



THEMATIC NETWORK PROJECT IN THE AREA OF LANGUAGES III

SUB-PROJECT THREE:

LANGUAGES AS AN INTERFACE BETWEEN DIFFERENT SECTORS OF EDUCATION

NATIONAL REPORT / Finland

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General introduction

Finland has an area of 338,000 sq.km and a population of 5.2 million inhabitants. The country has two official languages: Finnish, which is spoken by a majority of people, and Swedish (6% of the population). As it is expected, in a relatively small country by the population the national government (the Ministry of Education together with the National Board of Education) has the authority to regulate education. However, the institutions of higher education have a large autonomy.

Part one: Description of administrative and educational structures and policies

1. The Finnish education system

The Finnish education system consists of pre-school education, comprehensive school, post-comprehensive general and vocational education, higher education and adult education.

The traditional long-term objectives of Finnish education policy have been to raise the general standard of education and to promote educational equality. One of the main principles of Finnish education policy is to provide post-compulsory education for the whole age group. Every one has the opportunity to continue his or her studies after completing the nine-year compulsory comprehensive school, regardless of the social status. There are sufficient student places in all fields and at all levels throughout the country.

The educational level of the Finnish population is high. About 90% of comprehensive school leavers pursue further studies at upper secondary schools providing general education or at vocational schools and colleges. Each option acts as a channel to higher education.

Diagram 1 on the following page shows the different alternatives in Finnish education system. Pre-school education is provided in a day care centre or in a comprehensive school in the year preceding the beginning of school. Comprehensive school is a nine-year system providing education for all children of compulsory school age. Every Finnish citizen is required to complete this education. The school starting age is seven.

General upper secondary schools give post-comprehensive school education. The general upper secondary schools offer a three-year general education curriculum, at the end of which the pupil takes the national matriculation examination, which is the general eligibility criterion for higher education. The matriculation examination has undergone a change in the number of compulsory tests. According to the new regulation, effective on 1 January 2005, the matriculation examination consists of one compulsory test, ie the mother tongue and three other optional tests, which the pupil can choose from the other national language, a foreign language, mathematics or general studies test. In addition, pupils can take additional tests in other foreign languages. The new form of matriculation examination will be applied starting 1 August 2005, and the objectives of language teaching have been linked to the Common European Framework for Language Learning.

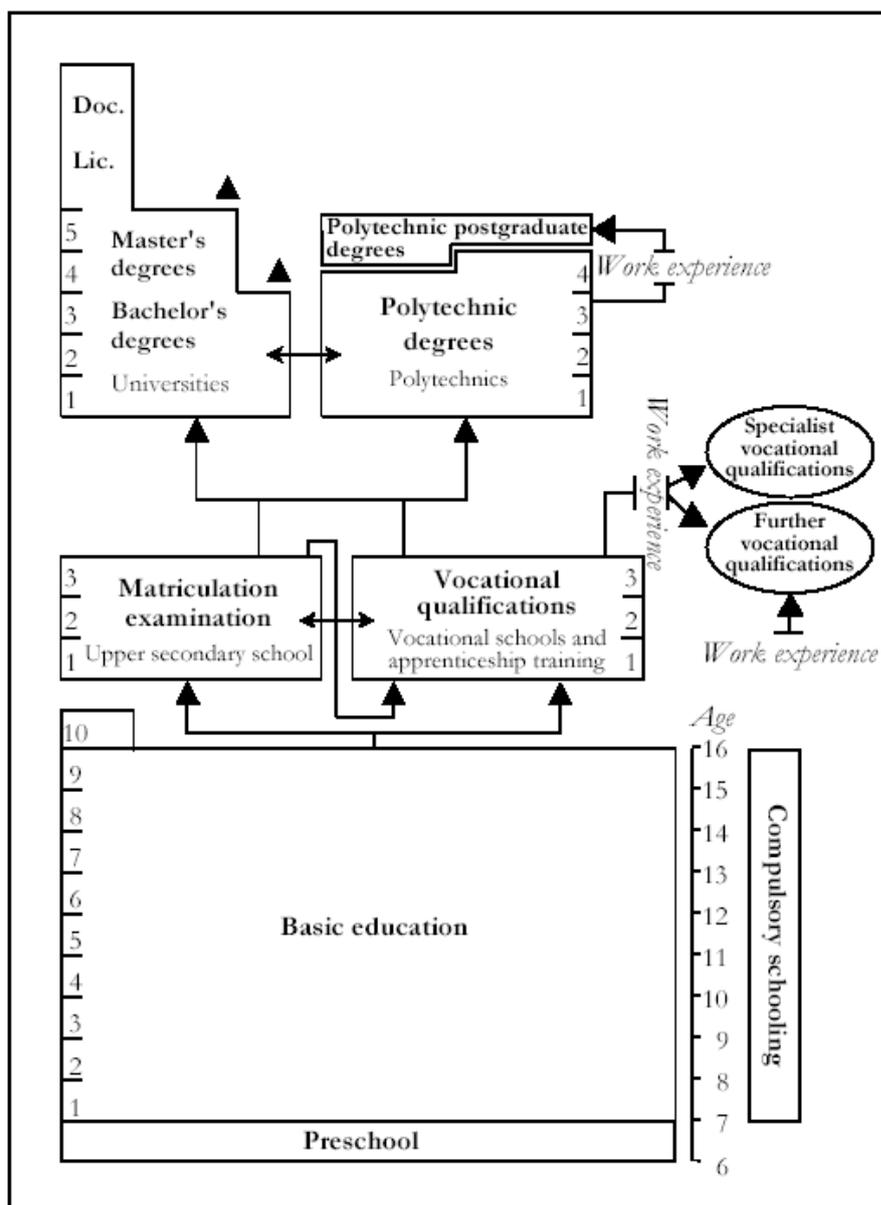
The general upper secondary school network covers the entire country. The schools follow a national core curriculum. Over the past few years, however, the range of choice has been widened.

