



More parallel please

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**Best practice of
parallel language use
at Nordic Universities:
11 recommendations**

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Frans Gregersen et al.

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Summary and policy perspective

The wave of globalisation sweeping the university sector is the main catalyst for the work of the Nordic Council of Ministers' Parallel Language Group. Higher education and research are increasingly multilingual activities that require highly developed language policies. In this report, the Group sets out 11 recommendations on the use of local and international languages at universities in the Nordic Region. They are presented in full in Chapter 3 and discussed in more depth in Chapter 4. In brief, they are that:

1. Every university should have a language policy.
2. Every university should have a language policy committee.
3. Every university should have a language centre.
4. Staff recruited abroad should be offered courses in the teaching language, common speech and language for special purposes.
5. Various categories of students should be offered language courses, following needs analyses.
6. Lecturers and researchers should be offered language courses, following needs analyses.
7. Universities should choose their teaching languages based on the principles of parallel language use and the "international classroom".
8. University language policies should also cover the language used in the administration.
9. The universities should monitor and regularly reassess the choice of language for publications.
10. University language policies should also cover the language used in dissemination of knowledge, outreach and external communication activities.
11. Language policies should include developing digital language-support resources at every university.

The quality of education and research at the universities depends on the ability of students, researchers and lecturers to develop the requisite language skills for advanced, internationally competitive intellectual work. As such, they will almost always need to be multilingual. However, this cannot be taken for granted. Rather, they need to be given organised, external support based on meticulous needs analyses.

In a globalised world, *universities and higher education institutions need to be inclusive*. This applies to ordinary students with an incomplete command of academic language, students studying in their own country but whose native language is not the main language of the country concerned, migrants, exchange students and guest students. It also applies to international researchers and other researchers who find themselves in what may, in many ways, be an alien environment.

As society's most important institutions for the production and communication of new knowledge, *universities have a democratic duty* to maintain and develop scientific dialogue, both in international research circles and with broad groups of citizens. This requires multifaceted linguistic competencies.

It is also worth noting that well-developed policies for parallel language use across the Region will generate substantial *Nordic synergies*. The Nordic universities are based in countries where the principal languages are medium-sized by international standards, but highly developed, and where English is spoken at a high level in universities and elsewhere. Business is conducted both in the local language and in English. As such, the conditions for parallel language use at Nordic universities are exceptionally good. In comparison with the Group's observations elsewhere in Europe, the Nordic debate on parallel language use appears to be advanced. Nordic exchanges of experience, guidelines and, in many cases, Nordic skills-development and resource-building programmes mean that the Region could relatively easily become a world leader in this growing field. Given the framework imposed by globalisation, parallel language use is also important for developing the Nordic language community.

Chapter 1 accounts for the work of the Group and outlines the background for it; Chapter 2 explains key terminology and concepts; Chapter 3 sets out the 11 recommendations in full; and Chapter 4 discusses each of the recommendations and the reasoning behind them.

1. Nordic language policy and the Group's remit

In April 2006, the Nordic Council of Ministers for Education and Research (MR-U) signed the Nordic Language Declaration. In the preface, the ministers stated that although the declaration is not legally binding, it would form the basis for a collective, long-term and effective language policy. One of the four areas identified in the declaration is "Parallel Language Use".

The Declaration states:

"The parallel use of language refers to the concurrent use of several languages within one or more areas. None of the languages abolishes or replaces the other; they are used in parallel."

The first paragraph under this headline refers to the parallel use of English and the Nordic languages:

"Nordic residents, who internationally speaking have good English skills, have especially favourable conditions for developing skills in the parallel use of English and one or more of the languages of the Nordic countries in certain fields. A consistent policy to promote the parallel use of languages requires:

- that it be possible to use both the languages of the Nordic countries essential to society and English as languages of science
- that the presentation of scientific results in the languages of the Nordic countries essential to society be rewarded
- that instruction in scientific technical language, especially in written form, be given in both English and the languages of the Nordic countries essential to society
- that universities, colleges, and other scientific institutions can develop long-range strategies for the choice of language, the parallel use of languages, language instruction, and translation grants¹ within their fields."

¹ Read: support for translation efforts.

Nordic initiatives to this effect have been launched on two occasions. First, Nordplus Language provided funding for a Nordic network on parallel language use at universities. This culminated in five national reports, one for each of the nation states taking part, which made up the greater part of the book *Hvor parallelt* (How Parallel). The national reports are available on the Group's website under *Nordisk Sprogkoordination* (Nordic Language Coordination): <http://sprogkoordinationen.org/aktoerer/centrale-aktoerer/nordisk-gruppe-for-parallelsproglighed/publikasjoner/>. These very thorough reports made clear that English was advancing rapidly throughout the university landscape, but also that there were major differences between disciplines and between subjects within the same discipline, and between the different forms of academic activity (teaching, research and communication). It was also clear that at that time it was impossible to say anything precise about the use of English and the local languages (for more on this terminology, see section 2, below) across national borders that was actually based on fully comparable data.

In 2014, the Nordic Council of Ministers set up a new group, including some of members from the previous network, to conduct a fresh analysis. It was decided that the new group's first interim report should form the basis for the fully comparable documentation of the use of English and local languages in universities in the Nordic Region. Following consultation with the relevant ministries in the various countries, the first interim report was submitted to the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2016. It is available in Danish at: <http://sprogkoordinationen.org/media/1426/foerste-delrapport.pdf>. The main conclusions as to choice of indicators for the monitoring of parallel language use in the Nordic countries are found below in the Appendix to this report.

The new group had a clear remit:

"Remit of the Nordic Group on Parallel Language Use

In principle

The main objectives of the Nordic Group on Parallel Language Use are to track the parallel use of English and the Nordic languages in the internationalised universities in the Nordic Region, and to draw up recommendations for best bilingual and multilingual practice, based on documented experiences from selected institutions.

In particular

The Nordic Group on Parallel Language Use will work on problems associated with the disconnection between the trends of internationalisation on the one hand, and the idea of parallel language use on the other, a gap which is often particularly visible in the university context. Based

upon the available results of work on parallel language use at Nordic international universities in the period 2011–2013, the Group will work on recommendations and collate new knowledge of good practice for strategic language choices in the university sector. Each year, the Group will focus on one area of work in collaboration with a range of selected institutions and discuss practice with key staff at these institutions.”

While drafting its recommendations, the Group visited a number of universities in the five Nordic nation states and Greenland – as well as in the Netherlands and Luxembourg – to familiarise themselves with existing practice for the use of local languages and the primary international language, English. The Group’s work has been minuted and reports have been written about the visits. These are available at: <http://sprogkoordinationen.org/aktoerer/centrale-aktoerer/nordisk-gruppe-for-parallelsproglighed/>. The work of the earlier network is also documented at: <https://nordiskparallelsprogsnet.blogs.ku.dk/>. All of the relevant documentation is available from these two websites.

An early draft of this report, *More Parallel, Please!*, was presented at the Group’s closing conference in Oslo on 5 May 2017. The conference was co-hosted by the Language Council of Norway and generously supported by Anna Enemark, who was the Nordic Language Coordinator at the time. The closing conference is documented in detail on the Group’s website, as mentioned above. Francois Grin’s introductory lecture (in English), which places the work in the Nordic Region in an international context, is particularly noteworthy.

2. Terminology and key concepts

This report fulfils the Group's objective of providing recommendations for best bilingual and multilingual practice at the Nordic universities. It contains 11 detailed recommendations and presents comprehensive explanations of the reasoning behind each one. The report uses the following terminology:

- The term "Universities" here refers to *higher education institutions and research institutions, which are accredited to award the highest academic degrees*, variously called PhD, Dr.Phil, Dr.Filos or Fil.Dr degrees, and equivalent degrees in theology, law, technology and medicine: Dr.Jur, Dr.Med, etc.
- In our terminology, an *education* may consist of several *study programmes*, and we distinguish between the elements of an education at different levels. An education at BA level will therefore be one *study programme*, while elements of "the same" education at MA level will be another *study programme*.² A *study programme* is defined here as a completed part of an education, graduates of which have earned a title such as BA (or equivalent), MA (or equivalent) or PhD (or equivalent).
- An education consists of *sub-elements*, to which it may be relevant to refer in the following. The concept of a sub-element is neutral in terms of scope and/or duration.
- *International* refers to non-Nordic students or staff, i.e. people who would not normally have one of the Nordic languages as their first language. *Nordic* employees are expected to reach a high level of understanding of the local language within a short time, and to adapt their own Nordic language so that colleagues and students are able to understand them (see also Brink 2016). Nordic staff members and students who fail to reach this level of proficiency should be treated as all other international students and members of staff.

² The terminology used here corresponds to that of the Bologna Process. This means that *postgraduate education* – which in a Danish context often means Master's courses, which can be taken in Danish or English – *is not included at all*.

