Some studies about immigrants and their descendants in the Swedish and Finnish contexts in recent years underline the importance of roots and personal experiences with the parents’ language(s) and culture to instill identity in the second-generation. Many of these studies show that the minority language has only a symbolic role in the identity of the second-generation, and the majority language is frequently used in every domain.

In my presentation I will investigate what kind of relationship Hungarians and their descendants in two neighbouring Nordic countries have with the Hungarian language and what kind of attitudes they have towards their other languages. Can they identify themselves as native speakers of Hungarian and/or as native speakers of the majority language? What do they consider their mother tongue/mother tongues are and what/which language(s) is/are the most natural language(s) to use?

My presentation will be based on my research which compares language choice and investigates language identity among adults with a Hungarian background living in Sweden and Finland. I will present some data about my survey which was completed by 50 Swedish-Hungarian informants and 38 Finnish-Hungarian informants and show some results of in depth-interviews with a few informants and their parents. Special focus is on the language biography of some informants and their narrative concerning issue on which conditions are immigrants and their descendants regarded as legitimate users of Hungarian and Finnish/Swedish by themselves and by laymen opinions.

Keywords: legitimate language speakers, immigrants and their descendants, language identity.