Thus individual schools can cultivate a more distinct image. Some upper secondary schools, eg,

have a specialized curriculum emphasizing arts or sports or some other field. (Sibelius upper secondary school). Upper secondary school constitutes the main channel to university education.

Diagram 1. Finnish education system

EDUCATION SYSTEM



source: http://www.minedu.fi/minedu/education/edusystem_eng.pdf

Vocational education and training follows the national curriculum as well. Taught courses form the core of the diploma programmes but practical training is nowadays included in the the study programme in all fields. All the qualifications are based on three-year courses giving eligibility for higher education. Besides, an initial vocational qualification can be completed through apprenticeship training, which is intended to promote the availability of on-the-job training. Another option isto combine upper secondary school and vocational studies.

The Finnish higher education system includes two parallel sectors: universities and polytechnics, universities of applied sciences (AMK-institutions). Today a network of 29 polytechnics covers the entire country. Polytechnics are multidisciplinary institutions of higher education, which have a university-level theoretical basis, a clear professional orientation and close connections with business and industry. They usually consist of several degree programmes. The trend is towards large units, where the border-lines between various types of institutions are blurred.

Studies at polytechnics are generally organised into degree programmes. Within the programmes, there are line options and within the options, vocationally orientated major and minor subjects.

The duration of the polytechnic degree is 3.5 - 4 years, which is equivalent to 140 - 160 ECTS units.

One ECTS unit refers to an average input of approximately 40 hours by the student, including lectures, group work, independent studying, written assignments, project work, graduation project, practical training, etc. Normally, a student achieves about 40 ECTS units per year.

There are 20 universities in Finland, ten of which are multifaculty institutions and ten specialist institutions. Of the specialist institutions three are universities of technology, three are schools of economics and business administration, and the remaining four are academies. In addition, university-level education is provided at one military academy under the Ministry of Defence. All universities engage in both education and research and have the right to award doctorates. The first university degree, which roughly corresponds to a Bachelor's degree, can generally be attained in three years of full-time study and the higher, Master's degree in five years.

Adult education, which is designed for the entire working-age population, has expanded rapidly in the past few years. Independent sponsoring organizations and evening schools provide general adult education. Adult education at polytechnics and universities comprise further education and they also provide open university courses. Each university has a centre for continuing education.

The adult education survey 2000 indicates that of 18 to 64-year-olds

- * more than half of the population participated in adult education and training,
- * most of adult education and training was work-related,
- * more than half of employees participated in employer-sponsored training,
- * one fifth of adults studied for other than work-related reasons.

The information in the previous paragraphs is based on the following websites:
<http://www.oph.fi>, <http://www.minedu.fi/opm/koulutus/index.html>, <http://www.stat.fi>

2. Decision-making and financing bodies

2.1. at national level

Parliament enacts laws on education and decides on the general principles of education policy. The government and the **Ministry of Education** are charged with implementing these principles at the central government level.

Practically all publicly funded education, from primary to higher education, is supervised by the Ministry of Education. Most existing private institutions are in the vocational sector, but they, too, rely on public funding, and the education they provide is subject to public supervision. The universities are State Institutions and funded directly from the state budget. The State and local authorities provide most of the funds for the other educational institutions.

