Military L2 immersion: Finnish-speaking conscripts in a Swedish language garrison

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The purpose of the present research report was to reveal the motivational background, and some longitudinal consequences, of doing military service in Swedish as an L2 among Finnish-speaking conscripts in Finland. Questionnaire data was collected in January and July 2015 in Finland’s only Swedish language garrison. The cross-sectional results (N = 42) showed that promotional instrumentalty enhanced participants’ L2 ideal selves, but integrative orientation did not. L2 ideal self predicted L2 learning efforts in the army, but only among those who had poor skills in the L2 at the beginning of the military service. The longitudinal results (N = 17) showed that participants reported higher levels of L2 proficiency, lower levels of L2 use anxiety and more positive attitudes towards L2 speakers after six months in the army than at the beginning of military service.

Keywords: Swedish in Finland, informal L2 acquisition.