

SIGMA Scientific Committee on Languages

LANGUAGE STUDIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN FINLAND

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The national linguistic situation

1.1.1. National languages

Finland has a population of about five million in an area of about the present Germany. The country became independent in 1917 after a hundred years under the Russian rule. Before, the country was part of Sweden. It was as late as 1888 that Finnish, the language of the majority, was given the same status with Swedish. Russian has never been widely used in Finland, and despite the long Russian rule, it was never an official language in the country.

Finland has two official languages, Finnish and Swedish. The Constitution of 1919 and the Language Bill of 1922 guarantee the same rights to the speakers of Finnish and Swedish. The number of the speakers of Swedish as their first language is c. 300,000, which constitutes about 6 per cent of the entire population. Most speakers of Swedish live in major coastal cities and in rather restricted areas along the coast of the Gulf of Finland and the Gulf of Bothnia. Sami (Lappish) speakers, who number c. 2,300, have been granted restricted language rights, e.g. primary education in their mother tongue.

Finland applies a restrictive immigration policy. The total number of the inhabitants with non-Finnish citizenship was c. 62,000 at the end of 1994. Most of them are not migrants in the regular sense of the term. About half of them come from various European countries; many are persons of Finnish origin who have acquired a foreign citizenship but have moved back to Finland. Migrants are required to attend classes of Finnish during their first year in the country. Migrant children attend regular Finnish schools.

1.1.2. Language policy

The language rights of the Swedish language minority are guaranteed in Finland very well. All speakers of the majority language are required to study the minority language in the comprehensive school. Every citizen is entitled to use his own language, Finnish or Swedish, when dealing with authorities, and the two languages have an equal status in culture and education. Children's parents have the right to choose the language in which they want to have their children educated. For Sami children, however, the language status depends on parentage.

Local governments are uni- or bilingual. If the minority population is less than 8 per cent, the locality is unilingual, except for some major cities where the criterion is an absolute number of inhabitants.

1.2. The system of higher education

Higher education is provided by 21 universities. Ten of them are multifaculty institutions, and four are specialized ones. There are four art academies providing university-level education in the arts. Each university is required to do research work and offer scientific or artistic undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes. By 1996, most university disciplines will adopt a two-tier undergraduate degree system. The lower academic degree, equivalent to a bachelor's degree, can be attained in three years of full-time study, and the higher degree, which is regarded as an undergraduate degree in Finland but is equivalent to a master's, in 5 to 5.5 years. The average total study times for the higher degrees vary, however, from five to nine years, depending on the discipline. For the humanities degrees, which comprise the language degrees, the average is around eight years.

Finnish university degrees comprise a major subject and two or three minor subjects plus a varying amount of communication and language studies. The credit unit is called 'study week', which incorporates 40 hours of student work. The higher degree consists of 160 credits, and the lower of 120 credits. A minimum of 55 credits are required for a major and 35 for a minor. All higher degrees involve an extensive thesis, which amounts to 20 credits.

Some 35,000 upper secondary school students sit the school-leaving matriculation examination every year. The matriculation examination is the standard basic requirement for admittance into universities, but most departments or faculties organize entrance examinations of their own, because a strict numerus clausus system is applied in practically all subjects. A total of 20,000 new undergraduates are admitted into the universities yearly, and some 17,000 of them start their studies. Less than a half of those who start their studies finish a degree, the total number of degrees being around 8,000 annually. The total university student population is about 130,000.

All Finnish universities are responsible for open-university education for students who have not been admitted to the regular programmes. At most universities there is a continuing education centre, which mostly also takes care of open university programmes.

Three quarters of the higher education budget is financed from the government budget through the Ministry of Education. Up to the early 1990s, higher education budgets grew steadily: from 1988 to 1991, the real annual growth was 15 %. In 1993 and 1994 the serious recession resulted in cuts up to a total of nearly one fifth in the higher education funding.

The system of non-university higher education is under a process of development. There are 22 temporary polytechnics which are participating in an experiment in the area. Nine of them are expected to be given a permanent status in 1996. They will be run by local governments and possibly by private institutions. By the side of the new polytechnics there are a large number of specialized non-university college and secondary level vocational institutions which offer streams of their own to students who have passed the matriculation examination. The new polytechnics are expected to take over all of this non-university higher education in the future.

1.3. The impact of secondary education on language studies in higher education

Foreign languages have always had an important position in the Finnish educational system. An important feature of Finnish foreign language education is that the languages remain in the student's programme throughout the study career after the first language is launched at the third grade (age nine). Comprehensive school pupils study one or two foreign languages in addition to the non-native national language. As many as about 40 per cent of the pupils take two foreign languages. The choice for the compulsory languages is between English, German, French, and Russian. The third, ie. voluntary,

language can in principle be any language, but the choice is restricted by the requirements concerning the accepted sizes of study groups. The same restrictions also apply to the choice of the compulsory languages: German, French, or Russian can rarely be offered outside bigger urban communities. English is by far the most popular choice.

In the upper secondary school (the gymnasium), the non-native national language is still compulsory, and in addition, students have access to one to three foreign languages. One foreign language is compulsory, and it is the language, mostly English, that the students started to study at the age of nine. About one third of the students take a second and a third language. In addition to the languages mentioned above, Spanish and Italian can be studied in the upper secondary school if the school is able to offer a programme for them.

The most extensive language programme throughout the entire school cycle up to the matriculation examination consists of a total of c. 600 periods, and the shortest, one that is offered in the gymnasium only, consists of c. 210 periods.

An important feature of the Finnish educational system is the matriculation (school-leaving) examination at the end of the upper secondary school. The school leaver is obliged to sit four examinations (the mother tongue, the non-native national language, a foreign language, and either realia or mathematics); two voluntary examinations, mostly in foreign languages, can be added. A language examination consists of various types of written tests and a listening comprehension section, whereas no oral production has been required. A voluntary oral examination in foreign languages was introduced in 1994. The examination has a pronounced washback effect on secondary education in Finland.

In vocational education, both in vocational schools and vocational colleges, one foreign language is studied in addition to the non-native national language. The scope varies according to specialization and level from c. 40 periods up to c. 230.

All university degrees also incorporate a language requirement. At this level, too, the non-native national language is compulsory, and depending on the discipline, students of most subjects have to fulfill language requirements, written and/or spoken, in one or two foreign languages.

In adult education, foreign languages have always been a favourite study area: a large variety of courses are offered by various types of institutions such as evening schools, workers' institutes, summer schools, and vocational training centres. Moreover, Finnish radio and TV channels devote a fair amount of their air time to language education.