In matters related to comprehensive and upper secondary school, vocational institutions and adult education, the Ministry of Education is assisted by an expert agency, the **National Board of Education**. Its primary tasks are to develop education:

- * The Board sets the framework for the curricula in primary education and upper secondary school,
 - outlines for vocational diplomas and demonstration examinations and launches different development projects,
- * evaluates education as well as develops the productivity of education,
- * provides information services including information networks,
- * provides support services. The agency maintains registers of student selections of the secondary level and polytechnics, arranges language exams, arranges and funds continuing training for teachers and other staff, is responsible for the recognition of qualifications attained abroad and sells study material.

2.2. at regional and local levels

Primary education is maintained by municipalities and federation of municipalities to all pupils of statutory school age. The municipality can arrange schooling itself or buy it from a registered community or foundation approved by the Council of State.

A municipality with both a Finnish speaking and Swedish speaking population has to arrange basic education separately for each language group.

Primary education has to follow the curriculum and the objectives set by the National Board of Education. For the development of education, the Ministry of Education together with the National Board of Education can grant permission to arrange some pilot education, which deviates from the generally accepted provisions.

Upper secondary and vocational education is maintained by municipalities or federation of municipalities. Upper secondary schools follow the curriculum set by the National Board of Education. Schools of lower vocational education also make

their syllabi within the framework of the curricula set by the Board, but they can also take the requirements of their economic region into consideration.

The polytechnics are mainly maintained by municipalities or federation of municipalities. The polytechnics are primarily funded from public funds. The costs are shared by both the State and local authorities. The funding is based on degree-specific unit prices determined by student. The Ministry of Education grants project funding to polytechnics for major development targets. Some of the additional funding granted by the Ministry of Education is awarded on the basis of performance, ie educational outcomes. The Ministry of Education confirms the degree programmes but the polytechnics decide on the contents of their curricula independently.

All Finnish universities are State institutions whose operations are primarily financed from public funds. In addition, the universities are increasingly procuring external funding and expanding their chargeable services. Performance-based funding channelled through the Ministry of Education is used to reward universities for high-quality education and research.

The national degree regulations define the objectives, extent and overall structure of degrees. Within the framework of these regulations, the universities decide on the contents and structure of their degrees in more detail. They also decide on their annual curricula and forms of instruction.

The Finnish Constitution secures the freedom of the sciences, the arts and the highest level of education. To implement these principles, new Universities Act (1998) ensures the autonomy of the universities and prescribes their function, operation and objectives in general terms only. Within these limits, each university decides on the detailed organization of its administration and the decision-making power of its administrative bodies. The universities decide independently how their teaching and research are organized and on the formation of faculties and other teaching and research units.

There are national decrees on the university degree systems of each discipline. The decrees define only the broad framework for each degree (extent, structure, main objectives), and the universities have a full autonomy to decide on the contents of each degree.

The Ministry of Education and each university as well as each university of applied sciences sign a performance agreement in which both parties commit themselves to certain objectives and projects and level of funding. The agreement is signed for a three-year period but the financial aspects are checked and negotiated every year.

In Finland, teaching is usually free of charge at all levels of education: there are no tuition fees. Compulsory education is completely free of charge (including one meal) for the pupils, but at higher levels of education, the students may have to pay for study materials, meals and transport.

Source: <http://www.miniedu.fi/julkaisut/HEP2001>

3. Language policies and language education policies

3.1. Clarification of concepts

The concepts of "policy for languages" or "language policy", "policy for foreign languages" and "policy for foreign language teaching" are often understood as synonyms. They have a distinct conceptual difference, though. The concept "language policy" refers to the official status of the languages that are spoken in a specific country and it is a question of social policy for communication; the concept "foreign language policy" refers to the status and use of foreign languages in a specific country and "foreign language teaching policy" refers to the overall policy of language teaching pursued in a specific country.

Also "language policy" and "language planning" are concepts often used in parallel. Sometimes the connection between them is understood hierarchically so that language policy is an upper concept to language planning. Language planning intends to find solutions to social language problems. Both these concepts give justification to one another. Without language policy there wouldn't be any language planning. (Riitta Piri, 2001, 14)

3.2. Review of language policy and planning in Finland

In Finland, efforts have been made to outline a general framework for language policy and language planning as early as since the 1970s. Sauli Takala, one of the planners has pointed out that an enhanced attention should be paid to the values, principles and procedures of planning (eg. fairness, sound fact basis, thorough follow-up and evaluation). He also finds it essential that the main actors should have a right to attend and influence language planning. While participating in the decision-making planning of Finnish language policy in the 1970s Sauli Takala outlined a framework for language teaching theory. Its purpose was to create first the prerequisites for central administration to start planning a national, language-political programme in theory. He also emphasizes the support of multidisciplinary research to language teaching.

