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Chapter 4

Multilingualism in Finnish teacher education

Tamás Péter Szabó, Elisa Repo, Niina Kekki and Kristiina Skinnari

Jokainen yhteisö ja yhteisön jäsen on monikielinen. Eri kielten käyttö rinnakkain koulun arjessa nähdään luontevana ja kieliä arvostetaan.

(Perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteet 2014: 28)

Varje gemenskap och varje medlem i gemenskapen är flerspråkig. Det ska vara naturligt att använda olika språk parallellt i skolans vardag och språk ska värdesättas.

(Grunderna för läroplanen för den grundläggande utbildning 2014: 28)

1 Introduction

Education in Finland is highly influenced by multilingualism, and this influence can be witnessed in primary, secondary as well as tertiary education. This multilingualism is evidenced by the diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds of the learners, the number of which is constantly increasing through immigration, as well as the growing emphasis on language and bi/multilingual education in the current curricula. In this chapter, the term *multilingual learner* is used to refer to persons who have competences to communicate in different language contexts with all their language resources – regardless of the way such resources are acquired or how well they are developed.

Two important concepts in addressing multilingualism in Finland are language awareness and multilingual pedagogy. Developing *language awareness* is understood here as increasing pre-service teachers' knowledge of languages, language use in education, and subject-specific literacy skills while *multilingual pedagogy* refers to promoting the use of students' whole linguistic repertoire as a resource for learning and encouraging the use of multiple languages side by side in a classroom (cf. Moate and Szabó, 2018; Honko and Mustonen, 2018).

In this chapter, we focus on how teacher education in Finland prepares teachers to teach multilingual learners in primary schools. Primary school in Finland consists of grades one to six (pupils aged seven to twelve). In addition, we also consider early childhood teacher education and subject teacher education for all education levels with reference to a program called Language Aware Multilingual Pedagogy (LAMP) at the University of Jyväskylä, which includes

multiple levels of teacher education programs to emphasize the continuity of the development of learners' multilingual literacy practices throughout the lifespan.

Our goal with this chapter goes beyond the compilation of an inventory showcasing various courses and study programs. For example, when presenting in what language(s) teacher education is organized, we point to higher education language policies which serve as a hidden curriculum and set guidelines for teachers. Further, we critically analyze discourses circulating in multilingual education, to highlight ideological and value-driven choices which influence teacher education practices.

In this chapter, we first provide a critical review of mainstream educational policies and ideologies that influence multilingual education and make assumptions about what teachers need to know and be able to do to work with multilingual learners. We then draw a general description of the status of multilingualism in Finland and briefly present the system of Finnish teacher education. Next, we continue with a review of courses and modules targeting teaching in multilingual settings. To give more insight into the functioning of such courses and modules, we provide examples from two teacher education contexts, first, the Multilingual Pedagogy and Second Language Learning course at the University of Turku, and second, as mentioned above, the Language Aware Multilingual Pedagogy (henceforth LAMP) program at the University of Jyväskylä.

2 Multilingual education: discourses and challenges

Language awareness and multilingualism appear as prioritized targets of educational policy documents of various scopes in Finland. Among others, the European Commission (2019) calls on its member states to develop language aware and multilingual pedagogies. Further, the current Finnish national core curricula of various levels of education (e.g., Finnish National Agency for Education, 2014) also promote multilingualism and language awareness. Multilingualism in these documents is presented in an overly positive, even celebratory manner. Further, goals in these documents are rather general and ambitious. For example, the recommendations of the European Commission (2019: C189/16) aim to cover multilingual language awareness in a holistic way:

Language-awareness in schools could include awareness and understanding of the literacy and multilingual competences of all pupils, including competences in languages that are not taught in the school. Schools may distinguish between different levels of multilingual competence needed depending on context and purpose and corresponding to every learner's circumstances, needs, abilities and interests.

This excerpt taken from an EU policy document defines language awareness at a community level but refers to individual linguistic repertoires. It is noteworthy that various languages, including those not taught in the form of explicit language instruction, are also counted in. Recognizing the absence of certain languages from mainstream education, the above excerpt implicitly points to some of the limitations of using all learners' language resources in education. Not only does the document give a high responsibility to school staff as they need to consider what kind of multilingualism is considered important or favorable in different learning situations; it also raises the expectation that there are autonomous, individual teachers and other school staff members in charge (cf. Jaspers, 2019) who have the expertise and time to

synchronize policy recommendations, curricular aims, community cultures and individual needs and preferences. Adapting a similar mindset, the Finnish Core Curriculum for Basic Education (Finnish National Board of Education, 2014: Chapter 9) states that:

The objective is to guide the pupils to appreciate different languages and cultures and to promote bilingualism and plurilingualism, thus reinforcing the pupils' linguistic awareness and metalinguistic skills. School work may include multilingual teaching situations where the teachers and pupils use all languages they know.