Until quite recently the decision-making in the Finnish education system was highly centralized by means of a rather detailed national curriculum. Today, local school authorities and even schools themselves can make far-reaching decisions concerning their syllabuses. Only the minimum requirements have been stipulated nationally in accordance with a general plan accepted by the government. This means that the way in which the system is now developed is mainly the concern of local authorities, and it is too early to tell to what extent they are able to respond to the changing needs, particularly under various types of financial pressures.

Content-based foreign language teaching has very rapidly gained in popularity in recent years. There are a number of upper secondary schools working for the International Baccalaureate, and educational institutions of all levels from the kindergarten to the university give tuition in various subjects in a foreign language, mostly in English.

A system of national general foreign language examinations in seven languages was introduced in 1994 to provide for a target for anybody interested in learning foreign languages irrespective of the way in which the learning takes place.

The major shortcomings of Finnish foreign language education in the comprehensive school and the upper secondary school lie in two areas: the scope of the language programme is too narrow since too high a proportion of all language education centres round English and Swedish (the compulsory character of the latter is partly the reason), and not enough attention is paid to oral aspects of language proficiency (which at least partly results from the constitution of the matriculation examination). In addition, the rapid rate of internationalization and increasing numbers of inhabitants of non-Finnish origin in the country will necessitate increased attention to aspects of intercultural communication.

2. LANGUAGE DEGREE PROGRAMMES OFFERED BY UNIVERSITIES

2.1. Traditional language and literature programmes

Modern language programmes are available at the following universities: Helsinki, Turku, Åbo Akademi, Tampere, Jyväskylä, Joensuu, Vaasa, and Oulu. The Community languages in which it is possible for students to major are English (7 universities), German (7), Swedish (8), French (4), Spanish (1), and Italian (1); the languages that are offered as minor subjects are English (1), German (1), French (3), Spanish (3), Danish (2), Italian (2), Portuguese (1), and Greek (1). Shorter courses are available in Dutch.

In 1992 a total of more than 17,000 new students were enrolled into the Finnish institutions of higher education. Fifteen per cent of them were students in the faculties of humanities. The number of the new modern language students can be estimated to be in the category of 1,350 students, ie. about one half of all the humanities students. Around 450 foreign language majors finish their degrees every year, and four out of every five have become language teachers.

Modern language programmes, English in particular, attract large numbers of young people in Finland. It is very difficult to ascertain where the real reason for this attraction lies. It may be partly due to (1) the relatively strong emphasis on modern languages in Finnish secondary education; (2) the fact that Finnish upper secondary schools attract more and more women, whose professional orientation often remains open when they leave school; and (3) Finnish secondary education is clearly orientated towards liberal arts. Female students finish modern language school curricula successfully, and this makes them choose a language programme because they have no particular orientation. As was pointed out above, the proportion of language teachers is large among the language graduates, and thus the status of the discipline has clearly been coloured by the general status of the teacher's profession, while the alternative professions play a minor role. It is important to point out however that only a definite minority of modern language entrants initially want to become language teachers.

Entrance into modern language departments is through a numerus clausus system. Each individual language department is responsible for the entrance criteria; some of the departments of one and the same language run an entrance examination together. The students are admitted on the basis of their school leaving certificates and their performance in the entrance examination. The relative weighting of the certificate and the examination varies from department to department: the points given for the certificate range from 30 to 50 % of the total. The greater part of the entrance examination, in some cases the entire examination, is a language proficiency test consisting of several sections. No oral production is however included, and there is no interview. The majority of the departments include a test based on an introductory linguistics textbook or some other relevant reading. This brings in a certain motivational component into the examination. In some cases the candidates' ability to analyse language material has also been tested. As a whole, however, the entrance into modern language programmes depends on the school leaving certificate and language proficiency at the time of the entrance examination. In English the starting language proficiency of

the incoming students is very high because only some 5-10 per cent of the candidates are admitted; in the other languages, the starting proficiency level is lower.

2.1.1. Content and objectives

The Finnish language degree programmes continue, to a large extent, the tradition of earlier philological syllabuses. Today, however, there is a great deal of variation from department to department, because each department and faculty is entitled to making decisions of their own on the content.

The programmes consist of four types of courses: language/linguistics; literature; background (Landeskunde) and cultural studies; and language proficiency. There is a great deal of variation from department to department: some stick to a more traditional philological (historical) orientation; in others, more attention is paid to present-day language, theoretical or applied linguistics, and/or teacher qualifications. Considering the number of departments and the variety of the approaches to the constitution of the syllabuses from institution to institution, it is practically impossible to give any indication of the relative proportions of the major constituents of the programmes. Today all language majors have done an introductory course in linguistics and phonetics as well as the history of the language, some applied linguistics in most cases, a survey of the literature(s) in the language they are studying, and aspects of the history and culture of the country. A high level of language proficiency should be, and often can be, reached through a series of compulsory language proficiency courses, at least in languages like English, in which the starting level is high. A variety of more specialized courses are offered by all departments in various areas of language study, theoretical and/or applied, literature, and cultural studies. There is always a list of set books in all the programmes.

The M.A. or Pro Gradu thesis is written before graduation on a topic relating to the major subject. The topics vary a great deal and can be in any one of the areas mentioned above. In the last few years, topics in applied language study, eg. in the area of language learning or language teaching, have gained in popularity.

Modern language programmes have been typical humanistic programmes, in which not much consideration has been given to the demands of any future professions, including that of the language teacher, despite the fact that it has been well known for a long time that most of the graduates become teachers irrespective of whether they want it or not. There has been a widening gap between the focus of disciplinary practice within the degree programme and real world problems, particularly where the emphasis in the programme has remained on aspects of philology and language history and/or literature. A few departments have made a conscious effort to develop their programmes to meet workplace requirements.

2.1.2. Structure of the programmes

Modern language degree programmes mostly consist of a major language, a minor language, studies in a third subject (pedagogy for teacher trainees), and some additional language and communication studies. All language department curricula are similar as to their basic structure. There are three levels of progression: the third level is required for a major (55 credits) and the second for a minor (35 credits).

All modern language degrees consist of a large number of separate courses each ending with an examination, the total number of examinations for a language major ranging in one language round 20-25. Each one of the three levels is concluded at many departments with a final examination, which may include an oral examination in addition to a written one. The M.A. thesis, amounting to some 70-80 pages in most cases, is reviewed by two examiners along an eight-point grading scale. External examiners are

not normally used in Finland below the level of the licentiate degree, which is the postgraduate level after the master's.

The teaching is given in the form of lectures, group work, seminars, independent study, and courses in oral and written proficiency. Today there is a tendency away from lectures over to group work and independent study.

The language of instruction is both Finnish/Swedish and the languages concerned. Finnish modern language departments employ a large number of native speakers of the languages taught in posts of lectors (the qualification required is M.A. or equivalent).