Learners themselves, parents, rectors, school boards, local, regional, national and international organs can act as decision-makers. A political decision-maker usually defines how many languages a pupil should study and how many optional language choice situations the pupil has in the course of schooling. But decision-making of what languages are offered to pupils is often done at the local level. The pupils' choices are based on their own and their parents' decision-making.

To increase diversification of the language programme is often the aim of planning. This is particularly the case in schools of general education. General education is provided by the forms of school that lay the foundation of all other education. However, it is to be noted that too wide a choice of languages may cause distribution of so many languages that implementation in practice is impossible. This is also connected with the productivity of education.

One of the language-political issues can also be, what kind of proficiency language teaching should produce. The set objectives might be too demanding. It cannot be

expected that language teaching should meet all the language skill requirements of working life. Even attitudes and lack of motivation may have a negative effect on the learning results of foreign languages. One example is the poor results of Russian language studies in some East and West European countries, because pupils were obliged to study it. It has been quite interesting to observe how "compulsory Swedish" was brought up on the mass media. This hasn't been the case with other compulsory subjects.

Productivity of language teaching has been studied very little. Peter Strevens, one of the pioneers in this field, has discovered together with some other researchers that there haven't been any analyses on cost-effectiveness. That's why they have come to the conclusion that the nation's language teaching institution should be studied as an entity so that the resources invested in it would yield an optimal result in respect to set objectives. So far, this kind of objective setting in our language policy has not reached adequate acceptance.

3.3. Language policies for native languages

The Constitution of Finland in its Article 17 stipulates that Finnish and Swedish are our official languages. The Swedish speaking population is a minority group accounting for 6% of the entire population. The linguistic rights of a minority group have been safeguarded by law:

The municipalities are divided into monolingual and bilingual municipalities. The law determines that a municipality is bilingual if there are both Finnish and Swedish speaking inhabitants and the minority group accounts for 8% of the population or at least 3000 inhabitants.

In bilingual municipalities, government officials must be able to serve their customers in both languages. Proficiency in Swedish and Finnish required from an official can be proved by a special government officials' language examination or in connection with language studies at the higher education level.

Both Finnish and Swedish are studied at each level of education starting from comprehensive school to higher education.

From time to time there have been heated debates on "compulsory Swedish studies" in Parliament and on the media. The pros and cons debates were sometimes so intense that they practically overshadowed other education-political issues. After all, a reserved stance on the minority language is not a typical Finnish attitude. According to researchers, language conflicts most frequently arise among people living close to each other. They have also pointed out that a bilingual person often acts as a bridge builder between those people who live close to each other but speak a different language.

3.4. Language policies for foreign languages

In Finland, the language education system is working fairly well and covers the whole country. All comprehensive pupils study two foreign languages: another national language and at least one foreign language. In addition, about 40% of lower secondary stage pupils study the third optional foreign language. About 80% of

upper secondary school pupils study foreign languages as an optional subject. In vocational education, language learning varies a lot in different diploma programmes but it is clearly on the increase. Polytechnic and university degrees include requirements of proficiency in the other national language as well as in one or two foreign languages depending on the field of study.

A one-sided language choice in all forms of education is, however, still a problem, and efforts have been made to diversify the language programme. The Ministry of Education has set a target to increase the learning of German, French, Russian and Spanish at all levels of education. The results will be seen within the next few years.

A survey on government officials' language skills supports the diversification efforts of the Ministry of Education: The survey conducted on government officials' language skills revealed that the officials' language proficiency has deepened but narrowed. English is mastered widely and fairly well but the number of the younger generation officials who master Swedish and German is diminishing. Proficiency in French has remained little in spite of adult education. There are very few officials who know Italian, Spanish or Russian. This trend will continue and deepen if language teaching in adult education and higher education is not intensified and if the language programme of comprehensive and upper secondary schools is not widened. It will be seen what kind of impact our Russian speaking immigrants have on the growth of the language skill reserve. (Table 2, p. 13)

Table 1. Quantitative average of language teaching per student in some EU countries in 1999

Country/Area	Average of studied languages
Luxemburg	2.9
Finland	2.4
Denmark	1.9
Belgium (Flemish community)	1.9
Sweden	1.7
France	1.7
Greece	1.5
Belgium (French community)	1.4
Portugal	1.3
Germany	1.2
Italy	1.1
Spain	1.1
Ireland	1.0
EU (arithmetic average)	1.4

Source: *Endbericht ueber Statistiken zum Fremdsprachlernen 2000, 27*

Table 1 shows that foreign languages are studied most in Luxemburg, Finland, Denmark and Belgium (the Flemish community). Luxemburg, Finland and Belgium have more than one official language or national language.

The examination of the language programme of the EU member states indicates that decisions have been taken or decision-making has at least progressed in the direction that all pupils in compulsory education have two compulsory foreign languages.