- *Local* refers to an employee or student who has grown up and mainly been educated in a Nordic country, and therefore has one of the Nordic languages as their *primary language of education*. This does not necessarily mean that their first language is a Nordic language. We are aware that the evidence suggests that people who live in the Nordic Region but do not have one of the Nordic languages as their first language do not find it as easy to understand the neighbouring Nordic languages (Delsing & Lundin Åkesson 2005:138f).
- *Exchange students* typically spend only a single semester or at most one academic year at a Nordic university. *Full-degree students*, as the term implies, are students who take whole degrees and therefore study at the Nordic university in question for at least the time it takes to complete the degree, i.e. a minimum of two years.
- *Parallel language use*, as mentioned above, means that two or more languages are used for the same purpose in a particular context or within a particular sector of society, in this case at universities in the Nordic Region. For most people, the use of English plus another language will probably spring to mind, but the concept is equally applicable to the use of Swedish and Finnish in Finland, or Danish and Greenlandic/Inuit in Greenland. As such, when English is added into the mix as part of the process of internationalisation of the universities, there are not two languages in play, but three. See also the Centre for Internationalisation and Parallel Language Use (CIP) on the University of Copenhagen website: http://cip.ku.dk/om_parallelsproglighed/
- Finally, *languages*: English is unquestionably the largest and most widely used *international language* in the Nordic Region. It is used in parallel with the *local* Nordic languages. However, not all of the Nordic languages belong to the same language family – for example, Sámi, Greenlandic/ Inuit and Finnish do not belong to the North-Germanic language family. Therefore, when referring to the languages that can be used alongside English, we refer to *the local language or local languages*. It is also legitimate to speculate whether it is farsighted (enough) to make English the only – or at least the main – international language in Nordic universities, especially in the light of Brexit and the USA's new isolationist policies. However, such considerations do not detract from the fact that English is currently used as an *academic lingua franca* throughout the Nordic Region (and in countless other places).

- As well as being a descriptive term, *parallel language use* should also be seen as a collective designation for conscious language policy initiatives that aim to ensure that all academic activity is not conducted in a single language (currently English). Whether English should or will continue to be the dominant language in this sense will not be discussed any further here, but it is a theme that will recur quite naturally in language policy debates in the years to come.

This terminology accords with that used in the Group's first report – a proposal on how to use a range of clearly defined indicators to monitor development in the use of English and the Nordic languages within the Nordic university sector (published (in Danish) on the website: <http://sprogkoordinationen.org/media/1426/foerste-delrapport.pdf>). As mentioned above, the indicators selected are reproduced in an Appendix at the end of this report.

3. Eleven recommendations for best parallel language practice in Nordic universities

1. *Every university should have a language policy* that incorporates thinking about internationalisation policy and relates to both national language policy frameworks and to the role of the university in its local community, however that is defined.³ A language policy is a publicly accessible document that sets out the overarching principles for the use of language for various purposes within a university. It should be the result of a wide-ranging debate conducted at all levels and involving all groups affected, so that the principles and consequences are generally accepted. *The language policy* should be adopted by and explicitly embedded in the university management, so that the management pays attention to it at all times. It should also be written in parallel languages, so that it is accessible in at least one local and one international language. Examples of best practice:
 - Háskóli Íslands (University of Iceland) Language Policy:
https://english.hi.is/university/university_of_iceland_language_policy
 - Language Policy of the University of Helsinki:
<http://blogs.helsinki.fi/centrumcampus/files/2015/04/kieliperiaatteet.pdf>
 - University of Copenhagen Language Strategy:
<http://cip.ku.dk/sprogstrategisk-satsning/>

³ For readers familiar with Danish or Swedish, we refer to: introduction to *Hvor parallelt*:
<http://sprogkoordinationen.org/media/1434/gregersen-og-josephson-svenskversion.pdf>

2. In order to implement the language policy, we recommend that every university sets up a *language policy committee*, the first task of which will be to monitor how the policy is practiced (and to adjudicate disputes); and the second will be constantly to revise the policy so that this is not set in stone, but a living, flexible, constantly evolving document. The language policy committee should also have a clear and fixed relationship to the support functions established as part of the university's language policy – e.g. language centres – so that it is able to evaluate existing support mechanisms and to initiate new ones.
3. In order to implement the language-policy support functions, we recommend that *language centres* be set up (or existing ones enhanced) and tasked with:
 - the development of research-based courses for international staff – primarily in the local language, but also in other languages as necessary;
 - the development of research-based courses for students in the languages they need;
 - quality assurance of the courses developed, either by the centres running them or by reaching agreement with other parts of the university (language faculties) or a qualified language school to do so;
 - offering translation and language-revision services to research and administrative staff and lecturers;
 - taking responsibility for the ongoing work of building up digital resources for language support.
4. We recommend that the universities establish *courses for international research and teaching staff*⁴ in the following fields:
 - Parallel language teaching practice (see also Recommendation 6).
 - Colloquial language in speech and writing, as used in everyday conversations with students and colleagues, the administrative language used in internal university communications with staff, and the administrative language used by national agencies (e.g. tax, health and traffic authorities) when communicating with the citizens of the country concerned.

⁴ Regarding international staff in university administration, see Recommendation 8 below.

- Subject-specific technical language (both shared academic language and specific terminology) in order to understand local students' questions, with a view towards being able to use the local language to understand textbooks and for the purposes of teaching, supervision conducting exams and administration. The abovementioned courses and tasks should – at least in the first instance – be incorporated into the contractual duties of newly recruited staff. Standard employment contracts should refer to these expectations. The overarching objective should be that all international staff possess basic parallel language skills, i.e. are able to read academic texts, teach, supervise, conduct exams and fully participate in administrative duties in both the local language(s) and English (or any other relevant international language). Full parallel language use is achieved when international employees are able to write both research texts and outreach texts in the local language.
5. We recommend that the development of language *courses for students* should be preceded by *needs analyses*, based on both immediate needs relating to course teaching and long-term needs in relation to subsequent career functions:
- *International exchange students* need at least a rudimentary knowledge of the local language community, the most common expressions in colloquial speech and the ability to read simple messages.
 - *International full-degree students* require advanced training in understanding the local spoken language(s), reading simple texts and administrative messages and, in the longer run, reading academic texts in the local language(s).
 - *Local students* not only need to be able to understand, read and write academic literature in the local language(s) and in English, but depending on their chosen disciplines and future plans, they may also need to achieve a degree of proficiency in a number of other languages.
6. We recommend that courses for (all) teaching and research staff be based on *needs analyses* that take into account each individual's long-term skills-development needs. What do they need to learn right now and what may wait until later but needs to be incorporated into the skills-development process? The overarching objective should be that all researchers and lecturers possess basic parallel language skills, i.e. the ability to read academic texts, teach, supervise, conduct exams and participate fully in administrative duties in both the local

language(s) and English (or other relevant international language(s)). Full parallel language use has been achieved when the international employee is able to write, conduct research and communicate texts in both the local language and an international language.

7. We recommend that *the teaching language* of a university should be based on the following principles:
 - Parallel language use is relevant to all forms of teaching, but not necessarily in the same way, nor is it necessarily always equally important. At basic educational levels, the local language will be dominant, but the option should also be available to read material in English. Similarly, specific course elements can be conducted in English or another international language as early as the first semester. Conversely, if the whole study programme is in English or another international language, it should be possible for elements of the programme to be taught in the local language(s) in order to familiarise international students with the surrounding language community. Study programmes at Master's level, and particularly at PhD level, should be conducted in the language most appropriate to the profession(s) in which graduates tend to find work, and/or the preferred language of the best lecturers.
 - Teaching should be based on the principles underlying the *international classroom* (for further details of this concept as used at the University of Maastricht, see:
http://www.vsnu.nl/files/documenten/Domeinen/Onderwijs/Onderwijsfestival/International%20Classroom%20-%20Rosenbach_Swaan%20-%20UM.pdf. To do this requires a continuous, determined, explicit and deliberate effort to take on board all of the students' combined language resources and experiences in the teaching process, and use them to illustrate topics from as many perspectives and in as many different ways as possible.
 - Both lecturers and students must master the teaching language – otherwise the quality of teaching and students' learning will suffer. However, language skills are not static: both lecturers and students can and should be offered supporting courses so that they master the teaching language to an adequate level before classes start – or at the latest, early on in the learning process.

- The reading material may well be in languages other than the teaching language, but universities should make sure that students are able to read and fully comprehend the course literature.
 - The teaching language may vary from one sub-element to another within the same study programme, but only where learning a particular subject in a particular language makes sense – or where the best lecturer for the module concerned only masters that language (see above regarding skills enhancement for lecturers).
 - The teaching language during a specific element may also vary if the lecturer needs to change it to demonstrate a point, or if the students have different language backgrounds. However, in both cases it should be clear from the start that students who have not mastered the language in question will be offered support. Before a course starts, students must always be fully informed of the languages used and the requirements that this places on them.
 - The parallel language skills students acquire during (elements of) a study programme should be made explicit, and credits awarded for them. Degree certificates and grades should specify the defined skills and competencies acquired in one or more languages during the course.
8. The language policy should include a specific section on *the language of the university administration*. The administration provides support and services for the staff and management of universities. The more international employees a university has, the greater the pressure to produce all administrative decisions and procedures in at least two languages. Nordic legislation includes expectations (and in the case of Sweden, explicit directives) that all decisions should be available in the local language. Conversely, staff must be confident that everyone can understand the regulations that affect their work. But producing all administrative decisions and regulations in two or more languages is a huge undertaking. This is just one reason why it is important that international employees should learn to read and understand administrative communications in the local language as soon as possible. Decisions on which types of communication should be in one or more languages can be based on the target audience, and whether intermediaries would be able to convey the meaning to individuals who do not understand the language. Computer generated summaries are another good option. Many university employees already use Computer Aided

Translation (CAT) systems. An obvious starting point is to develop continuously updated term lists consisting of approved translation equivalents in the relevant languages. Regarding best practice in this area, see the University of Copenhagen's action plan for language in administration (in Danish) at: http://cip.ku.dk/om_parallelsproglighed/sagt_og_skrevet/Rapport_om_brug_af_engelsk_som_administrativt_sprog.pdf and Helsinki University's terminology bank (in several languages): <http://tieteentermipankki.fi/wiki/Termipankki:Etusivu>.