2.1.3. Impact of the Community programmes

It is too early to assess the impact of the Community programmes on organization, syllabuses, teaching methodology, and assessment in Finnish modern language departments. Most Finnish modern language departments have traditionally required that before graduation their students spend a period of two to three months in the country in question. A large number of Finnish language departments have entered Erasmus ICPs; three were also functioning as programme coordinators in 1994-95. In general, the reception of the Erasmus programme has been enthusiastic in Finland. It is obvious by now that the opening up of the Erasmus programme for Finnish universities has rapidly resulted in highly increased exchange of students and in new types of contacts between teaching staff members. It is estimated that more than 1,200 Finnish students spend a period of at least three months in another EU country, while the number of the incoming students remains at a level which is just below 700. How many of these students are studying modern languages is not known. The reciprocity problem that is clearly implied by the difference of the figures has rapidly diminished.

One of the immediate outcomes of the increase in the number of foreign students in Finland has been the introduction of courses taught in foreign languages, mainly English (the programme plans in Finnish higher education for the academic year 1995-96 contain more than 200 programmes, single courses or larger entities, to be taught in English, and a few also in German); in foreign language departments the same trend has been seen in the decrease of the number of courses taught in Finnish.

2.2. 'Alternative' programmes

There are two programmes, one at the University of Jyväskylä and the other at the University of Vaasa, which offer a major in applied linguistics. In both of the two, there is a heavy emphasis on communication studies while the language aspect has been played down. At Jyväskylä, a specialization in intercultural communication is also available within the programme.

The degree and examinations reform undertaken in the 1990s has reintroduced a high degree of flexibility into the degree programmes. With the exception of the programmes with clearly defined professional objectives and within the confines of the rather strict numerus clausus system, undergraduate students are relatively free to build up their own programmes. Language students mostly study two languages, but in all language programmes, a degree of variability is introduced by the inclusion of a second minor as well as the possibility of the students being able to add some optional minor subjects or independent study units. Most modern language students take pedagogy, if they participate in the teacher education orientation, or either general literature or theoretical/applied linguistics as their second minor subject. There are a large number of students who select minor subjects in social sciences, communication studies, economics, or marketing. At the University of Helsinki, a recent addition to the programmes is the availability of a combination of study units in the law to students majoring in English (and vice versa, a number of law students are admitted into the English Department).

Economics, wherever it is available, has gained in popularity in recent years but the number of the students who combine it with modern languages is not great. The case apart is the language-oriented programmes at business schools, where the integration of economics subjects with language studies is easier. At the Helsinki School of Economics and Business Administration it is possible for students to do a major in English, Swedish, French, German, and Russian.. Åbo Akademi University offers a programme in which a foreign language (80 credits) can be combined with subjects in economics and business (either 40 or 20 credits). At the University of Oulu, a language (80 credits) can be combined with a non-language subject (up to 80 credits) such as business administration, technology, international law, public law, tourism, information systems, media, speech communication, and European studies.

A rather new alternative is area studies. Area studies programmes are mostly build up round a language (German Studies, French Studies), and relevant courses in a variety of departments are used as building blocks. There is less interest in linguistic phenomena as well as language proficiency, and more scope is given to the societal and cultural aspects of the area concerned. Area studies programmes are available as minor subjects only (15 to 20 credits).

2.3. Postgraduate programmes (up to and including PhD)

All Finnish universities with languages as major subjects can accept postgraduate degrees in these subjects.

The master s degree is considered an undergraduate degree. The Finnish postgraduate level comprises two degrees: the licentiate and the doctor s degree (Licentiate and Doctor of Philosophy for postgraduate students in languages). There were no systematic postgraduate programmes in the country before the beginning of 1995 when the Ministry of Education allocated additional resources for universities to start sixty-seven four-year doctoral programmes in different areas of study. Another twenty-four were added later the same year, which raised the total number to ninety-one. There are five in languages and linguistics. The ones coordinated by the Universities of Helsinki and Turku are generally languages and linguistics oriented, while the one coordinated by the University of Jyväskylä works in the area of language learning and language teaching and the one coordinated by the University of Oulu deals more specifically with normal and delayed development of the mother tongue. The total number of full-time students in the Helsinki, Turku, and Jyväskylä programmes is around 50. The fifth programme is concerned with Asian and African languages and cultures.

The Helsinki doctoral programme also incorporates translation studies. All four departments that train translators and interpreters (see 5.1 below) can accept doctoral degrees in the traditional way.

The Licentiate is either regarded as a preliminary stage for the Doctorate, a preliminary 'exercise', or it is the qualification requirement for certain types of university or non-university positions. It is expected to take two years. The Doctorate is the minimum research qualification for university positions.

2.3.1. Content and objectives

Normally there are no specifically defined objectives nor any detailed plans for postgraduate studies. Neither is there any uniform framework for postgraduate studies applicable in all Finnish universities. In most subjects the traditional postgraduate system is built around the production of the postgraduate thesis. A thesis is required for both postgraduate degrees, and it is expected to be a proof of independent research capability. All faculties also require some course work and participation in postgraduate

seminars. The PhD thesis is printed and published, before it is evaluated in a public session.

The purpose of the new full-time doctoral programmes is to introduce an element of goal-orientedness and bring about a higher level of intensity into postgraduate studies. The programmes to be funded were selected through an open competition from among c. 200 proposals. No overall framework was available, and the programme coordinators were given total freedom in making their plans, which means that there is not much uniformity in the programmes undertaken. The students are expected to finish their PhD degrees in four years. In addition to research work for the theses, the programmes comprise courses in recent developments in the field concerned, seminars in related topics and in the students' research areas, and independent study.

Each postgraduate student has a personal supervisor or, particularly in the new doctoral programmes, a supervisory team.

2.3.2. Structure of the programmes

The thesis is the common denominator for all postgraduate degrees in Finland. A composite thesis is also accepted, consisting of several published articles. Participation in the postgraduate seminar is always required; the length of the seminar varies from department to department. In some departments postgraduate students participate in the seminar as long as they are working on their theses. There is no overall framework for the coursework required. In some departments postgraduate students are expected to sit examinations on relevant literature, while in others a number of options are offered instead of examinations such as essays, research reviews, papers, participation in conferences and workshops, presentation of papers at conferences, and course work.

External assessors are required for the doctor's thesis. The faculty appoints two assessors who review the thesis before it is printed, and at the public review session there are one or two examiners. Many faculties also require two external assessors for the licentiate thesis; in some faculties one of the two may be from the postgraduate student's own department. Licentiate theses are also mostly examined in a public session.