Beyond emphasizing the importance of bi- and plurilingualism, this excerpt also suggests implementing genuinely multilingual practices through school work. Again, such an ambitious aim can be realized only if teachers are well-prepared and know various methods and tools to facilitate multilingual education interaction in a meaningful way. The attempt to find and/or develop such methods is apparent beyond policy documents as well, and is furthermore manifested in the allocation of public funding. For example, in 2017–2018 the Finnish government allocated € 10,000,000 to local experimental development projects to break ground for innovative language education and multilingual pedagogies (Ministry of Education and Culture n.d.). A substantial amount of funding has also been given to multilingualism-related pre- and in-service teacher education (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2018; n.d.). Although all the policy documents and research papers reviewed above for the purpose of this study emphasize language awareness and multilingualism as goals and ideals of education and normalize multilingualism, the lack of established practices often delays the implementation of multilingual pedagogies (cf. Tarnanen and Palviainen, 2018). In the Finnish context, one of the reasons is that although teachers' beliefs towards multilingualism are supportive, their practices often mirror monolingual ideologies since they do not necessarily have experience and expertise in the practical implementation of multilingual pedagogies (Alisaari et al., 2019). One way to ensure such expertise is through work with multilingual groups, for which teacher education should provide space (Alisaari et al., 2019) through, for example, encounters and experimentations during the mandatory teaching practice or internships.

Facing the above mentioned challenges, in this chapter we ask how pre-service teacher education prepares teachers to teach multilingual groups of students. We map related modules and courses of all Finnish teacher education institutions to draw a general picture and then present two examples to prepare a critical discussion of the topic.

3 Multilingualism in Finland

3.1 Recent growth of attention paid to multilingualism due to societal change

Bilingualism, or, rather, parallel monolingualism (Heller, 1999) has long been present in Finland. By constitution, Finland has two national languages (Finnish and Swedish) which are the media of instruction in mainstream education. Further, Sámi languages, Romani and Finnish Sign Language have a legally protected status as media of instruction, and students' home languages can also be used if they are necessary and if their use “does not endanger learners' chances to follow teaching” (Act on comprehensive education, 21.8.1998/628, §10). Although this legal frame already includes several languages, the above listed languages cover only a fraction of Finland's multilingualism (Alisaari et al., 2020; Honko and Mustonen eds., 2018).

Languages with a long history in Finland (e.g., Russian and Estonian) and others with a more recent growth (e.g., Somali and Arabic) are under-represented as media of instruction, even though their speakers form a growing proportion of the student population. Learners' everyday literacy practices are increasingly multilingual, but many of their literacy practices often remain hidden from teachers or school communities in general (Martin, 2016).

Presently, the population increase in Finland (with a current population of 5,513,130 on 31 December 2018; Statistics Finland, n.d.) results mainly from the arrival of migrants from abroad. During January–June 2017, Finland's population increased by 3,804 persons; that means, 6,324 more persons immigrated to rather than emigrated from Finland. There was no growth among the native Finnish population (Statistics Finland, n.d.). Demographic changes have also re-drawn the relationship between groups of speakers of different languages. Swedish as the other national language is spoken by approximately 5% of the population, while the proportion of people whose home language is not Finnish or Swedish is 6% (Honko and Mustonen, 2018).

Recent studies and international assessments (e.g., PISA) suggest a significant gap between the learning results of native Finnish or Swedish speakers and of students with a migrant background (Harju-Luukkainen et al., 2014; Vettenranta et al., 2016). One of the outcomes of the PISA 2012 study is that not only the first-generation but also the second-generation migrants tend to succeed much less than students of Finnish origin with Finnish and/or Swedish as their first languages. Second-generation migrants' learning achievements lag almost two school years behind those of native Finnish or Swedish speaking students (Harju-Luukkainen et al., 2014). In this chapter we refer to both first and second generation migrants when using the term *students with an immigrant background*.

The widespread circulation of PISA results has resulted in a discourse of deficit (i.e., learners with immigrant background lag behind and this situation should be managed with intervention). This deficit discourse which has called decision-makers' attention to multilingualism and increased awareness about the issue has fed several attempts to find theoretical and practical solutions to benefit from the richness of learners' multilingualism and respond to challenges set by the changing linguistic landscape of Finnish education. Breaking traditional norms of parallel monolingualism (i.e., separate Finnish and Swedish medium tracks of mainstream education) and being in the phase of continuous experimentation, Finnish teacher education seeks answers and best practices of multilingual pedagogies in the different teaching modules and courses they offer (Moate and Szabó, 2018), as Sections 5 and 6 of this chapter will demonstrate.

3.2 Language awareness and multilingualism in the Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education

The current Finnish Core Curriculum for Basic Education (Finnish National Board of Education, 2014) has been implemented in comprehensive education since 2016. It includes the objectives and core contents of different subjects, and provides a common direction and basis for renewing instruction of all schools in Finland. As the excerpt in Section 2 showed, this document has a strong emphasis on language awareness and multilingualism and states that students' whole linguistic repertoire should be seen as a resource for learning. Furthermore, the focus on multilingualism and language awareness permeates all educational levels from early education to adult education, which is visible in the guiding documents of these educational stages (e.g. Finnish National Agency for Education, 2014, 2016a, 2016b).

In the core curricula, the role of language is understood to be central in all teaching and learning, and the languages of the learners are seen as resources. Further, there is a wide understanding of multilingualism as including not only separate languages but also subject-specific languages and language varieties. The curriculum for comprehensive education even declares that “all teachers are language teachers” (e.g. Finnish National Agency for Education, 2014), which points to the changing role of teachers. According to the core curricula, language teachers are not the only agents for multilingualism and language awareness in their school community but, rather, this role is given to all educators. That is, subject teachers are responsible for socializing the students to the language of their subject content. Therefore, we find that teacher education programs should systematically place emphasis on preparing all teachers with the expertise to teach academic and subject-specific language. The programs in Finland could mediate knowledge to create multilingual learning environments building on students’ linguistic and cultural resources and practices to allow all students to accomplish academic tasks they could not do alone (cf. Gibbons, 2015; Villegas et al., 2018).

