



LANGUAGE AWARENESS AND IDEOLOGIES IN FINLAND

Engaging with the Public: Language Awareness and Ideologies in Finland

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Project Overview

- Based at the University of Helsinki
- Funded by the Kone Foundation, 2023-2026
- Four linguistics researchers and a communications specialist
- Four work packages
- International advisory board

Objectives, Ethos

- Combines science and public outreach
- Addresses language-related ideologies and attitudes in contemporary Finland
- Raises awareness about language equality and justice in Finland, putting Finland in conversation with other locations and research
- Assesses the contemporary language ideologies and attitudes focusing on Finnish and English and how they impact inclusion in society
- Activates relations between researchers, external stakeholders, media and language activists to increase general understanding of language
- Inspired by research in Fourth Wave Sociolinguistics and linguistic justice (e.g., Baugh 2018; Charity Hudley, Mallinson & Bucholtz 2020; Flores & Rosa 2017; Wolfram 2023).

Public Outreach

Get involved by engaging in discussion about language attitudes and ideologies with us on social media.

LAIF website:

<https://www.helsinki.fi/en/projects/language-awareness-and-ideologies-finland>

LAIF on social media:

- Twitter / X: @laifproject
- Instagram: @laifproject
- Facebook: Language-Awareness-and-Ideologies-in-Finland/61553992692541/
- LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/language-awareness-and-ideologies-in-finland/>
- YouTube: LAIF Language Awareness and Ideologies in Finland <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC4Hsf-RLdMMYJA15HLK6QqQ>

Language Attitudes



Dr. Laura Hekanaho leads the work package on language attitudes. Hekanaho started in December 2023.

- offers an updated account of the relationship of Finnish and English in Finland today (building on influential survey study by Leppänen et al 2011)
- survey methods to assess the relationship between Swedish, Finnish and English
- additional differentials such as standard/nonstandard, urban/rural are also tested
- target population includes both L1 and fluent L2 speakers of Finnish
- data from the semantic differential scales will be analyzed with linear mixed models distinguishing between population-level and person-wise effects as well as CDA methods

