

The Second Thematic Network Project in the Area of Languages (TNP2)

NATIONAL REPORT ON CURRICULUM INNOVATION

FINLAND

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A list of relevant websites can be found at the end of each section.

1. Introduction

1.1. The system of higher education

Higher education in Finland is divided into two distinctive systems: universities and polytechnics. These form a network of higher education that covers the whole of the country. Higher education is provided in the two national languages, Finnish and Swedish.

Universities

University education in Finland started in the 17th century. With the founding of new universities and the upgrading of some institutions to university level in the 20th century there are now 20 universities in Finland. Ten of these are multi-faculty universities, three are universities of technology, three are schools of economics and business administration, and four are art academies. The National Defence College operating under the Defence Forces also provides university-level education.

Universities carry out research and provide education based on this research. All Finnish universities are state universities, and some 70% of their funding comes from the government. There is no tuition fee in Finnish universities for degree programme students. The total number of university students is currently 147,000, of whom 19,000 are postgraduate students. Finnish universities offer close to two hundred degree programmes. The largest fields of study are technology, humanities and natural sciences.

In the Finnish system, there are four academic degrees. At first-degree level, it is possible to take a voluntary Bachelor's degree but almost all students go on to take a Master's degree. Although nearly all students take a Master's degree in Finland, their degree corresponds to Master's degrees in countries where most students only complete a Bachelor's degree. The minimum requirement for a Bachelor's degree is 120 Finnish credits or 240 ECTS credits (one Finnish credit corresponding to 40 hours of work). In most fields a Master's degree consists of 160 credits (320 ECTS credits). Completing a Bachelor's degree usually takes a minimum of three years, including basic and intermediate studies as well as a Bachelor's thesis in the major subject, studies in one or more minor subjects and language studies. The Master's degree requires at least another two years and includes advanced studies and a Master's thesis. However, the independent nature of university studies in Finland means that graduation time varies considerably, the average being 6.5 years.

The two postgraduate degrees are the voluntary Licentiate degree, which corresponds to a Doctorate in most countries, and the Doctorate degree. Postgraduate studies for a Licentiate consist of coursework and an unpublished thesis. The Doctorate requires, in addition to this, a published doctoral dissertation and the public defence of it. The full-time studies for a Licentiate last for ca. two years. Completing a Doctor's degree takes four years of full-time study.

Universities select their students applying a *numerus clausus*. The matriculation examination, which is generally taken at the end of general post-secondary school, is by far the most common way to obtain eligibility for university education. The student selection is based on either an entrance examination or grades in the matriculation examination, or most commonly both.

The academic year begins on August 1 and ends on July 31. Instruction is divided into two semesters, usually from mid-September to mid-December and mid-January to mid-May. University studies consist of several types of work, mainly lectures and other instruction, but also exercises, essays or other independent work such as set-book examinations. Apart from degree studies in their major and minor subjects, students also take optional courses, often in other faculties and increasingly also in other universities in Finland or abroad.

Each university has a centre for continuing education which provides professional further education to update and develop the professional skills of university graduates. They also provide open university instruction.

Polytechnics

The Finnish higher education system was restructured radically in the early 1990's when polytechnics were created by upgrading and merging institutions offering vocational higher education. Most of the 30 polytechnics are multi-disciplinary and operate in several units. They are either municipal or private. The funding for polytechnics comes from the government (57%) and municipalities (43%). At the first stages of the creation of the polytechnic system the government has allocated special funds for their development. Polytechnic-level education is also provided at the Police College, which operates under the Ministry of Interior.

In polytechnic education, the emphasis is on close contacts with business, industry and services, especially at the local or regional level. Degree programmes are designed to meet the requirements and needs of working life. Graduates are qualified experts in their fields. Polytechnics also organize adult education and carry out some research with a distinctly applied and practical emphasis and with relevance to their teaching.

Degree programmes in polytechnics concentrate on an area of professional expertise and specialization. Several polytechnics also offer interdisciplinary degree programmes. Most polytechnic degrees encompass 140 or 160 Finnish credits (280 and 320 ECTS credits, respectively). This means three and a half or four years of studies. An extension of one year is allowed. Degree programmes include basic studies, professional studies, optional and elective studies, compulsory on-the-job training and a Bachelor's thesis. The Ministry of Education confirms the degree programmes while the polytechnics design their curricula.

Eligible for polytechnic education are those who have passed the matriculation examination or have a vocational diploma. Students apply through a joint national application system. In many cases entrance examinations are held but also academic performance and work experience of applicants are taken into consideration.

1.1.1. Recent changes in the system of higher education

The major change in the Finnish system of higher education in the 1990's was the creation of polytechnics. This, together with other measures such as limiting the number of programmes a student can begin in the same year to one, has increased the intake to higher education considerably. The polytechnics system was introduced in 1991 on an experimental basis for the provision of vocational higher education. The Polytechnics Act was passed in 1995 and since August 2000 all polytechnics in Finland have had permanent status. Polytechnics are currently receiving the right to award postgraduate degrees.

A profound change in university legislation took place in 1997 as separate acts on each university were replaced by a comprehensive Act on Universities. The loose legislative framework that was introduced leaves room for each university to decide on its administration.

One major change has been the reintroduction of Bachelor's degrees to most university disciplines. This took place between 1994 and 1997. The aim was to shorten graduation times, make degrees more flexible and internationally comparable. As mentioned above, although nearly all students take a Master's degree in Finland, their degree corresponds to Master's degrees in countries where most students only complete a Bachelor's degree. Another aspect of the degree reform is the introduction of postgraduate schools in 1995 through cooperation between the Ministry of Education, universities and the Academy of Finland. They offer a considerable number of full-time positions in research training. This has been one reason for the considerable increase in the annual number of doctorates awarded.

Universities and polytechnics are responsible for quality control and systematic evaluation of their activities and output. Since 1996, the evaluation of higher education has been carried out by the Finnish Council for Higher Education Evaluation. It is an advisory body to the Ministry of Education and it assists universities and polytechnics in their self-evaluation processes and the promotion of evaluation in general.

A reform of university funding began in 1996. It involves a formula based on the agreed target number of Master's and doctoral degrees. The government policy has been to encourage universities to increase the amount of external funding through chargeable services, commissioned research, international projects etc.

The recent years have seen a considerable development in university teaching, and the Ministry of Education has appointed several departments and units to be centres of excellence in teaching. As an incentive, high-quality university teaching is among the indicators the Ministry uses for allocating performance-based funding for universities. IT-aided teaching has been introduced in several fields.

The Government's Development plan for Education and University Research for 1995-2000 comprised ten priority areas: life-long learning, labour market orientation, internationalization, language teaching, implementation of the national information strategy for research and education, sustainable development, improvement of mathematics and science skills, emphasis on the cultural mission of the universities, establishment of centres of excellence and strengthening the role of quality evaluation.

1.1.2. The impact of the Bologna Declaration

The Bologna Declaration became a much-discussed issue in Finland after it was given in 1999. This was also related to the Finnish presidency of the EU the same year. However, it is difficult to say what its impact will be. It is nevertheless clear that one of the main trends in the development of higher education all through the 1990's has been to make the Finnish system better correspond to international practices. An example of this development is the introduction of Bachelor's degrees and the setting of a recommended time for completing degrees (Bachelor's in three years, Master's in five).