The member states of the European Union, whose language programmes have been described above, are all countries whose own language is an Indo-European language. It is easier for the pupils of these countries to adopt foreign languages than the corresponding Finnish pupils whose native language, Finnish, is not related to the languages studied at school. Except for Russian, all foreign languages at comprehensive schools and almost all foreign languages at upper secondary schools in Finland are languages of the Union countries.

Although there hasn't been done any scientific research in Finland on what kind of language is easy for pupils to adopt. Finland has, however, some empirical information on the matter. The results of the matriculation examination indicate that the pupils of our Swedish schools succeed better in language exams than the pupils of the corresponding Finnish schools. Better results can be attributed to the fact that Swedish is related to the languages generally taught at school, whereas Finnish-speaking pupils' mother tongue (Finno-Ugric language) is not related to the languages studied at school.

3.5. Changes in the environment of language programme policy planning and decision-making

In the past few decades the environment of language programme policy has changed in many ways.

A closer study of these changes makes it possible to distinguish the changes in pure language policy from changes in the mere environment.

The development of the Finnish school system can be roughly divided, according to development lines, in the axis of centralization or central tendency and that of decentralization. Education-political decisions are made hierarchically and the operations of lower administrative levels are directed more or less by upper administrative levels. Education-political decision-making is centralised when it is done by central administration and decentralized when it is done in some other decision-making levels. The degree of centralization and decentralization varies in different countries and different periods along with social changes. National education-political planning together with language programme political planning takes a stance on the administrative level at which decisions are made. Basically, it's a question of the position of educational decision-making levels, ie, education institutions in the decision-making process and what form it will take in practice.

From the perspective of development lines the Finnish education system has expanding, rising and integration lines. Education has expanded quantitatively and the number of education institutions has grown. The second line is rising, that is, a rise at the Finnish education level. An example of rising is a rise in the number of students who have graduated from upper secondary school and passed the matriculation examination in the past few decades. An example of integration is the reform of compulsory education where secondary school and folk-school were combined into one

comprehensive school covering the entire age group. This development also means an average enhancement in Finns' language skills.

3.6. Internationalization aspects of education policy

Education policy and language programme policy can also be examined from the perspective of multicultural development. The internationalization of economy and society have brought about changes in the ways how languages are used as a means of international communications. International communication is an obvious part of the internationalizing economy and globalization of international interaction. The use of language can be estimated to be subject to the same competition factors and market forces as trade. Internationalization has become part of language planning when some language, say, English or even Arabic has started to act as a medium of international communication. However, this hasn't happened randomly. There can be conscious directing in the background, which has been unnoticed by a majority of people.

The National Board of Education states that internationalization is a challenge to Finnish competence, which, above all, means improvement of schooling, ie, enhancement of the education level, particularly in the field of vocational education. On one hand, internationalization involves a better knowledge of foreign languages and cultures and improvement of vocational competence. On the other hand, it's a question of increasing understanding and tolerance. This implies that schooling should also strengthen the prevention of racism and hatred to aliens.

It can be seen that internationalization has increased in education as well as in other fields of society. The National Board of Education examines language teaching and internationalization of education as one unity belonging together. This aspect has come out in the area of language programme policy, eg, in the strategy programme of language teaching and internationalization. (The National Board of Education 1997).

Finland participates in the activities of several international organisations that are involved in education policy. The main organisations are the European Union, the European Council, OECD and UNESCO. Finland has also been a member of the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) since 1995. In 1999 the Centre got a permanent position as an institution of the European Council. During its existence, the Centre has trained trend-setters for language teaching, experts in language programme political planning and language teachers' training as well as writers of textbooks.

3.7. Language policies for life-long language learning

One of the guiding principles in political decision-making concerning education policy is the principle of life-long learning. Language skills require life-long maintenance and development. This calls for both society's and an individual's contribution. Over the past few years, the language studies in vocational and adult education as well as in higher education have received a lot of education-political attention and development projects. The improvement and maintenance of language skills require a solid foundation all through the early childhood, comprehensive school, upper

secondary school and vocational education. Studying is a kind of full-time job for a child and a young learner. The most effective and productive results can be obtained if the basic studies of as many as possible languages are started and also their proper extent is carried out at the stage of full-time studies.

Some key development areas will be internationalization, international cooperation and increasingly growing multicultural society. These factors set new demands on language and communication skills in particular as well as on tolerance, cultural knowledge and versatile general education. It is obvious that better language skills and even proficiency in a greater number of languages will be needed.

In their development strategies for comprehensive education, political decision-makers have emphasized the importance of the other national language and the importance of teaching in a foreign language. Teaching at comprehensive and upper secondary schools in a foreign language and immersion teaching at their best apply only to a small part of the age group. Nevertheless, they are demanding systems and have to be implemented properly. Hence, research and development work ought to be carried out with determination. This would enable to focus more on the language skill development of the learners that show motivation and interest in languages.