2.3.3. Impact of the Community programmes

In the area of foreign languages the Community programmes have not yet had much impact on postgraduate studies. A few postgraduate students have participated in the Erasmus student mobility programme. Since Lingua was not open to the EFTA countries before 1995, it has not been possible for Finnish postgraduate students to participate in language-related research programmes. It can be expected that the major contribution of Community programmes in the area of postgraduate studies will be through participation in research linking up departments in different countries.

2.4. Career prospects for graduates of language programmes

Finnish modern language programmes largely remain culturally oriented humanities programmes which offer a liberal education to their students. There are occasional voices trying to promote links between modern languages and other disciplines through a more pronounced employment orientation. There have been a few attempts however to create certain types of interdisciplinary programmes, although in most cases their scope is restricted to some introductory courses only.

For language graduates, the most obvious choice has so far been becoming language teachers. In 1990, about 70 per cent of all Finnish university graduates who had majored in English, German, or Swedish were working as language teachers in various types of

institutions, including universities, which were funded by the Ministry of Education or local governments; the same percentage for Romance languages was 55 per cent. In 1985 the same percentage was some five per cent higher. If the graduation rates remain at the same level, it can be expected that the budget reductions in the public sector will mean a further decrease in the employment rate in language education that receives public funding. No information is available about the number of the graduates who are employed as language teachers in the private sector; the percentage employed in the private sector was 16-18 per cent with the exception of the graduates in Romance languages, of whom 29 per cent were employed in the private sector. Some two to three per cent of the language graduates were unemployed in 1990.

Similarly to other graduates from the Finnish faculties of humanities, modern language graduates reach the labour market rather late. In 1985, only 6 per cent of the graduates were younger than 29, and since then there has not been any marked change in the times that it takes for language majors to graduate. For all academic disciplines the corresponding percentage was 18 per cent in 1985.

Outside language education, modern language graduates can be found in a large number of occupations: school principals, secretaries, translators and interpreters, researchers, entrepreneurs, and various positions in service industries. The numbers are very low in each area.

Despite the decreasing trend in the employment in the public sector, the prospects for language specialists look good for the future: the internationalization of various industries in Finland and ever increasing links with European and other countries will mean high levels of demand for language education; it is not only language teachers that are needed but also specialists in a large number of fields whose language skills and cultural knowledge are much better than the ordinary.

There was no statistics available of the employment of persons with Finnish postgraduate degrees in languages, but even without any proper statistics it is possible to say that most of them are employed as university teachers or researchers. About one half of all the persons who finished their doctoral degrees in Finland in 1973-92 were working at universities in 1992 (the total number of those whose employment was known was 5,765). Comprehensive and upper secondary schools employed only 55 doctors. More than 60 per cent of the doctors received their salaries from the government budget. Only 1.6 per cent were unemployed in 1992.

The number of doctoral dissertations is increasing rapidly as a result of various types of affirmative action: while there were less than 300 new doctors annually in the 1970s, their number had gone up to 698 in 1994. The present target is set at 800 a year. This increase will mean that since higher education cannot offer more positions any more, many of the new doctors will have to find their employment, for instance, in various industries and secondary education. Developing non-university higher education will also be able to give employment to many of them.

3. INITIAL AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING OF LANGUAGE TEACHERS

3.1. Initial training

3.1.1. Institutions responsible for training

All primary and secondary school teachers are given university education in Finland. The basic requirement for the qualification as a teacher at any level is the higher university degree, which can be finished in approximately 5 to 5.5 years of full-time study. This also concerns teachers of second languages. Language teachers in vocational education mostly have their degrees from university language departments. The only exception is

in the area of business orientation where a number of teachers have their university degrees from the language programme of the Helsinki School of Economics and Business Administration.

The faculties of education are responsible for the pedagogical studies and teaching practice that are incorporated into the degree programmes for language teachers. Finnish-speaking foreign language teachers are trained at the universities of Helsinki, Jyväskylä, Turku, Tampere, Oulu, Vaasa, and Joensuu; a corresponding programme for Swedish-speaking teachers is available at Åbo Akademi University.

The graduates from the Helsinki School of Economics and Business Administration programme where students can major in a foreign language can become language teachers at business colleges by doing their teaching practice in specialized training institutions and fulfilling the qualification requirements relating to pedagogy.

3.1.2. Content of training programmes

Most modern language undergraduates study two languages, a major and a minor. English is by far the most popular major; Swedish comes next (it is the minority national language, which is compulsory in the comprehensive school, and therefore a certain level of employment is guaranteed), and German, French, and Russian follow with more or less equal quotas.

Students who are being trained as foreign language teachers have to do a minor in education and finish a programme of practice teaching in the university teacher training school. The enrollment into the teacher education programme can take place at the beginning of the university studies or any time during the studies in the language programme. In most cases the students enter teacher education after the first year. The education minor and practice teaching are done side by side with the studies in the language departments, and when the students finish their degree, they are fully qualified language teachers. It is also possible to undertake the educational studies and teaching practice component after the degree has been finished. This used to be the regular system until 1980, but today only a minority of the would-be teachers do this.

Students in programmes for comprehensive school teachers can include languages as minor subjects and be qualified as language teachers (15-20 or 35 credits).

The new degree programmes that were adopted in the 1990s are based on the concept of general pedagogical qualification, which means that the pedagogical studies qualify teachers for all school levels and school types. They are also allowed to build up their degrees rather freely of all subjects taught in Finnish schools.

3.1.3. Structure of the programme

For the higher degree, which is required for teacher qualification, students have to do a minimum of 160 credits. The degree typically consists of two school subjects, a major of a minimum of 55 credits and a minor of a minimum of 35 credits, a master's thesis of 20 credits in the major subject, the pedagogical studies and teaching practice up to 35 credits, 10 credits for communication and languages studies, and 5 credits for optional studies. It is important to see that since the higher degree is required for teacher qualification, all teachers have to write a thesis (see 2.1.2). It is an exception rather than a rule that teacher trainees write their theses on topics relating to subjects in the area of language learning or teaching.

It is recommended that teacher trainees do their pedagogical studies during two academic years. The minimum requirement for students to be able to start their

pedagogical studies is 15 credits in the subjects they are planning to teach, and 35 credits are normally required for the final phase of practice teaching.

3.1.4. Impact of community programmes to date

Since Finland joined the Community only recently and under the EEA agreement it was not possible for Finnish departments to join Lingva programmes, there cannot be any impact as yet, with the exception of the experiences of the small number of students who have participated in the Erasmus programmes so far. Some teacher education departments have been actively engaged in Erasmus exchange.