1.2. Identification of relevant changes in the social, political, cultural, professional and economic environments

The structure of general post-secondary education has changed considerably in recent years. Students have more freedom of choice and the number of compulsory courses has decreased. The effects of this can be seen in higher education. Students are more prepared for independent studying and planning their studies. However, more freedom of choice has sometimes also meant that students have chosen to study a few courses of one optional subject and then started another one without acquiring comprehensive knowledge of any. This is most common in languages (see 2.1.5.).

The study of languages has become increasingly popular as it is considered an asset for example in professional life. The EU membership has also increased the importance of learning languages and especially German and French are chosen as optional languages at schools. Meanwhile there has been a serious decline in the number of students learning Russian at school during the 1990's.

The national student financial aid system was revised in the 1990's. The financial aid scheme has two elements: a grant and a repayable loan. The maximum time for a student to receive financial aid was set to 55 months in most fields of study. This was also a measure to limit the duration of studies.

Internationalization is one of the key issues of recent years in Finland. All universities and polytechnics have established international cooperation, most commonly in the form of student and staff exchange programmes. They have also arranged special language and culture courses for outgoing students and courses for example on Finnish language and culture for visiting international students (see 5.3.). The number of study modules and programmes taught in a language other than Finnish or Swedish has very much increased (see 5.4.). These are usually open to both Finnish and international students.

New technology has meant the creation of new professions. Finland is one of the leading countries in information technology. The government has recognized the needs of this field by launching a four-year project that will gradually increase the number of students in IT-related programmes.

Finland experienced an economic recession in the early 1990's. The recent years have seen an excessive economic growth. New jobs have been created and unemployment is not a very serious problem for graduates. Even undergraduates are effectively recruited, which has almost become a problem in some fields as students who have found employment do not complete their degrees. Universities and polytechnics have developed career planning and recruitment services for graduates and students. Language students and graduates are most commonly employed as teachers, translators and information specialists.

Websites:

Links to Finnish universities (Ministry of Education)

<http://www.minedu.fi/minedu/education/universities.html>

Links to Finnish polytechnics (Ministry of Education)

http://www.minedu.fi/minedu/education/polytechnics_list.html

Ministry of Education

<http://www.minedu.fi/>

National Board of Education

<http://www.oph.fi/english/index2.html>

'The Education System in Finland' in Eurybase

<http://www.eurydice.org/Eurybase/Application/frameset.asp?country=FI&language=EN>

Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council

<http://www.minedu.fi/minedu/education/finheec/finheec.html>

Academy of Finland

<http://www.aka.fi/>

Centre for International Mobility (CIMO)

<http://www.cimo.fi/>

Finnish national report for SIGMA Scientific Committee on Languages

<http://www.fu-berlin.de/elc/NationalReports/natr-fin.htm>

LANGUAGE DEGREE PROGRAMMES

2. Innovations in language degree programmes offered by universities

2.1. Traditional language programmes

The programmes discussed here are language programmes mainly for non-native speakers. Finland has two national languages, Finnish and Swedish. Programmes in one of these languages for speakers of the other are included here.

Traditional language programmes are usually titled philologies (e.g. Romance philology, English philology) or language and culture/literature programmes (e.g. German language and culture, French language and literature). These programmes are taught at the following universities: [Åbo Akademi University](#), Universities of [Helsinki](#), [Joensuu](#), [Jyväskylä](#), [Oulu](#), [Tampere](#), [Turku](#) and [Vaasa](#). Some universities have programmes in only a few European languages, others also have programmes in smaller European languages and non-European languages. Degree programmes that focus on one language are available in English, French, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, German, Russian, Polish, Czech,

Finnish (programmes for Swedish-speakers and for foreigners), Hungarian and Estonian. Programmes that include more than one language are available in Finno-Ugric languages, South Slavonic languages Scandinavian languages, Japanese, African languages, Central Asian, East Asian and South Asian languages, and Semitic languages.

2.1.1. Content, objectives, and structures of programmes

Programmes in languages are divided into three stages: basic studies, intermediate studies and advanced studies. Students majoring in a language complete all three stages and write a Master's thesis. Before entering into advanced studies some take the voluntary Bachelor's degree, for which they need to complete basic and intermediate studies and write a Bachelor's thesis. The 160-credit (320 ECTS credits) Masters degree and the 120-credit (240 ECTS credits) Bachelor's degree correspond to the Master's and Bachelor's degrees in other countries, although in Finland nearly all students take a Master's degree. Some departments have programmes that can only be studied as a minor subject at the basic and intermediate levels.

Each stage is usually further divided into study modules such as language skills, literature, linguistics etc. Some 'core' courses are compulsory but the student can also choose some of the courses according to his or her interests and orientation, especially in intermediate and advanced studies. At this stage students can at many departments chose a programme designed for future language teachers (c.f. 3.2.) or translators (4.2.). Most modern language programmes also include a stay in a country where the language is spoken.

Language programmes are designed to offer students an expert knowledge of the language studied. Programmes focus on language skills and communication, linguistics, literature, and cultural and social studies.

Most departments have their own postgraduate seminars and each postgraduate student has a personal supervisor or a supervisory team. Postgraduate studies, i.e. here referring to studies for a Licentiate or a Doctorate, include coursework and a thesis. The coursework comprises 10 credits (20 ECTS credits) in major subject and 20 minor subject credits (40 ECTS credits). The voluntary Licentiate degree, which corresponds to the doctorate in most countries, consists of coursework and an unpublished thesis. Postgraduate students taking the Licentiate can after that continue to a Doctorate, which requires a doctoral dissertation and a public defence of it. It is also possible to take a Doctorate without a Licentiate degree.

See also 1.1. (Universities)

2.1.2. Career prospects for graduates

In general, graduates from language programmes find employment relatively easily. There is a lot of demand for experts in especially EU languages and Russian. The choice of a career is often linked to the minor subjects a graduate has studied.

The 'traditional' careers for graduates in language programmes are teaching and translation. A great number of teachers' posts in secondary and post-secondary education will become vacant in the near future, which means that career prospects in teaching are very good. Meanwhile, the demand for language teachers is constantly growing also in polytechnics, university language centres, other learning institutions, companies and private language schools. The expansion of international business and the EU membership have increased the need for translators and interpreters in both the public and the private sector.

Graduates also work in international affairs, libraries, cultural affairs and administration, publishing, consultancy, tourism etc. For example, the need for experts on Russian language, society and culture is increasing at different levels of public administration while the graduates from programmes on non-European languages can find employment in international organizations and e.g. development aid projects.

The recent years have seen a significant development in the careers available for graduates. New jobs and titles have been created to meet the need for language experts in fast developing areas such as ICT where graduates from language departments have become for example technical writers.

A small, yet significant number of graduates continue their studies at postgraduate level. Many of them chose the career of a researcher although the recognition of a Licentiate's or a Doctor's degree is increasing also outside the

academic world. For example, polytechnics require a Licentiate degree for teachers they employ, whereas Universities require a Doctorate.

2.1.3. Recent changes in content, objectives, and/or structure of programmes

In some languages the curriculum has been revised to establish more courses aimed at improving the basic language skills of students. At the same time, some language programmes, especially English departments, have left some language skills courses out of their curriculum and concentrated on the teaching of language in different contexts. In many language programmes the introduction of academic writing courses has been an important change. The content of individual courses has also changed in some cases. For example translation courses especially at basic studies level used to focus on the improving of students' language skills. Now these courses deal with different aspects of translation such as translation theory, methods, and different text types.

