



Finnish Public Media Representation of Asylum seekers and Refugees in 'Easy Finnish'

Qualitative Discourse Study of *Yle Selkouutiset*

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Examensarbete / Degree Thesis
Master's in Media Management

2017

DEGREE THESIS	
Arcada	
Degree Programme:	Media Management
Identification number:	18614
Author:	Surakhanim Aghaverdiyeva
Title:	Finnish Public Media Representation of Asylum seekers and Refugees in ‘Easy Finnish’: Qualitative Discourse Study of <i>Yle Selkouutiset</i>
Supervisor (Arcada):	Dr. Mats Nylund
Commissioned by:	
Abstract:	
<p>Media representation of asylum seekers and refugees has been discussed by many researchers including Finnish media portrayal of Roma and Somali asylum seekers and refugees (Horsti 2003, 2007, 2013; Nordberg 2004). However, there has been little or no research in Finnish media representation of the recent asylum seeker flow and refugee crisis starting in 2015. Taking the initiative from that point, this research has presented earlier literature in this theme and concluded several important aspects. These aspects are then studied via qualitative discourse analysis method with reference to the case of radio news in easy-Finnish which is an important media to Finnish language learners and other residents of Finland who find it hard to follow traditional Finnish media. The empirically studied case is how <i>Yle selkouutiset</i> represented asylum seekers and refugees during March-April 2017, when the debates on asylum seekers and refugees were at its peak level among traditional Finnish media, public and governmental institutions. Data is analyzed with qualitative discourse analysis method suggested by Fairclough (1995) and the results are then presented and discussed with earlier research findings. Further managerial and research implications are suggested at the end.</p>	
Keywords:	Finnish media, <i>Yle selkouutiset</i> , refugees, asylum seekers, qualitative media discourse analysis
Number of pages:	42
Language:	English
Date of acceptance:	13.06.2017

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1 INTRODUCTION

Refugees and asylum seekers have become a hot topic again following the recent refugee flow crisis of 2015-2016. In fact, refugee migration has taken place for many decades and has increased considerably with the technological development of transportation. The development has reduced time and costs which made it easier for refugees to escape poverty, disease and wars. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) report (2015), 13.9 million people were displaced due to conflicts and 11 million of those are internally displaced people. The rising percent has also brought problems to national security and awakened terrorism discussions especially in Western Europe. The 2005 French riots (see Canet & Pech 2008), Prophet Mohammad cartoon controversy in magazines of Denmark and France (following the publish of Muhammad's cartoons in Jyllands-Posten of Denmark in 2005 and Charlie-Hebdo of France in 2006) have shaped an emotional political topic of the issue. These, as well as recent terror attacks in Paris, Nice, London, Stockholm and the threats coming from extremist terror organizations such as ISIS have already flamed the debates over the refugee issue. So, in the last two decades, refugees have been a hot topic of the media and it is now clear that the information and debates will continue in media due to rising amount of refugee movements towards the West. The main critical point in this issue is whether the media plays a source of objective information or drives public to a certain opinion of its own goals by hindering some approaches in their contents. This is known as *agenda-setting* which is an *issue salience* in other words; while certain issues of relative importance to an actor makes its way to actor's agenda others do not (Soroka 2003). This raises the research problem of media's misrepresentation or not full representation of refugee and asylum seeker related debates which has been studied by several researchers as presented in the Literature Review part.

The empirical part of this study is the discourse analysis of news about asylum seekers during 1 March to 12 April in easy Finnish media *Yle Selkouutiset*. Finland, being a first-class country in media freedom was ranked No 1 in World Press Freedom index in 2016 by Reporters Without Borders organisation and has maintained its reputation in media

freedom for years. The country's position in Reporters Without Borders rankings in Press Freedom has been the first place since 2002, except for years 2007 and 2008 when the country was placed fifth and fourth respectively. Finnish media consumption has been at high level: according to Jyrkiäinen's (n.d.) country report in European Journalism Centre webpages, 76 percent of the population older than 10 reads a daily newspaper or afternoon paper. Finland's publicly funded national broadcasting media company is Yle which is a state owned limited company supervised and monitored by Finnish Communication Regulatory Authority (Moe & Mjos 2013). Being a competitive media company in Finland, Yle has four TV and six radio channels (Yle 2014). One of the TV channels, TV1 was ranked the most popular TV channel of Finland in 2015 and its radio channel Radio Suomi has kept its market dominancy (Yle 2014). Funded by a separate Yle tax since January 2013, Yle has 2951 permanent employees and the turnover of Yle was 470.9 million EUR in 2016 (Yle 2017).

Yle offers news bulletins in English, Russian, easy Finnish in addition to Finnish, Swedish, Sami, Karelian and sign languages. News in easy Finnish is presented once a day on TV and radio. Radio news in easy Finnish is usually offered daily, while TV news are available during weekdays and working days. News usually covers main important events in Finland and abroad which lasts for about 4-5 minutes per bulletin. It has also its own webpage under Yle which saves archived news programs and makes it available for users to follow the news on the internet. So, it is an important source of news both for people learning Finnish language and those who find it hard to follow traditional Finnish as well as English language media. The texts of each radio news coverage are published along with each coverage in their webpages.

The foreign population of Finland has been notably increasing over years since 1990s. There are currently slightly over 350 000 people living in Finland whose native language is other than Finnish, Swedish or Sami while this number was slightly over 50 000 in 1993 (Statistics Finland). Finnish capital city Helsinki had 13.5% of foreign language population in early 2015 and it is expected that nearly one fourth of the population will be foreign-language speakers by 2030 (Laitinen & Teivanen 2015). Foreign language speakers took part in 90% of the population growth in Finland and they have outnumbered Swedish speaking people who are the largest minority of Finland (Yle 2014). Therefore, the foreign language population has become a significant sample in Finnish population

which is going up in the future as well. The role of easy Finnish media is very significant for these people to consume the news about Finland and integrate via learning the language. Therefore, being a significant news source, Yle easy-Finnish radio news is studied in this thesis on their representation of asylum seekers and refugees to its consumers.

1.1 Background of the study

There has been research analyzing media presentation of refugees as outlined in the theoretical part of this study with significant findings. Although not so widely available, there has been research in Finnish media representation of refugees (ie. Nordberg 2004; Horsti 2007). However, there been little or no research on refugee representation of easy Finnish media which is aimed for mainly foreign language population in Finland. As a European Union member country, Finland has also undertaken the Union's laws and directives on accepting refugees. Relatively, asylum seeker and refugee related issues have awakened debates in media as the rising number of asylum seekers entered Finland. During early 2017 the negative decisions given to asylum seekers by Finnish Immigration Service made the topic hot in the media especially after citizen initiatives. The start point of the case period is when theaters started the protest initiative against increasing negative decisions granted to asylum seekers and this protest was followed by churches. *Helsingin Sanomat*, one of the major newspapers in Finland, published the news on 1 March that over 20 theaters would join the initiative of protecting human rights and decided to read the negative decision letters publicly as a protest (Heikkinen 2017). The newspaper later published that some churches also decided to read the decisions publicly without judging whether the negative decision was wrongly given or not (Hakkarainen 2017). The intensive media coverage of these stories as well as the mentioned initiatives made Finnish Immigration Service to issue a press release on 9 March (Finnish Immigration Service 9.3.2017), stating that the letters should be read thoroughly and all asylum seeker applications are evaluated carefully before decisions are given. On March 11, both asylum seekers and people welcoming refugees as well as another group of people who are against asylum-seekers and support deportations held protests in central area of Helsinki near each other, but the protests went peacefully (Pajuriutta 2017). On 4 April 2017, police realized the return of asylum seekers who had got a negative decision and had to

return to Afghanistan, which was protested by several hundred people both near the police station and at the airport (Airola & Virkkunen 2017). The debates went on for the next days in traditional Finnish media by presenting the demonstrators' aspect that Afghanistan is not safe and returning of refugees to a dangerous area is "a shame for the country" (Yle 5.4.2017). In response to the debates Finnish Immigration Service issued a press release in this issue on 6.4.2017 in Finnish, 7.4.2017 in Swedish and 11.4.2017 in English, and stated:

- a) Not all Afghanistan is in war and the areas with danger are carefully evaluated and considered
- b) People getting negative decisions are those coming from areas where there is possible international protection
- c) Even if those coming from conflict areas do not necessarily get granted asylum in Finland, if they can be accommodated protection in safe cities
- d) Those refused asylum in Finland need to return after all appeal processes also support the negative decision and police is responsible to carry out the return.

Taking the initiative from there, this study aims to review the representation of the refugee and asylum seeker debate case of March-April 2017 which was initiated by traditional media and involved media, state institutions as well as people in addressing their opinions about the case.

The research questions of this study are:

- a) What are the important aspects from the discourse analysis of public easy Finnish news media delivering the case during the selected time?
- b) Were important actors' (refugees, police, politicians, local people, those against refugees) perspectives were covered and how were the asylum seekers and refugees as well as other directly related actors represented in the events?
- c) Were the laws and policies communicated by the media to create a wide understanding for consumers as suggested by earlier research?

To attempt to study this topic widely firstly this research presents earlier research which consists of published scientific articles which used a certain methodology to select media and analyze their contents on certain issues related to refugees. The validity and reliability of the referred articles in this topic are certainly considered to keep the credibility of the

thesis. Thus, in the theoretical part the thesis will present earlier research which has studied the influence of media on refugees and asylum seekers and critically discuss the results of those studies along with empirical results of the study without generalization. The empirical part is the qualitative discourse study of the representation of refugee debates of March-April 2017 by easy-Finnish public media *Yle selkouutiset*.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Definitions and Terms

To understand key factors in media representation of asylum seekers or refugees studied by earlier literature it is critical to take into account the following concept definitions:

Asylum-seeker: According to UNCHR asylum-seekers are those whose request are not processed and status not yet determined for international protection. In Finland asylum seekers can apply for asylum on the basis of fear of being persecuted because of origin, religion, nationality, membership in a social group or political views in home country own country of permanent residence. However, fear of unwillingness to return to home or permanent residence country is not justified as a reason to apply for asylum. (Migri.fi).

Refugees: Asylum seekers become refugees after they have been granted asylum. Official definition as defined by 1951 Geneva Convention are those "...owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it." (Adapted from UNHCR web-site)

Mass Media: Newspapers, magazines, film, radio, television, phonograph and other means of communication reaching and involving the society and having effects on both political and cultural life of the society. In political aspect, mass media provides space for political candidates for wider debate and is a means of power exercise for politicians and

agents of governments. In cultural aspect, mass media refers to being a primary source of definitions and images of social reality and being the largest source of leisure time interest. (McQuail 2000: 4)

News Discourse Analysis: Analysis of news with a critical linguistic approach by going beyond just reflecting on the neutral information (Fowler 2013: 1-9)

Public service media: Public media institution with a certain funding (license fee) and relatively vague program obligations. In the last two decades, public service media has reformulated this traditional understanding as presented before and public service media is understood as a media which can be funded commercially, not necessarily be a public company and variety of programs can be provided there. (Søndergaard and Helles 2012: 81).

News: The reporting of actions and events by journalism organizations, other content providers and ordinary citizens on a variety of media (Benett 2016: 25)

Representation: The communication and transmission of meanings which are constructed through the framework of sounds, words, notes, gestures, expressions, clothes and other elements of natural and material world which operate as symbols and carry meanings (Hall 1997: 1-11)

2.2 Research on media representation of asylum seekers and refugees

Asylum seeking themes came into debate discourse in Finland in the beginning of 1990s when Somalian asylum seekers came to Finland through Russia (Horsti 2013). Later the same decade, the asylum seeking of Roma people began to move throughout Europe which also raised debates in Finland and Finnish media. Nordberg (2004) analyzed the media debate on Roma asylum seekers of 1999-2000 into Finland. While the media represented voices both against them as well as those of supporting the view that they should have the same rights as Finnish people, Roma people's own voice was not presented in the discussions about them. The case was also studied with the difference variable in largest Finnish language newspaper (*Helsingin Sanomat*) and Swedish language newspaper (*Hufvudstadsbladet*) of Finland: Interestingly, the Swedish language media was found

to have covered the refugee perspectives more closely by inviting Roma people to raise their own voice in the debates. (Nordberg 2004). This is explained by Nordberg (2004) as Swedish speaking people's being a minority in Finland and therefore welcoming the minorities as well as the closeness of Swedish People's Party, Finland's Swedish speaking population's political party, to the newspaper. Horsti (2003) also analyzed the image usage between Finnish and Swedish language news in Finland and the results were similar to those of Nordberg's (2004) study; while Finnish language news used Roma ghetto images to support illegality topic and that they left to gain money, Swedish language news directed the attention to Roma people's being discriminated by using a different set of images.

Horsti (2007) studied news released by Finnish news agency Suomen Tietotoimisto (STT) on asylum seekers and concluded that although the channel delivers news with only facts and thus seems neutral, only asylum seeker news involving the notion of illegality and control issues made its way to the news. Moreover, the asylum seekers' own perspectives and ideas for debates were not presented which means their access to the discourse about themselves was rejected (Horsti 2007). However, Finland is not exclusively worse than other democratic countries in media representation of asylum seekers and refugees. There has been a number of research studying media's portrayal by analyzing media contents over different periods of time. The research presented in this study is mainly about those which analyzed Canadian media as Canada has rich history of immigration and a democratic country where freedom of speech is valued. Another reason is large availability of the related research in Canadian context over others. One of the key conclusive factors found by several scientific articles is the understanding of refugees as being threat to internal security. Jenicek & Wong (2009) made the analysis on the basis of ethnicity studying media's role in Tamil and Chinese refugees respectively and concluded that the Canadian media pictured Tamil refugees as those involved in "terrorism, drug-dealing and other criminality". Although, these refugee groups' stories were discussed and refugee-critique sides' opposing claims were largely presented, only "intermediaries" were interviewed in the same media contents who would comment on behalf of refugees. This creates a big doubt whether the refugee side was represented equally and it makes the freedom of speech vulnerable in this issue as claimed by Jenicek & Wong (2009). Consequently, Jenicek & Wong (2009) argue that the refugees of that ethnic group became

perceived as a risk eventually and new tighter refugee reform laws were passed out following the debates. The “security threat issue” has also affected the refugees as researched by Smolash (2009). These results were also found for asylum seekers in British media discourse as studied by Innes (2010). Therefore, Innes’ (2010) study also concluded that asylum seekers were presented as a security threat to the United Kingdom by the media. In the analysis of anti-terrorism cases (in 2003 and 2006) on two major Canadian newspapers, Smolash (2009) suggest that the media continuously racialized crimes even when withdrawn by officials which gives legitimacy to state violence especially against Muslim, Arab and South Asian citizens as well as non-citizen residents in Canada. Similarly, Mahtani, Henry & Tator (2008) also concluded that ethnic minorities are portrayed in a problematic way after content analysis in the media. In the Belgian context, Van Gorp (2005) found out that Flemish media in Belgium discussed asylum seekers more harshly and presented as “intruders” while other media portrayed their innocence and being victims.