3.2. In-service training

3.2.1. Institutions responsible for training

All teachers have to participate in in-service training a certain number of days a year. This compulsory training is organized by local school authorities. Teachers are also allowed, on application, to participate in training offered by other suppliers of training services. Since school boards have suffered serious financial cuts as a result of the recession in the 1990s, school boards are mostly unable to subsidize teachers who want to participate in such courses.

In-service training for teachers, language teachers included, is also organized by university continuing education centres, some university foreign language and teacher education departments, the Federation of Finnish Foreign Language Teachers, and some private organizations. A small number of foreign language teachers have been able to attend in-service training courses abroad, possibly sponsored by various Finnish or foreign cultural and other similar organizations.

3.2.2. Content of the training programmes

The programmes are a mixture of general educational topics, updated information about language and communication as well as the specific languages taught, and issues in culture and life in the countries where the languages concerned are spoken. In many cases there has also been a heavy school management component in the training organized by local school authorities.

3.2.3. Structure of the programmes

There is no set structure to the programmes. They vary in length from a couple of hours to 3-5 days.

3.2.4. Impact of the Community programmes

See 3.1.4.

3.3. Training of teachers of 2nd language

Finnish and Swedish as national languages are compulsory school subjects, but in higher education and language teacher education when taught as second languages, their status does not differ from that of foreign languages.

4. LANGUAGE PROVISION FOR STUDENTS OF OTHER DISCIPLINES

4.1. Language studies integrated into non-language programmes and language options offered in combination with non-language programmes

The flexibility of Finnish degree programmes, particularly the possibility for individual students to create their own combinations of subjects (see 2.2 above), makes it possible for students to integrate language studies in principle with any other disciplines. The only restriction may relate to the way in which the numerus clausus system is applied in each individual university, faculty, and department. It is also possible to include a minor subject from another university, Finnish or foreign, in the degree. Students can also freely incorporate additional subjects beyond the minimum requirement of 160 credits.

Attempts are being made to remove the restrictions there are on the inclusion of minor subjects in the degree.

Programmes in which language studies are systematically integrated with non-language studies are not many. In business schools it has traditionally been possible to combine languages with aspects of economics. The University of Helsinki offers a new combination of the law and English, in which law students can incorporate 20 credits of English into their degree and students of English 20 credits of law studies. It is hoped that a similar programme can be started in French.

4.2. General and subject-oriented language courses accompanying non-language programmes (service courses)

Every Finnish university has a language centre which is responsible for offering foreign language programmes to non-language majors. The biggest centre is that of the University of Helsinki with c. 100 teachers providing tuition in 20 languages and with self-access facilities to 42 languages. In a small university, such as the University of Vaasa, the language centre services have been integrated with the teaching of the modern language departments.

With the exception of certain science disciplines, all Finnish university degrees include, in addition to the non-native national language (Swedish for Finnish speakers, Finnish for Swedish speakers), a foreign language requirement mostly in one language but in some fields like the humanities in two languages. Both written and spoken skills are involved. In the recent degree and examinations reform the foreign language requirements have been reduced from their earlier level. University faculties have also cut down the instruction involved by either allowing students to be examined without attending courses and by integrating foreign language instruction with subjects studies in terms of the content-based teaching approach.

The first language centres were established in the early 1970s. A centre of the language centres, the Language Centre for Finnish Universities, was established in 1974 at the University of Jyväskylä to take care of planning, materials production, information services, and in-service training. More recently this national centre has developed a high level expertise in the area of foreign language testing.

Language centres find it more and more difficult to meet the demand for foreign language instruction. Both the human and material resources for this purpose are insufficient. Most of the resources have to be spent on rather low-level compulsory instruction in major European languages required for the degrees, while minimal resources are available for more advanced competence in these languages or for instruction in less taught languages. Despite the fact that everybody admits that proficiency in foreign languages is valuable, languages are unfortunately the first to suffer when resources are cut.

4.2.1. Content and objectives

There is a great deal of variation in the ways in which the courses are organized. The courses consist of reading comprehension exercises through the study of subject-related

texts and exercises in spoken skills (e.g. seminars where students are expected to give presentations and participate in the discussion). Reading comprehension may be separated from the spoken skills, but reading and speaking may also be integrated within one and the same course unit. In many cases the degree of integration with the content of the students' major subject studies is high. Writing in the foreign language is not normally included before the level of postgraduate studies, but such instruction is sporadic even there. There seems to be, however, a growing demand among undergraduates for writing instruction, at least in English, which is a result of the intensification of the contacts with European countries.

The languages offered are usually English, German, French, and Russian, but courses are also offered in Spanish, Italian, and at some language centres also in Portuguese, Danish, Irish and modern Greek. The Helsinki University Department of German offers a 10-credit programme in Dutch.

Language centres offer both survival courses in Finnish as a foreign language for incoming exchange students and elementary and intermediate courses in Finnish. Larger programmes are available at the University of Helsinki and the University of Jyväskylä (teachers of Finnish as a foreign language are also trained at these two universities).

The objective is to make it possible for students to familiarize themselves with the language that they can be expected to encounter in their own special field both during their studies at the university and after they enter the labour market.

4.2.2. Structure of the courses

The foreign language courses give from one to five credits. Larger programmes are available in the area of economics and business administration. At the Helsinki School of Economics and Business Administration, the average amount of language credits included in a finished degree is as high as 35 credits. The Helsinki University of Technology offers an optional ten-credit programme in foreign languages to their students.

Students are allowed to include these courses in their study programmes at any stage of their study careers before they finish the degree. Some faculties consider high enough a matriculation examination grade to be good for the university level too. Reading comprehension has usually been assessed by means of a reading comprehension examination. Spoken skills are mostly assessed through continuous assessment.

The overall requirement for the study of foreign languages varies from faculty to faculty: in many faculties it is as low as three credits, but it can be as high as twenty (without any elementary courses) for the higher degree at the Helsinki School of Economics and Business Administration.

4.2.3. Impact of the Community programmes

The Erasmus and Comett programmes have rapidly increased the number of Finnish students who have spent of a study period abroad. They have also brought a small number of students from European Union countries to Finland. Increased contacts with speakers of other languages, either in Finland or abroad, will result in the value of functional language skills being better understood.

5. THE TRAINING OF TRANSLATORS AND INTERPRETERS

5.1. Institutions responsible for the training

Translators and interpreters are trained at four specialized university departments and in the language departments of one faculty of humanities. The specialized departments are at the University of Turku, University of Tampere, a department at Kouvola affiliated to the University of Helsinki, and a department at Savonlinna affiliated to the University of Joensuu. The University of Vaasa offers a translation programme in their language departments. At the University of Turku the training of translators and interpreters is being integrated with the programmes offered by the foreign language departments. In 1994, to meet the increasing demand for French, the University of Helsinki started a new programme to train translators of French as a specialized stream.