9. Language policies should also cover *the choice of publication language for research results*. This currently varies greatly according to main disciplines, and even between subjects within them. Ultimately, the researcher concerned makes the decision. The language policy committee is responsible for documenting the choices made in the various parts of the university. This will provide an opportunity for the critical monitoring of trends, so that the language committee can react if one discipline or unit shuts itself off from the international research community by publishing exclusively or mainly in one local language or in local journals. It is equally important for the committee to issue warnings to academic circles that publish exclusively or mainly in English that they are neglecting the local academic language, terminology and text patterns. The Group also recommends that language policies should include instructions for compulsory written summaries of theses and dissertations in both the local and an international language.
10. The language policy should contain a special section on the university's *dissemination of knowledge, outreach and external communication*. Research is both international and local. While there is a demand for research results to be communicated to a global public, there is also a great need for universities to solve problems that are considered important in their own countries. The latter requires communications that are directed specifically at the local population. Good communication is always predicated on clear, targeted use of language, which is not necessarily something researchers are good at. For that reason, universities hire or enter into partnerships with communications service professionals. In the future, universities should communicate the results of their research to everybody for whom it may have consequences. However, the costs associated with providing the information in an efficient manner will greatly limit what is realistic.

11. We recommend that university language policies should also include plans for *building up digitally accessible language resources*. Specific requirements would include multilingual term banks for different academic disciplines; quality-assured translation programmes with clear instructions for use (e.g. with a view to subsequent manual correction); programmes for linguistic analysis; and digital academic term banks. These resources should be kept up to date, include user instructions and be made available to as many students and staff as possible. Other resources might include locally or internationally prepared utilities for developing language skills or for writing assignments, collections of exemplary lectures and/or exam papers.

4. Reasoning and background to the recommendations

4.1 Introduction: globalisation, internationalisation and the need for language policies

It seems to be generally agreed that e.g. contemporary phenomena like satellite news channels mean that we live in a globalised society. To take just one English-language example, CNN is available all over the world. Raw materials, processed goods and services also move at great speed across borders – e.g. kumquats are for sale far away from where they are grown.

This development affects universities differently from other sectors of society, as research has always been international – at least in principle. Even allowing for important differences between the humanities and social sciences on one hand, and the natural sciences on the other, knowledge has always been exchanged across borders. However, the conditions under which research and higher education operate have altered significantly in the last decade. Firstly, the number of international employees and students has risen noticeably. In the universities that the Group visited, it was not unusual to find courses on which a majority of the students were from outside the Nordic Region. Secondly, multilingualism in the Nordic Region of today means that many of the local students have an immigrant or minority language as their first language rather than the language of the majority. Thirdly, higher education – not just university education, although that is the focus of this report – has been gradually transformed into a market in which lecturers, researchers and students can relocate to wherever they believe is best for them. Annual international rankings quantify the quality of universities, all the way down to the individual disciplines. Students and researchers are expected to know this and strive for the best-possible jobs after graduation. The degree of internationalisation of a given university is taken into account in these quality rankings.

However, it is a precondition for the ability of students, researchers and lecturers to move freely between different universities that they are able to understand and speak the teaching language. In the Nordic Region, this has been interpreted as meaning that, given the local population's relatively advanced command of the international language (English), the only realistic way forward would be to make English the teaching language for the courses and programmes that are intended to attract international students. Thus, in the Nordic Region, internationalisation has been very much synonymous with *Anglicisation*. This kind of conscious or unconscious language policy invariably leads to domain loss, meaning that teaching and research in the higher education domain are conducted in a language other than the local one – in this case, English. Parallel language use is an attempt to do things differently.⁵

The situation in the Nordic Region is not unique – in fact, it is replicated in most European countries. However, particular conditions apply in each country, and often in each university. The various Nordic countries have different starting points when it comes to the use of English as a teaching language in their universities. Finland has been a bilingual speech community all through its history and made this legally binding in 1919, when Finnish and Swedish were accorded equal status as national languages of the independent republic. This means that in Finland, English is now used as a *third* supplementary language in higher education. Greenland already has at least two languages (Greenlandic/Inuit and Danish). Reconfiguration of the teaching languages for individual subjects, disciplines, or for the university as a whole would require an in-depth analysis of opportunities and problems.⁶

⁵ For readers familiar with Nordic languages we may refer to the Group's special issue of the Nordic journal *Nordand* on this theme at: http://sprogkoordinationen.org/media/1440/nordand-book-2_2012_2610.pdf

⁶ To give a non-Nordic example: In Luxembourg, most people speak Luxembourgish, which has been recognised as a separate language since 1984 and has its own orthography. It is as closely related to German as Danish is to Swedish. However, German and French are both used in the education system, although French has greater prestige (so mathematics is taught in French in primary schools). As a result, the university in Luxembourg teaches in all three official languages, as well as in English. However, a considerable minority of the population in Luxembourg has Portuguese as their first or home language. Children from this minority therefore need to master four languages. This example illustrates that linguistic complexity is not unknown in Europe. Indeed, in all of the Nordic countries there are students whose first language is an immigrant language (e.g. Turkish) or one of the main European languages, but who are not regarded as international students because they went to Danish, Norwegian or Swedish speaking schools and now attend a university where they must learn English as a teaching language.

Nonetheless, the new language situation in the Nordic Region means in effect that the universities are more multilingual than ever – it is not just the local languages and English which are heard in the corridors and canteens.

The Nordic universities are regarded as key national institutions. To varying degrees, they have been given the task of maintaining the local technical language and developing and revising local terminology.⁷ Many people outside universities therefore regard them as monolingual – or at most, sporadically bilingual. In fact, relatively little teaching at Nordic universities does not incorporate languages other than the local one: texts are read in other languages, media in other languages are seen or heard online, and lecturers and guest lecturers sometimes speak a different language. *The concept of parallel language use is therefore used to make people aware that multiple languages are always used at the universities.*

4.2 Re: Recommendation (1) Every university should have a language policy

Every university should have a language policy that incorporates thinking about internationalisation policy and relates to both national language policy frameworks and to the role of the university in its local community, however that is defined.⁸

A language policy is a publicly accessible document that sets out the overarching principles for the use of language for various purposes within a university. It should be the result of a wide-ranging debate conducted at all levels and involving all groups affected, so that the principles and consequences are generally accepted.

The language policy should be adopted by and explicitly embedded in the university management, so that the management pays attention to it at all times. It should also

⁷ For readers of Norwegian we refer to the important Norwegian white paper on the humanities, March 2017 <https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/e51d8864c32248598e381e84db1032a3/no/pdfs/stm201620170025000dddpdfs.pdf>, special section 6.4 "Norsk som vitenskapsspråk" (Norwegian as a Scientific Language p.63–65).

⁸ For readers familiar with Danish or Swedish, we refer to: introduction to *Hvor parallelt*: <http://sprogkoordinationen.org/media/1434/gregersen-og-josephson-svenskversion.pdf>

be written in parallel languages, so that it is accessible in at least one local and one international language.

Examples of best practice:

- Háskóli Íslands (University of Iceland) Language Policy:
https://english.hi.is/university/university_of_iceland_language_policy
- Language Policy of the University of Helsinki:
<http://blogs.helsinki.fi/centrumcampus/files/2015/04/kieliperiaatteet.pdf>
- University of Copenhagen Language Strategy:
<http://cip.ku.dk/sprogstrategisk-satsning/>

The Nordic universities need language policies. In this context, the concept of a language policy refers to a set of regulations governing the use of spoken or written language in the work of a university. Language policies are found at many levels: The EU has a language policy that regulates the educational opportunities that must be available to EU citizens and their children in the member states. The Council of Europe also has a language policy that sets out the requirements that must be fulfilled if a language is to be given the status of approved minority language, as well as the rights that follow from this status. The Nordic countries have a Language Convention:⁹ that includes provisions on translation and interpretation for Nordic citizens in the Nordic countries. Most of the Nordic countries also have legislation regulating language policies. In Finland, Finnish and Swedish were accorded equal legal status as national languages as early as 1919. Norway has long had legislation governing the relationship between the two written standards of Norwegian: *Bokmål* and *Nynorsk*. Legislation like this has, of course, consequences for universities' language policies. In Norway, for example, a parliamentary white paper from 2008, *Mål og mening*, sets out the role of universities in relation to the maintenance and development of Norwegian technical terminology. The white paper gave rise to actual legislation, in the form of *Universitets- og høyskoleloven* (§7, stk.1) (University and Further Education Law, section 7 (1)).¹⁰ This was recently expanded on in the parliamentary white paper of March 2017 on the humanities referred to above (note 7).