The media's content has been questioned by several scholars who claim that the media failed to give equally balanced information and instead missed the opportunity of enlightening the public regarding refugees and their backgrounds. Bradimore & Bauder (2011) emphasize that the media’s role on discussing and claiming the legitimacy of refugees of sexual minorities, have brought about Canada’s “superiority” over other non-Western regions, and more racist approach to other cultures. This in itself also made those refugees vulnerable and weaker in an equal society. In addition, doing a discourse analysis on two articles and comments on a major Canadian news portal about Tamil refugees, di Tomasso (2012) concludes that the narratives were within the framework of dehumanization of children and families of those refugees. And it is easy to understand that accepting refugees as a “threat” in “own land” would bring uncertainty and violence towards them. So, the media’s slightly harsh use of language inflamed such violent discourse which means apparently the media took the role of directing others opinion rather than giving information and forming the opinion on others in a more positive or empathetic way.

Refugees and asylum seekers were also found to be “bringing diseases” or in other words being a “threat to health” as per some research analyses on the media. A recent study by Reitmanova, Gustafson & Ahmed (2015) concludes that the already existing notions of immigrants being “disease-breeders” and “health fraudsters” have also been portrayed in

Canadian media over the past decade. The same problem is found by Reitmanova & Gustafson's (2012) analysis in 273 news articles, editorials and letters to the editor from 10 major Canadian daily newspapers published during 1999-2008 over the issue of immigrant tuberculosis. The article suggests that the tuberculosis was found to be depicted as a biomedical disease imported by immigrants to Canada which is regarded as deracialization of health information in media. Similarly, Terwal (1996) found that Italian media created a moral panic in the health conditions of asylum seekers and undocumented migrants in the area by describing their unhealthy conditions of living and that the local people were worried of the diseases they would cause them.

According to Mahtani and Mountz (2002) it is a surprising fact that there were very few stories in newspapers covering governmental reforms and bills on immigration passed out in 2000 following boats arrivals having migrants smuggled from China. Therefore, they suggest that governments need to be more active in the communication of information such as immigration policies and statistics. Hirji's (2011) analysis on Canadian TV show *Little Mosque on the Prairie* and American TV shows *24* and *Lost* conclude that whilst there has been progress such as discussing and presenting Islam especially after 9/11 events, the shows still portrayed Muslim women in an underrepresented and stereotyped way. The article suggests that in contrast with such underrepresentation, these shows had a better chance of debating relevant Islam and women issues which could have contributed to awareness and public education. Similarly, analyzing Canadian media covering 2003-2005 Shariah debates, Sharify-Funk (2009) argues that the media did not raise the voices of those with more balanced approach as well as those who would give more complex understanding of the issue; the media rather flamed the debate by only portraying two organizations' statements in a "response to each other" way. Another similar media analysis article of Odartey-Wellington (2011) suggests alternative media discourses that should adopt racial perspectives and is able to question relevant cases whether they are racially motivated. The article made an analysis on Canadian media contents which covered the story of Suaad Hagi Mahmoud, a Canadian of Somali origin, who was stopped in Nairobi, Kenya in 2009 with the claim of the migration authorities which accused her of not having resemblance with the photo in her passport. Her citizenship card and other ID proving documents were not sufficient by Canadian authorities there, who confiscated

her passport and asked her prosecution by Kenyan authorities. After 8 days of imprisonment she was bailed, however it took approximately 2 months before she returned to Canada following her identity proof of DNA tests conducted on her and her son in Canada. The case was largely described and discussed by Canadian media. Analyzing them Odartey-Wellington (2011) concludes that the media did not question the critical question whether she experienced this because of her race, thus racial element was not covered in the media. Exploring this theme Greenberg (2000) claims that the opinion discourse of mainstream media expressed negative viewpoint on the refugees, and even on the issues which are supposed to be public debate before coming to direct conclusory opinion. Jenicek & Wong (2009) puts an emphasis on media's role in raising the refugees' voices from themselves, and deliver information instead of doing politics, while Bradimore & Bauder (2011) stress the significance of attention on the language used in the media which may cause a racist approach although not intended. Similarly, Esses, Medianu & Lawson (2013) suggest that the governments need to communicate tightly with the media to provide information in order to reduce uncertainty, thus as a threat as perceived by the society. Therefore, media failure in communication of information is concluded by these authors who suggest media adopt ways to communicate the various sides of information and encourage a holistic and healthy debate around the refugee issue. Yet, on the other hand during elections it is governments who use "threatening" discourse themselves and deliver this via the media to public.

The above discussed articles which have analyzed media representation of refugees or asylum seekers, have come to the conclusion that the media has formed opinions in the public in various ways. The media analysis articles presented here mainly covered the failure of media in creating balanced content and in contrast encouraged influencing public opinion against refugees and their immigration. The researchers suggest that the media should be a source of information, and should create an understanding of the phenomenon to people. So, in the framework of democracy, the media's negative role is best described by Henry and Tator (2002) who also analyzed the topic:

"Journalists and editors often deny strongly that racism exists in newsrooms, and sometimes refuse to validate the voices and views of those they have represented as "others." As a result, the discursive and institutionally structured forms of bias and discrimination remain unacknowledged and invisible. Media representations are discursive formations.

Furthermore, they are so much a part of the everyday normative culture – including the material fabric of media institutions – the racist ideologies and rhetorical practices seem natural to those immersed in this environment” (p.226)

There have certainly been critiques of these studies being credible due to the narrower methods before making conclusions (Hier 2008; 2010) and certainly responses for this critiques (see Mahtani 2009). This topic is obviously polemical and the main points of literature review are presented in Section 2.3 without making any generalizations.

2.3 Earlier research main points

Asylum seeker flow and media representation of refugees and asylum seekers has been studied by a number of researchers. Although it is not unique truth, the identified key conclusions and factors from the majority of earlier research are as follows:

- a) The media contents were unequal to asylum seekers and refugees and caused discourses on the basis of ethnic origin
- b) The media was not effective enough to communicate with the government and people on delivering new policies and laws.
- c) The media contents were found to be misbalanced in the portrayal of asylum seekers and refugees, such as describing them as "threats" to internal security and healthcare.
- d) The media should create informative content letting people absorb the whole image before making an opinion on the topic of asylum seeker immigration.