Gaining a profound knowledge of foreign languages during the schooling period almost invariably triggers a learner's motivation for life-long learning. With a poor foundation at school, the learner often finds it difficult to continue studies on his/her own initiative.

4. Mapping of institutions and programmes engaged in language provision

4.1. Vertical axis: formal education system

4.1.1 Kindergarten and pre-school level

There is no obligation to provide foreign language teaching at pre-school. A special form of language teaching is so-called immersion, which is often started at kindergarten before the pre-school stage.

Immersion is a voluntary education programme, which is aimed at the pupils who speak the majority language as their first language and who otherwise wouldn't come into contact with the immersion language. The immersion is based on the presumption that the best learning results of the other language can be achieved in a meaningful communication setting. Some special features of immersion are that, to begin with, instruction is mostly given in the immersion language and not in the pupil's first language or native language; for example, mathematics and biology can be taught in the immersion language. When the pupils are in the 5th or 6th grade about a half of instruction is given in the immersion language and the other half in the pupil's first language or other languages.

The teachers who teach in the immersion language speak only that language to the pupils because it is important that the pupils can hear and use the language in different functions and in different situations. Besides, the teacher acts as an important language model for the pupils. The pupils are encouraged to use the immersion language from the very beginning and they are expected to use the immersion language when communicating with the immersion teacher and with other immersion pupils.

The aim of immersion teaching is to give the pupils both oral and written language skills of the immersion language at the same time when the pupils' first language is being developed. The immersion syllabus follows the national curriculum and the immersion pupils will achieve the eligibilities required by the national curriculum.

4.1.2. Comprehensive school

The first compulsory foreign language, A1 (in a majority of cases English) is started in the 3rd grade and continues through comprehensive school, 8 courses altogether.

The pupil can also choose another optional foreign language, A2 in the 5th grade, the extent of which is 6 courses during the comprehensive school.

The second compulsory foreign language, B1 is started in the 7th grade, which is studied 6 courses. The pupil can also choose the second optional foreign language comprising 4 courses.

As a conclusion: a pupil studies two compulsory foreign languages and can choose two optional languages.

4.1.3. Upper secondary school

The pupil continues to study two compulsory foreign languages and can choose courses of two optional languages. The pupil takes the matriculation examination at the end of the studies.

Table 2. The following table shows the number of students who have studied common and optional languages at upper secondary school in 2002

language	A1 and A2	B1	B2	B3
percentage	%	%	%	%
English	85.6	0.4	0.3	0.1
Swedish	4.1	98.6		0.3
0.0				
Finnish	4.4		1.0	0.0
0.4				
Finnish				
as second language	0.3		0.0	0.0
0.0				

Swedish				
as second language	0.0		0.0	0.0
0.0				
French	1.2		0.0	30.2
25.8				
German	4.0		0.0	65.9
40.0				
Russian	0.4		0.0	2.4
10.2				
Lappish	0.0		0.0	0.0
0.1				
Latin	0.0		0.0	0.4
2.9				
Spanish	0.0		0.0	0.2
13.9				
Italian	0.0		0.0	0.2
5.9				
Some other language	0.0	100%	0.0	100%
0.7	100%		0.0	100%
total number of				
students	41,056		31,719	10,664
14,163				

source: www.oph.fi

The National Board of Education has launched various projects to promote language learning and teaching at the secondary level. One of them was KIMMOKE in 1996-2000. Its aim was to diversify teaching and learning methods as well as to develop and harmonize the evaluation results in all secondary schools.

Another project was started in 2001. The project aimed at developing the teaching methods of the Russian language. The aim of the project was to increase the popularity of Russian courses of study, both long and short courses.

The third project launched by the Board was the development project of language teaching in 2002-2004. The aim of the project was to enhance learning results in language teaching both at comprehensive school and upper secondary school by intensifying teaching and learning methods. The project also intended to diversify the choice of languages. (Table 2, p. 13)

4.1.4. Secondary vocational education

The students study the other national language and one foreign language as compulsory subjects. Vocational schools also provide optional foreign languages, which may vary in different schools. The idea is to continue the language studies of previous education and expand oral and written language skills with the vocational vocabulary of each specific diploma programme.

4.1.5. Polytechnics

The polytechnics provide language teaching to various degree programmes. The student studies one foreign language and the other national language as compulsory subjects regardless of the degree programme he/she is in. The students have a possibility to take a government officials' language examination of Swedish in connection with their Swedish studies. Also Finnish and communication skills are included in the curriculum as compulsory studies.