3.3 Language education in Finland

Traditionally, students have learnt several languages in Finnish schools. It is compulsory to learn one foreign language and the official language of Finland that is not the students’ first language (Swedish for students who take part in Finnish medium education, starting latest from grade six, and similarly Finnish for those students studying in Swedish medium programs). According to the latest educational renewal, starting in 2020 and onwards, learning the first foreign language begins in grade 1 (age 7–8) rather than in grade 3 (age 9–10) (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2019). Most often, in over 90 per cent of the cases, this first foreign language is English, but in the Swedish speaking schools the first new language introduced is usually Finnish (Skinnari and Sjöberg, 2018). Beyond English, Swedish and Finnish, there is a decrease in the diversity of languages learnt in schools, especially non-European languages (Pyykkö, 2017). The Ministry of Education and Culture wants to expand the language variety by recommending that the first foreign language chosen be a language other than English (cf. Pyykkö, 2017).

For students who have only recently arrived in Finland, there are one-year preparatory classes from which the students are flexibly integrated into mainstream classes (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2015). After that, Finnish or Swedish as a second language teaching is organized with an adjusted syllabus for learners whose home language is not the official language of tuition (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2014). Teaching the students’ heritage languages in most cases takes place separately outside of the school day, for example in the afternoon, often outside of the school building (Kuukka et al., 2015). These groups learning heritage languages are often very heterogeneous (e.g., age and level of heritage language proficiency) and the municipalities who organize basic education have varying resources and ways to implement heritage language education (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2014). Heritage language teachers’ educational backgrounds also vary greatly (Piippo, 2017) and often they are not required to have the same kind of teacher certification as public school teachers.

3.4 Teacher education in Finland

In Finland, there are currently eight universities that educate teachers. The different teacher education departments and units create their own curricula autonomously which results in quite significant differences between the curricula. However, all class teachers (i.e., primary school generalist teachers who teach all subjects in grades 1 to 6, students aged 7–12) are required to complete a 5-year master's degree (300 ECTS) with a major in educational science, including multidisciplinary studies in the subjects and cross-curricular themes taught in basic education. Additionally, pre-service primary teachers often specialize in at least one of the school subjects. Further, the Master's degree includes 20 ECTS (540 hours) of practicum in teacher training schools or outside of such institutions. Teacher training schools are part of universities, and offer pre-service teachers arenas to bring pedagogical theories into practice. Teacher candidates are not only expected to become familiar with the knowledge base in education and human development but are also required to write a research-based graduating thesis. After gaining a profession as a teacher, the teachers have autonomy in their work. The teaching profession has been very popular in Finland and especially class teacher education is very competitive: around 5–15% of applicants get accepted to the programs (see Vipunen, n.d. for details).

As for languages, pre-service teachers study compulsory modules in language and communication skills: written and oral Finnish/Swedish, as well as a foreign language (usually English) and a national language, meaning Swedish in Finnish-medium programs or Finnish in Swedish-medium programs (Government Decree on University Degrees, 794/2004, §6). Also, all students have a background of learning languages since, as already stated, in comprehensive education it is compulsory to learn at least the second national language and one foreign language, and it is not uncommon to learn further additional languages as well (Pyykkö, 2017). How the different universities offer courses in multilingual pedagogy, then, is discussed in Section 5.

4 Methods

To provide an overview of multilingualism in teacher education programs in Finland, this chapter draws on curricula and course descriptions issued by all eight teacher education institutions in Finland as well as on a survey conducted in early 2019 among teacher educators at these universities. We contacted all of the institutions in Finland offering teacher education in January 2019 (see Table 1) and requested answers to our questions (see Appendix 1).

Table 1. *Data sources of this study*

University	Answers to questionnaire survey	Public website (curricula and course offerings)	Examples
Åbo Akademi University (Vasa)	+	+	
Tampere University		+	
University of Eastern Finland		+	
University of Helsinki	+	+	
University of Jyväskylä	+	+	+
University of Lapland		+	
University of Oulu		+	
University of Turku	+	+	+

Based on the sources presented in Table 1, added with information obtained via personal communication, we combined content and discourse analysis (e.g. Johnstone, 2018) to examine the aims, content, structure, and perception of the modules and courses to highlight common features and atypical solutions alike. It should be noted that course information on public university websites is not always up-to-date or exhaustive. Further, as noted earlier in this chapter, the number of projects and courses on multilingualism and diversity in education has grown rapidly recently, and it is likely that this growth continues at a similar or even faster pace in the future. In most Finnish universities, the curricula are currently in the process of being renewed. According to teacher educators from different universities, more content regarding multilingualism and multiculturalism will be offered in their new curricula.

For a deeper understanding of insider perspectives, two examples from teacher education contexts are presented in Section 6, which include quotes from pre-service teachers' course work and feedback surveys. In most cases, original texts were written in Finnish by our participants, and we quote them in our translation. We are aware of the fact that translation is to some extent also transformation of texts so we secured quality by peer reviewing each other's translations. The two examples emerge from ongoing research projects conducted by the authors of this chapter. In those projects, current legal regulations and GDPR of the European Union (EU 2016/679) were followed in handling research data and obtaining informed consent from participants.