⁹ Cf: <http://www.norden.org/da/om-samarbejdet-1/nordiske-aftaler/aftaler/sprog/sprogkonventionen>

¹⁰ https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/2005-04-01-15#KAPITTEL_1-1

The legislative framework must therefore be taken into account when embarking on the process of drawing up a new language policy. However, there is still a great deal of room to manoeuvre in within this framework. The various universities in the Nordic countries work within a global, European and Nordic system, but they do not all do so in the same way, or with the same objectives. It is useful to think about the universities in each country as a “university system” made up of highly internationalised institutions with the ambition and capacity to compete globally, as well as institutions with a local or regional base and limited interest in internationalisation. Universities can also develop a specific regional identity or see themselves as having a particular profile, e.g. as the university of the capital city. They may have originally been set up to teach a particular discipline or had a regional purpose and may have different historical backgrounds or links with their surrounding community. They may celebrate certain traditions or take pride in rejecting others. This also means that language policy can vary considerably from one university to another, and that each university must develop its own language policy based on its own specific conditions.

The group highlights the following examples of best practice:

- Háskóli Íslands (University of Iceland) language policy:
https://english.hi.is/university/university_of_iceland_language_policy
- University of Helsinki language policy:
<http://blogs.helsinki.fi/centrumcampus/files/2015/04/kieliperiaatteet.pdf>
- University of Copenhagen Language Strategy:
<http://cip.ku.dk/sprogstrategisk-satsning/>

Language policies are elaborated on and implemented via action plans that serve as the basic operational document. An example of this is the University of Copenhagen’s report on the language of administration and its accompanying action plan: http://cip.ku.dk/om_parallelsproglighed/sagt_og_skrevet/Rapport_om_brug_af_engelsk_som_administrativt_sprog.pdf.

4.3 Re: Recommendation (2) Every university should have a language policy committee

In order to implement the language policy, we recommend that every university sets up a *language policy committee*, the first task of which will be to monitor how the policy is practiced (and to adjudicate disputes); and the second will be constantly to revise the policy so that this is not set in stone, but a living, flexible, constantly evolving document. The language policy committee should also have a clear and fixed relationship to the support functions established as part of the university's language policy – e.g. language centres – so that it is able to evaluate existing support mechanisms and to initiate new ones.

It should be noted, however, that all language policies run a very real risk of becoming just another online document with no impact on the practices of the university in question whatsoever. In the course of its work, the Group was informed of numerous examples to suggest just how real this danger is. In our opinion, it is essential that language policy should be seen as a continuous, proactive process. The process of drawing up the first generation of language policies has taught us two things: it is important to involve everybody who will be affected by it, and equally important that they become aware just what it entails. It is also important that this is done in a way that allows for regular revision when circumstances change or when experience dictates it. This is why the second lesson is so important: someone must be responsible for implementing the policy once it has been drawn up, and the policy must be firmly embedded in the university management to facilitate regular revision and follow-ups. Otherwise, there is a risk that the policy just becomes a dead document full of good intentions.

It is vital that the policy is not just drawn up by linguists, and that all disciplines and subjects are involved in the process. Linguists know how to divide the concept of language into a range of competencies, each with a particular area of application and subject to particular learning problems: speaking, reading, listening, and writing. What linguists cannot have prior knowledge of are the particular terminological needs, discursive traditions and text and communication patterns found in subjects other than the language sciences – which after all constitute a relatively small part of a university's total activity. A broadly-based language committee or language policy committee can make this the object of systematic study in order to identify the best solutions for the different subject areas.

However, when drawing up a language policy, there are narrow limits in terms of what you can determine in advance. First and foremost, a language policy must set *out the general principles to be used in particular cases* by those who are faced with a decision on which language to use for reading materials, teaching or (formal or informal) meetings. It is not the purpose of a language policy to remove decision-making power or responsibility from those concerned.

The two key questions in respect of a language policy are which languages and language skills can or should be used for which functions – and, more specifically, which support functions need to be established in order to make these intentions a reality. This means that it is crucial for the success of a language policy that the distance between those who decide on the overarching principles on the one hand, and those who organise and implement the various support functions on the other, is not too large.

4.4 Re: Recommendation (3) Every university should have a language centre

In order to implement the language-policy support functions, we recommend that language centres be set up (or existing ones enhanced) and tasked with:

- the development of research-based courses for international staff – primarily in the local language, but also in other languages as necessary;
- the development of research-based courses for students in the languages they need;
- quality assurance of the courses developed, either by the centres running them or by reaching agreement with other parts of the university (language faculties) or a qualified language school to do so;
- offering translation and language-revision services to research and administrative staff and lecturers;
- taking responsibility for the ongoing work of building up digital resources for language support.

Several of the universities visited by the Parallel Language Group, in the Nordic Region and beyond, have set up language centres that provide the support functions necessary for the implementation of their language policy. In fact, in many cases, these centres were an inevitable response to pressing needs, even before the university in question had drawn up a coherent language policy. In some cases, writing centres were established to improve students' comprehension and, in particular, command of the academic genres. Several universities also had established pedagogy centres. Parallel language use is so relevant to both types of centre that it is worth considering whether all three of these activities should be integrated rather than run separately.

The University of Copenhagen, where the Centre for Internationalisation and Parallel Language Use was set up in 2008, and the University of Luxembourg, where a language centre was set up in 2003, both found it crucial to build on needs analyses before courses were organised – or, more precisely, tailor-made – for specific target groups.

The most appropriate funding model for centres is a combination of a basic grant that provides a certain guarantee that the requisite research and development work and inter-disciplinary support will be possible, and an internal market economy, based on payment from departments and faculties for courses tailor-made to meet particular needs. It is absolutely vital for quality-assurance purposes that the language centre has a core of full-time researchers and lecturers with permanent contracts, who are not just in a position to keep up with rapidly developing international research in their field but are able themselves to contribute to it. Hence, the need for basic grants.

The range of courses run by language centres is often thought of as falling into two categories: English courses for lecturers and students; and courses in the local Nordic language for international staff. In practice, analyses of the language centres reveal that they meet a range of needs:

- A need for courses in the local Nordic language for various types of local students, especially courses in academic writing. It is advantageous for students to be able to write in specialist academic genres in their first language before learning to write in a language they have not yet mastered quite as well (although it should be noted that rhetorical patterns and traditions in academic language vary between language communities).

- A need to read in languages other than the one that is currently the most popular, i.e. English. Lecturers should also learn about how to teach in a language other than their first one, and about how to teach students with a first language other than the teaching one. In Recommendation 4, we refer to this as “parallel language teaching practice”. This requires a different method and another language awareness than the familiar situation in which the lecturer and the students all share the same first language.

To date, language centres have primarily been set up to meet the needs of researchers, lecturers and students. However, administrative staff also have a range of language needs. They need to be able to conduct polite conversations with international employees about their appointments and work duties, and to use clear, idiomatic international language (usually English) to inform them of new initiatives, new opportunities for research grants and new courses. Regarding the language needs of administrative staff, see the University of Copenhagen’s language policy at: http://cip.ku.dk/om_parallelsproglighed/sagt_og_skrevet/nordiske_rapporter/.

In this context, it is worth noting that several of the language centres conduct regular reviews of which courses it is worth commissioning from one of the university’s language faculties or from one of the many private companies operating in this field, and which ones they need to develop, deliver and revise themselves in order to find a form that requires less preparation than during the original planning phase.

Language centres can also play a role in the basic recruitment system by highlighting the most important language shortcomings in new students’ qualifications. These analyses can be used as a basis for developing language teaching throughout the educational system.

The University of Helsinki has had great success with its language policy “rapid response team”, which provides assistance in the implementation of language policy at local level. This shows that there is a need for the experts in the language centres to reach out, rather than waiting for students and lecturers to approach the centres for help and support.

4.5 Re: Recommendation (4) Staff recruited abroad should be offered courses in the teaching language, common speech and language for special purposes

We recommend that the universities establish *courses for international research and teaching staff*¹¹ in the following fields:

- Parallel language teaching practice (see also Recommendation 6).
- Colloquial language in speech and writing, as used in everyday conversations with students and colleagues, the administrative language used in internal university communications with staff, and the administrative language used by national agencies (e.g. tax, health and traffic authorities) when communicating with the citizens of the country concerned.
- Subject-specific technical language (both shared academic language and specific terminology) in order to understand local students' questions, with a view towards being able to use the local language to understand textbooks and for the purposes of teaching, supervision conducting exams and administration.
- The abovementioned courses and tasks should – at least in the first instance – be incorporated into the contractual duties of newly recruited staff. Standard employment contracts should refer to these expectations.
- The overarching objective should be that all international staff possess basic parallel language skills, i.e. are able to read academic texts, teach, supervise, conduct exams and fully participate in administrative duties in both the local language(s) and English (or other relevant international language).
- Full parallel language use is achieved when international employees are able to write research texts and outreach texts in the local language.

One particularly interesting group in the internationalisation process is the steadily increasing number of international employees in Nordic universities. The five national reports in the inter-Nordic comparison *Hvor parallelt* all emphasise how difficult it is to pinpoint the number of international employees at universities in the Nordic countries. However, the only likely and reasonable conclusion is that the numbers are rising, but that they vary greatly between universities and main disciplines. This formed part of the background for the Parallel Language Group's proposal for a special indicator to track this trend and provide comparable figures for the entire Nordic Region, cf. the Appendix below.

¹¹ Regarding international staff in university administration, see Recommendation 8 below.