4.1.6. Universities

One foreign language and the other national language are compulsory subjects. The students in every faculty have to acquire both written and oral proficiency in these languages.

There is a special curriculum for language teachers, and the extent of the studies is about five years.

The curriculum includes, among other things, a compulsory 6-month stay in the particular country the language of which he/she is studying.

A special curriculum has been planned for the translators and interpreters of foreign languages.

4.2. Horizontal axis: other language providers

4.2.1. private language schools

There are some private language schools that provide their services in some major localities. In addition, a few larger companies arrange language courses for their personnel during the working hours. The courses are given on the permanent basis or intermittently when needed.

However, language courses are one of the services that have been outsourced for profitability reasons.

4.2.2. Workers' institutes or civil institutes

Workers' institutes and Civil Institutes have gained a lot of popularity among learners in all age groups. Their supply of foreign languages is wide. They have also started to provide preparatory instruction for government officials' language examination and for matriculation examination.

4.2.3. Publishing

The publication of language learning materials consists of textbooks with corresponding recordings. Since there are several rival publishers, the variety of textbooks is fairly wide. New and revised textbooks are needed constantly, because information gets out of date very rapidly (eg money units, geography). In universities they often resort to foreign publications.

4.2.4. Broadcasting

The YLE television channel provides language courses. The courses have often been tailored for tourists' needs. Recently, there have been Russian, Estonian, Italian and Spanish courses. The courses usually have two teachers, a native speaker and a Finnish teacher of each particular language.

It is a great advantage to Finnish people that foreign films have not been dubbed. This enables people to hear the language even the intonation in its real setting.

Part two: Mapping of interfaces on the vertical and horizontal axes

5. Structures of cooperation in the educational sector: HEI and other language providers

5.1. Vertical axis: What kinds of cooperation are there between HEI and

5.1.1. pre-elementary educational institutions

There is no obligation to provide foreign language teaching at the preschool level. However, a special form of language teaching is immersion teaching, which is frequently started at kindergarten before the preschool age. There are primarily Swedish and English immersion kindergartens available in Finland but only in major locations (eg Helsinki English Language Montessori Preschool).

The universities on their part influence the operations of the immersion kindergartens by providing in-service training to immersion teachers and by conducting surveys on the immersion children's adoption of language. There is also a lot of cooperation between the university and immersion kindergarten personnels. In addition, cooperation can be seen in immersion children's teaching and evaluation methods.

5.1.2. primary educational institutions

Cooperation between primary schools and higher education can be seen in learning and teaching, for example, in curriculum planning work. At the organizational level, cooperation is done in policy development and surveys and in addition, there are some cooperation organs, for example, at the local level. Cooperation is also focused on the development of teaching and evaluation methods and preparation of teaching materials.

5.1.3. secondary educational institutions

Cooperation at the secondary level is mainly similar to that of the primary level, ie, based on learning and teaching. At the organizational level, there is, however, more personnel cooperation between the teachers of higher education and the teachers of secondary level. There are also some local work groups that have investigated cooperation possibilities to provide, for example, free-choice language studies as well as to guarantee a good choice of language programmes for postgraduate students. In some schools, there may be the same teacher teaching both at the secondary level and at the higher educational level. In addition, there is research work with universities and cooperation in "policy development". The teachers of secondary level have developed teaching and evaluation methods, teaching materials, language portfolios and e-learning in cooperation with HE language teachers.

5.1.4. in-service training

There is cooperation between higher education and other levels of education mainly in language teachers' in-service training. A majority of language teachers' in-service training is provided by universities. The teachers' in-service training is primarily financed by the National Board of Education. Also other organizations that provide language courses use mainly HE teachers or other language teaching experts working at universities as their instructors. In connection with polytechnics, there are Vocational Teacher Training Schools, which provide pedagogic studies and also further training to the teachers who specialize in vocational language teaching.

5.1.5. between higher educational institutions

There are two parallel higher educational institutions: universities and universities of applied sciences or polytechnics (AMK- institutions). Polytechnics are multidisciplinary institutions of higher education, which have a clear professional orientation and close connections with business and industry.

The language centres of various universities cooperate with each other as well as with the persons who are in charge of language teaching at polytechnics. Examples of cooperation are the annual meetings for the teachers of the language centres and the meetings for the Council of the Heads of the Language Centres. The polytechnics have the ARENE language work group, information and counselling days for polytechnic language teachers and joint development projects financed by the Ministry of Education, which intend to harmonize evaluations and the evaluation of oral skills of the Swedish language in particular. Even the universities and polytechnics cooperate, eg at the local level, developing the supply of free-choice language studies and at the national level, eg launching a development project of harmonizing the evaluations of the performance levels of the Swedish language.