Traditional language programmes have begun to focus more on literature and culture in addition to language. Many programmes have even changed their name from 'philology' to 'language and culture/literature' to better describe the content of the programmes. This has also in some cases meant the establishing of or cooperation with literature or cultural studies programmes.

Contacts with working life have been established for example in the form of internship programmes and special study modules for improving skills needed in language related professions (see 2.1.4.). Language departments at some universities have introduced separate programmes for translators or students in teacher training (see 4.2.1. and 3.2.1., respectively). The amount of courses designed for prospective language teachers has increased also at universities with separate teacher's training units.

Many departments have created web-based courses in which some or all of the course material is available online and students can profit from distance learning.

At many universities language departments have cooperated with other departments, also in fields other than languages, and in some cases with departments at other universities – even abroad, see 2.1.4. – to broaden their curricula (see also 5.1.1.).

Some departments have recently made changes to the structure of their programmes by increasing the amount of credits for some courses. In some cases the extent of programmes was expanded from 80 (160 ECTS) to 90 (180 ECTS) credits. Some programmes have introduced new special requirements with some courses left out for those studying the language as a minor subject.

2.1.4. Examples of good practice

[The English Department](#) at the [University of Tampere](#) has introduced a module titled '[Options](#)' to both intermediate and advanced studies. Students choose 6 courses from 18 options. [The English Department](#) at the [University of Turku](#) has a similar [system of options](#).

[The Department of Slavonic and Baltic Languages and Literatures](#) at the [University of Helsinki](#) has integrated lectures given by internationally acclaimed visiting scholars, critics and authors into the curriculum by giving students the opportunity to gain credits by attending the lectures, which preferably form intensive courses, and writing an essay or commentary on them.

One of the four study modules in basic studies the [Department of English](#) at the [University of Helsinki](#) is the tutorial, which in the form of a seminar supports other studies in language and literature, gives students the chance to practice the oral and written use of English and provides background information about the culture and institutions of English speaking countries. Similar courses have been introduced at the [Department of Romance languages](#) and the [Department of German](#).

The Russian departments in Finland introduced a new element to their curricula in the year 2000 on an experimental basis. Second year students now spend one semester at a Russian university and complete there a 15-credit (30 ECTS credits) study module that is then integrated as part of their degree studies in Finland.

An example of courses and study modules aimed at improving students' professional skills and preparing them for new professions e.g. within IT are the International Business Communications Programme and Language Professions and New Technologies Project at the [University of Oulu](#) (Dept. of German, French, and Scandinavian Languages). The [Department of Romance and Classical Languages](#) at the [University of Jyväskylä](#) will together with the [Department of Computer Science and Information Systems](#) within the next 3-5 years introduce a new programme called *Mastere en technologie de l'information pour romanistes* that will train French students for careers within IT. The [Department of African Studies](#) at the [University of Helsinki](#) has been initiating the creation of an EU Master's programme called *Computer Applications on Modern Extra-European Languages*. It trains experts for IT in extra-European languages.

The Department of German, French and Scandinavian Languages at the [University of Oulu](#) has focused on forming links to professional life by involving alumni and mentors.

[Langnet](#) is a national graduate school for language studies that has 83 students and over 100 professors.

2.1.5. Reasons underlying these changes

Political changes have had an effect on language studies, e.g. in some languages like Russian a lot of materials became outdated in the early 1990's, and for this reason the programmes have been developed accordingly.

The reason for increasing basic language skills courses is the fact that in some languages the students' skills at entering the programmes have weakened (see 1.2.). On the other hand at some English departments there is less need for these courses as most students have learned English as their first foreign language at school, i.e. for ten years.

The amount of credits for some courses did not have sufficient relation to the actual amount of work required, especially compared to some other disciplines, and the number of credits allocated for courses has been adjusted in a number of universities during the last couple of years. Students' ideas and feedback, as well as the demands of working life, have influenced curriculum planning.

See also 3.2.6.

2.1.6. Identification of needs

2.1.6.1. Seen in relation to the development of language studies

The following needs can be identified:

- Need to improve the standard of students' language skills before entering language programmes.
- Need to develop the students' cultural competence.
- More individual consultation, smaller groups.
- More optional courses, giving students the possibility to orientate to specific areas.
- Increased need for programmes for foreign students, especially in Finnish and Swedish.

2.1.6.2. Seen in relation to non-academic requirements

The following needs can be identified:

- Need for more language professionals, especially teachers.
- Development of students' IT skills.

2.1.7. Measures to be taken at institutional, regional, national, and European level to meet the needs identified

2.1.7.1. At first-degree level

- More staff and funding.

- Monitoring of studies.
- Links to working life.
- Links to alumni.
- Development of curricula for languages at general post-secondary schools.
- Cooperation in curriculum planning between departments at different universities teaching the same language.
- Functional exchange programmes.
- Facilitation of establishing international contacts, especially in the area of non-European languages.

2.1.7.2. At postgraduate level

- More funding for research projects.
- More cooperation between departments at different universities.
- Organizing postgraduate studies in the so-called co-tutelle system made easier for departments.

Links to websites of language departments:

University of Helsinki (under Faculty of Arts)

<http://www.helsinki.fi/english/faculties.html>

University of Joensuu, Faculty of Humanities

<http://www.joensuu.fi/humanities/index.html>

University of Jyväskylä, Faculty of Humanities

<http://www.jyu.fi/tdk/hum/laitokset.html>

University of Oulu, Faculty of Humanities

http://www.oulu.fi/hutk/laitokset_e.html

University of Tampere (under Faculty of Humanities)

<http://www.uta.fi/studies/fac&dept.shtml>

University of Turku, Faculty of Humanities

<http://www.utu.fi/hum/tdk/english/departments.html>

University of Vaasa, Faculty of Humanities

<http://www.uwasa.fi/hut/english.html>

Åbo Akademi University, Faculty of Humanities

<http://www.abo.fi/fak/hf/organisation/hfinst.sht>

2.2. ‘Alternative’ programmes (Applied Language Studies, Cultural Studies, etc.)

Most ‘traditional’ language degree programmes include elements that fit into this category. The programmes discussed here have a specific focus on a certain perspective on language.

2.2.1. Content, objectives, and structures of programmes

Applied Language Studies

The [Centre for Applied Language Studies](#) at the [University of Jyväskylä](#) was established in 1974. It concentrates on research but it also has a 20-credit (40 ECTS credits) study programme on applied linguistics for language students at the advanced studies stage. The programme is closely linked to the research at the Centre. The Centre coordinates a postgraduate programme in language studies and language teaching.

The undergraduate programme includes compulsory courses in applied linguistics, language learning and teaching, and a seminar. The students also choose a set of optional courses on different themes, the topics of which may range from the relationships between language, culture and society to language assessment.

Language and Communication

The [Department of Languages and Communication](#) at [Helsinki School of Economics and Business Administration](#) offers degree programmes in English, German and French, where the students can study for a BSc or MSc degree. These programmes focus on business communication. Main themes are communicational situations in business life, the relationship between language and culture, and the professional use of language. The language programmes include basic, intermediate and advanced studies and a thesis.

