"We are here, and we exist as English-speaking students"

A case study of international students' experiences of inclusive language practices at the University of Helsinki

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Master's Thesis

English Studies

Faculty of Arts

University of Helsinki

January 2023

Abstract

Faculty: Faculty or Arts

Degree programme: Master's Programme in English Studies

Study track: Applied Linguistics

Author: Laura Ramula

Title: "We are here, and we exist as English-speaking students": A case study of international students' experiences of inclusive language practices at the University of Helsinki

Level: Master's thesis

Month and year: January 2023

Number of pages: 58 + appendices (6 pages)

Keywords: inclusiveness, linguistic inclusion, language policy, translanguaging, international students

Supervisor or supervisors: Niina Hynninen

Where deposited: Helsinki University Library

Additional information: N/A

Abstract:

As a consequence of globalization, higher education institutions are becoming increasingly multilingual. Linguistic superdiversity is apparent within our communities, and education should view multilingualism as a valuable resource (Källkvist & Hult, 2020). Prior research has suggested that language barriers may pose issues for the inclusiveness of international students within higher education institutions (e.g., Xiao, 2021). One issue that the University of Helsinki is currently combating is finding language policies that successfully attain linguistic inclusion of all students within the university community. This is because the university has a role in both safeguarding the national languages of Finland (Finnish and Swedish) whilst also ensuring that the quality of education remains the same for non-Finnish/Swedish-speaking students.

This study examines the issue from the perspective of 6 non-Finnish/Swedish-speaking students, who were interviewed about how they have experienced linguistic inclusion at the University of Helsinki. Linguistic inclusion, in this study, refers to language-related processes aiming for inclusiveness. To limit the scope of the research, students had to be first year master's students, ensuring that they had on-going courses to share experiences from, but also prior university experience to compare to.

The students reported that although their overall experience at the University of Helsinki has been inclusive, they have some suggestions based on their experiences to improving inclusiveness through language practices for international university students. Especially in matters relating to their education, the students reported that they would like information to be provided in English as a lingua franca. In more social contexts, such as attending events, the students do accept and even appreciate more translingual practices, as this allows students to become more included within the Finnish/Swedish-speaking communities.

The University Student Union (HYY) is currently in the process of planning a new language strategy for 2023, for which the findings of this paper can provide some recommendations. The main feedback for HYY that the study provides is that all necessary information and training would be provided in all three languages and at least also in English, so international students working in organizations under HYY still have the same access to information as their Finnish/Swedish-speaking equivalents. The study still leaves some questions for future research to respond to, such as: what the main difficulties are in maintaining trilingual communication, how to balance between the responsibility of the institution and the student, and examining non-linguistic factors contributing to students' experiences of inclusiveness.

Table of Contents

1 Introduction

As universities open doors to exchange and international students, academic and social settings are becoming increasingly multilingual. Internationalization of universities does not and should not automatically mean that universities must resort to English medium instruction (Mortensen & Lønsmann, 2021; Källkvist & Hult, 2020). However, in a country like Finland, where the national languages[1] are not learned much outside of the country, providing education in English is one of the ways of attracting international students. With this decision comes the responsibility of ensuring that the education is worth the investment of time and money that the international students put into moving to the country. Previous research has stated that language barrier is one of the main issues that international students struggle with in their studies abroad (Xiao, 2021; Hipsi, 2019, Lau & Lin, 2016). Especially in social gatherings, speakers switch from the language of instruction to the community or majority languages, which may exclude some participants (Hipsi, 2019; Lau & Lin 2016).

The University of Helsinki attempts to combat this issue through policies that seek to ensure that both the academic and social settings of the university are in fact trilingual (Student Union of Helsinki, 2018; University of Helsinki, 2014). In theory this means that those partaking in international master's programs taught in English can attain their degrees without knowledge of the national languages. The language of instruction is therefore English, which means the students should be able to rely on English to get by (excluding language courses). The Student Union of Helsinki is then responsible for ensuring that students feel included also in the social settings of the university, and they do so by providing events and services available also to the non-Finnish/Swedish speaking students. In multilingual settings, however, students are likely to make use of their native languages, as they may more naturally engage in shared languages with their peers (see e.g., Xiao, 2021). Therefore, it is important to examine how these language policies affect student's experiences in practice, to ensure international students feel included in their studies in the new environment. This thesis seeks to shed light on this theme by answering the following research questions:

1. How do international master's students define the concept of "inclusiveness" based on their experiences of inclusion and exclusion at the University of Helsinki?