3 CHOICE OF METHOD

3.1 Qualitative versus quantitative

The thesis will employ qualitative approach aiming to explore the research question fully. Certainly, neither qualitative nor quantitative has proven to be always better than the other

method, they rather differ depending on the research (Silverman 2010: 10). Qualitative data is referred as “...research that produces descriptive data: people’s own written or spoken words and observable behavior” (Taylor & Bogdan 1984: 5). Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009: 482) puts the differences between qualitative and quantitative studies, presented in Table 1:

Table 1. Differences in qualitative data (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2009: 482)

QUALITATIVE DATA	QUANTITATIVE DATA
Meaning expressed through words	Meaning derived from numbers
Non-standardized data make results	Numerical and standardized data make results
Analysis through conceptualization	Analysis through diagrams and statistics

As seen from Table 1, qualitative method relies on creating meaning through words and makes interpretations and analysis through conceptualization which is also an appropriate method for this study. In media research area, Berger (2014: 22) suggests that quantitative research focuses on counting, measuring and observing while qualitative research focus on texts interprets meanings out of the text which are not ultimately there in the text. Therefore, the qualitative media discourse study approach is taken to explore the theme thoroughly by studying the topic within a time period by analyzing related news programs delivered by easy-Finnish media. Since this study does not research and make results with numbers, quantitative study is not appropriate for this research.

3.2 Qualitative Media Discourse

The study has employed qualitative media discourse as a methodological tool to conduct data analysis and drive results. News is not merely descriptive information and accepting news only in such way is a limited approach as news is constructed through carefully manipulated selections of social reality (Nylund 2006b). News materials are edited from bigger data and the actual occurrence can be changed or lack information during edition which then may lose its main message to the consumers. Or alternatively, news can show

the parts within specific interests of the media company or others. It is even possible to cover the voice of all actors while making news stories but still deliver the message to public differently than the actual actor would like to deliver. In his study of interviews on Finnish TV, Nylund (2006a) found that even though a case was covered by inviting the relevant actors for TV interview, the reporters had the control of the interview by having pre-determined agenda, the phenomena which in general can limit one or more actors' messages not to be delivered as it should be although they are present on TV. Therefore, considering that news is a complex process, the news texts empirically studied in this research is not analyzed depending on what is described, however a theoretically based advanced analysis method is needed to create a better understanding. For this purpose, this study has taken media discourse method to study the topic.

Fairclough (1995) distinguishes discourse and genre: discourse is referred to the language used in the studied material while genre is the language associated with the structure of material. For instance, interview has its own language structure while advertising uses a different language structure which refers to the notion of genre. In this study, discourse type is employed since the language used in the empirical material is analyzed. So, discourse is more than just a text, it is also text interaction process. In other words, as Talbot (2007) puts, while the text is a product that can be observed, discourse on the other hand refers to the interaction of this product.

The process for this qualitative study starts with analyzing earlier research and driving important variables from them. Empirical case includes related important events and notable issues around this theme. These issues conclude the selected period of this case which starts from 1 March 2017 when about 20 theatres started publicly protesting negative decisions (Teater Viirus 2017; Heikkinen 2017) and ends on 12 April 2017, a day after the press release of Finnish Immigration Service to address the returning process and further debatable questions (Finnish Immigration Service 11.04.2017). The news coverage of easy Finnish media related to asylum seekers and refugees are all taken for qualitative discourse analysis and the results are presented in Results section.

3.3 Research Process

According to Fairclough (1995) media discourse analysis has two types:

Communicative events: when a specific type of media is analyzed for a particular case. The continuity and change is important to be studied in this method.

The order of discourse: General and overall discourse as well as its evolution in social and cultural changes.

As this research empirically studies a specific case in a selected media (*Yle selkouutiset* Radio news from 1.3.2017 to 12.4.2017) communicative events analysis is chosen in this study. Fairclough (1995: 59) suggested a framework for media discourse analysis of a communicative event as in Figure 1 below:

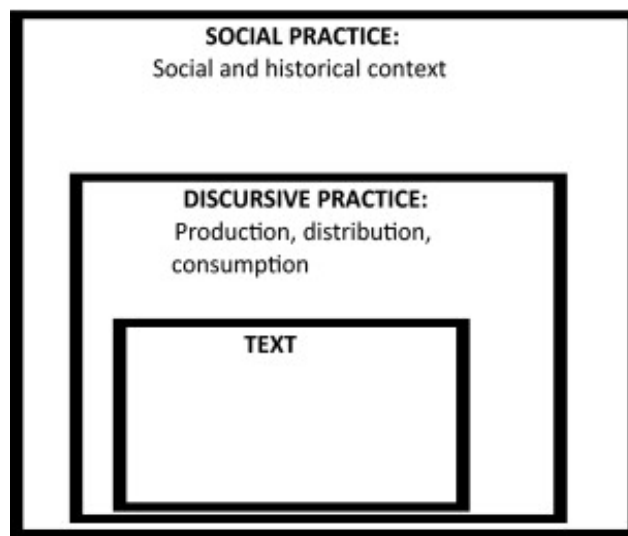


Figure 2. Media discourse analysis framework of communicative event (Fairclough 1995: 59)

Figure 1 summarizes media discourse analysis of a communicative event as analysis of relationships between text, discourse practice and sociocultural practice. The text analysis is referred as linguistic analysis (Fairclough 1995: 58) and the text analyzed in this research is the radio news texts. For text analysis Fairclough introduces three ways:

- a) Particular representations of social practice
- b) The notion of whether the identities and roles of reader and writer are constructed or highlighted
- c) Writer and Reader interaction and relationships, ie. formal or informal

For text analysis, this research has undertaken particular representations of the events related to asylum seekers and refugees during the study period. According to BBC (n.d.)

the key terms below are significant to determine the representation of events or issues in the media are *construction* (the ways of gathering the media text: For television or films it refers to editing and camera angles, while in newspapers it refers to the layout, the chosen images to be presented with the text), *mediation* (the process of portrayal; re-writing the script or arranging the photographs before it finally reaches to the audience), *selection* (the selection of certain facts and arguments over others), *anchorage* (captions and taglines referring to the used images), *stereotypes* (simplified representation via exaggerating basic characteristics), *camera shots and angles* (having low or high angle to make persons seem more or less influential respectively), *editing* (resenting certain situations to manipulate the audience emotions), *audio codes* (the representation by using audio: ie. music, strong accent, various tunes may add different understandings when the text reaches to the audience), *visual codes* (the usage of images or symbols to shape the representation) and *ideology* (the beliefs of media producers which shape the representation of certain items in the media).

In this study the selection of the facts over others taken into use by the case media when representing asylum seekers and refugees was used. In addition, editing and stereotypes were also employed for studying the representation of asylum seekers and refugees in *Yle selkouutiset*.

The second process of Figure 1 is called Discourse practice which is process of text production and text consumption and its aspects of standing between society and culture as one leg, and language and text as another leg (Fairclough 1995). Linguistic and intertextual analysis is available for this process of analysis: while linguistic analysis refers to description, intertextual text is more interpretive. So, linguistic analysis can be a base to do intertextual analysis. (Fairclough 1995).