Cultural Studies

The cultural studies and area studies programmes aim at a multidisciplinary understanding of their target areas. Cultural studies programmes are available at several universities, usually under the language departments. At the [University of Helsinki](#), area studies programmes have an independent statuses and they are organized at the [Renvall Institute](#) which operates under the [Faculty of Arts](#).

Cultural studies programmes mainly consist of courses on the society, history, geography, arts, literature and language of the area on which they focus. The programmes work in close cooperation with several departments. Most of them can be studied as a 10-40 credit (20-80 ECTS credits) minor subject and are open to all students at their university. The North American Studies and Latin American studies programmes at the [University of Helsinki](#) can also be studied as major subjects.

2.2.2. Career prospects for graduates

Applied Language Studies

Most of graduates become language teachers. A considerable number also choose a researcher's career.

Language and Communication

Graduates work in different areas of international business communication. Some become teachers or researchers.

Cultural Studies

Graduates from a wide variety of fields include a cultural studies programme in their degree (at the moment it is possible to major in only the North American Studies and Latin American studies programmes at the University of Helsinki). Cultural studies are an asset e.g. to future teachers, researchers, journalists, and economists.

2.2.3. Recent changes in content, objectives, and/or structure of programmes

Applied Language Studies

The programme in its present form was established in 1996-1997. Some changes have been made to offer more choices and flexibility for students, e.g. in the form of closer ties between research and teaching.

The [Centre for Applied Language Studies](#) participates in a national postgraduate school for language studies called [Langnet](#).

Language and Communication

The programmes at the [Department of Languages and Communication](#) at [Helsinki School of Economics and Business Administration](#) have been developed to better cater for the needs of business life. This has meant a more precise focusing of the aims of the courses offered as well as the introduction of new courses such as *Business Communication Skills*, *Corporate Analysis* or *Geld und Finanzen*. The needs of business life have been explored e.g. through research and commissioned theses.

New methods of teaching have been introduced, e.g. web-based courses.

Cultural Studies

Most programmes are relatively young and have not experienced any major reorganization yet. The North American Studies and Latin American Studies Programmes at the University of Helsinki included advanced studies to their programme in 2000, which meant that it is now possible to study them as a major subject.

2.2.4. Examples of good practice

Applied Language Studies

A recent addition to the programme is a course on research methods, which focuses on the essential issues of doing research.

In the academic year 2001-2002 the Centre for Applied Language Studies will launch a study programme on language teaching technology. The programme is 5 to 20 credits (10-40 ECTS credits) and includes courses on e.g. web-based language teaching, production of teaching materials and evaluation.

Language and Communication

See 5.2.3.

Cultural Studies

The [Renvall Institute](#) at the [University of Helsinki](#) has developed the use of the Internet as a tool in teaching for example by creating websites and discussion forums for individual courses.

The [Baltic Sea Region Studies](#) programme at the [University of Turku](#) has introduced courses in languages that are not otherwise available at this university, e.g. Lithuanian and Latvian.

2.2.5. Reasons underlying these changes

Applied Language Studies

There is a growing need for experts on e.g. language teaching as the need for language teachers at schools increases. The aim has been to focus on problem-based learning so that students can benefit from the research projects, not just individual courses.

See also 3.2.6.

Language and Communication

The needs of working life have an increasingly important role in university studies while there is more information that is based on research about how communication works in business. The students' skills at entrance level have improved in the English language and language studies have become more like communication studies.

Cultural Studies

Internationalization has created the need for more in-depth knowledge of other cultures. The general trend towards a more multidisciplinary approach has had an impact on the founding and developing of cultural and area studies programmes.

2.2.6. Identification of needs

2.2.6.1. Seen in relation to the development of language studies

Applied Language Studies

- Development of the training of language teachers, especially in the area of assessment.

Language and Communication

- Standardization of evaluation criteria.

Cultural Studies

- More staff and funding.

2.2.6.2. Seen in relation to non-academic requirements

Applied Language Studies

- More cooperation between educational institutions.

Language and Communication

- More cooperation between educational institutions.

Cultural Studies

- Better recognition and appreciation of programmes.

2.2.7. Measures to be taken at institutional, regional, national, and European level to meet the needs identified

2.2.7.1. At first-degree level

Applied Language Studies

- Unifying the assessment methods and measurements in language teaching.

Language and Communication

- Developing the language studies at general upper secondary schools.

Cultural Studies

- More staff and funding.
- Development of international contacts.

2.2.7.2. At postgraduate level

See 2.1.7.2.

Websites:

Centre for Applied Language Studies, University of Jyväskylä

<http://www.solki.jyu.fi/englanti/realdex.htm>

Department of Languages and Communication, Helsinki School of Economics and Business Administration

<http://www.hkkk.fi/kielet/>

Renvall Institute, University of Helsinki

- Programmes for North American Studies, Latin American Studies, Russian and East European Studies, Nordic Studies, British and Irish Studies, German Studies, Asia-Pacific Studies (starting 2001-2002)

<http://www.helsinki.fi/hum/renvall/>

North American Studies Program, University of Tampere

<http://www.uta.fi/laitokset/historia/sivut/eng/nam/nam.htm>

British Studies Programme, University of Turku

<http://www.abo.fi/fak/hf/enge/brisc.htm>

Russian Studies Programme, University of Tampere

<http://www.uta.fi/laitokset/fil2/slaf/rust/>

Baltic Sea Region Studies, University of Turku

<http://www.utu.fi/hum/tdk/english/baltic/>

FAST (Foundations in Area Studies for Translators) Program, University of Tampere

- United States Studies, British and Irish Studies, Finland Studies

<http://www.uta.fi/FAST/>

Sàmi Studies Programme, University of Helsinki

<http://www.helsinki.fi/hum/sugl/saami.html>

3. Innovations in the training of language teachers

3.1. Language teaching and learning in primary and secondary school education

Children residing permanently in Finland receive basic education which is intended for children from seven to sixteen years of age. A child may be granted the right to start basic education at the age of six or eight. The curriculum for basic education in comprehensive schools (primary and lower secondary schools) covers nine years.

Upper secondary school provides general education for students who are usually 16 to 19 years of age and usually ends with the completion of the matriculation examination. Education at upper secondary level is also provided by vocational schools.

The national core curriculum for both the comprehensive school and the upper secondary school is determined by the National Board of Education. It includes the objectives for the subjects and their contents. The education provider, i.e. usually local educational authorities, and the schools draw up their own curricula within the framework of the national core curriculum.

Two languages other than their mother tongue are compulsory for all pupils in basic education (primary and lower secondary schools), one of these being the other national language (Finnish or Swedish, depending on the pupil's mother tongue) and the other English, German, French or Russian. English is by far the most common one. The first foreign language begins most commonly in 3rd form although in a few schools the first foreign language is taught from 1st or 2nd form onwards. The second foreign language is usually taught from 7th form onwards. In addition to this, one or two optional languages can be chosen. These are taught most commonly from 5th and 8th forms onwards. The choice is normally between the aforementioned languages and in a few schools Latin. As many as 40 per cent of pupils take an optional foreign language.