Most international employees are in short-term positions, e.g. as PhD students, or are on a *tenure track*—in other words, they must demonstrate the value of their research in order to secure a degree or a permanent position. In these situations, it is their research that comes first, and since it is mainly conducted and conveyed in an international language (usually English), and in collaboration with local colleagues who also work (primarily) in that language, there is little incentive to learn the local language. Learning a second (or third, or fourth) language requires a major investment of time and attention. Quite simply, this means that it will only happen if management makes it a priority and if contracts stipulate that international staff must achieve a certain level of proficiency in the local Nordic language. The study time required for this must, of course, be factored in as a part of the employees' total of working hours. This is already the case in a number of institutions, including the University of Helsinki. The detailed provisions of its language policy can be considered best practice in this area: <http://blogs.helsinki.fi/centrumcampus/files/2015/04/kieliperiaatteet.pdf>.

It is also worth considering whether learning the local language is necessary in all circumstances, and whether all language functions need to be learned. One reason why it is necessary to learn the local Nordic language is that researchers and lecturers have lives outside of the university – private lives in a society with a dominant Nordic language. Inability to speak the dominant language will limit the capacity to function properly as a citizen. The private sphere is also characterised by many different forms of interaction, e.g. the bus passenger who does not understand the driver's instructions in a situation of acute emergency may be in mortal danger. Researchers who do not speak the local language will depend on assistance either from the public sector or from the university in order to understand the regulations surrounding essential services, e.g. health insurance, tax and housing. Providing this assistance will place quite a heavy burden on the universities. The level of assistance needed usually varies, but the priority must clearly be to offer internationals basic reading skills, especially as regards public-sector communications (which even local people do not always understand!) and basic listening skills, i.e. the basic receptive language skills in general.

On arrival in the Nordic countries, international staff often do not know whether they intend to remain. The universities expect to retain the best of them, but this is by no means a foregone conclusion. If international employees are to become full academic citizens, they gradually need to learn not just enough to get by in the local language outside the university, but also the language skills necessary within the university, i.e. for research, teaching and administration. This is the basis of the detailed

recommendation that individual skills-development plans be drawn up tailored to the language background and ability to learn languages of each employee. This would, in the long term, make it possible for the individual concerned to function at the same level as local people, i.e. in two languages.

Again, it is the risks and costs associated with not doing so that should lead universities to commit themselves to this expenditure. If PhD students or young researchers in recruitment positions are to have a real chance of becoming an asset for their Nordic universities, they must also have the opportunity to participate in their communities – both the academic community (in terms of teaching, exams and administration) and the non-academic community (e.g. conversations with their child’s caretakers and participation in parent/teacher consultations). Universities risk wasting the large sums that have been invested and will be invested in these individuals if they fail also to invest the time and resources needed to ensure that they are able to make real choices about whether to stay on at their institutions.

4.6 Re: Recommendation (5) Various categories of students should be offered language courses, following needs analyses

We recommend that the development of language *courses for students* should be preceded by *needs analyses*, based on both immediate needs relating to course teaching and long-term needs in relation to subsequent career functions:

- *International exchange students* need at least a rudimentary knowledge of the local language community, the most common expressions in colloquial speech and the ability to read simple messages.
- *International full-degree students* require advanced training in understanding the local spoken language(s), reading simple texts and administrative messages and, in the longer term, reading academic texts in the local language(s).
- *Local students* not only need to be able to understand, read and write academic literature in the local language(s) and in English, but depending on their chosen disciplines and future plans, they may also need to achieve a degree of proficiency in a number of other languages.

Ideally, sufficient funding would be available to draw up individual skills-development plans for every student at all of the Nordic universities. Unfortunately, we do not live in

an ideal world. The provision of support for students must therefore be planned on the basis of a classification of them as either *local* or *international* students. The latter category may be further subdivided into *exchange* and *full-degree* students.

In general, we should not presume that international students have any knowledge of the local Nordic languages. If they are required to learn them, the universities must offer relevant courses. Possible exceptions are guest students and exchange students from other Nordic countries. However, it cannot be assumed that all Nordic students will automatically understand the local spoken language – that will depend on their own language background and on the Nordic language community to which they belong. In certain cases, Nordic students will have a language profile that resembles any other international student, but in many other cases it will be possible to treat them like locals.

Local students are generally expected to be able to read academic texts in other languages to the level required by their courses but not to speak or write in academic genres in languages other than the local one. Exchange students rarely spend more than a semester in a Nordic country, so they have no great incentive to achieve advanced proficiency in the local language. Full-degree students are in a particular Nordic country for much longer, and as such they may be equated with, for example, PhD students. In both cases, a choice must be made about whether the objective of the language policy should be to equip them to function as citizens of the country, or whether that is the responsibility of the individual.

In all cases, the Parallel Language Group recommends that a *needs analysis* be carried out before setting up courses for students. Like other research tools, needs analyses may vary widely, from simple multiple-choice questionnaires (e.g. listing languages or specific skills – to read, write, listen and speak), to detailed teaching analyses designed to reveal the language skills needed to achieve full mastery of the material concerned. For example, many university lecturers would be surprised to discover the level of qualifications possessed by their students in reading and understanding texts in English. There is a very large and unmet need for courses in genre-specific academic reading in English. The potential for improving the education of each individual student by making sure that they are all able to read and understand the material they are expected to study should be obvious.

Glenn Ole Hellekjær has conducted analyses of the level of English-language proficiency students are expected to have on leaving university, compared to the level needed to learn what is listed in their syllabus (e.g. Hellekjær & Hellekjær, 2015). This

leads on to the question of which elements of a study programme currently not taught in English (or another international language) might benefit from being taught in English in the future. The Group's recommendations on teaching languages are presented in *Hvor parallelt*. However, in the course of the Group's many visits – in particular, during the visit to Bergen – alternative criteria for organising course elements in languages other than Norwegian emerged: Several programmes are interested in offering exchange students places for a single semester, and/or offering their own students a trip abroad within a particular *window of internationalization* to make sure they acquire the skills needed during their stay abroad. In both cases, the evidence suggests that management should carefully analyse which elements of a study programme are best suited for English Medium Instruction (or for instruction in another international language) – either because of career prospects or because of the lecturers available. In addition, there may be progression considerations and other study-planning issues related to the reception of exchange students (e.g. whether exchange students specifically seek out this particular course at this particular educational institution) which will influence the final decision. Preferably, these factors should all point in the same direction.

In other words, it is not easy to identify one single factor as *the* crucial one when it comes to replacing the local teaching language with an international one. However, if there is such a factor, it would have to be the desire to ensure that graduates have a better career foundation. John Airey in particular advocates detailed analyses of how sub-elements relate to overall requirements and subsequent careers before deciding on the teaching language (Airey 2011).

Exchange students may to some extent be categorised as short-term visiting students, and as such their needs are similar to those of others who are only temporarily part of the university system. Specifically, they need to be able to understand enough of the local written and spoken Nordic language to get by on their own (and not be too much of a burden on support services), and not to be completely *lost* outside familiar international student circles.

For full-degree students the position is completely different. They may well participate in teaching designed for international students, and that may lead us to presume that enough is being done for them, but the Group's analyses and post-visit reports suggest that it is not quite that simple. Firstly, some courses have simply substituted teaching language, not changed the content. In such cases, examples, frameworks for interpretation and points of reference refer exclusively to the local

Nordic environment and/or Nordic society at large. This makes it difficult for international students to derive the full benefit of the course, irrespective of whether they understand everything that is said. Secondly, even if a course is devised from an international perspective, the frameworks for the teaching and the composition of study teams may leave international students isolated from the majority of local students on the course. In fact, you have to change the pedagogic approach in order to fully integrate students, irrespective of country of origin or language background. Thirdly, examples have been identified of exams in English that offer the option of switching to the local language (Nissen, 2015). If an examiner permits the use of two or three languages because he or she understands them, students who speak languages with which the lecturer is not (sufficiently) familiar are unfairly excluded.

The Group recommends that internationalisation should involve considering every aspect of the students' learning outcomes. The teaching language is just one factor. As stated in the report following our visit to Maastricht, some Dutch universities and in particular Maastricht University, under the heading "*the international classroom*", offer a range of ideas on how to tackle internationalisation in higher education. See the explanation for Recommendation 6 below for further information.

4.7 Re: Recommendation (6) Lecturers and researchers should be offered language courses, following needs analyses

We recommend that courses for (all) teaching and research staff be based on *needs analyses* that take into account each individual's long-term skills-development needs:

- What do they need to learn right now and what may wait until later but needs to be incorporated into the skills-development process?
- The overarching objective should be that all researchers and lecturers possess basic parallel language skills, i.e. the ability to read academic texts, teach, supervise, conduct exams and participate fully in administrative duties in both the local language(s) and English (or other relevant international language(s)).
- Full parallel language use has been achieved when the international employee is able to write, conduct research and communicate texts in both the local language and an international language.

In all of the Nordic countries, there is a tradition of managers meeting employees to discuss the direction of the employee's career. The Group recommends that these meetings should also take into account the development of the individual's language skills. It is extremely naïve to believe that researchers and lecturers who are appointed to permanent positions do not need to improve their language skills or that this may be left to market forces.