5.2. Content of the training programmes

The programme includes the following elements: language proficiency, linguistics, sociocultural knowledge, and non-language specialization. The theory and practice of translation and interpreting are given a large share in the programme. Students have to specialize in translation in special areas such as technology, medicine, and the law.

The languages taught are English, German, Swedish, Russian, French, and Spanish. For language proficiency the target is a high (near-native?) competence in the languages studied. More attention is paid to translation while interpreting is given a smaller share in the programmes.

A specialized course in conference interpreting will be organized the first time in 1995 at the University of Turku. The languages are English, French, and German. The participants are trained to interpret from two foreign languages into their first language both consecutively and simultaneously. There is a strong component of European Union information in the programme. The participants are expected to be able to function as conference interpreters in international organizations

5.3. Structure of the programmes

Translators and interpreters do a higher university degree of 160 credits consisting of a major and a minor. The major subject has to be a language subject but the minor can be any other subject taught at the university. The structure of the programmes is the same as in the degrees taught by the language departments. The ways to assess the progress of the students does not differ from those used in language departments. (See 2.1.2 above.)

5.4. Impact of the Community programmes

The situation with the training of translators and interpreters is not any different from the other programmes discussed above.

5.5. Career prospects outside translating and interpreting

In 1993 there were a total of 298 translators and interpreters (273 women and 25 men) with the higher university degree. A total of 41 per cent of the women worked as translators, interpreters, or researchers, and as many as 21 per cent as secretaries. Six per cent were members of staff at universities, and another six per cent worked as teachers in vocational education. The men worked as translators, interpreters, and researchers more often than the women (48 per cent). Seventeen men (74 per cent) and 119 women (55 per cent) worked in service industries. Every other person with a translator's training worked in the private sector. Six women were private entrepreneurs. One man and sixteen women were unemployed.

The career prospects outside translating and interpreting will not look different from the above spread of occupations in the future. The fact that Finland became a member of the

European Union is rapidly increasing the demand for high level translation and interpreting services.

6. LANGUAGE STUDIES IN NON-UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

There are no programmes in non-university higher education in Finland in which students specialize in languages.

The vocational education system of the country is being reorganized. An attempt is being made to make the system simpler and to create a distinct non-university sector of higher education. The institutions of vocational (non-university) higher education (polytechnics) will offer three-to-four-year courses giving qualifications comparable to university degrees but with an occupational emphasis. At the moment there are 22 experimental polytechnics, which are each formed by one or several college-level institutions. These 22 polytechnics comprise a total of 85 vocational institutions. Nine of the 22 experimental polytechnics are expected to be given a permanent status in 1996.

In addition to the experimental polytechnics, there are a large number of college-level institutions or separate streams in vocational schools offering vocational education to upper secondary school leavers. Vocational education is divided into 26 basic programmes involving a total of 200 specializations. Some 60 per cent of those who finish upper secondary school enter vocational education

The polytechnics have been active in establishing exchange programmes with corresponding institutions in community countries. A total of 20 institutions in 14 polytechnics are taking part in 41 ICPs under the Erasmus scheme, and as many as 15 polytechnics participate in various Comett projects.

Courses in the non-native national language and a foreign language, normally English, have been compulsory in vocational education. With the exception of business colleges, foreign language instruction has greatly suffered from the low degree of specialization of language teachers and generally negative attitudes among the non-language staff. A shift in the attitudes is visible in some of the experimental polytechnics. In 1993-94 three programmes were taught entirely in English, and several polytechnics offered individual courses which were taught in a foreign language. Students are also offered training periods abroad, also incorporating, in some cases, the possibility to do a foreign degree.

7. NEW NEEDS IN THE AREA OF LANGUAGE STUDIES

7.1. In undergraduate and postgraduate programmes offered by universities

7.1.1. Seen in relation to the development of language studies

There is a constant need to revise the syllabuses as a result of the broadening of the discipline and societal and cultural changes. In the last decade or so, many modern language departments have revised their programmes to include more units that relate to the present day both in terms of the language concerned and of various types of background knowledge (linguistics, history, literature, culture, and society). At the same time, syllabuses have been extended to incorporate more information about the way in which languages are used in their respective contexts. At the same time, syllabuses should be supplemented with more information about intercultural communication. The changes may necessitate the introduction of alternative and optional study units into the syllabuses. Increased optionality will also result in greater learner-centredness, which should be one of the objectives of curricular change in higher education.

The above development may require a somewhat different constitution of staff in language departments and the opening up of collaboration with departments in other disciplines. In many departments there is also a need to have more staff members with postgraduate degrees.

Recent technological developments, such as computer-assisted research and teaching, Internet, hypermedia, multimedia, and satellite broadcasting, should urgently become part of normal practices in language departments.

There are not many alternatives to traditional modern language programmes. Yet a certain interest in developing them is manifest at several universities, for instance, through the plans to create area studies programmes and programmes in European studies. This interest should be supported.

Both the traditional postgraduate training and the new Ph.D. programmes exist side by side. The new programmes are obviously there to stay, and it is possible that they will gradually develop into graduate schools proper. It is important to learn from the experiences of the first years of these programmes and make the necessary changes in the system. Since the new programmes do not cover all disciplines, care should be taken to see to it that postgraduate students who are working outside the new programmes can also be given the tuition that they need to be able to finish their degrees. Alternative interdisciplinary doctoral programmes are needed by the side of those which are directly language-oriented. Efforts should be continued to lower, from the present 39-40, the average age at which postgraduate students finish their degrees.

More attention than is evident today should be paid to the exchange of postgraduate students.

There are obvious problems in the ways in which credits obtained in other Finnish universities are accepted by Finnish university departments. In many cases foreign credits are accepted more easily. It is self-evident that this situation has to be changed.

Not much attention has been paid to the in-service training of the staff in modern language departments. The rapid changes in the world make such training an essential requirement. Increased exchange of teaching staff would serve the same purpose.

7.1.2. Seen in relation to professional requirements

Future professional competence requires both depth and breadth. A high level of competence will be required in one academic discipline but, in addition, professionals will have to be able to cope with phenomena outside their core competence area. This means that traditional discipline-oriented qualifications will have to be opened up for critical review.

Present Finnish humanities degrees are rather narrow in scope despite the fact that they are made up of three subjects. Most modern language students study two languages, and traditionally a third subject has been chosen that supports the study of the two languages (e.g. literature, linguistics, pedagogy). Furthermore, even if the education of language teachers has been the only professionally related task of the language departments (80 per cent of the graduates have become teachers), this has not mostly been taken into account in the syllabuses of the departments. The departments are few, for instance, that allow their students to write their M.A. theses on multidisciplinary topics, e.g. topics that relate to foreign language teaching or learning. No trend towards "professionalization" can be seen.