Our personal and professional position and stance have inevitably influenced our choice of topic as well as our analysis. All authors of this chapter work in teacher education programs that foster multilingualism and language awareness in two Finnish universities. Further, the lead author is an EU citizen immigrant to Finland who teaches and conducts research in Finnish and English, while his three co-authors are native Finnish researchers and teachers with a professional background in teaching either Finnish language or foreign languages.

5 Multilingualism in teacher education programs in Finland

Below we provide an overview of obligatory and optional teacher education courses that directly thematize multilingualism and linguistic diversity. Our aim in this section is to give insights into some main constellations in which these topics are discussed at various Finnish universities. When writing about the programs and courses, we indicate the workload in ECTS, 1 ECTS equaling 27 hours of work. This is the only way we can compare the offered courses since there is little information available about the number of contact teaching hours available. Courses offer different time allocations to lectures or seminars and individual or group work.

We organize information about course offerings along three aspects: (i) obligatory courses and modules; (ii) optional courses and modules; and (iii) institution-specific features and emphasis of the local teacher education curriculum.

5.1 Courses and modules in teacher education units preparing pre-service teachers to work in multilingual groups

While investigating **obligatory courses and modules** offered in teacher education units in Finland during the academic year of 2018/2019 (Table 2 below), it became clear that no matter at which university pre-service teachers study, generally they will come across courses that include some content regarding multilingualism.

Table 2. *Obligatory courses and modules (including number of ECTS) in teacher education units for preparing pre-service teachers to work in multilingual groups in the academic year 2018/2019*

University	Title of Module or Course
Åbo Akademi University (Vasa)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “Finnish and Foreign Language” (5 ECTS) (part of a 30 ECTS unit on “Culture and Identity”) ● “Intercultural Education” (5 ECTS)
Tampere University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “Language Education” (5 ECTS) ● “Pedagogical communities and equity” (5 ECTS) ● “Inclusive School” (5 ECT)
University of Eastern Finland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “Education in the Cultures of Diversity” (5 ECTS)
University of Helsinki	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “Finnish Language in School” (5 ECTS)
University of Jyväskylä	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “Finnish Language and Literature: Language Aware Subject Teaching in Multilingual and Multicultural Groups” (3 ECTS)
University of Lapland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ”Diversity of Learning” (5 ECTS)
University of Oulu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ”Diversity in School and Education” (5 ECTS)
University of Turku	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “Multilingual Pedagogy and Second Language Learning” (2 ECTS)

As Table 2 demonstrates, multilingualism is most often introduced either as a part of the Finnish language and literature module or as a module about diversity. This being the case, when included in Finnish language and literature courses, the focus of teaching appears to be on Finnish as an additional language pedagogy, leaving multilingual pedagogy aside. In addition, sometimes topics such as linguistic and cultural diversity appear to be discussed in the didactics courses of other disciplines than languages, such as on History, Science, Ethics, or Art classes. These courses are not indicated in Table 2, since they do not have a special focus on multilingualism.

Based on the analysis of the study programs, migrant-induced multilingualism, language-aware practices for newly arrived immigrants, or multilingual pedagogy are topics that the curricula at the time of the study did not yet widely highlight. Another trend appears to be that if “multilingual learners” are discussed under the topic of diversity, the significance of language is often diminished. For instance, in some universities, content regarding multilingual learners is integrated into a course focusing on learning difficulties and “other special cases”. Moreover, a conflict remains between declared language policies (e.g., the local curricula of teacher education departments) and multilingual practices: the courses on multilingual pedagogy are often organized solely in Finnish or Swedish and sometimes solely in English. That is, the courses themselves do not model the use of multiple languages side by side in a classroom.

Many teacher education units also offer **optional modules as additional courses** that prepare teachers to work in multilingual groups. These optional modules vary from singular courses (3–5 ECTS) to larger programs (25–120 ECTS) regarding linguistic and cultural diversity. The optional programs cover a rich variety of topics, depending on the strategy of the university. For instance, some programs offer content about second language development – providing a foundation for designing and facilitating linguistically diverse students’ learning. The modules often include practical perspectives, materials, and concrete scaffolding examples as well as opportunities for teachers to interact with linguistically diverse groups. In addition, the modules may provide theoretical knowledge on intercultural competence, multiliteracies, genre pedagogy, metalinguistic awareness and multilingualism as a resource of learning. Simultaneously, the participants are often offered time to examine their perceptions and reflect on their ideologies.

5.2 Special focus and institution-specific features regarding diversity

As noted earlier, Finnish teacher education is autonomous and universities design their own curricula in line with their institutional profile and the needs of the local communities they serve. The map in Figure 1 below shows linguistic diversity across Finland, with darker grey regions showing more linguistically diverse communities (Statistics Finland, 2017). We have added the names of the universities with a teacher education unit to the map to discuss some of the findings from our survey in relation to the location of some of the universities, shedding light on some of the most prominent differences of the societal context of teacher education programs across the country.