In upper secondary school, students can continue in all of the languages they have learnt at the level of basic education. Two languages (the other national language and another foreign language, most commonly English) are compulsory. It is also possible to start new languages in upper secondary school. In addition to the languages mentioned above, Latin, Spanish and Italian can be studied in some upper secondary schools. The other national language and another foreign language are compulsory in the matriculation examination, other languages are optional. The language examinations consist of various types of written tests and a listening comprehension test.

In vocational education, both in vocational schools and in vocational colleges, one foreign language is studied in addition to the other national language. The scope of language teaching varies according to line of specialization.

3.2. Initial teacher training

3.2.1. Institutions responsible for training

Language teachers trained at the universities of [Helsinki](#), [Joensuu](#), [Jyväskylä](#), [Oulu](#), [Tampere](#) and [Turku](#) and [Åbo Akademi University](#). These universities also train primary school teachers, as does the [University of Lapland](#). A comparatively small number of business orientated language teachers have their university degrees from the [Department of Languages and Communication](#) at [Helsinki School of Economics and Business Administration](#).

3.2.2. Content, objectives, and structures of programmes

Language teachers at the lower and upper secondary level have their degrees from university language departments (see also 2.1.) whereas many primary level language teachers have a degree in Education with specialization in the language in question. Most students of languages aiming at becoming a teacher study two languages, one as major and the other as minor subject. Thus, they will be able to teach both languages at school.

A potential language teacher completes the traditional language programme offered by a language department, including Basic Studies, Intermediate Studies, Advanced Studies and a Master's thesis. (See 2.1.1.) The majority of prospective teachers write their theses on topics other than language teaching or learning. Language teacher training is a 35-credit (70 ECTS) programme that students of traditional language programmes can include in their 160-credit (320 ECTS) Master's degree as a minor to qualify as teachers. Teacher training, given by a faculty of education, includes pedagogical studies and teaching practice. The pedagogical studies comprise courses on general pedagogical issues as well as courses on the teaching of languages in particular. Teaching practice takes place primarily at the university teacher training school, where the students teach a set number of lessons observed by their supervisor.

Language students can apply for admission to teacher training at the beginning of their university studies or at any stage during their studies (see also 3.1.4.). It is also possible to enter the teacher training after receiving a Master's degree. The teacher training is usually done side by side with the studies in the language departments so that when the student graduates from the department, he or she is also a fully qualified teacher.

Together with a Master's degree (160 Finnish, 320 ECTS credits), the completion of a teacher training programme is a qualification requirement for a language teacher in primary and secondary schools as well as various other types of educational institutions. Degree programmes are based on the concept of general pedagogical qualification, which means that pedagogical studies qualify teachers for all school levels and school types.

Students in programmes for primary school teachers can include languages (15-20 or 35 Finnish credits, equal of 30-20 or 70 ECTS credits) as a minor in their degree and be qualified as language teachers.

3.2.3. Career prospects for graduates

The career prospects for students in language teacher training are good. To a great extent this is due to demographic reasons. A large number of teachers reach the age of retirement during the next decade and already the demand for qualified language teachers is high especially in certain areas of the country and especially within certain languages; there is a greatest need for teachers of English and German.

Furthermore, the need for language teachers in private language schools or companies increases constantly. A number of qualified language teachers find employment in areas other than teaching, such as administration or consultancy.

3.2.4. Recent changes in content, objectives, and/or structure of programmes

In recent years many language departments have designed special courses and study modules for the students contemplating the career of a teacher. In the years 2001 and 2002 the [Faculty of Art](#) at the [University of Helsinki](#) will offer the possibility to apply to study in a teacher-orientated line right from the beginning of university studies in some languages (see 3.1.5.).

Teacher training programmes have focused on literature and cultural aspects of language teaching in addition to basic language learning. Teacher training programmes increasingly give attention also to content-based language teaching. Courses on language immersion have been introduced to some teacher training programmes (see 3.1.5.).

3.2.5. Examples of good practice

The [Department of English](#) at the [University of Jyväskylä](#) started in 2000 a teacher training programme where a number of students are admitted both to the language department and to teacher training. A similar system will begin at the [Department of German](#) in 2001. A special teacher-line will also be introduced in 2001 at the [Department of English](#) and the [Department of German](#) at the University of Helsinki, followed in 2002 by the [Department of Scandinavian Languages and Literature](#) (Swedish). The teacher-line will have its own quota (18 students in each language) in the intake of new students.

The Teacher Education Department at [Åbo Akademi University](#) has started a research project called ‘Languages and Communication from a Pedagogic Perspective’ in 1997. The project aims at developing language teaching and its methods for example by surveying possibilities for a more flexible learning context, creating links between the teaching of foreign languages and native languages and making use of drama, literature and media to improve cultural literacy in the context of language teaching.

The [Department of Applied Education](#) at the [University of Joensuu](#) has launched a 15-credit (30 ECTS credits) study programme called ‘Vocationally Oriented Language Learning and Teaching’. This programme is aimed at language teachers in vocational schools and colleges and in adult education. This programme, which focuses e.g. on teaching languages for specific purposes and makes use of the latest developments in the research in the field, can be included in the degree of students in teacher training.

The Teacher Education Department at the [University of Jyväskylä](#) offers a programme called [JULIET](#) (Jyväskylä University Language and International Education for Teachers) which is intended for primary school teachers.

The [Centre for Language Immersion and Multilingualism](#) at the [University of Vaasa](#) offers a 40-credit (80 ECTS) ‘Programme of Multiculturalism’ which focuses on language immersion and multilingualism and is aimed e.g. at teachers of multilingual children.

See also 2.2.1. ([Centre for Applied Language Studies, University of Jyväskylä](#)).

3.2.6. Reasons underlying these changes

See 3.2.3.

The education system has undergone a major decentralization on the administrative level in the 1990’s. Local educational authorities and schools themselves have more freedom than before to decide on their curricula and the teachers are naturally very much involved in this.

The [National Certificate of Language Proficiency](#) in nine languages was introduced in 1994. The examination for the certificate is open to anybody regardless of the way they have learned the language.

The main problem in Finnish language teaching and learning has been that too little time and attention is devoted to oral aspects of language proficiency. This is related at least partly to the structure of the matriculation examination.

The introduction of content-based foreign language teaching has changed the role of the language teacher. There has been a distinct trend towards more and more tuition in a foreign language, mostly English, on all levels of education.

3.2.7. Identification of needs

3.2.7.1. Seen in relation to the development of language studies

- More attention to multicultural teaching environments.

- Improving future teachers' IT- and multimedia skills.

3.2.7.2. Seen in relation to non-academic requirements

- Development of programmes to suit the needs of varying teaching environments.
- More choice of languages in primary school teacher training, at present concentrates too much on English alone.
- Making the career of a teacher more attractive to language students.

3.2.8. Measures to be taken at institutional, regional, national, and European level to meet the needs identified

3.2.8.1. At first-degree level

- More extensive funding for language studies, especially in primary teacher training.
- More competitive wages for teachers.
- Giving more children the possibility to study languages other than English as their first foreign language.
- Surveying the conditions of language teaching, e.g. the sociolinguistic situation, linguistic attitudes.

3.2.8.2. At postgraduate level

- More research relating to language teaching in new environments.

3.3. Continuing teacher education (in service)

3.3.1. Institutions responsible for training

All teachers are obliged to participate in in-service training a certain number of days each year. Training is provided by local school authorities but teachers can also apply to participate in training offered by other suppliers of training services.