Researchers may have discovered the hard way that their language skills are in some particular measure inadequate. The most obvious challenge consists of writing research articles – a skill that needs to be continuously updated throughout a research career, especially due to the increasing demands placed on linguistic and rhetorical sophistication. It may be equally important for an employee to develop his or her teaching skills in English (or another language that is not the employee's first). Lecturers' language competencies should also encompass the ability to assess their students' language skills and where possible integrate them into the planning of the courses. This means both to take account of their limitations when teaching in the local language, including students whose first language may not be the local one and to exploit them where they may enrich the learning process. This is one reason why internationalisation offers a new perspective on local multilingualism and prompts awareness that it is ubiquitous. Add to this that large groups of students who are unfamiliar with an academic environment anyway will place heavy demands on the lecturer to lead them gradually towards more advanced uses of academic language. Parallel language use means that the use of language may change depending on the learning activity (one language for lectures, another for Power Point displays; one language for lectures, another for group work; one language for group work, another for working in pairs and in classwork, and so on). This approach closely resembles the language practice referred to in the Netherlands as "the international classroom".

In essence, the international classroom is about ensuring that teaching takes into account the total language competencies of a given group of students, and the experiences on which they are based (see below under Recommendation 7). In its current form, the recommendation may well place demands on universities to provide courses and coaching and act as a sounding board, but the heaviest demands are actually on the employee, who has to come up with the diagnosis on which any conversation about support measures is based.

4.8 Re: Recommendation (7) Universities should choose their teaching languages based on the principles of parallel language use and the “international classroom”

We recommend that *the teaching language* of a university should be based on the following principles:

- Parallel language use is relevant to all forms of teaching, but not necessarily in the same way, nor is it necessarily always equally important. On basic educational levels, the local language will be dominant, but the option should also be available to read material in English. Similarly, specific course elements can be conducted in English or another international language as early as the first semester. Conversely, if the whole study programme is in English or another international language, it should be possible for elements of the programme to be taught in the local language(s) in order to familiarise international students with the surrounding language community. Study programmes at Master’s level, and particularly at PhD level, should be conducted in the language most appropriate to the profession(s) in which graduates tend to find work, and/or the preferred language of the best lecturers.
- Teaching should be based on the principles underlying the *international classroom* (for further details of this concept as used at the University of Maastricht, see: http://www.vsnu.nl/files/documenten/Domeinen/Onderwijs/Onderwijsfestival/International%20Classroom%20-%20Rosenbach_Swaan%20-%20UM.pdf). To do this requires a continuous, determined, explicit and deliberate effort to take on board all of the students’ combined language resources and experiences in the teaching process, and use them to illustrate topics from as many perspectives and in as many different ways as possible.
- Both lecturers and students must master the teaching language – otherwise the quality of teaching and students’ learning will suffer. However, language skills are not static: both lecturers and students can and should be offered supporting courses so that they master the teaching language to an adequate level before classes start – or at the latest, early on in the learning process.
- The reading material may well be in languages other than the teaching language, but universities should make sure that students are able to read and fully comprehend the course literature.
- The teaching language may vary from one sub-element to another within the same study programme, but only where learning a particular subject in a particular language makes sense – or where the best lecturer for the module concerned only masters that language (see above regarding skills enhancement for lecturers).
- The teaching language during a specific element may also vary if the lecturer needs to change it to demonstrate a point, or if the students have different language backgrounds. However, in both cases it should be clear from the start that students who have not mastered the language in question will be offered support. Before a course starts, students must always be fully informed of the languages used and the requirements that this places on them.

- The parallel language skills students acquire during (elements of) a study programme should be made explicit, and credits awarded for them. Degree certificates and grades should specify the defined skills and competencies acquired in one or more languages during the course.

In *Hvor parallelt* the Parallel Language Group set out its research-based recommendations on the choice of teaching language and a series of other recommendations relating to teaching qualifications and students' language qualifications (see <http://sprogkoordinationen.org/media/1433/english-as-a-medium-of-instruction-summary-of-recommendations.pdf> , much more detailed in Danish or Swedish: <http://sprogkoordinationen.org/media/1432/engelsk-som-undervisningsprog-baggrund-og-rekommendationer-med-svensk-kortversion.pdf>). Recommendation 7 therefore refers solely to the universities' institutional responsibilities for setting the overarching guidelines for the use of different languages at the institution. The recommendation is based on the Bologna Process, in which first-level study programmes last three years and lead to a degree at Bachelor level, followed by a two-year study programme leading to a degree at the Master's level. Post-graduate advanced study for a doctorate may either be built in along with the Master's in a four-plus-four model or be a separate continuation (following the award of a Master's degree) lasting three or four years.

In general, the Bachelor level is seen as an extension of the secondary school system, and as such generally uses the local language, i.e. the first language of the majority of the local students. At this juncture it must be underlined once and for all that the local language is not necessarily the first or best language of *all* local students. All of the Nordic countries now have minorities whose members have not necessarily been brought up in the local majority language but speak it as a second – in some cases even a third – language. Students from this type of language background are entitled to support in precisely the same way as those whose first language is the local one, but their needs will of course be different. In the vast majority of cases, the language of school and secondary education for students from language minorities has been the local majority language.

There is already a strong tendency for certain Master's courses – at least in some places, e.g. natural sciences at the University of Copenhagen where in principle all courses use English as the medium of instruction – to use English as the teaching language. This makes it easier for universities to attract students from all over the

(English-as-a-second-language speaking) world and applies to an even greater extent to PhD courses. But those are far fewer in number and far more specialised.

A model in which the Bachelor level is Nordic and the Master's level is part Nordic, part international (i.e. English) sends a strong message – viz. that English is the language of specialisation and career progression. However, this applies to a lesser extent in the humanities, social sciences, theology and law. A clear distinction has thus emerged between the main scientific disciplines at universities in relation to the use of international languages, and this is reflected in the patterns of publication.¹²

Using a particular medium of instruction may mean many things, not just one (see Recommendation 6 above). A great many international lecturers will use English at first – but will hopefully soon be able to understand questions in the local Nordic language or converse with local students who have difficulty explaining themselves in English and therefore switch to the local language. For others, group work in classrooms will be done in the language with which the students are most familiar. Depending on the makeup of the group and the proportion of international students, that language will often be a Nordic one. There will also probably be international employees who decide to write Power Point presentations in the local Nordic language, but still do the actual oral presentation in English. No doubt other hybrid forms will emerge that we have not yet envisaged. This is where the concept of parallel language use acts as a reminder that linguistic reality is in fact highly diverse.

In European language policy discussions, a great deal of attention is being paid to the concept of *receptive bilingualism* – in which two languages can be used simultaneously in such a way that the speakers understand (but do not speak) each other's language. In fact, this is the principle upon which the Nordic language community is based – or at least with respect to Norwegian, Swedish and Danish, as it does not work for Finnish and Icelandic (or Sámi, Faroese or Greenlandic/Inuit). At universities in Finland, Swedish/Finnish receptive bilingualism is, however, quite normal.

Another challenge is that many students currently at Nordic universities will probably work in more languages in the course of their careers than was the norm for their predecessors. In order to fully prepare e.g. doctors, dentists or vets for an international labour market, bilingualism is simply not enough. Careers such as these, which involve a high degree of interaction with the general public, require such a mixed palette of

¹² For readers familiar with Nordic languages: This is amply documented in the country reports in *Hvor parallel*.

language skills that it would be virtually impossible to fully prepare students for it as part of their actual education, unless efforts are made to expand their awareness of languages and increase their willingness to communicate across recognised language barriers. This is one of the most important reasons why *the international classroom* may act as a significant source of inspiration for improving the quality of education itself. Parallelism between languages is not limited to two at a time.

4.9 Re: Recommendation (8) University language policies should also cover the language used in the administration

The language policy should include a specific section on *the language of the university administration*:

- The administration provides support and services for the staff and management of universities. The more international employees a university has, the greater the pressure to produce all administrative decisions and procedures in at least two languages. Nordic legislation includes expectations (and in the case of Sweden, explicit directives) that all decisions should be available in the local language. Conversely, staff must be confident that everyone can understand the regulations that affect their work. But producing all administrative decisions and regulations in two or more languages is a huge undertaking. This is just one reason why it is important that international employees should learn to read and understand administrative communications in the local language as soon as possible.
- Decisions on which types of communication should be in one or more languages can be based on the target audience, and whether intermediaries would be able to convey the meaning to individuals who do not understand the language. Computer generated summaries are another good option. Many university employees already use Computer Aided Translation (CAT) systems. An obvious starting point is to develop continuously updated term lists consisting of approved translation equivalents in the relevant languages. Regarding best practice in this area, see the University of Copenhagen's action plan for language in administration (in Danish) at: http://cip.ku.dk/om_parallelsprogghed/sagt_og_skrevet/Rapport_om_brug_af_engelsk_som_administrativt_sprog.pdf and Helsinki University's terminology bank (in several languages): <http://tieteentermipankki.fi/wiki/Termipankki:Etusivu>.

During our visits, the Group often found that internationalisation has placed pressure on administrative functions, but that this often has gone unrecognised. The large number of international appointments in itself puts pressure on internal administrative

communication. Unless a strong, mandatory introduction programme is organised to give employees the ability to more or less look after themselves, it will in the future be necessary to provide substantial university service and support on topics like tax, housing and health insurance. It would be unthinkable for universities to help local staff with such private matters. Beyond the initial phase, such matters should also be the responsibility of the individual international employee, assuming that the university has given them effective and far-sighted support at the start. An introduction package should convey all the necessary information, including details of relevant websites and public-service bodies that are ready to kick in as soon as the international employee has registered an address, got a personal id number or a social security code and opened a bank account. The Group recommends that the mandatory introduction package should also include any accompanying spouse and older children. However, only in exceptional circumstances should the university seek to find employment for an accompanying spouse (let alone older children).