See also 7.2.2 and 7.3.1 below.

7.1.3. Seen in relation to the creation of Europe

Finnish universities are rapidly developing European and area studies programmes together with more specialized degree programmes with a strong language and culturally oriented component. Such programmes are an essential ingredient in European integration. Programmes of this kind should be available in all institutions of higher education.

The possibilities to study the less taught community languages at the language degree level need to be strengthened, since language teachers are primarily trained by modern language departments. Before any adequate teaching in these language can be offered, the training of the teachers has to be organized.

7.2. In initial and in-service language teacher training

7.2.1. Seen in relation to the development of language studies

One of the major problems in initial language teacher education is the rather poor integration of subject studies taught by language departments in faculties of humanities, on the one hand, and pedagogical studies and teaching practice, which take place in faculties of education, on the other. Language departments mostly design their programmes without any consultation with staff members responsible for pedagogical training and vice versa. In a few modern language departments, aspects of applied language study have been added into the programme as options for students who are being trained as language teachers.

All programmes for language teachers should involve a component which gives students an insight into aspects of second language development, evaluation of language proficiency, and intercultural communication.

Teachers of less taught European Union languages need to be trained. In Finland this also means more attention to languages like German, French, Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese in the entire foreign language teaching system.

Similarly to most other degree programmes there is a need to cut down the total study time from the present average of seven to eight years.

7.2.2. Seen in relation to professional requirements

Modern language programmes have been typical humanistic programmes, in which not much consideration has been given to the demands of future professions, including that of the language teacher, despite the fact that it has been well known for a long time that most of the graduates become teachers irrespective of whether they wanted it or not. There has been a widening gap between the focus of disciplinary practice within the degree programme and real world problems, particularly where the emphasis in the programme has remained on aspects of philology and language history and/or literature.

The master's thesis which all degrees include is written in most cases on a relatively theoretical topic, and it is only seldom that it relates to any aspect of language learning or language teaching.

It seems that there is an obvious need to make it more attractive for students to combine a language subject with a non-language subject. Such combinations would make it possible to offer more content-based language teaching or teach non-language subjects in foreign languages. The present degree structure makes such combinations

possible. In pedagogical training, more attention should be paid to language and communication in the workplace.

There is an urgent need to develop an in-service training system which is available to all language teachers. It should be funded appropriately. Particular attention should be paid to ways in which teachers' language proficiency and cultural knowledge could be kept up and brushed up. This can be done in Finland, but extended stays in a country where the language taught is spoken should be made possible for language teachers. There is a tradition of one- or two-day in-service training sessions in Finland. Longer term programmes are needed. It should be possible for teachers to do a continuing education professional diploma, which could make part of a postgraduate degree (a Professional Licentiate degree).

7.2.3. Seen in relation to the creation of Europe

There is an urgent need for Finnish departments to join Lingua programmes, so that Finnish language teachers can learn from the advances in their profession in other European countries. In-service training and continuing education for language teachers should be organized in collaboration with other community countries.

7.3. In language provision in universities for students of other disciplines

7.3.1. Seen in relation to the development of language studies

There is an urgent need to develop interdisciplinary programmes which combine foreign languages with non-language subjects. New interdisciplinary programmes cannot normally be created without cuts in the resources for traditional subjects or for research related to interests of faculty members who have been appointed through a screening system controlling the 'purity' of the discipline concerned. Interdisciplinary interests may even be considered a dismerit. New challenges are mostly considered only within the boundaries of present administrative units, which are either subject-based or discipline-based.

Because of the recession it is difficult to launch new programmes through budget funding at the moment, and private donations are difficult to find for the humanities. Today most of the budgetary resources are filtered down the administrative hierarchy as low as possible, which means that management and decision-making resides at the same low level. The accountability principle and the gradual giving up of the traditional narrow categories of appropriations earmarked for specific purposes have strengthened the tendency towards 'selfishness' in individual subject-based university departments. It takes a long time before attitudes can be changed. New generations of university teachers tend to be programmed in the same way: postgraduate training is self-perpetuating. It is not possible to expect any major change in the area of the modern language programmes, or the humanities for that matter, in the near future, however necessary a change of orientation is considered to be.

In the present-day world, there is an obvious need for degrees with various kinds of specialization where the specialization incorporates a high level of competence in language study and foreign languages: we need lawyers who specialize in language problems in international agreements, economists who are specialists in cross-cultural communication, language teachers who are highly competent to deal with problems of specialized varieties of language (more and more people are going to be employed abroad and they need specialized knowledge and skills in the foreign language), social workers who can cope with culture-bound (mostly involving language) problems, etc.

All language centres work with resources which are far too restricted for the demand. The development of the language centres is faced with the same problems as

interdisciplinary interests in general: the funding given to them takes away resources from narrowly unidisciplinary interests. In the programmes offered by the language centres, the foreign language provision could be considered a starting point for the study of cross-cultural communication and area studies. The present restricted resources available for language centres curtail this kind of development. The minimum requirement is that resources are shifted from study skills to more demanding language practice in languages that students have studied before and in languages that are new to them. Most of the resources of language centres are spent on improving the language skills of students with low proficiency in the languages required. This means that the resources available for the teaching of those at a high level of competence are rather restricted. The same is also the reason why the supply for less taught languages is rather small or sporadic.

Increased internationalization has resulted in an added emphasis on oral skills, but at the same time the need has been expressed to develop programmes in writing, particularly for more advanced levels.

More resources are needed to build up self-access facilities and acquire materials for self-access purposes. An important element in terms of language learning objectives is the new national system of foreign language examinations undertaken in 1994, which offers a possibility for any language learner to be tested in seven European languages along an eight-level grading scale.

7.3.2. Seen in relation to professional requirements

A good proficiency in English and some other European language is an essential component in present-day professional competence. This does not mean language skills in the traditional sense nor even what has been termed language for specific purposes but a capacity to function in professional contexts in a foreign language. This involves a linkage between language aspects and the other elements of professional competence and a fair amount of practice in intercultural communication.

A great deal of service teaching in foreign languages is done by non-tenured and part-time instructors, which means that the interest in professional development is often rather low. At the same time, the massive demand for instruction results in the overburdening of the teachers with work, which also prevents adequate professional development.

See also 7.2.1 above.

7.3.3. Creation of Europe

A minimum level of foreign language proficiency is part of all degrees in Finland. What is needed however is internationalization of academic degrees to make it easier for graduates to enter the labour market outside Finland. This can partly take place through content-based language teaching and through exchange programmes but it also requires the rethinking of integral parts of curricula in all types of disciplines. Such developments have been rather natural in many areas of economics and business administration but they are also necessary in science, technology, and social science.