University centres for continuing education organize in-service training for teachers, as do some university foreign language and teacher education departments and some private organizations. The Federation of Finnish Foreign Language Teachers provides its members with training and scholarships for courses abroad.

3.3.2. Content, objectives, and structures of programmes

In-service training includes general educational topics, updated information about language and communications as well as the specific languages taught, and cultural and regional issues. In recent years many teachers have improved their IT-skills through special courses.

In-service training courses can vary in length from a couple of hours to 3-5 days.

3.3.3. Recent changes in content, objectives, and/or structure of programmes

The use of computers in language teaching - language software as well as the Internet - is a recent addition to the topics of in-service training

3.3.4. Examples of good practice

In 2001 the [Vantaa Institute for Continuing Education](#) at the [University of Helsinki](#) has started a programme to educate a group of primary school teachers further into teachers of English in order to respond to the growing need for English teachers.

3.3.5. Reasons underlying these changes

See 3.2.6

3.3.6. Identification of needs

3.3.6.1. Seen in relation to the development of language studies

See 3.2.7.1.

3.3.6.2. Seen in relation to non-academic requirements

See 3.2.7.2.

3.3.7. Measures to be taken at institutional, regional, national, and European level to meet the needs identified

See 3.2.8.

Websites:

Faculties of Education with webpages in English

- University of Joensuu, Faculty of Education
<http://www.utu.fi/kasv/kasv/english.html>
- University of Oulu, Faculty of Education
<http://wwwedu.oulu.fi/ktkeng.htm>
- University of Turku, Faculty of Education
<http://www.utu.fi/kasv/kasv/english.html>

University of Vaasa, Centre for Language Immersion and Multilingualism

<http://www.uwasa.fi/hut/svenska/eside1.html>

The Federation of Foreign Language Teachers in Finland SUKOL

<http://www.sukol.fi>

The Matriculation Examination Board

<http://www.minedu.fi/yo-tutkinto/index.html>

4. Innovations in the training of translators and interpreters

4.1. Description and analysis of the current spectrum of professional activities

Translating is becoming increasingly versatile, as it has in many cases evolved more in the direction of localization, editing and documentation. New professions such as technical writing are changing translators' working environments.

4.2. Institutions responsible for training

Translators and interpreters are trained at the Centre for Translation Studies at the [University of Turku](#) ([English](#), [French](#), [German](#), [Spanish](#)), the Department of Translation Studies at the [University of Tampere](#) ([English](#), [German](#), [Swedish](#), Russian), the Department of Translation Studies in Kouvola, affiliated to the [University of Helsinki](#) ([English](#), [Swedish](#), Russian, [German](#)), [Savonlinna School of Translation Studies](#), affiliated to the [University of Joensuu](#) ([English](#), Russian, [German](#), minor in [Swedish](#)). The [Department of Modern Finnish and Translation](#) at the [University of Vaasa](#) also trains translators, as do the translator-lines at the departments of [French](#) and [German](#) at the University of Helsinki.

See also 2.1.

4.3. Content, objectives, and structures of programmes

4.3.1. At first-degree level

Translators and interpreters study for a Master's degree, i.e. 160 credits (320 ECTS credits). The programmes comprise Basic Studies, Intermediate Studies, Advanced Studies and a Master's thesis. It is also possible to take a voluntary Bachelor's degree, 120 credits (240 ECTS credits), before this.

Students majoring in translation study at least one minor subject. The choice of minor subjects is relatively free, and they often complement the students' expertise in a field of specialization.

The translator and interpreter training programmes include elements such as language proficiency, linguistics, sociocultural competence and specialization in a given field, e.g. technology, medicine, or law. For language proficiency the target is to acquire a competence in the language that is as near as possible to that of an educated native speaker.

4.3.2. At postgraduate level

Postgraduate studies, i.e. studies for a Licentiate or a Doctorate, include coursework and a thesis. The coursework comprises 10 credits (20 ECTS credits) in a major subject and 20 minor-subject credits (40 ECTS credits). The voluntary Licentiate degree, which corresponds to the doctorate in most countries, consists of coursework and an unpublished thesis. Postgraduate students taking the Licentiate can after that continue to a Doctorate, which requires a doctoral dissertation and a public defence of it. It is also possible to take a Doctorate without a Licentiate degree.

4.3.3. At the level of continuing education

Continuing education (in-service training) for translators and interpreters is provided by university centers of continuing education, which arrange courses usually on specialized topics. They can also design courses to suit the individual needs of e.g. a translation company.

4.4. Career prospects for graduates

Career prospects for graduates of translator and interpreter programmes look very good. International organizations and private companies increasingly need language experts. For example, the Finnish EU membership has revolutionized the need for interpreters.

In addition to translation, graduates find employment as technical writers, export assistants or researchers. In some universities translators and interpreters can also apply for admission to teacher training.

4.5. Recent changes in content, objectives, and/or structure of programmes

4.5.1. At first-degree level

Language and translation technology has been increasingly introduced into the language programmes by integrating it to as many courses as possible. Individual courses have been linked into larger study modules.

Interpreting has gained importance in the programmes and specialized courses on interpreting are organized.

See 4.6.

4.5.2. At postgraduate level

Postgraduate seminars have been introduced to some programmes.

4.5.3. At the level of continuing education

New courses on the use of IT in translation have been introduced.

4.6. Examples of good practice

The [Savonlinna School of Translation Studies](#) offers its students a wide range of minor subjects from other languages (including Japanese) to tourism, communication and culture.

In 1997 the [Department of Translation Studies](#) at the [University of Tampere](#) launched a 20-credit (40 ECTS) [Technical Communications Programme](#) which gives student the possibility to specialize in Technical Communication. The programme forms links between the university and the business sector.

The [Department of English Translation Studies](#) at the [University of Turku](#) offers a 20-credit (40 ECTS) minor in conference interpreting. The programme includes both consecutive and simultaneous interpreting. The department also organizes a post-graduate course on conference Interpreting together with other translation departments at the university. The Department of Translation Studies at the University of Tampere has divided the German translation programme into separate lines of specialization for translators and interpreters.

A Multicultural Communication programme which focuses on translation has been established at the [University of Helsinki](#). It operates at present under the [Department of General Linguistics](#). The programme cooperates with language departments and other departments and is open to all students at the university.

4.7. Reasons underlying these changes

See 4.1. and 4.4.

Closer links to working life are constantly being established and many students find employment even before graduation. It is not unusual to integrate studies with work, e.g. through commissioned Master's theses.

4.8. Identification of needs

4.8.1. At first-degree level

- Need for more students of translation and interpreting to and from Russian.
- Enhancing the language proficiency of students before entering the programmes.
- More teaching of Finnish to international students graduating from these programmes.
- Developing the teaching of terminology and lexical expertise.
- Focus on translation technology and audio-visual translation.
- More practical experience of the profession.

4.8.2. At postgraduate level

- More cooperation between departments.
- More funding.

4.8.3. At the level of continuing education

- In-service training in the use of language and translation technology.

4.9. Measures to be taken at institutional, regional, national, and European level to meet the needs identified

4.9.1. At first-degree level

- More beginner's courses, especially in Russian.
- More funding for courses of Finnish for foreigners.
- Developing links with working life, e.g. in the form of internships.
- Estimating the need for translation and interpreting experts in the (expanding) linguistic context of the EU.