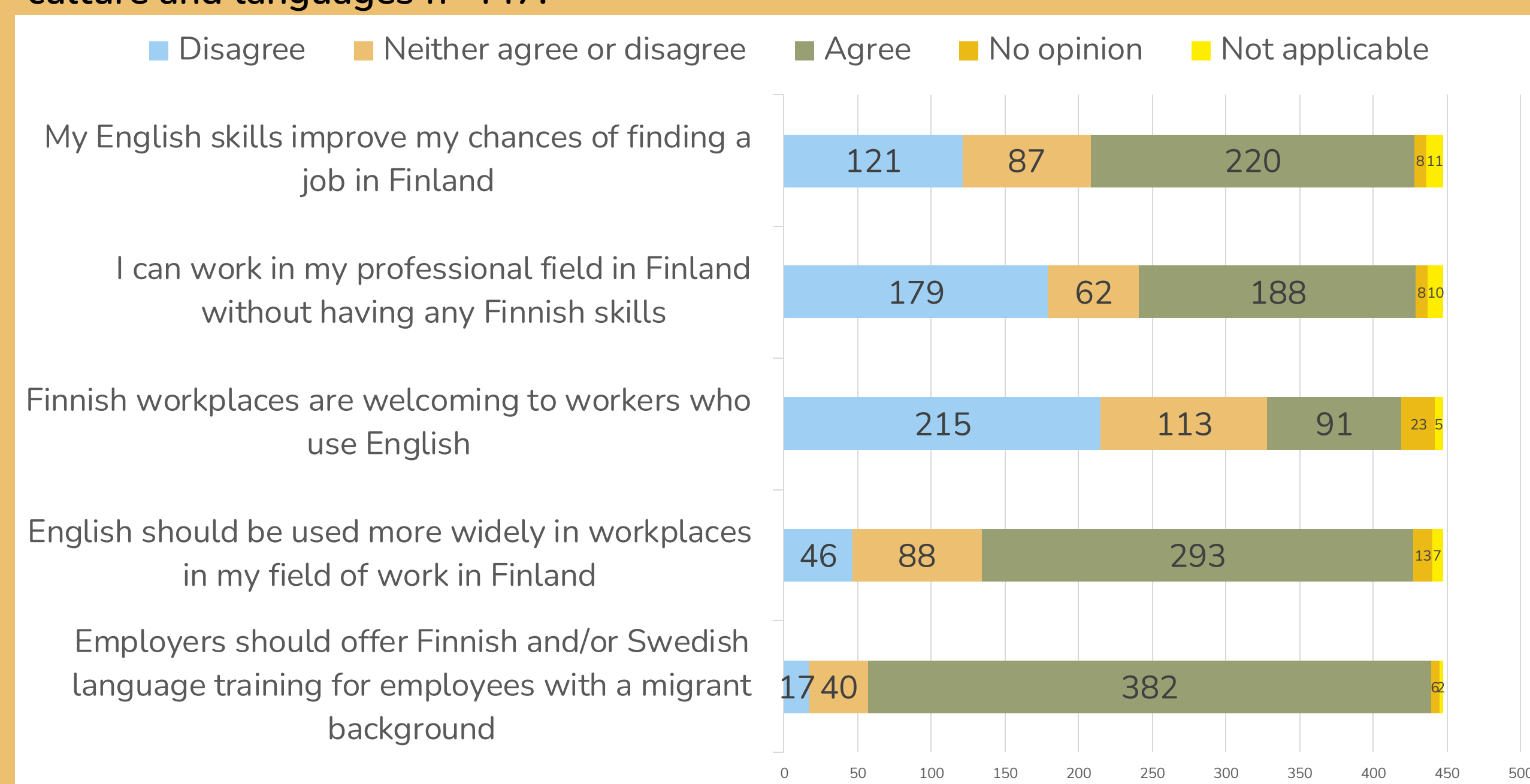
Migrants



Katariina Pyykkö leads the work package on language attitudes. Pyykkö started in April 2023.

- investigates how English proficiency affects the integration, employment and social engagement of academically trained migrant women in Finland, draws on sociolinguistics and CDA
- focuses on social background factors (such as gender, area and field of work) to create an understanding of daily multilingualism and language-based discrimination
- uses online survey methods to gain cross-sectional data of the obstacles hindering the employment and integration of academically trained migrants of all genders; initial results illustrated in Figure 1 (Pyykkö, 2023)
- ethnographic methods to assess how female migrants position themselves within their language repertoire and societal expectations regarding language skills in Finland, using interview data and citizen science methods

Figure 1. Five sample responses out of a series of 12 statements about Finnish work culture and languages n=447.



Language Ideologies



Dr. Marika Hall leads the work package on language ideologies. Hall will start in February 2024.

- investigates the relationship of power and status of languages and language users relative to each other
- data consists of the open-ended, free-form responses to the surveys utilized in WPs 1 and 2, as well as the ethnographic data from WP2
- qualitative and critical approach to the data, with an explicit aim to identify emergent themes of social equity, inclusion, purism, exclusion and perceptions of language threat
- data explored with corpus-assisted thematic/discourse analysis followed by a phase of close reading

Awareness



Anna Suutarla leads the work package on awareness. Suutarla started in September 2023.

- acts as a liaison between the project researchers and the general public
- creates a website offering information about language-related materials such as podcasts, publications, databases, and corpora
- produces original blog, audio (e.g., podcast interviews) and media (e.g., YouTube videos) created for the project
- prepares materials crafted expressly for members of the media, including press releases, arranging interviews, and a conference event hosted midway through the project
- creates a communication blueprint for linguists to interact with the media and the general public

Figure 2. WP4 outreach materials: video



Jenny Sylvin and Elizabeth Peterson at the Herring Festival in Helsinki, 2023.

Outcomes, Future Aims

- Pursue further funding and collaboration to establish a Finnish / Nordic / wider language awareness body that interacts with the public about language
- International collaboration with similar groups and organizations
- Expand project to include indigenous languages, migrant languages, and ethnic languages
- Improve public and policy awareness about language as an overall component of social equality, understanding and justice
- Horizon Europe 2022: priority to "to strengthen the European linguistic capital in a globalised world"

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