This study has taken linguistic analysis of the news texts to find out the description of the studied case. Interpretive analysis is referred to an interpretation of the news text with the social and cultural aspects (Fairclough 1995). However, this is not merely description of what is "in-text", this is rather a critical analysis of what is presented about asylum-seekers and refugees in *Yle selkouutiset* radio news and whether or how full the news story covered the ongoing case (demonstrations and protests as presented by other media) as

well as the variables of the theoretical background (media communication of governmental policies, representing the news by having direct actors, ie. refugees' or asylum seekers' as well as other related actors' own voices heard). Critical linguistic analysis was applied in this stage to analyze the representation of the news texts.

The final stage of data analysis, sociocultural practice deals with the sociocultural aspects' entrance of the discourse analysis (Fairclough 1995). For this stage Fairclough (1995) puts three main sociocultural contexts which is also used in this research: political, economic and cultural. The research process of this study as described in steps using Fairclough's (1995) media discourse model in sections 3.3.1, 3.3.2 and 3.3.3.

3.3.1 Step 1 – Text

At this stage, the Radio news of *Yle selkouutiset* starting from 1 March 2017 until 12 April 2017 was listened to by the researcher from the news archive of *Yle Selkouutiset* webpage. The researcher listened the program again the second time by checking the news against its subtitled texts. The news subtitles are published below the playback media in Finnish; so, the transcription of the coverages was readily available in the archive page of *Yle selkouutiset* together with the coverages in *Yle selkouutiset* webpage which were translated into English by the researcher to make the discourse analysis.

The news using asylum-seeker or refugee words was selected and analyzed critically based on its discourse. The total amount of listened and analyzed radio news programs were 45 as it was broadcasted every day during the case period. 6 radio news programs out of these 45 included the word of “turvanpaikanhakija” meaning asylum seeker in English. There was no coverage including “pakolainen” which mean refugee in English.

3.3.2 Discourse Practice

The research compiled the news presenting refugees or asylum seekers of the period by analyzing the topic as well as the contents of news texts and analyzed them along with variables from literature review results. At this step, the focus was not only what the news presented, also what it did not present which was an important event or a significant actor of the case.

3.3.3 Step 3 – Sociocultural Practice

At this stage, the research analyzed the sociocultural aspects of the results. As Fairclough (1995) suggests, this step should present political, economic and cultural implications of the discourse. In this research, the analytic results of previous process of discourse practice are then reflected in political, economic and cultural contexts in this research to create a wider understanding of the research topic.

3.4 Research Ethics and Limitations

The study refers to publicly available data which is published in consideration with Finnish public broadcaster Yle's Ethical Guidelines (Yle 2016). In addition, possible usage of the names, surnames and other private or sensitive information including addresses and genders have not been used in this thesis. The subtitles of the studied coverages are under the copyright of Yle, and it can be reached online at *Yle selkouutiset* archive (<http://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/selkouutiset/>) or requested from Yle which is the owner of the texts. Yle decides how long both the texts and news bulletins should be available in its web archives available to public, texts are not annexed to this study to respect the owners right of distribution.

The main limitation of the research was that the empirically studied media (radio news) contained short news texts per covered topic. When the timing should be short per news coverage it is challenging to suggest what could have been instead mentioned to give a full coverage of the topic. Another limitation was that only six radio news programs were found to have covered news about refugees and asylum seekers which was not a high amount considering the actuality of the theme in the society. Further research and managerial implications are made as an attempt to overcome or minimize these challenges. And the main strategy to tackle the limitations was that this research did not generalize the findings; it rather reflected the results of the data analysis to contribute in this research topic and suggested implications for managers and researchers. Certainly, this limitation is because the discourse analysis is largely subjective.

4 EMPIRICAL STUDY: DATA ANALYSIS & RESULTS

The case as introduced in section 1.1 of this thesis can be illustrated with the sequence of important events as in the Figure 2:

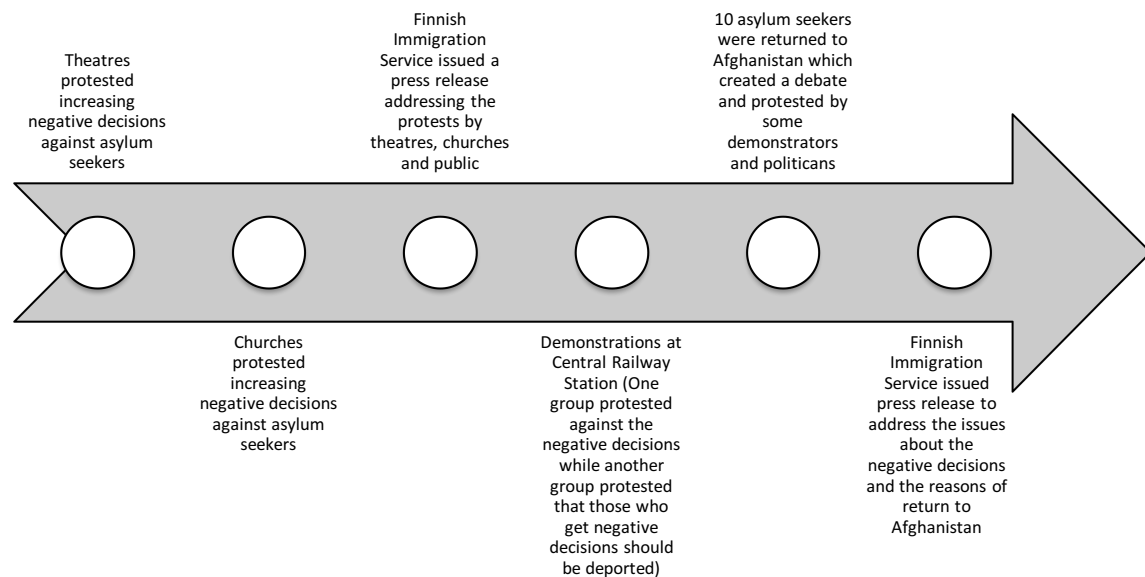


Figure 2. The timeline of important events of the empirical case

Taking the initiative from earlier research, this study will analyze and reflect on YLE's easy-Finnish media representation of the case events related to refugees and asylum seekers during March-April 2017 when was at its peak level along with important events as presented in Figure 2. Being a product of Finnish Public Broadcasting company Yle, this easy Finnish media delivers news in easy Finnish. Its news bulletin is delivered every day in Radio at 21:35. News bulletin presented both via radio and television is available at their webpage <http://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/selkouutiset/> where it is possible to find the archived daily news delivered in the past. Texting for radio news is available in their website together with the radio news for each date. The language is pronounced slowly and short sentences are used for easy and fast understanding. Certainly, easy Finnish media addresses those who learn Finnish and have hardships to follow the traditional media. This means it might as well be a media source for certain people who find it hard to follow Finnish media available in other languages than easy Finnish. In the case of Sweden, Rydin's (2013) study found out that a certain group of immigrant women did not attend

“Swedish as a second language” or alike courses, they rather improved their language skills by watching TV in Swedish with available texting. Although they could improve their language skills that way, they felt more isolated than their husbands as they were unable to make communications with natives and TV was the only window outside their own world. (Rydin 2013). *Yle selkouutiset* is therefore a significant source for its consumers as it offers the news in easy Finnish and published the subtitles of each news.

