Skulle du kunna beskriva Sydvästra Finlands polisens kommunikation på Instagram? Och på Twitter? Hurdana tanker väcker dessa inlägg hos dig?
- Vad känner/tänker du när Sydvästra Finlands polis publicerar inlägg på svenska?
    - o Finns det särskilda situationer eller typer av inlägg som du önskar skulle också publiceras på svenska? (t.ex. när inlägget gäller en svenskspråkig kommun, när en trafikolycka eller en större operation är på gång osv.)
- Tycker du att det är i allmänhet hyggligt att beskriva kommunikation på sociala medier som effektiv, pålitlig, förståelig, opartisk och inkluderande? Varför/varför inte?
    - o Och om du tänker på statliga organisationers, som polisens, SoMe-kommunikation?
    - o Och hur är det med SF-polisens SoMe-kommunikation?
- Har du några slutliga tankar kring språket och Sydvästra Finland polisens SoMe-kommunikation som du inte ännu har tagit upp under intervjun?