5.2. Horizontal axis: What kinds of cooperation are there between HEI and the organizations/ institutions?

International language schools employ teachers of higher education. One of their tasks includes arranging TOEFEL language tests. The contents of the test depend on the field chosen. These tests serve as an indicator of the learning results achieved at various educational levels. Cooperation should be intensified.

Universities and polytechnics have focused especially on developing distance learning and e-learning over the past few years. Advanced technology has facilitated the development of virtual AMKs and virtual universities. (www.virtuaaliamk.fi and www.virtuaaliyliopisto.fi) So far, higher educational institutions have offered language courses to private and public enterprises, for example, on business communication, computing vocabulary, cross-cultural considerations, legal terminology etc.

The curricula and study materials are usually customized for each course. Third universities offer, for example, language courses aimed at government officials. It is obvious that in the future, the universities and polytechnics will expand their chargeable services by offering various language courses, which have been customized according to the customers' needs.

In addition, higher educational institutions, the Goethe Institute and the French Cultural Centre have, for example, cultural collaboration, cooperation in scientific

research and teacher training. Besides, HEI occasionally uses visitors' service of these institutions as well as diverse print-, audio- and video-publications to enrich their own teaching material.

Today, HEI's cooperation with EUROCALL (The European Association for Computer-Assisted Language Learning) has become evident. It is an association of language teaching professionals, currently represented in 33 countries. Its aims and objectives are to provide a European focus for the promulgation of innovative research, development and practice relating to the use of technologies for language learning.

Part three: Needs, obstacles, opportunities and measures to be taken to improve communication and cooperation

6.1. Threats

Today, the most serious problems in language teaching in Finland are, according to Professor Kari Sajavaara, as follows:

- proficiency in the native language has collapsed both at comprehensive schools and upper secondary schools; in addition, the gap between girls and boys has widened in the girls' favour
- proficiency in Swedish has diminished
- Russian is studied far too little
- writing skills have declined

All these things have a direct impact on what language and communication teaching is like at the higher education level and on possibilities to achieve the set targets.

In Finland, the number of students who study foreign languages has grown but the duration of studies, especially the time spent on contact teaching, has decreased considerably compared, for example, with the 1980s. The pupils at upper secondary school choose separate courses of different languages and that way they don't learn any language properly. A possibility to split the matriculation examination has reduced language studies, because several pupils take part in the matriculation examinations after completing the compulsory courses in the particular languages, but have not completed the entire course of study in those languages. A particularly big problem is the fact that passed grades are given in all forms of education without justification. The diversification of the choice of languages has clearly been emphasized at the expense of other factors.

Resources for language teaching in higher education, ie universities and universities of applied sciences, have to be used to fill in the negligences of the lower education levels. The decision-making on language teaching is fragmented and lacks coordination entirely. The optionality of the matriculation examination, which enables the choice of four compulsory subjects, also affects the appreciation and status of Swedish studies in particular.

6.2. Measures to be taken

Decision-making and coordination ought to be centralized

There should be one person in charge, who would have an overall view of the development of language teaching at all levels. At present, most of the decisions are taken by the Ministry of Education, but there is nobody whose main concern would be language learning and teaching. Consequently, there is a lot of overlapping development work as there is no one to coordinate it.

Language teachers' education

HE institutions should cooperate with those institutions in charge of language teacher education.

Firstly, language teachers' basic education is to be developed:

- * contents need to be revised
- * vocational education and adult education should be taken into consideration in basic education
- * language technology should be taken into account
- * communicational functions of language and a vision of language as a sociocultural phenomenon should be emphasized

Secondly, further education for language teachers should be organized on a regular basis (eg European framework)

Cooperation should be enhanced

Cooperation between the language teachers at various school levels should be intensified; every school level should see to it that the set targets are reached, ie the teachers shouldn't put off their own job to the teachers of the next level

Closer collaboration between universities and universities of applied sciences is required for the development of language teaching in higher education; a starting point to improved cooperation would be that at least the colleagues of the same school would collaborate with each other

Universities and universities of applied sciences should make closer contacts with the representatives of working life

Common European Framework for Language Learning

The planning of curricula should be based on the Common European Framework for Language Learning at all school levels; comprehensive schools will start to observe a new curriculum on 1 August 2006 at the latest and upper secondary schools on 1 August 2005, in which the objectives of language learning have been defined on the skill level scale as per the European framework. The objectives of language studies in higher education should be linked in the same way to the skill level scale. For this reason, more further education is needed for all language teachers.

Oral language skills

The importance of oral language skills should be emphasized. The essential development target is to make the testing of oral language skills a compulsory part of the language tests in matriculation examinations. At present, participation in oral language tests is optional. In most HE institutions, however, the importance of oral skills is already noticed.