4.9.2. At postgraduate level

- Creation of contacts and cooperation in Finland and in Europe.

4.9.3. At the level of continuing education

- Courses designed to meet the needs of translators and interpreters, e.g. in the use of new technology.

Websites:

University of Helsinki

- Department of Translation Studies
<http://rosetta.helsinki.fi/>
- Department of French Philology, French Translation
<http://www.helsinki.fi/hum/romkl/fra/francais.html>
- Department of German Philology, German translation
<http://www.helsinki.fi/hum/sala/>

University of Joensuu, Savonlinna School of Translation Studies

<http://www.joensuu.fi/slnkvl/>

University of Tampere, Department of Translation Studies

<http://www.uta.fi/laitokset/trans/>

University of Turku

- English Translation and Interpreting
<http://www.utu.fi/hum/engtra/>
- French Translation and Interpreting
<http://www.utu.fi/hum/frantra/>
- German Translation and Interpreting
<http://www.utu.fi/hum/deutra/>
- Spanish Translation and Interpreting
<http://www.utu.fi/hum/espanja/>

University of Vaasa, Department of Modern Finnish and Translation

<http://www.uvasa.fi/hut/suomi/en.html>

PROVISION FOR STUDENTS OF OTHER DISCIPLINES

5. Innovations in language provision for students of other disciplines

It is necessary to bear in mind that students in Finland have studied at least two languages at school (the national language other than their mother tongue and a foreign language), one of these for at least ten years (see 3.1.) before entering the level of higher education.

5.1. Language studies integrated into non-language programmes

5.1.1. Content, objectives, and structures of programmes

As university students in Finland have a considerable freedom in designing their studies (see 1.1.), it is possible to combine language studies from language departments as a minor subject with virtually any major subject. Language studies are among the recommended minor subjects e.g. in fields such as history, communication, literature and linguistics (see also 3.1.2. for primary teacher training students minoring in languages).

Non-language programmes that systematically integrate language studies in them are relatively few. Law students at the [University of Helsinki](#) can apply to a 20-credit programme (40 ECTS credits) at the [Department of English, German or French](#) at the university. In return, language students have the possibility of 20 (40 ECTS) credits of studies at the [Faculty of Law](#). The [Department of Languages and Communication](#) at the [Helsinki School of Economics and Business Administration](#) offers students not majoring in languages a wide range of courses that can be combined into a programme of up to 30 credits (60 ECTS credits). The [Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration](#) in Helsinki has a similar programme. At [Åbo Akademi University](#) students at the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences can choose a programme at the Department of German which incorporates language studies with studies in their major subject. [Helsinki Business Polytechnic](#) offers a programme for management assistants that includes 12 (24 ECTS) credits in three languages.

Some polytechnics offer degree programmes which include a considerable amount of language studies. However, these are mainly elementary or intermediate studies in several languages and will be dealt with under 5.2.

5.1.2. Recent changes in content, objectives, and/or structure of programmes

The needs of working life are increasingly taken into consideration when designing the programmes. In Finland there is clearly a trend from language studies integrated into non-language programmes towards teaching content in a foreign language (see 5.4.).

5.1.3. Examples of good practice

The [Department of Languages and Communication](#) at the [Helsinki School of Economics and Business Administration](#) has a wide range of courses that students can combine into a minor subject.

5.1.4. Reasons underlying these changes

The internationalization of working life has influenced the programmes as well as recent research in language teaching for specific purposes.

5.1.5. Identification of needs

5.1.5.1. Seen in relation to the development of language studies

- More native teachers.

5.1.5.2. Seen in relation to non-academic requirements

- More co-operation between educational institutions in Finland.
- More co-operation with educational institutions abroad.

5.1.6. Measures to be taken at institutional, regional, national, and European level to meet the needs identified

5.1.6.1. At first-degree level

- Increased funding.

5.1.6.2. At postgraduate level

(Not applicable.)

5.2. General and subject-oriented language courses accompanying non-language programmes

5.2.1. Content, objectives, and structures of programmes

In universities, language programmes for students not majoring in languages are provided by language centres. Each university has its own language centre except the art academies situated in Helsinki, which are served by the [Language Centre](#) at the [University of Helsinki](#). The language departments of some universities also arrange courses that are open to all students at the university.

The completion of a university degree in any field in Finland requires demonstrating written and spoken language skills in the national language other than the student's mother tongue, i.e. Swedish for Finnish speakers, Finnish for Swedish speakers, and at least one other foreign language. The choice is usually between English, German, French and Russian, sometimes also Spanish and Italian. English is by far the most usual choice. In some fields, especially in the humanities, two foreign languages are obligatory. In addition to the language studies that are an obligatory part of a degree, students can choose additional language courses and make use of the language centres' self-learning facilities for a large variety of languages.

The obligatory courses consist of reading-comprehension exercises, usually with texts related to the students' major subject, and exercises of spoken skills such as presentations and discussions. There is also an end-of-course exam. The objective is to familiarize the students with the language they can be expected to encounter during their studies and in professional life. Students can take the language courses at any stage of their studies, although in some fields it is recommended that these courses should be completed as early as possible so as to help students in their studies, which in most cases involve e.g. course materials in foreign languages. It is possible for a student to attempt to pass the required oral and written exams without attending the courses if he or she has good skills in the language in question. A high grade in the matriculation examination (see 3.1.) is often sufficient proof of the required written skills.

The obligatory requirements for language studies vary between different fields. In many faculties it can be as little as four (eight ECTS) credits while for example at the Helsinki School of Economics and Business Administration it can be as much as 16 (32 ECTS) credits and at the Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration in Helsinki it can be 15 (30 ECTS) credits. However, in addition to the obligatory courses many students choose to study additional courses. Language studies are usually popular with students.

The language studies included in a polytechnic degree vary according to educational institution and discipline. However, studies in the national language other than the student's mother tongue (Swedish for Finnish speakers, Finnish for Swedish speakers) and another foreign language are a compulsory part of all degrees. The polytechnics are currently organizing their language teaching and some of them have already created language centres similar to those of the universities. In many polytechnics, however, the language studies are still arranged within the individual degree programmes.

5.2.2. Recent changes in content, objectives, and/or structure of programmes

New teaching methods have been introduced into language courses for students not majoring in languages. More emphasis has been laid on, for example, self-learning and web-based instruction. Many courses combine contact tuition with distance learning and independent projects. The students' varying language skills at entrance stage have been taken into consideration by creating supporting courses for those with weaker skills. Portfolios have been found a useful method in many cases.

The programmes have been tied more closely to the needs of working life, simulating actual language situations. The language courses have been developed more towards teaching communication and intercultural issues in addition to language skills in the traditional sense. Special courses such as academic writing have been introduced.

Many universities and polytechnics have introduced courses in a wider variety of languages than before. For example, the study of non-European languages has increased.

5.2.3. Examples of good practice

The [Language Centre](#) at the [University of Helsinki](#) is the biggest of the university language centres in Finland. Its ca. 100 teachers provide tuition in 20 languages and self-learning facilities for 42 languages. A new innovation are short courses on press language in Spanish and Russian where beginners quickly gain elementary knowledge of the languages. The Language Centre has developed [ALMS](#) based teaching for the needs of students (Autonomous Language Learning Modules).