Figure 1. *Linguistic diversity across Finland in relation to the location of teacher education units. The map is taken from a figure created by Statistics Finland (2017)*

Åbo Akademi University (Vasa unit), located on the west coast in close proximity to Sweden in a highly bi- and multilingual region with a large influx of exchange students and students with immigrant/other minority language backgrounds, has designed its teacher education especially to serve the needs of Swedish-medium schools. Since bilingual communication has long been part of Finland Swedes' everyday life, the program has focused on bi- and multilingualism over the last 20 years with a module on Culture and Identity (Table 2). Based on survey answers, teacher educators at this university “problematize the understanding of bi- and multilingualism as a sort of language parallelism” to counter the separation of languages inherent in parallel monolingualism in Finnish education. Geared to professionals for the Swedish-medium schools in Finland, the teacher training school offers English–Swedish CLIL education which, according to the survey respondents, “provides a good frame for developing multilingual awareness, experiences and skills” in this “very international” region.

The University of Jyväskylä, located in the center of Finland in a region with a dominantly Finnish speaking population, has the oldest Finnish-medium teacher education in Finland running since 1863. The university is known for its applied language studies and education and offers optional Finnish as a second language programs as well as specializations: JULIET (*Content and Language Integrated Learning*) and LAMP (*Language Aware Multilingual Pedagogy*; see Section 6.2). JULIET (CLIL) courses are taught in English and taken also by international and exchange students, enabling ideal environments for genuine intercultural encounters for teacher candidates. In class teacher education, one of the four

compulsory teaching practices is organized outside of the university's training school, usually in a linguistically diverse district, to provide as complex experience to students as possible.

The University of Turku has two campuses located in the city of Turku and city of Rauma. In this chapter we focus on the Turku campus, located in South-West of Finland in one of the more linguistically diverse regions. Whereas most of the teacher training schools (where the pre-service teachers do their practicum associated with the university's teacher education program) in Finland are located in very close proximity to the universities in city centres and thus generally have a more monolingual student body, the training school of the University of Turku is located in a more diverse area of Turku and has 64% of students speaking languages other than Finnish as a first language. Because of this, pre-service teachers at the University of Turku have many possibilities to encounter multilingualism during their practicum. To combine these encounters with research-based understanding of how to teach multilingual learners in a linguistically responsive manner (e.g. Lucas and Villegas, 2013), all pre-service teachers (around 90 students per cohort) study a course called "*Multilingual Pedagogy and Second Language Learning*" as a compulsory part of their degree in the third year of study (cf. Section 6.1). Originally, the course was added to the curriculum in the academic year 2016/2017, at the time when the National Core Curricula were reformed to promote language-aware pedagogy on policy level. The course responds to the question of how to implement the curricula as classroom level practices.

The University of Helsinki, located in the capital city in the most linguistically diverse region of Finland, is an officially bilingual (Finnish–Swedish) university and, accordingly, has two teacher education tracks – one on Finnish-medium instruction and the other on Swedish-medium instruction. The staff and the students of these tracks work in tight collaboration with regards to the development of multilingual pedagogies. Further, the university lecturer position for Finnish as a second language in this program focuses specifically on multilingual pedagogy. Lecturers from the Finnish-medium program noted in the survey that the atmosphere of teacher education is multilingual, pointing out that "we have relatively lots of multilingual students and students that live in multilingual environments so this subject field in itself is basically not strange to the students".

According to its website, the **University of Eastern Finland**, which is close to the Russian border, focuses on early language education and intercultural communication. It has an English-medium program (in cooperation with a Russian university) and courses on Chinese and Chinese culture. The **University of Lapland** is located in Rovaniemi, the capital of Finnish Lapland which is the home region of the Sámi people. Accordingly, the university states on its website that their teacher education has a focus on Sámi languages. The website of **Tampere University** emphasizes that international perspective is part of teacher education and the importance of multicultural skills is growing. The **University of Oulu**'s website mentions sustainable development, human rights and local and global responsibility as some of the central values of their teacher education.

In summary, there are specific teacher education courses and programs across Finland, several of which are related to local geographic and demographic features and have been designed to meet the needs of local communities. Often targeted at international students, English-medium teacher education appears in various points of the country. However, it tends to remain isolated, most likely because it is not possible to find a job as a teacher in public elementary and secondary education without a language certification or a degree completed in Finnish or Swedish.

6 Two examples of multilingual pedagogies

In this section, we present two examples to show in more detail how teacher education units prepare pre-service teachers for multilingual classrooms, and to discuss the emerging and changing beliefs of pre-service teachers regarding multilingualism during their teacher education. The first example discusses the obligatory third-year Multilingual Pedagogy and Second Language Learning course at the University of Turku, taught by two of the authors of this chapter. The other example is called the LAMP program (*Language Aware Multilingual Pedagogy*) at the University of Jyväskylä (Bachelor level, optional), taught by the other two authors of the chapter.