7.4. In the training of translators and interpreters

7.4.1. Seen in relation to the development of language studies

There is a clear need to increase the number of trainees in this area. This concerns translators and interpreters working with French in particular but also those working with English and German. Less taught European languages should be included in secondary

school language programmes, and the general level of school language teaching should be raised to give a better foundation for the training of translators and interpreters, so that a higher level of competence could be reached.

The output language proficiency level of translators and interpreters should be what is described as near-native. It seems that this level cannot always be reached in the present programmes.

7.4.2. Seen in relation to professional requirements

Professional training in conference interpreting should be made a regular part of the training in the area.

More emphasis is needed in the future in the area of the law and administration as well as acquaintance with various international organizations.

Finland's membership in the European Union will necessarily be reflected upon the content of the basic degree, teaching methodology, and methods of assessment

There is a need to work out terminological data bases in Finnish and Swedish (Finland Swedish, which is not the same as Swedish in Sweden).

There seems to be a need to increase the scope of the teaching relating to the Finnish language in the programmes.

7.4.3. Seen in relation to the creation of Europe

Professional training is only given to translators and interpreters of the major European languages. Since the number of translators and interpreters for the other European languages required is rather small, the training in the other languages can only be developed through collaboration with other community countries.

7.5. In language studies in non-university institutions of higher education

7.5.1. In language programmes

There are no language programmes in non-university institutions of higher education.

7.5.2. In language provision for non-language students

The need to develop a strong language provision for students in non-university higher education is evident for the same reasons that exist for university students of disciplines other than languages (see 7.3.1-7.3.2 above). Such a need has been evident for a long time in business colleges and in the area of tourism, but it is also felt in other areas. In-service training and continuing education of the teaching staff is urgently needed; a certain number of language teachers working in institutions of non-university higher education will also be required to obtain postgraduate degrees.

Many staff members in non-university higher education still regard language competence as rather narrow spoken and written skills instead of it being an integral element in the professional qualifications required for an international workplace. In many cases, changes in the attitudes toward languages and language education are urgently needed.

8. MEASURES TO BE TAKEN TO SATISFY THE NEEDS IDENTIFIED

8.1. Measures to be taken in the areas of initial and in-service language teachers training

8.1.1. Measures within the responsibility of the institutions

Universities should carry out regular evaluations of their programmes to be able to respond rapidly to the changing needs in terms of the professional competence of teachers. Particular attention should be paid to quality assurance as well as the scope of the degrees obtained. All restrictions on what subjects can be combined in a degree should be lifted, and the study of minor subjects in any faculty or any university should be made as easy as possible.

Due attention should be paid to language proficiency entry levels. Additional resources should be made available in languages for which adequate levels cannot be reached.

Programmes in less taught European languages should be opened in as many universities as possible. Student exchange programmes should be used to make the study of such languages possible if they are not available at the student's own university.

Student counselling should be stepped up to make incoming students aware of the new requirements for professional competence and the role of languages in the present-day world.

Exchange of teaching staff with foreign departments should be made a regular practice in all language departments. In-service training of teaching staff should be introduced if it is not available.

8.1.2. Measures within the responsibility of the regional and national authorities

An essential requirement for the universities to be able to respond to the changing needs is the continuation of the present national policy according to which decision-making and funding in higher education are highly decentralized. The national authorities should keep an eye on the effectiveness and impact of the educational system on the labour market.

Finland has a detailed foreign language policy. It is necessary however to reconsider it at regular intervals as a result of changing needs. Less taught languages should be a special concern of national authorities. Special resources should be made available to universities for them to be able to develop programmes for such languages where the demand cannot be satisfied with the resources available.

Proper funding should be made available for in-service training of language teachers.

Particular attention should be paid to the development of measures to assist the recognition of degrees and study units. The adoption of the ECTS system offers a practicable solution in this area.

8.1.3. Measures within the responsibility of the European Union

There is a definite need for more consistent exchange programmes for staff members in language departments and for postgraduate students. Collaboration between EU countries is necessary in the training of teachers for less taught languages and in in-service training of language teachers.

8.2. Measures to be taken in universities (outside the area of teacher training)

8.2.1. Measures within the responsibility of the institutions

Universities should take advantage of the flexibility written into the present degree structure to make it possible for students to combine different types of subjects with languages. Particular attention should be paid to the creation of interdisciplinary alternative degree programmes similar to the European studies and area studies programmes already established.

There is an urgent need to develop self-access facilities for service teaching. There is a definite shortage of resources in language centres: the massive demand cannot be met at the moment. The teaching staff are also in need of continuing education.

Multidisciplinary programmes are also needed in postgraduate studies. As much as possible, postgraduate programmes should be made international. Postgraduate students need instruction in academic writing in foreign languages.

8.2.2. Measures within the responsibility of the regional and national authorities

A national survey is needed to evaluate the present language teaching input-output ratio as against the foreign language requirements in the labour market.

Increased resources should be made available for service teaching in foreign languages, particularly in less taught languages and at higher levels of language competence. Resources should also be made available for the adoption of modern technologies and multimedia methodologies.

The requirement that a test in Swedish is compulsory for all academic degrees should be lifted.

8.2.3. Measures within the responsibility of the European Union

Collaboration is needed in the introduction of distance education and new technologies, such as Internet, into regular teaching practices.

Exchange of teaching staff should be stepped up. It could partly compensate for the shortage of staff who are capable of adopting interdisciplinary approaches to the implementation of new programmes. In many cases, entire degree programmes could be based on collaboration between departments in different countries.

8.3. Measures to be taken in non-university institutions of higher education (outside the area of teacher training)

8.3.1. Measures within the responsibility of the institutions

It is necessary for many institutions functioning in the area of non-university higher education to reconsider their language programmes. Since there is an obvious need for workplace-oriented language and communication skills (even more so than in university education), particular attention should be paid to the possibilities of integrating language teaching with the content of the major subject areas of the students. It is very important that these institutions make it possible for their language teachers to participate in in-service and postgraduate training.

There is an urgent need here too to develop self-access facilities and materials as well as multimedia methodologies. This need is particularly urgent for less taught languages.

8.3.2. Measures within the responsibility of the regional and national authorities

The national foreign language policy should be reviewed in the area of vocational education.

8.3.3. Measures within the responsibility of the European Union

Efforts to support student and staff exchange and collaboration in curriculum development and intensive courses should be intensified because in vocationally oriented education the interest in language education is an outcome of a need to use languages for practical purposes.

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