The Swedish-speaking sections of the universities located in Helsinki have launched a joint project called the 'Language Alliance' under the [Department of Languages and Communication](#) at the [Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration](#) in Helsinki. The aim is to provide language courses for Swedish-speaking university students.

The [Department of Languages and Communication](#) at the [Helsinki School of Economics and Business Administration](#) has developed a course called [Environmental Communication](#) that deals with companies' environmental reporting, focusing on the students' presentation and argumentation skills in English. The Department has also revised the programme for Russian, including in it a portfolio course.

The [Language and Communication Centre](#) at the [Helsinki University of Technology](#) has, together with students, created a range of web-based material for language study, for example an exercise tool called [Xercise Engine](#).

Four polytechnics have together with the [Centre for Applied Language Studies](#) which is based at the [University of Jyväskylä](#) collaborated in a project to standardize the assessment of language skills in polytechnics.

The [National Defense College](#) has made use of the [National Certificate of Language Proficiency](#) as part of officers' university level training.

5.2.4. Reasons underlying these changes

Internalization has led to a considerable increase in language studies in most fields. The need for professionals with good functional language skills has been recognized as well as the need for people competent also in languages other than English.

In many fields students are required to write papers, research reports and thesis abstracts in English. This has increased the need for courses in academic writing.

Students increasingly have part-time jobs while studying, which is one reason for the increase in the use of self-learning possibilities.

5.2.5. Identification of needs

5.2.5.1. Seen in relation to the development of language studies

- More qualified language teachers also in smaller educational institutions.
- Courses in foreign languages for specific fields.
- The differences in the entrance level of students' language skills to be taken better into consideration.
- Better self-learning facilities.

5.2.5.2. Seen in relation to non-academic requirements

- More courses in languages other than English.
- The needs of working life to be taken better into consideration, e.g. presentation skills, courses in languages relevant to future career.

- More courses in academic writing.
- Standardizing the evaluation in language studies.

5.2.6. Measures to be taken at institutional, regional, national, and European level to meet the needs identified

5.2.6.1. At first-degree level

- Better funding.
- More co-operation between educational institutions.
- Creating a standard for language studies.
- Considering language learning a continuum from primary and secondary school to higher education.
- Enhancing the study of languages other than English already at primary and secondary school.
- Standardizing the language studies included in a polytechnic degree.

5.2.6.2. At postgraduate level

- Making better use of web-based teaching.
- Courses in academic writing.

5.3. Language provision and support for mobile students

5.3.1. For incoming students

Most university language centres and several polytechnics offer courses of Finnish or Swedish as a foreign language for incoming international students. The courses are usually of elementary or intermediate level. The [Department of Languages and Communication](#) at the [Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration](#) in Helsinki has launched a course of *Swedish for Foreigners* as a distance learning project aimed at incoming exchange students together with universities in Poland, Estonia and Latvia.

Some educational institutions have developed the courses in other languages to better suit the needs of international students.

5.3.2. For outgoing students

The needs of outgoing exchange students have been recognized in many language courses which include skills useful for these students. There are also some special courses, for example a course called *Vorbereitungskurs Auslandsstudium* at [Helsinki School of Economics and Business Administration](#) for students planning studies in a German-speaking country. The [Language Centre](#) at the [University of Helsinki](#) has a similar course for students planning to study in an English-speaking country.

5.4. Non-language programmes or parts of programmes taught through one or several other languages

5.4.1. Disciplines involved

There has been a visible trend towards programmes or parts of programmes taught in foreign languages, i.e. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), in Finland in the late 1990's. Even before this, students in nearly all disciplines could include individual courses taught in foreign languages in their degree. Course materials are in most fields very often in languages other than Finnish or Swedish.

Most universities and polytechnics offer programmes in English. The disciplines where this is most common are economics and business administration, although programmes are offered in a variety of fields. In addition to complete programmes, study modules of 5 to 20 (10 to 40 ECTS) credits taught in a language other than Finnish or Swedish can be included in a degree.

Examples of such programmes in universities:

[International School of Social Sciences, University of Tampere](#)
[International Design Business Management programme \(IDBM\)](#), a joint programme of [Helsinki School of Economics and Business Administration, University of Art and Design Helsinki](#) and [Helsinki University of Technology](#)

Nearly all polytechnics offer one or several degree programmes in English; links to polytechnics available at http://www.minedu.fi/minedu/education/polytechnics_list.html.

5.4.2. Levels at which (parts of) programmes are taught

Programmes are taught at any stage of first-degree education. Some doctoral programmes are also being developed.

5.4.3. Languages used

English is by far the most common language used. Some programmes in Swedish have also been created for Finnish-speaking students.

5.4.4. Target groups (mobile students, home students et cetera)

The programmes are aimed at both home students and international students.

5.4.5. Policies and objectives underlying the practice described

The aim of the programmes is mainly to prepare students for the demands of international academic and working life as well as to make them more competent for studies abroad, and to enable international students to complete degree programmes in Finland.

5.4.6. New measures proposed

An evaluation of 15 polytechnic and university programmes taught through a foreign language was carried out in 1999. The recommendations on the national, institutional and individual level given by the evaluation team can be found in Tella, S. et al. 1999. *Teaching Through a Foreign Language: From Tool to Empowering Mediator*. Publications of Higher Education Evaluation Council 5. Helsinki: Edita. These recommendations include e.g. that more attention should be paid to the role, significance and hidden potential of the foreign language, that language other than English should be introduced as languages of instruction and mediation, and that the acceptable language proficiency level of the teachers should be defined. So far, at least the Universities of [Helsinki](#) and [Jyväskylä](#) have carried out an evaluation of their teaching given in English. (For Helsinki, see Lehtonen, T. et al. 1999. *English or not English: that is the question! Teaching through English at the University of Helsinki*. Opintoasiainosaston julkaisuja 18. Helsinki: University of Helsinki. For Jyväskylä, see Räsänen, A. 2000. *Learning and teaching through English at the University of Jyväskylä*. Reports of the Jyväskylä University Language Centre 4. Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä.) A similar evaluation could be useful also in other institutions of higher education.

Websites:

University Language Centres in Finland (Åbo Akademi University Language Centre)

<http://www.abo.fi/sptj/other/>

CLIL Compendium, a website focusing on CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), with Finnish participation in the development team

<http://www.clilcompendium.com>

CONTINUING EDUCATION

6. Innovations in language studies in continuing education (excluding language specialists)

Language studies after graduation are usually sponsored by the employer, who can buy these services from universities' centres for continuing education or, as in most cases, private language schools.

6.1. Target groups

- University graduates who need foreign languages in their working environments.
- Adult learners in polytechnics.

6.2. Content, objectives and structures of programmes and courses

The courses are usually designed to meet the needs of the individual learners.

6.3. Recent developments

The demand for language courses has increased considerably in the 1990's. The use of IT has enabled distance learning on a larger scale.

6.4. Identification of new needs

The need for speakers of foreign languages other than English has been recognized. An increasing need is to improve the language skills of teaching staff at universities and polytechnics, as they are required to teach courses in foreign languages.

6.5. Measures proposed to meet the needs identified

- Better funding for language teaching for subject teaching staff.

Websites:

University Continuing Education Centres (Finnish Council of Directors of Centres for University Continuing Education)

<http://www.uta.fi/council/centres.html>