6.1 Example 1: Multilingual Pedagogy and Second Language Learning course at the University of Turku

As noted above, the University of Turku is located in a highly diverse region in the south of Finland, where the majority of students in the training school speak over forty different languages. Given that pre-service teachers have many multilingual encounters in their practicum, the 5-week-long course, consisting of 5 lectures and 5 seminars, covers topics regarding language awareness, second and foreign language learning, language skills assessment, and multilingual pedagogy. During the course, pre-service teachers learn to identify the language demands of classroom tasks and understand that academic and subject-specific languages of school differ fundamentally from everyday conversational language. Further, the pre-service teachers become familiar with sociocultural, psycholinguistic, and sociolinguistic processes involved in learning an additional language, and with ways of using that knowledge in instruction and assessment. Usage-based language teaching methods and practices developing multiliteracy, as well as metalinguistic awareness, are tried out in practice. For instance, different reading strategies are introduced to show how academic texts can be understood even when the student's language skills in the target language are not yet on an advanced level, and teacher candidates are guided to compare languages to demonstrate how talking about language improves the use of language. Additionally, the course offers ways for using multilingual students' linguistic repertoires as a resource in learning, cultivating and valuing linguistic diversity by permitting multilingual practices in the classroom. Throughout the course, strategies to scaffold instruction for multilingual students are demonstrated and reflected against current theory (e.g. Cummins, 2017; Gibbons, 2015; Lucas and Villegas, 2013). The active involvement of the pre-service teachers, hands-on perspectives and collaborative learning are at the core of the course.

At the end of the course of spring 2019, we conducted a feedback survey (which 49 volunteers out of 90 pre-service teachers answered; 54.4%). The survey focused on (a) pre-service teachers' understanding of multilingualism, (b) how the experience of the course had influenced this understanding, and (c), what practices they would use to scaffold learning of a multilingual student in school. The pre-service teachers reported that the course had widened their view on multilingualism (43/49, 87.8%). That is, the course appeared to have improved their self-efficacy in encountering multilingual students, enabled a more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon, and provided concrete tools to practice language aware and multilingual

pedagogy. Extract 1 represents how a pre-service teacher reflected on this changed understanding:

Extract 1: How has the course affected your understanding of multilingualism?

I have learned several practices to take multilingual learners into account and support their learning. This knowledge has dispelled the fear to teach multilingual learners and made me realize that students' languages are a resource that can and must be used in instruction. Students live in a multicultural environment, and therefore, it is important to encounter different languages and their speakers equally. (Pre-service Class Teacher, No. 33)

Such a widened view of multilingualism was evident in pre-service teachers' definitions of multilingualism. In analyzing how the pre-service teachers understood multilingualism, the following criteria became evident from their answers: (i) a person who is born in a multilingual family or whose surroundings are multilingual (*nativeness criterion*); (ii) a person who has a good ("perfect") command of multiple languages is multilingual (*competence criterion*); and (iii) a person who uses multiple languages or fragments of one language in different situations is multilingual (*usage-based criterion*). It is noteworthy that especially the pre-service teachers who experienced that their understanding of multilingualism widened during the course (30/43, 69.8 %), defined multilingualism via the usage-based criterion, which aligns with recent understanding in research (e.g. García and Otheguy, 2020; Lantolf and Thorne, 2006).

When it comes to reported practices, pre-service teachers named a variety of methods to provide multilingual students with access to learning Finnish and content taught in Finnish, with 37/49 (75.5%) participants reporting more than one strategy to scaffold instruction. Extract 2, which shows part of one pre-service teacher's response, demonstrates the multiplicity of strategies in participants' answers:

Extract 2: With what practices can you support the learning of a multilingual student in school?

By giving [the student] a chance to show their competence and to teach other languages also to their fellow students. By a positive attitude towards languages and appreciation of everyone's competences: seeing all languages as equal. By enabling to accomplish and process classroom tasks in students' own home languages, which can help to understand things and to learn the content. By functional methods and tangible examples. By analysing textbooks beforehand to anticipate what the difficult terms and language demands, etc. are that pose challenges. By mapping students' language level and creating exercises and supports which help the student to get on the next level (meaning not too easy or too difficult). (Pre-service Class Teacher, No. 41)

On the one hand, as Extract 2 shows, practices drawing on students' linguistic and cultural resources are highlighted in pre-service teachers' answers (e.g., comparing home languages or letting students accomplish the tasks in their mother tongues). On the other hand, many of the reported practices would scaffold learning for all students in class (e.g., using visual aids and hands-on activities).

In sum, the feedback of the course demonstrates the conceptual attention and self-reflection required in the process of developing the complex set of knowledge, skills, and orientations needed to teach linguistically diverse students well. Even in the context of Turku (with possibilities to encounter multilingualism already during teacher practicum), pre-service teachers consider the course on multilingualism eye-opening and “one of the most beneficial” courses in their teacher education, as one teacher candidate states in the survey. As teachers have a significant role in creating, interpreting, and appropriating new educational policies (cf. Hornberger and Johnson, 2007), it is recommended that similar courses be offered systematically and as a compulsory part of teacher education programs in the future.