This study utilized the webpage of the easy Finnish media to access radio news starting from 1 March 2017 until 12.4.2017 the day after the latest press release by Finnish Immigration Service in English had been made in this issue. In attempting to answer the research questions, the study aims to analyze the data in media discourse analysis method and reflect on the core points derived from earlier research based on the following points:

- a) significant aspects from the discourse analysis of the data
- b) which actors’ perspectives directly related to the case were covered or not covered at all: Asylum seekers or refugees, experts, Finnish citizens, governmental institutions.
- c) how did the media communicate government policies and existing laws to people

The empirical data is analyzed with Fairclough’s (1995) media discourse tool and the data results are presented accordingly with Fairclough’s discourse analysis steps for the analysis of communicative events: Text, Discourse Practice and Sociocultural Practice.

4.1 Media Discourse Analysis step 1: Text

As already stated the research case studied Yle news media in easy Finnish during 1 March 2017 – 12 April 2017 when the debate was hot. The first step of data analysis included only news stories related to refugees and asylum seekers of the period in question.

Only 6 out of 45 radio news programs in YLE easy Finnish media covered news about refugees and asylum seekers during 1 March 2017 – 12 April 2017. The first coverage related to asylum seekers or refugees was on 3.3.2017 and the representative sentence was “*People who do not get asylum, are being returned*”. Although the procedure is true, the actual theme that many asylum seekers get negative decisions which have created

controversies and debates which has led to peaceful protests of theaters and churches who decided to read out the letters loudly, was missing.

The next coverage was on 11.3.2017 describing the demonstrations held near Central Railway Station. The coverage represented the event and actors as:

“In Central Railway Station square market there has been asylum seekers’ demonstration already many weeks. On Saturday many other people also came to the place. Many would like to support asylum seekers. Others were in different opinion. They told that asylum seekers’ demonstrations must be stopped.

Asylum seekers demonstrated in Central Railway Station square market because they are disappointed with the decisions of Finnish Immigration Service. Many asylum seekers get the decision that they cannot stay in Finland.”

When it comes to the actors’ representation of 11.3.2017 coverage, it still underrepresents both important actors of the case: asylum seekers and Finnish Immigration Service. Asylum seekers are presented as those *“who are disappointed”* which infers that *“they do not like the decision but they do stay in the country”*. Their perspective is not presented that why they are disappointed and why they do not want to return to their countries. Not sharing these perspectives and using *“disappointed”* leads to underrepresentation. Meanwhile Finnish Immigration Service had addressed this issue in their press release two days before and their perspective is not covered either.

The coverage of 21.3.2017 presented results of a survey conducted to learn about Finnish people’s opinion on asylum seekers. To be able to make a discourse analysis the whole text is as below translated into English:

“A big research has been published on Finnish people’s opinion about asylum seekers. A large portion of Finns do not dare to say what their opinion is about asylum seekers. They are afraid that they are called racist or “suvakki”. “Suvakki” is the epithet used for tolerant people.

Every second respondent said in the research that one cannot freely express own opinion about asylum-seekers in Finland. People think that in Finland it is hard to discuss matters on asylum-seeking freely and properly.

According to research Finns are ready to help people who need help.

They think that asylum-seekers must integrate to Finnish lifestyle. This means being elastic in own lifestyle.”

The text of 21.3.2017 coverage mostly presents results of a research. However, the asylum seekers are represented as “*those in need of help*” as well as “*those who have different lifestyle than Finnish people and some of them unwilling to accept Finnish lifestyle*”. Especially the sentence “*This (meaning adapting to own lifestyle – author) means being elastic in own lifestyle*” does not present whether it is according to research or news makers’ own opinion. Generalization may create the understanding that all asylum seekers have “*different*” lifestyle than Finns and they “*hard to integrate*” which itself is biased.

The topic of 24.3.2017 coverage was someone’s setting fire to an asylum seekers’ tent in Helsinki center which is a form of protest of negative decisions and against deportations. The translation of the whole text is presented to make a discourse analysis:

“Police investigate the fire case, which was set in asylum seekers’ tent in Helsinki Central Railway Station market square. Police suspect sabotage, therefore that someone ignited fire on the tent on purpose.

During the extinction of the fire one person got injured.”

In this coverage, asylum seekers were underrepresented as the purpose of asylum seekers’ tent is not mentioned. Their tent was made there as a protest to the negative asylum decisions and deportations granted to the asylum-seekers.

On 4.4.2017 the topic of the news was the returning of 10 asylum seekers and protests against them. The news covered the story as below translated into English:

“Police investigate the confrontation between demonstrators and the police in Pasila, Helsinki. About 50 people opposed the return of asylum seekers to Afghanistan. People tried to prevent the advance of police car from the garage of Pasila police station. Police ended up using power means to move out of the car road. Later the demonstration was made also in Helsinki-Vantaa airport.

Police want to smooth down the wrong information about the return. Police say that only adults were returned and nobody there was pregnant. There were 10 people in the flight and the flight went peacefully.

Demonstrators' opinion is Afghanistan is not safe to return people."

In this coverage, the police's perspective that the flight went successfully and there was no pregnant women or children was covered. In addition, the demonstrators' perspective that Afghanistan is not a safe country to return the asylum seekers was also covered which is a good discourse to cover both actors' perspectives. However, the perspective of the main actor, Finnish Immigration Service, is missing in the discourse and they are the governmental body which issued these negative decisions. Moreover, not covering the asylum seekers' perspective who attended and describing that "the flight went peacefully" is covering a news story of the flight process which involved asylum-seekers in addition to operating officials and making conclusions on all participants' behalf with no representation of asylum seekers' opinion.

The final coverage was on 11.4.2017 and the topic was again the return process and professionalism of the process. The news covered the theme as follows, translated into English:

"The return of the asylum seekers to Afghanistan went properly. So says Non-discrimination Ombudsman, who monitors the returning flights and the police's operating. The Ombudsman says that the police did not acquire interpreter to the place, but other than that there is nothing else to be remarked to the police's operating. The monitoring people think police behaved people well both in Police station and during flight to Afghanistan. Finland returned 10 people to Afghanistan on a plane a week ago. A group of people objected to the returning process in front of Helsinki Police Station and in the airport. Police officers were blamed for instance for returning children to Afghanistan. All returned asylum-seekers were however adults."

This coverage represented the perspectives of the Ombudsman and demonstrators which creates wider understanding about the case. Nevertheless, the perspective of the asylum seekers in flight is missing. The process is all about the 10 asylum seekers who were returned but all actors' perspectives are covered except for asylum seekers themselves

and Finnish Immigration Service. The press releases of 6.4.2017 (in Finnish) and 7.4.2017 (in Swedish) addressed the issue of Afghanistan's safety and returning process according to Finnish laws. So, missing these two direct actors' perspectives does not create a full coverage or representation of the case.

The next step of media discourse analysis is Discourse Practice which goes beyond what is presented and discusses the implications in order to study the topic further.

4.2 Media Discourse Analysis step 2: Discourse Practice

The first coverage was 3.3.2017 which discussed Finland's help in the returning of asylum seekers who got negative decisions. The monitoring procedure was described briefly but enough considering the nature of easy-Finnish news. However, the main event – the protests of churches and theatres was not presented with at least one sentence. This implies that the news did not cover the rising dissatisfaction and protests in the local community, and presented the case of negative decisions and the return process just as sequences of events which were realized successfully and monitored by appropriate institutions.

