



HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO
HELSINGFORS UNIVERSITET
UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

Bi- and multilingual universities

– Challenges and future prospects

University of Helsinki
1–3 September 2005





Bi-and multilingual universities

Welcome to discuss the most challenging issues for bi-and multilingual universities!

I am delighted to invite you to the University of Helsinki and our Conference entitled *Bi- and multilingual universities – challenges and future prospects*. The University of Helsinki is a bilingual University and our long and extensive experience in bilingual education and multilingualism makes us the perfect venue for a dialogue on multilingual issues.

The main objective of our Conference is to discuss and highlight research and to exchange experiences on bi- and multilingual higher education, in particular on factors that promote and inhibit it. Furthermore, the aim is to discuss the strategic and pragmatic development of such multilingualism at the university level.

In addition, we also wish to present the Finnish language policy in theory and practice. The language laws of Finland are regarded as some of the most advanced in the world, not only in relation to the country's autochthonous linguistic minority, Finland Swedes, but also to the three indigenous peoples' languages: Inari, Skolt and North Saami.

The programme of the Conference will be of interest to a wide audience of university leaders, university teachers and researchers in the field of multilingual education, languages and minority issues, as well as to university administrative personnel in charge of international and academic affairs in both multi-and monolingual universities.

Our list of speakers includes some of the world's most prominent scholars in the field of multilingual education and multilingualism.

Let me invite you to our University and the beautiful city of Helsinki. We believe that this Conference will be a watershed in the ongoing development of multilingual higher education. I can promise you an interesting and stimulating Conference and an exciting time in Finland.

Yours faithfully,

Ilkka Niiniluoto
Rector



Welcome to Helsinki

Helsinki is a modern European cultural city whose urban cosmopolitan lifestyle exists in perfect harmony with nature. Surrounded by the sea and its own exotic archipelago, Helsinki offers visitors a variety of sights and experiences.

Throughout its 450-year history, Helsinki has existed in the crosscurrents of East and West. The colourful layers of history can be seen everywhere; a walking tour of the city centre will open your eyes to a fascinating past. Today's Helsinki is also a city of the future. Its modern architecture, cutting-edge design and high-technology have attracted international recognition for the city.



The Conference will address three broad topics:

Theme 1. Multilingual higher education

Multilingual education has many challenges but also many prospects ahead. The workshops and plenary sessions related to theme 1 will address the impact of the Bologna process on multilingual education with a particular focus on the role of languages and multilingual studies in this process. The way that language centers, new technologies and language learning methods function in supporting multilingual instruction will also be examined.

Theme 2. The cultural, political and historical context

Understanding the challenges of and threats to multilingual education requires knowledge about the larger, cultural and political context in which it exists. The workshops and plenary sessions related to theme 2 will thus try to analyse the broader trends to determine how they may affect multilingualism at the university level and how multilingual higher education in turn may affect them. For instance, to what extent will the rapid spread of English as a lingua franca affect multilingual education? What are the impacts of globalisation, nationalism and the flow of immigrants and refugees on multilingual studies? Finally, does the EU have a long-term policy to promote multilingualism in Europe?

Theme 3. Multilingualism at the universities in practice

How can the university play a role in helping students from all language groups to become bilingual? What kind of administration supports multilingualism in the best way at the universities? The workshops and plenary sessions related to theme 3 will reflect on the strategic and practical issues related to bi- and multilingual universities and also discuss their backgrounds and future challenges. Participants in these sessions will also assess how bi- and multilingualism can be used as a marketing asset in order to promote universities. The aim of these workshops is largely to provide a venue for the exchange of experiences and practical examples among the participating universities. It is hoped that participants will leave with some fresh ideas about developing multilingualism at their universities.

There will also be a **poster session** which will allow for informal discussion with participants from bi- and multilingual universities.





Languages of the Conference

The official languages of the conference are English, French and German and interpretation into these languages will be provided at the plenary sessions.

Keynote speakers

Our list of speakers includes some of the world's most prominent scholars in the field of multilingual education and multilingualism. Please see our web-site for more information.

Social program

The Conference will provide excellent opportunities for sightseeing, networking and social interaction. For instance, a reception hosted by Rector Ilkka Niiniluoto, a tour of the city by bus and a conducted tour to the stunning Sea fortress Suomenlinna.

For more information about the **programme, registration, accommodation, submission of papers and fees** please visit our website: **www.helsinki.fi/palmenia/congress/bilingual2005**

If you have any questions regarding the Conference please do not hesitate to contact us at: bilingual2005@helsinki.fi

For more information see: **www.helsinki.fi/palmenia/congress/bilingual2005**

The University of Helsinki is officially a bilingual university with a long experience in bilingual education and multilingualism. The research results and teaching carried out at the University have been widely acclaimed. The University participates in more than half of the national Centres of Excellence in Research, elected by international scientific panels. The University of Helsinki has also been invited to be a member of the League of European Research Universities, a co-operation body for leading European research universities.