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[1] Finnish and Swedish

2. How do language practices in social and academic contexts at the university affect students' experiences of inclusiveness?

The questions are explored through semi-structured interviews with international master's students from the University of Helsinki. This thesis begins with a background section defining the key concepts, such as *multilingualism* and *inclusiveness,* in addition to highlighting the most relevant prior research into these concepts and examining language policy at the University of Helsinki. The background section is followed by an explanation of the materials and methods used in this study, elaborating on why the qualitative approach was chosen as the most appropriate for the aims of this paper. The fourth section presents the key findings of this research, which are then linked to previous research and implications of this study in the discussion section. The study intends to not only contribute to the discussion within current research, but also provide feedback for the University and specifically the University Student Union, as they are currently in the process of planning a new language strategy for the upcoming years (Student Union of the University of Helsinki, 2018). Following this, a short summary of the thesis, including future research possibilities, is presented in the final, concluding section.

2 Background

To keep up with the globalizing world, higher education institutions are asked to internationalize. Within the multilingual higher education institutions in Finland, English is the academic lingua franca, with students in international programs receiving English Medium Instruction (EMI). However, alongside internationalization, the University of Helsinki also has a responsibility in safeguarding the national languages: Finnish and Swedish. Unfortunately, having to study in these languages would require that students learn these languages before being able to apply for a study right. Therefore, for international students seeking to study and/ or continue living in Finland upon graduation, linguistic inclusion often happens through English as a lingua franca. Creating language policies that efficiently balance between safeguarding the national languages and including non-Finnish/Swedish speaking students within the communities of the University of Helsinki is one that prior research suggests still requires solutions. Before moving on to the solutions that this study proposes, it is relevant to provide some background of prior research into the topic, and define the relevant concepts: *multilingualism*, *translanguaging*, *English Medium Instruction*, *inclusiveness*, and *linguistic inclusion* in higher education. This background section also presents how the current language policies at the University of Helsinki tackle the issue.

2.1 Multilingualism and translanguaging in English Medium Instruction (EMI)

The term *multilingual* can be used to refer to a setting, practice, identity, or anything that involves individuals speaking or knowing multiple languages (Cenoz, 2013). This means that individuals can be multilingual, but also societies can be multilingual, even when containing mono- and/or multilingual speakers. English Medium Instruction (EMI) refers to instruction in which teaching is conducted in English as a lingua franca, but not particularly for language learning purposes (Jenkins, 2019; Dafouz, 2017). Emma Dafouz (2017) defines that "typically, and particularly in research conducted in Europe, EMI is used to refer to higher education institutions (HEIs) where English is not a/the national language and where well-established universities in the country's respective national languages already exist" (170). This definition describes the kind of education taking place at the University of Helsinki within international programs, as Finnish and Swedish are the national languages in the country, but English is used as the language of instruction. Students learn the content of their master's program, mediated through the English language. Dafouz (2017) also describes that the two main goals of EMI are to recruit international talent but also internationalize students within their home countries.

Thus, EMI settings provide a space for multi- and monolingual students to share linguistic resources and develop language awareness (Dafouz 2017).

One way of sharing linguistic resources in multilingual settings happens through *translanguaging*. Translanguaging has been defined as "accessing different linguistic features or various modes of what are described as autonomous languages, in order to maximize communicative potential" (Garcia 2009, p. 140). Simplified, this can be understood as the way in which speakers of different backgrounds use their linguistic resources in a versatile manner within communication, instead of sticking to a monolingual model of conversation. Garcia (2009) claims translanguaging is an act performed by bilingual speakers. However, in the current society of linguistic 'superdiversity', research has shown that speakers do not need to have fluency or be 'native' in a language to be able to borrow terms from different languages into their speech or writing (Wei, 2018; Canagarajah, 2013). Canagarajah (2013, p. 8) claims that in research, a shift is needed from a 'monolingual orientation' of communication to a 'translingual orientation', where communication is no longer viewed as fixed to a specific, assumed system of "language", but instead it is recognized that "languages mesh in transformative ways, generating new meanings and grammars". In this framework, it is no longer necessary to differentiate between *code-switching* and *code-mixing*, both which are tied to the ideology that it requires speakers to be 'fluent' in both languages (Canagarajah, 2013; Auer, 198; Gumperz, 1982). These terms can still exist and be used to refer to specific instances, when language is seen as separate entities, and it can be distinguished which languages are being borrowed into which (Canagarajah 2013). However, in this study, all code-mixing is referred to as *translanguaging* and *translingual practices*, to indicate that the communicative practices are not tied to a required competence in any of the 'languages' being used.