The coverage dated 11.3.2017 presented the demonstrations against negative decisions given by Finnish Immigration Service and another demonstration close to the place which consisted of people who were against the stay of asylum seekers and such demonstrations. The term “*asylum seekers' demonstration*” used in that coverage gives an understanding that the protest was held only by asylum seekers. However, local people also participated there. For instance, China's biggest news agency Xinhua introduced this group with the term “*supporters of asylum seekers*” (Xinhua 2017). Using “asylum seekers' protest” and following with “the protest of other group who oppose asylum seekers” may lead to marginalizing asylum seekers in the discourse by failing to represent some of the local people's support to them (by attending the protest in this case).

In addition, the news of 11.3.2017 coverage shortly described what asylum seekers and the other group demanded, which was a good part. However, the missing part was the perspective of Finnish Immigration Service which issued the negative decisions and thus was an important actor in this issue. Two days before the demonstrations, on 9.3.2017, a press release in the related topic was issued by Finnish Immigration Service. The non-

coverage of the perspective of such important governmental institution might have led to the lack of the communication of governmental policies to its listeners. Therefore, at least one or few sentences could have covered the governmental perspective in this issue to cover all related actors' perspectives. Without this perspective, the listeners may be taken to the immediate conclusive opinion that whether negative decisions are true or false without grounded arguments which should also include the arguments delivered by Finnish Immigration Service making these decisions.

The coverages of 21.3.2017 and 24.3.2017 presented specific events not directly related to the negative decisions or returning process, however included news about asylum seekers. The first one introduced the research results on Finnish people's opinion of not daring to talk openly about asylum seekers while the second case was about an unknown person's setting fire to asylum seekers' tent. While the first case would have been considered in the successful presentation of the issue, the second one is not. The main reason is the lack of information on why asylum seeker tent is there and what were the reasons for having the tent there. The radio news only presented a photo where it said the tents are presented as "demonstration tents" however no further news of what the demonstration was for. It could have at least covered with one sentence that the demonstration tents were put there to house people protesting negative decisions given to asylum-seekers and the tent camp has been there for weeks.

The coverage of 21.3.2017 included the term "... to help people who need help" is a very subjective and generalized statement as it is not clearly defined what actions are meant in "helping". The subsequent sentence is about integrating so the term "help" may be based on helping "person's ability to integrate". Furthermore, it may create the understanding that integrating requires sacrificing own traditions and give up some of the cultural values to conform new traditions of the host culture. Creating such understanding of integration is nuanced and the application of the term of help to integration this context emphasizes the differences between the groups.

The case of the return of the asylum seekers was the most relatively described one in the coverage of 4.4.2017. The process as well as police's perspectives on the procedures and demonstrators' perspective that the destination where asylum seekers are sent is not safe was covered. However, governmental policies and the perspectives of direct actors,

namely the Finnish Immigration Service, was not presented which still put the question mark to the issue of negative decisions. The sentence “*Police say that only adults were returned and nobody there was pregnant.*” is not backed up with any following argument that why police say so. It could have been a response to some of the demonstrators’ claims that there are children or pregnant women but using only one such sentence does not support this idea fully. It instead may lead to the understanding that “*it is OK to return adult asylum seekers while pregnant women and children can stay in the country*” in researcher’s opinion. Therefore, the reason why that sentence was used should have been justified clearly and moreover, returning policies and laws could have been presented to make it more clear that what are the exceptions and excuses for not returning an asylum seeker who have gotten a negative decision.

This case was continued in the coverage of 11.4.2017 where the professionalism of the police was discussed in the return process which was also presented in 4.4.2017 coverage. The news presented ombudsman’s perspective that the police’s kind treatment and professionalism helped the return process go successfully. The term “*return of the asylum seekers went properly*” is not correct as the news discusses Police’s professionalism and manners in the process. However, the term “return” in that context represents also people who were returned in the flight and their feelings during the process. Calling the return “proper” without even introducing one sentence of how people in the return flight were feeling during the whole process is one-sided approach. Or the sentence should have been made so that it would create an understanding that the term “proper” refers to Police’s operating and behavior.

However, the questions marks as discussed in previous cases were still not shed light in this coverage which was the last one in the studied case period. Whether the returning of asylum seekers is fair or not as discussed by media, public and politicians was answered by Finnish Immigration Service in their press releases (6.4.2017 in Finnish, 7.4.2017 in Swedish and 11.4.2017 in English) where the grounds for negative decisions and return of the asylum-seekers are justified. This was not discussed or even presented with one sentence in Yle selkouutiset news during the studied period; however, being the main governmental institution in this case, the perspective of Finnish Immigration Service should have been at least presented very briefly in order to have an equal and proper discourse in the news.

4.3 Media Discourse Analysis step 3: Sociocultural Practice

The main sociocultural issue in this analysis is the lack of communication of updates given by Finnish Immigration Service despite being in the core of the case as a decision-making governmental unit on permit matters and granting some asylum seekers negative decisions which flamed debates over the issue. Being underrepresented in this case media, Finnish Immigration Service may have led to certain misperceptions in listeners' views for instance, being an unfair or asylum seeker critical agency which gives out negative decisions without further explanations, although they addressed the issue with two different press releases during that time. So, it is suggested that this may lead to the consequence that Finnish Immigration Service may lose its credit and gain listeners' lack of trust on the long run. Being a major governmental agency and handling immigration issues of Finland, it is very critical that this governmental institution is represented in all media which presents and discusses debatable issues in immigration. Fairclough (1995) suggests sociocultural practice in discourse analysis can be reviewed during text production and text consumption steps as they are different processes. Text production in this case is the preparation and presentation of the news bulletin while text consumption is when the listeners either listen to the news either on radio or later at the webpage of *Yle selkouutiset*. This study does not generalize that lack of trust to an important governmental institution intentionally belong to the text production step; it is rather suggested that such problem may occur in the following step when the listeners or viewers consume the news and form their opinions in this topic.

Another aspect is researcher's subjective opinion on cultural context: the underrepresentation of asylum-seekers and refugees by not presenting their own perspectives and by only covering problematic issues about them may lead to the understanding that they are always "problematic". Such discourse may bother the notions of adaptation and cultural diversity on the long run as they may have nothing more but the prejudice in local Finnish people's minds as found by earlier research: the opinion of "people of economic gain" studied by Nordberg (2004) or "illegal" presented by Horsti (2007).

Final sociocultural issue is the cultural differences in the understanding of the governmental institutions especially the Police in this study. Obviously, the listeners of *Yle*

selkouutiset are mostly coming from other cultural than Finnish, and different cultures have different understanding of the Police and other governmental institutions. For instance, in autocracy regimes the Police is not usually a positive figure in people's eyes. Therefore, the representation of the Finnish police in this coverage merely as those "who took asylum seekers to airport and arranged the deportation" in researcher's opinion would not always create the same understanding in every listener's mind that the police did their responsibility by law; however, it may lead to misunderstandings that the Finnish police decide by themselves and search for asylum seekers to deport from the country.

Yle Selkouutiset is thus an important media channel delivering the news to people who are at the initial step of integrating to Finnish society. The listeners come from various cultures and full representation along with considering sociocultural aspects is very important. So, *Yle Selkouutiset* should consider cultural implications of the news discourse when representing the events in their news.