6.2 Example 2: LAMP – Language Aware Multilingual Pedagogy at the University of Jyväskylä

LAMP – Language Aware Multilingual Pedagogy is an inter-departmental teacher education program which overarches early childhood education teacher, class teacher and language subject teacher education. In this regard, LAMP is an atypical program since it integrates related content of three distinct teacher education programs. Doing so, LAMP emphasizes the continuity of the development of learners’ multilingual literacy practices throughout the lifespan. Through intensive dialogue between the students, teacher educators and local actors in the field of education, study assignments and action research, LAMP aims at enhancing pre-service teachers’ advancement in (i) understanding and managing the operating culture, challenges and strengths of day care centers and schools with multilingual and multicultural children, and developing an operating culture of multi-professional teams that values multilingualism; (ii) identifying and specifying learners’ linguistic and cultural resources; and (iii) knowing ways to supervise the integrated learning of language and content (Aalto et al., 2018; Moate and Szabó, 2018). LAMP was launched in the academic year 2018/2019 as a 25 ECTS study specialization for early childhood education, classroom, and language subject pre-service teachers (with a quota of 20, 12, and 10 persons, respectively). Courses have been integrated into a Bachelor-level basic pedagogical study module (3 courses of 5 ECTS each) and extended by two LAMP-specific courses (5 ECTS each). LAMP has also been developed into a Bachelor’s and Master’s program for language subject pre-service teachers (quota 10 persons) starting in the academic year 2019/2020. In these new programs, there are three new LAMP-specific courses (5 ECTS each) that focus on teacher identity, the pedagogy of bilingual and language enriched education, as well as learners’ multilingualism. Students are encouraged to write their BA and MA theses on LAMP-related topics such as multilingual pedagogy or language policy.

In order to continuously develop the program, LAMP teachers have conducted action research with pre-service teachers to better understand their study experiences and professional development. Data gathering focuses on course work of students of the 2018/2019 cohort (submitted tasks and classroom interaction), and is at an initial stage. Data presented here comes from 27 (64.3%) of the total number of 42 students who have so far consented to using their course work for research purposes.

While in the previous example, our focus was on the development of pre-service teachers’ professional skills, strategies and their conception of multilingualism, in this example we discuss how pre-service teachers participating in LAMP reported on their personal learning pathway in a graded essay task (“My own language philosophy”). This task was part of a new course

developed for first-year LAMP students entitled “Multilingualism and Language Learning in a Changing Society” (5 ECTS) which in its first iteration ran through the entire academic year. The essay task functioned as a means of synthesizing in retrospect the most important ideas and themes of the course as well as one’s individual learning pathways, often narrated in terms of contrast, e.g., initial beliefs versus current knowledge. Extract 3 demonstrates a relatively quick change in one participant’s way of thinking:

Extract 3

During the course I observed how some of my prejudices or old beliefs had changed. [...] One of these thoughts which was built on quite a fragile basis was that bi- or multilingualism would hamper children’s language development or language learning. However, I understood quite soon that there is no scientific support for such a conceptualization. (Pre-service Class Teacher, No. 17)

This excerpt shows distancing from a previous way of thinking, the participant even calling it “prejudice”, thereby emphasizing its “fragility” and lack of “scientific support”. That is, by attributing this kind of transformation or illumination from the course, the essay can be seen to be a useful tool of developing new professional understandings.

Further, students often came up with new interpretations of linguistic diversity which are meaningful to them. Some students reported that they arrived to LAMP with mixed expectations, especially because they did not consider themselves multilingual and/or especially gifted in learning foreign languages but were, for some reason, still interested in learning languages in general. Although their understanding of themselves as language learners did not change, many students reported on beginning to see themselves as multilinguals whose linguistic repertoire is wider than they had earlier thought, including fragmentary resources of diverse languages and language varieties.

Finally, the essays also provide interesting feedback on the pedagogical design of the course. The course in question included 14 meetings (2 hours each, 28 hours contact teaching in total) and consisted of course instructors’ lectures, course participants’ presentations as well as guest lectures of (and conversations with) external experts who shared their lived experience of multilingualism with the audience. Guest lectures by multilingual people (e.g., a person with a refugee background or a Deaf person representing Finnish Sign Language users as one of the linguistic minorities of Finland) proved to be very useful as they provided authentic insights into the challenges and richness of multilingualism. References to these guest lectures are in the center of discussion in several essays:

Extract 4

I find that I learn mostly from those kind of lectures where somebody comes to talk about their personal experiences. Then I experience that I internalize subject matters in theory and can apply it in my future work. (Pre-service Teacher for Early Childhood Education, No. 39)

Based on extracts 3 and 4, we argue that continuous reflection on the changes of one's own beliefs and open dialogue with representatives of various multilingual groups play a significant role in the construction of new professional identities.

7 Implications for teacher education

Our data from the teacher education departments of different Finnish universities show that growing multilingualism in society, requirements of the newest core curricula, and European language education policies have been responded to in teacher education programs. However, developmental work is ongoing and many institutions are at the stage of establishing or further developing courses and modules on multilingualism and multilingual pedagogy. This might be the reason why many of the universities did not initially answer our questionnaire. In a personal contact with a teacher educator from one of the universities that did not respond, it became evident that courses on multilingualism had been planned but not yet implemented.

In general, teacher education appears to be slow in responding to societal changes. For example, with regard to in-service education witnessed in our own contexts, some teachers criticized the top-down order and rate of change leading to in-service teacher education being re-organized. An example of top-down decision-making is the political decision to start second or foreign language teaching from first grade instead of grade three, which was the norm earlier. Implementing this reform has been prepared with several pilot projects experimenting with early language education in selected schools. However, in spite of decision makers' preference for introducing more languages to young learners, by far the most consistently chosen language appears to be English (Finnish National Agency for Education, n.d.). Although some pre-schools have given short-time introductory language education sessions in children's home languages (so-called language showers), upon starting school English is the foreign language most often chosen by parents and children, and often the only one offered by the schools and municipalities (Skinnari and Sjöberg, 2018).

