

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the Swedish speaking minority in the area of Finland. Because Finland had been a part of the Kingdom of Sweden for some centuries, the Swedish language had a dominant position in Finland for quite some time. The Swedish language kept its high prestige even during the period of the Russian rule that began in 1809. In the 2nd part of the 19th century the status of the Swedish language weakened to a large extent and today it is considered to be a minority language of Finland. The purpose of this thesis is in the first instance to define the term of identity and the specifics of minority identity. Subsequently I will focus on the the Swedish speaking minority in Finland, its self-concept, history and literature. In the last part of my thesis I will investigate the work of the Finland– Swedish writer Kjell Westö, in particular his depiction of his own Finland- Swedish identity.

KEY WORDS: identity, minority groups, the Swedish speaking minority in Finland, Swedish literature in Finland, Kjell Westö