5 DISCUSSIONS

As Esses et al. (2013) suggests governments and media should collaborate in communicating laws and policies to encourage a healthy debate. In this study, of the main governmental actors Ombudsman and Police were represented while Finnish Immigration Service was not even with a single sentence on their press releases. Their first press release of 9.3.2017 by Finnish Immigration Service (2017) addressed the issue of negative decisions and gave arguments why asylum seekers receive these decisions. The second press release (Finnish Immigration Service 11.4.2017 in English) explained why the return process is taking place and the criteria for conducting this process. These policies and laws added further enlightenment to the raising debate by answering the critical debated questions of why asylum seekers and their family members were getting negative decisions and why they would be returned to the countries which according to some was not considered safe during the period. Certainly, the aim of this study is not to consider whose perspectives were right or wrong, but to mention that a healthy debate should allow the perspectives of all related actors including those of policy makers and their communicators. This aspect was not discussed or presented to the listeners of easy Finnish media.

This raises the question whether a resident in Finland whose English, Swedish and Finnish skills were not enough to follow the media, would have gotten enough information of the mentioned two press releases, which consist of the arguments addressed by Finnish Immigration Service to respond the debates.

Finally, underrepresentation of the asylum seekers, refugees as well as the main governmental institution may lead to further issues in political and cultural contexts. By not hearing the perspectives of Finnish Immigration Service, the consumers of Yle easy Finnish media may have lack of trust since the discourse presents the institution as negative decision giver body without any further information about them. Another perspective is by being underrepresented by the media, asylum seekers and refugees may be exposed to unwanted views and prejudices by locals. They need to be presented more along with having their own voices heard and not just as *“the persons to be deported but still insisting to stay in Finland which causes further problems and debates”*.

6 CONCLUSIONS

Media representation of refugees and asylum seekers has been researched by several scholars as presented by Theoretical Background of this study. Taking the initiative from earlier research, this research case studied the portrayal of asylum seekers and refugees during a specific period when debates were heated among public, media and governmental institutions. Selected case media was Yle easy Finnish news media which presents news in easy Finnish making it easy for understanding of people who learn Finnish or find it hard to follow traditional Finnish media. Taking into account increasing number of foreign language speakers in Finland, this media is significant for those, whose English, Finnish or Swedish language skills are low and / or who find this media the most suitable way of getting informed about ongoing discourse and events in Finland. Although it is likely not followed by many native Finns and others in Finland, easy Finnish media as the case media of this study is still important news media, as it plays a significant role as a media delivering news and it may as well be the only source of news media for a certain group of people in Finland who are unable to follow traditional media.

The aim of this qualitative study was to find out the representation of asylum seekers and refugees by the case media during 1 March 2017 – 12 April 2017, the period when there were public debates, demonstrations, return process of asylum seekers, protests against that as well as two press releases by the governmental actor Finnish Immigration Service to address these issues. A variable derived from earlier research to be studied empirically was that media fails to cover especially perspectives of asylum seekers and refugees by giving them a direct chance to state their own opinion in issues and debates about themselves. Another variable studied empirically was media's failure in communicating laws and policies made by governmental institutions to people. This study therefore focused on these two variables and how important events of the period were covered by easy Finnish media in radio. The data was analyzed with news discourse analysis method.

The results show that the important events and direct actors of these events (asylum seekers, refugees and Finnish Immigration Service) were underrepresented in Yle easy Finnish media although some of the important events they play a direct role were presented. Asylum seekers and refugee perspectives were only covered once that they are unhappy with negative decisions without further representation of their perspectives. However, in general four out of six cases presented perspectives of other related actors in question which can be considered a balanced approach by media as presented by Sharify-Funk (2009) and Jenicek & Wong (2009). On the other hand, critical governmental messages in related issues were not communicated, especially considering that there were two press releases made by Finnish Immigration Service during the studied period and these press releases tried answer related debate questions. The only policies discussed were general issues; asylum seekers getting negative decisions cannot stay in Finland and steps of the return process. Hence, the topic discussed by other media was especially the rising number negative decisions for asylum seeker application as well as possible reasons for that and the issue of whether the asylum seekers are in danger or not when they are returned to their countries. These issues were not presented or discussed in the studied case media.

Although this study does not generalize, the analysis results suggest being underrepresented in the media asylum-seekers, refugees and Finnish Immigration Service and Police may lead to biases in sociocultural aspects. The asylum seekers of the studied case period were never given a chance to state their opinions which may lead to the prejudice of being “illegal” and “needed to be controlled” as found by Horsti (2007) analyzing Finnish news

agency STT. In addition, as Finnish Immigration Service addressed all the debated questions and not presenting the perspectives of such an important governmental body would lead to biases about the agency. Therefore, it is concluded that the case of this study could have been covered more thoroughly by presenting critical debate issues discussed publicly and several important conclusive points of press releases of Finnish Immigration Service.

It is understandable that there is very limited time for daily news bulletin and it is challenging to present more extensive or advanced topics in such a limited time. However, by introducing critical issues briefly, the listeners could have been encouraged to join the website and read more in easy Finnish about the issues or possibly to join the debates. This is the main managerial implication of this research. Further implications and limitations are discussed in the following sections.

6.1 Managerial Implications

This study suggests following managerial implications for media managers and editors:

- a) The discussion of critical issues of specific important cases including governmental press releases or policy updates and perspectives of related actors including asylum seekers or refugees in question.
- b) Direct representation of all related actors in news coverages: in this theme by presenting the perspectives of Finnish Immigration Service, asylum seekers or refugees and by having their own voice heard directly in the coverage.
- c) Encouragement of easy Finnish media listeners to actively join debates or read further in the website in easy Finnish. At the present, the website mainly contains archived news and few other materials. People who cannot follow news in English, Swedish or traditional Finnish language might lose critical points of public debates once the only source of getting information from media is easy Finnish media. Therefore, the developed website with further news and discussions could encourage those people to receive more related information about cases debated in the community.

6.2 Further Research Implications

The studied case in this thesis was a specific case period (1.3.2017 – 12.4.2017) and specific media (Yle easy Finnish news) which consists of news several short sentences. Therefore, this study has limitations to make solid conclusions and generalize them. Several important cases and periods should be studied to make comparisons and then make possible generalizations. The significance of this study is being as a pioneer research of this case studied empirically in easy Finnish public media, which can be studied further to contribute in this research area. Therefore, the directions for further research are:

- a) Traditional Finnish media representation of recent refugee crisis. Research in this field has been done mainly for Roma asylum seekers arriving in Finland in 1999-2000 (see Nordberg 2004, Horsti 2003).
- b) Differences in representation of recent refugee crisis between Swedish language and Finnish language media in Finland. Nordberg (2004) and Horsti (2003) found significant differences between these media when studying the case of Roma asylum seekers. Similarly, Van Gorp (2005) also found the differences in representation of Flemish language and the other media in Belgium. Therefore, studying the differences is worthy to create further understanding in this research area.
- c) Similar researches to be done in other easy Finnish media, for instance, *Selk-osanomat*, *Selkosivut* and *Selkokeskus*.

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