The greatest pressure, however, arises from the presence of international employees within the university. The large and growing presence of employees who work in English creates an expectation that all internal written communication, including e-mails and news, whether sent to everyone or just to international staff, will be written in at least one international language (i.e. English) as well as the local one, and possibly only in the international language. It is impossible for the administrative staff of a university to cope with a doubling of their workload without a serious decrease of quality, unless they are given access to quality-assured translation systems with a long shelf life – if possible, in a form that “only” requires proofreading by a human afterwards.

The Group is convinced that a Nordic initiative will be needed as part of a transitional phase, before computer aided translation programs to and from English, Spanish, German and French are good enough for widespread use in the university sector. The point of the initiative must be to make official ministerial communications of relevance to universities, e.g. acts and ministerial orders, available in approved international versions and to develop genre-sensitive translation software that uses approved Nordic terms to deliver quality-assured translations of local Nordic communications.

The Group recommends drawing up a Nordic specification of requirements and a Nordic list of terms (based on existing ones), combining these two things, and inviting Nordic research and development institutions to tender for the work. A steering group

made up of practitioners from the various Nordic university administrations and selected “super-users” would then test and continuously improve the program. One particular problem worth mentioning is that it will be necessary, to a certain extent, to invent new terminology, since many of the governing bodies, educational practices and support functions in our university sector have no parallels in other European systems. For example, to the best of our knowledge there is no Anglo-American equivalent of the Danish concept of “studienævn”. It is translated into English as “study board”, but this does not fully capture the scope of the body’s functions let alone give any clue as to its connotations.

4.10 Re.: Recommendation (g) The universities should monitor and regularly reassess the choice of language for publications

Language policies should also cover the choice of publication language for research results:

- This currently varies greatly according to main disciplines, and even between subjects within them. Ultimately, the researcher concerned makes the decision. The language policy committee is responsible for documenting the choices made in the various parts of the university. This will provide an opportunity for the critical monitoring of trends, so that the language committee can react if one discipline or unit shuts itself off from the international research community by publishing exclusively or mainly in one local language or in local journals. It is equally important for the committee to issue warnings to academic circles that publish exclusively or mainly in English that they are neglecting the local academic language, terminology and text patterns.
- The Group also recommends that language policies should include instructions for compulsory written summaries of theses and dissertations in both the local and an international language.

In its earlier report, the Parallel Language Group documented how various languages are used in Nordic scientific publications (see the country reports in *Hvor parallelt*). In brief, we found that the English language has been accorded higher status over time and now completely dominates in technology, the natural sciences and health science research: up to 99% of all publications in these fields are in English. However, even within the field of STEM (Science, Technology and Medical) research, there is a great deal of variation. For example, English is not as dominant in physical geography as it is in computer science. The same type of variation is found within the humanities and

social sciences, albeit the proportion of publications in English is generally lower – between 35% and 85%. The choice of language depends upon which form of publication is dominant within the discipline. Where journal articles and conference presentations are dominant, the proportion of English-language contributions is much higher than where monographs and anthologies play a major role. Tradition, the nature of the research questions addressed, the target audience and wider participation in research-based discussions in these fields all dictate that more of the results are published in the local Nordic language or languages.

It is therefore neither possible nor appropriate to set a general limit for the quantity of research that should be published in a Nordic language, nor for that matter in English. We can only say that it should be possible to publish in different forms and different languages, depending upon the publication culture concerned. Similarly, it would have a detrimental effect on academic quality if a particular publication culture that has arisen in one particular discipline were to become the model for all fields – irrespective of whether the publication culture in the natural sciences or the humanities serves as such a general standard.

The main point of compiling statistics concerning the publication cultures in various research fields is to obtain an overview of the trends over time. If a specific field exclusively addresses a national audience, and therefore uses the local Nordic language, this can be just as reasonable as another field of research publishing exclusively in English. It does not always suggest that an intervention is required. However, both knowledge and communication pay a price when publications are exclusively international or local, and those responsible should ask themselves whether the price is too high.

It must also be noted that Nordic universities have a responsibility for the continued evolution of their national languages, so that they continue to serve as scientific languages in their countries: this is a question of democracy and knowledge dissemination. In Norway and Sweden, this responsibility is enshrined in statute or stipulated in regulations, ministerial orders or official recommendations. Up-to-date publication statistics will make it possible to determine whether the universities have taken this responsibility seriously.

4.11 Re: Recommendation (10) University language policies should also cover the language used in dissemination of knowledge, outreach and external communication activities

The language policy should contain a special section on the university's *dissemination of knowledge, outreach and external communication*:

- Research is both international and local. While there is a demand for research results to be communicated to a global public, there is also a great need for universities to solve problems that are considered important in their own countries. The latter requires communications that are directed specifically at the local population. Good communication is always predicated on clear, targeted use of language, which is not necessarily something researchers are good at. For that reason, universities hire or enter into partnerships with communications service professionals. In the future, universities should communicate the results of their research to everybody for whom it may have consequences. However, the costs associated with providing the information in an efficient manner will greatly limit what is realistic.

For obvious reasons, external communication, knowledge dissemination and outreach are obligations which Nordic universities must take very seriously. As tax funded institutions, operating in an increasingly international market for both research and teaching – a market that in itself gives rise to greater mobility and linguistic diversity – there is an acute danger of universities being perceived as alien, perhaps even frightening, by the ordinary taxpayers who fund them. The danger is that the model on which university education and the Nordic welfare model as a whole is based – i.e. no fees and largely funded by taxes – could lose popular support. It is by no means certain that communication, outreach or knowledge dissemination on their own will overcome all of these challenges, but it is safe to say that the challenges cannot be addressed without putting a great deal of effort into the various forms of external communication.

Communication takes many forms, and not everything into which universities conduct research can be explained within the time and attention span available. On the other hand, feedback from the general public on which research problems they consider important, could be vital for research planning and drawing up research programmes capable of attracting widespread public support. The Group would like to highlight a number of Nordic universities – the University of the Faroe Islands, the University of Greenland and Sami University College – that have launched initiatives

aimed at maintaining and reinforcing local culture. This development might conceivably be seen as a form of opposition to internationalisation, but only a superficial assessment could lead to such a conclusion. Indeed, all of the universities in the Nordic Region fulfil precisely the same function. All of them help keep the local language flexible and capable of describing what is happening at the cutting edge of research. All of them help explore the history and cultural influences that have led to the Nordic Region we know today.

Taking their local surroundings seriously will ensure that Nordic universities are still of vital importance to their funders, the tax payers, while the international perspective inherent in research will prevent them from having a narrow outlook leading to provincialism. None of the Nordic states belong among the super powers or form part of bigger, self-sustaining cultural groups. The Nordic Region is uniquely placed because of our relative affluence and highly developed democracy. In the university sector, we may also demonstrate for small and medium-sized nations a way to proceed – because collectively, the Region constitutes a far stronger unit than any of the countries on their own.

4.12 Re.: Recommendation (11) Language policies should include developing digital language-support resources at every university

We recommend that university language policies should also include plans for *building up digitally accessible language resources*. Specific requirements would include multilingual term banks for different academic disciplines; quality-assured translation programmes with clear instructions for use (e.g. with a view to subsequent manual correction); programmes for linguistic analysis; and digital academic term bank. These resources should be kept up to date, include user instructions and be made available to as many students and staff as possible. Other resources might include locally or internationally prepared utilities for developing language skills or for writing assignments, collections of exemplary lectures and/or exam papers.

There is no doubt that digital language resources exist that would help make language work easier. The individual facing a specific language problem just has to know about them. The greatest challenge therefore consists of establishing portals that are easy to

find and access, and which are continuously maintained and developed so that they become more and more useful. During our visits, the Group found that administrative work is impeded because there are (still) no authorised translations of government rulings (e.g. acts and ministerial orders), and in particular those which govern university activities. It should be a national duty to ensure that authorised versions are produced using clear, consistent terminology adapted to suit European, cross-border usage. On the other hand, it is the duty of the universities – possibly via national or Nordic collaboration – to make the best quality-assured resources available, and to purchase the licences necessary for university staff to access and exploit them.

Translation is domain-dependent – in other words, translation software produces the best results when it works on the most standardized texts. As yet, there are no translation programs that are strong and context-sensitive enough to give a clear, correct answer to any question. However, they are certainly improving, and the universities should be first in line with critical quality assurance in order to reap the benefits. There is a specific role for academic term banks that provide translation equivalents in several languages for words that are commonly used in all kinds of academic activity, e.g. “account”, “report”, “argument”, etc. The Nordic language councils will have a role to play in establishing such term banks.

Regarding specialised terminology within specific academic subjects, students often seem to think that a particular term is always preferable. In fact, it is more often the case that a variety of terms emerge within the same field precisely because different perspectives are deployed, and these are often closely related to different theoretical approaches to the subject. Consequently, we do not advocate terminological uniformity, but terminological awareness.

Written exam papers are where students demonstrate their command of the three vital components of academia: the discourse, authorised genres and terminology relevant to their subjects and their disciplines. Exemplary exam papers would make an ideal starting point for a tangible discussion of implicit and explicit norms of writing. Another topic that the Group did not touch on, but which plays an important role in the whole debate on parallel language use, is the idea of what is correct. The Parallel Language Group consists of linguists who have spent much of their life advocating tolerance and diversity. This means that norms cannot be taken for granted and have to be defined before they can be used for categorisation or grading. A collection of exam papers considered exemplary for one reason or another would provide an

obvious starting point for such a discussion – not only of what is deemed correct but also of more advanced textual norms.