Despite the wide and supportive discourses on multilingual education, Finnish policy makers and educators do not necessarily clarify whose multilingualism is in question and who should be supported through multilingual practices. Although policy documents such as the recommendations of the European Commission and the Finnish national core curriculum for basic education (Finnish National Agency of Education, 2014) write about "multilingual competences of all pupils" (European Commission, 2019: C189/16), teachers and researchers alike quite often only refer to the multilingualism of people with a (recent) migrant background (e.g. "the term multilingual learner used in the study referred to multilingual Finnish language learners from a migrant background"; Alisaari et al., 2019: 51). We argue that this approach reflects societal (mis)conceptions and assumptions as well as the unequal status of different languages. That is, at a discursive level, there is a distinction made between Finnish and Swedish as national languages, prioritized – mainly European – dominant languages such as English, Spanish, German, or French, and the often unnamed languages of people with immigrant background.

Since recent changes in mainstream educational language policies were implemented as responses to the PISA results mentioned earlier, we can interpret these policies as various means to intervene in order to handle the growing performance gap between native Finnish students with Finnish and/or Swedish as their first languages and first and second generation immigrants. It seems that "elite multilingualism" (i.e., knowing Finnish, Swedish, English, and other major

European languages) is not considered an issue which would need intervention. This is evident in Finland in that native Finnish students are not often associated with discourses of teachers ‘using all students’ linguistic resources in teaching’. Elements of recent, mainstream discourses that consider “elite multilingualism” are mainly about early foreign language education, which targets mainstream European languages but almost never non-European languages of people with immigrant background.

Current developments in teacher education (pre-service and in-service) are targeted at awareness-raising; that is, several programs aim at changing the beliefs of teachers from seeing multilingualism as a deficit or a problem to seeing it as an asset or a resource. This is based on the assumption that disseminating information in courses leads to changes in classroom practices (cf. Alisaari et al., 2019). Teacher education reforms build on research in several national contexts that identify “mainstream teachers’ lack of preparedness for linguistically diverse classrooms as a main problem which has to do with the deficit views many of them hold of multilingual learners” (Villegas, 2018: 133). In Finland this deficit view is evident in teachers’ views of students’ multilingualism as an obstacle for learning. According to several studies (e.g. Villegas et al., 2018: 143), pre-service teacher education can provide valuable strategies to practitioners for teaching multilingual learners. Such strategies include enhancing learning and student participation by taking the students’ home language into account and using multimodality in teaching to support the learners. Furthermore, research shows that merely discussing the topic with pre-service teachers to enhance their understanding is not sufficient, as their multilingual language awareness should also lead to transformative pedagogy where the new understandings are enacted in practices that support the learners’ multilingualism (García, 2008). On the other hand, the example of the University of Turku suggests that spending time in a multilingual environment (e.g., completing teaching practice in the multilingual teacher training school) is not necessarily enough to prepare pre-service teachers without opening a space for awareness-raising reflection.

8 Conclusions and avenues for future research

In this chapter, we presented how recent changes in Finland’s demography and contemporary discourses in education policies have influenced Finnish pre-service teacher education. Beyond providing an overview of course and module offerings, we critically discussed two examples of teacher education practices to provide a more in-depth understanding of how multilingualism in schools is addressed in the practice of teacher education. In this concluding section we aim at building ideas for further research.

First, we find long-term studies crucial in understanding the impact of recent developments in teacher education. As mentioned earlier, programs and course offerings are in the stage of constant change at Finnish universities, so long-term studies would shed light on the evolution of multilingualism in teacher education. Further, zooming in on pre-service teachers’ individual developmental pathways, it would be especially important to better understand how their language philosophy and expert identity develops in various programs. From a methodological point of view, the study of feedback tasks, reflective diaries, blogs and other submissions would show how various tasks could be used to develop pre-service teachers’ language awareness and multilingual mindset.

Finally, a comparative study of long-term research on related teacher education programs would show different challenges and solutions within the same national teacher education system which would then lead to a better understanding of the role universities play in answering local needs and demands. At a larger scale, drawing connections between pre- and in-service teacher education would help in further developing peer mentoring networks and activities. Such networks have long been part of teachers' life in Finland (e.g. Heikkinen et al. eds., 2012) and would play a significant role in innovation towards a more multilingual and language aware Finnish educational landscape (Moate and Szabó, 2018).

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Appendix 1:

Questions to teacher education departments (translated from the Finnish original)

1. In your institution, how are pre-service class teachers prepared to work with multilingual learners?
2. In your department, what course(s) or module(s) prepare(s) pre-service class teachers to work with multilingual learners?
3. What study unit or study program do these belong to?
4. Is the course or module compulsory or optional for pre-service class teachers?
5. How extensive is/are the course(s)/module(s)? (For example in terms of ECTS or number of lecture hours)
6. What are the aims and content of the course(s) or module(s)? What is emphasized?
7. How is multilingualism as a concept understood in the course(s)/module(s)?
8. According to your observations, what is the stance of students towards multilingualism and multilingual pedagogy?
9. Do the students work with multilingual groups during their teaching practice, or is there any other opportunity offered to them to gain teaching experience in multilingual schools?
10. What is the strength of your department in organizing education in this field?
11. What needs and wishes do you have with regards to education that develops the multilingualism of pre-service teachers?