4.13 Closing remarks on what is worth implementing

The Parallel Language Group finds that policy development at the universities has artificially insulated internationalisation policy from language policy. Artificially because it is obvious that internationalisation has consequences for language, and because language policy is nothing more than a systematic approach to using teaching, coaching and sparring to improve the quality of core university services in the era of internationalisation. Or perhaps we should say “the new era of internationalisation”, since it has long since been documented that the internationalisation of knowledge – through languages such as Latin, French and German – has been a key characteristic of higher education for a very long time (see, e.g. Mortensen & Haberland, 2009).

When planning language policy initiatives, both cost and impact must be taken into account. This applies, of course, to every measure in every organisation or business. An account must be given of the rationale behind using resources in a particular way and/or why a particular approach provides precisely the desired effect in the best and cheapest way. The difficulty for universities is that so much meaning is invested in the concept of teaching and research *quality*.

Research output is evaluated in an ongoing process of peer review, citation counts, assessments, appointments to academic posts and applications for grants from external funders. We can certainly tell high-quality research when we see it, but it is rather more difficult to explain precisely how this quality arose. Was it inherent in the idea, in the methodology, in the study design, in the reporting process or the language used? Or in all of these different elements to an equal extent?

Teaching quality is also quantified in a variety of ways. Students receive grades and evaluate their lecturers and courses as a whole. Teaching is also evaluated by external experts for the purpose of accreditation, and through continuous assessments based on various types of information meticulously gathered from the exam system and from questionnaire surveys. Employers, too, are often happy to provide feedback on the relevance of graduates’ qualifications. However, it is again more difficult to pin down the connection between local efforts on particular courses, or particular support measures that receive special funding, and the final product (the completed education).

We hope we have argued convincingly in the recommendations presented above that language policy is worthwhile. It takes time, energy and money, but these must always be reflected in the eventual quality produced. It seems obvious – and yet it is not generally the case – that students who are required to read English-language literature should have enough knowledge of English to be able to understand it. It seems equally obvious that university support systems could save significant amounts of money if international staff received an obligatory introduction package that helped them to function as citizens in the Nordic societies. It also seems self-evident that it would be a good investment to provide international staff with the language skills needed to participate on an equal footing in all of the functions of a university. In brief, it is obvious that it pays to invest – even if the return is due only in the long term. The universities must have the courage to invest the money needed in the short term, so that the investment pays off in the long term.

We would encourage the universities to think of internationalisation and language policy together as a means of enhancing the quality and effectiveness of teaching, research and administration. We firmly believe that implementing these 11 recommendations would be a worthwhile investment in improving university quality.

Sammanfattning och utbildningspolitiskt perspektiv

Den yttersta orsaken till Nordiska Ministerrådets Parallellspråksgrupps arbete är universitetens globalisering. Forskning och högre utbildning sker i dag i mångspråkiga sammanhang, vilket kräver en utvecklad språkpolitik. Gruppen ger nedan 11 rekommendationer (anbefalinger) om bruk av internationella och lokala språk vid universiteten i Norden. De presenteras i sin helhet i kapitel 3, och i kapitel 4 följer utförligare diskussion. I stark förkortning är de följande:

1. Alla universitet bör ha en språkpolitik.
2. Alla universitet bör ha en språkpolitisk kommitté.
3. Alla universitet bör ha ett språkcenter.
4. Internationellt anställda ska erbjudas kurser i undervisningsspråk, allmänspråk och fackspråk.
5. Olika studerandekategorier ska erbjudas språkkurser efter genomförd behovsanalys.
6. Anställda lärare och forskare ska erbjudas språkkurser efter genomförd behovsanalys.
7. Universitetens undervisningsspråk väljs enligt principer om parallellspråkighet och internationellt klassrum.
8. Universitetens språkpolitik ska innefatta administrationens språk.
9. Val av publiceringsspråk ska följas och utvärderas löpande.
10. Språkpolitiken ska omfatta universitetens förmedlingsverksamhet.
11. Språkpolitiken ska omfatta uppbygget av digitala språkstödsresurser vid varje universitet.

Utbildningens och forskningens kvalitet är beroende av att studenter, forskare och lärare kan utveckla de språkliga förmågor som krävs för avancerat intellektuellt arbete i internationell konkurrens. Den kapaciteten, som nästan alltid måste bli flerspråkig, följer inte automatiskt av deltagande i verksamheten. Den måste ges organiserat stöd utifrån noggranna behovsanalyser.

Universitet och högre utbildning måste vara inkluderande i en globaliserad värld. Det gäller vanliga studenter med bristande förmåga i akademiskt språk, inhemska studenter med annat modersmål än landets huvudspråk, migranter, utbytesstudenter och gäststudenter. Det gäller också internationella forskare och forskare som vistas i en i många avseenden främmande miljö.

Universiteten har ett demokratiskt uppdrag som samhällets viktigaste instans för kunskapsförmedling och produktion av ny kunskap. De ska upprätthålla och utveckla ett vetenskapligt samtal såväl i internationella forskningssammanhang som med breda medborgargrupper. Det kräver en mångsidig språklig kompetens.

Slutligen bör framhållas en stark *nordisk nytta* med en utvecklad och gemensam parallellspråkspolitik. Nordens universitet präglas av att verksamheten bedrivs dels på internationellt sett medelstora men mycket välutvecklade samhällsbärande språk, dels på engelska där den allmänna kunskapsnivån, såväl innanför som utanför universiteten, är hög. Förutsättningarna för parallellspråkighet är därför ovanligt goda. Vid de europeiska kontakter gruppen haft framstår den nordiska parallellspråksdiskussionen på universiteten som avancerad. Gemensamt erfarenhetsutbyte, gemensamma riktlinjer och i många fall också gemensam kompetensutveckling och resursuppbyggnad kan därför relativt lätt innebära att Norden blir en föregångsregion inom detta växande språkpolitiska område. Parallellspråkigheten har också betydelse för att utveckla den nordiska språkgemenskapen inom ramen för de nya språkvillkor globalisering medför.

I kapitel 1 ges en bakgrund till och redogörelse för gruppens arbete, i kapitel 2 förklaras centrala termer och begrepp, i kapitel 3 redovisas de 11 rekommendationerna i sin fulla lydelse, och i kapitel 4 följer en diskussion och motivering kring var och en av dem.

Literature of interest in this field, including literature referenced in the report

- See in general: www.sprogkoordinationen.org Click on “Sprogpolitik”, which contains all of the official documents.
- The Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences’ report (in Dutch, but with an English summary): <http://knaw.nl/nl/actueel/publicaties/nederlands-en-of-engels>
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- Parliamentary white paper on the Humanities in Norway: <https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/e51d8864c32248598e381e84db1032a3/no/pdfs/stm20162017002500oddpdfs.pdf>
- Language Policy of the University of Helsinki: From guidelines to practice – Towards functional multilingualism: <http://blogs.helsinki.fi/centrumcampus/files/2015/04/kieliperiaatteet.pdf>
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Appendices

The Parallel Language Group's indicators for use in biennial follow-ups on progress in relation to the Language Declaration

The indicators are designed to provide an overview, based on uniform criteria, of the use of English and the local languages in the Nordic Region. The idea is to make the reporting in this area simple and manageable. We are aware that the definition and validation of each individual indicator is open to discussion because it is difficult to be certain that they are used in exactly the same way in all five countries. Nevertheless, the Group takes the view that taken together, these indicators provide a viable and fairly detailed picture of how parallel language use will develop over the coming decades in each country and in the Nordic Region as a whole.

The indicators chosen are:

- As to language policy:
 - whether language policies have been drawn up for the individual institutions in the country concerned;
 - whether there are overarching guidelines at national level, in the form of language legislation, white papers or similar.
- As to publications:
 - the total number of journal articles produced per annum in the country's university sector by main language and affiliation to main discipline or subject;
 - the number of PhD dissertations per annum by main language, taking into account the main discipline, the university at which it was defended and the date the dissertation was approved.

- As to the Nordic languages and English as teaching languages:
 - the total number of teaching hours advertised in a Nordic language vs. in English, in the university sector in the relevant year by main disciplines;
 - the total number of study programmes advertised in English in the relevant year, broken down by level (i.e. Bachelor compared to Master's) and main disciplines.
- As to mobility and internationalisation:
 - the total number of exchange students and full-degree students in the university sector in the relevant year, by level (i.e. Bachelor compared to Master's) and main disciplines;
 - the number of new international appointments per annum, defined as appointments of individuals who were not citizens of the country concerned prior to their appointment, and who were not resident in the country immediately prior to their appointment.



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More parallel, please!

More parallel, please is the result of the work of an Inter-Nordic group of experts on language policy financed by the Nordic Council of Ministers 2014-17.

The book presents all that is needed to plan, practice and revise a university language policy which takes as its point of departure that English may be used in parallel with the various local, in this case Nordic, languages. As such, the book integrates the challenge of internationalization faced by any university with the wish to improve quality in research, education and administration based on the local language(s).

There are three layers in the text: First, you may read the extremely brief version of the in total 11 recommendations for best practice. Second, you may acquaint yourself with the extended version of the recommendations and finally, you may study the reasoning behind each of them. At the end of the text, we give some suggestions for further reading in this highly explosive area.



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