In multilingual settings, where not all speakers share the same linguistic repertoires, it is sometimes unclear which languages can be used for communication to remain effective. The university context is an example of this kind of setting, where language policies and practices are required which, to an extent, control translanguaging and how languages are to be used in the multilingual setting. However, multilingualism should be viewed as a resource to education rather than as a problem (Källkvist & Hult, 2020). For example, Sahan & Rose (2021) highlight the pedagogical benefits of translanguaging in EMI settings through their research in Turkey. They examine the functions of translanguaging in EMI engineering classrooms, seeking to explore the pedagogical functions of translanguaging by "propos[ing] a framework to examine

language functions from a translanguaging perspective in EMI classrooms" (Sahan & Rose, 2021, p. 353). Their findings extended the previously found suggestion that translanguaging serves as a function to translate new concepts or building rapport information (see e.g.: Evans, 2008, Tarnopolsky and Goodman, 2014), but also that it serves multiple pedagogical functions and classroom management. With these findings, Sahan & Rose (2021) argue that EMI settings should welcome translanguaging practices to "enhance the quality of [students' and teachers'] overall educational experience" (p. 356). Allowing students to make use of their linguistic resources in their education, enhances the learning experience, because they can understand concepts through their own communicative models.

However, it is also important to understand the linguistic contexts within which students are having these educational experiences. For example, within the EMI setting that Sahan and Rose's (2021) research takes place, the languages that teachers and students engaged with in were Turkish and English – languages that students generally felt reasonably comfortable in. Kuteeva's (2020) study examines translanguaging in a Swedish university, highlighting that translingual practices are effective when all students within groups share proficiency in the languages. However, Kuteeva (2020) argues that translingual practices can also be considered excluding by international students if they do not have proficiency in the one or more of the shared languages. In different ways, both Kuteeva (2020) and Sahan & Rose (2021) highlight the importance of finding appropriate translingual practices within EMI settings, that aid yet suit the linguistic repertoires of the students within the context.

2.2 Linguistic inclusion in multilingual settings

Before moving on to linguistic inclusion specifically, it is important to define the overall concept used in this paper, *inclusiveness*, differentiating it from inclusion and exclusion. One way to understand the difference, is to think of inclusiveness as an outcome of the process of *inclusion* (Talmage & Richard, 2017). Inclusion, according to Talmage & Richard (2017, p. 9), is a process of "leverag[ing] human diversity to increase a community's capacity to improve their own well-being". By default, our communities include human diversity, meaning that our communities form of multiple individuals, with different "identities, attitudes, behaviors, and perspectives" (Talmage & Richard, 2017, p. 9). Diversity should be viewed as a valuable resource to a community, and inclusion is a process that seeks to provide all individuals with the necessary tools to have an active role in the community. Through the process of inclusion, the community outcome is inclusiveness, meaning that all individuals, especially those that

were previously excluded or not included, are part of the community (Talmage & Richard, 2017; Bicchi, 2006; Reynal-Querol, 2005). Talmage & Richard (2017) focus in their study on how community well-being is enhanced through inclusion. When all members of a community are recognized as participants, with the ability to take part in community decision-making, leadership, functions and structures, the outcome of inclusion is inclusiveness. In the case of this study, the community can be understood as the university community, and the focus is on enhancing the inclusiveness of non-Finnish/Swedish speaking international students.

Diversity factors can be a wide variety of demographic features, such as (and not limited to): national origin, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, and language (Talmage & Richard, 2017; Roberson, 2006). Since all demographic features affect experiences of inclusiveness, it is likely that students too would have experiences that would be linked to feeling excluded or not included due to any of their demographic features. Therefore, whilst it is important to recognize that experiences relating to lack of inclusiveness within any of these demographic markers are important to research, the focus of this thesis is on linguistic inclusion, centered on issues related to language. This does, however link to national origin and ethnicity as well, although these are not examined with as explicit detail. As the focus of this paper is on how language affects student's experiences of inclusiveness, it is important to look more closely and define *linguistic inclusion* as well. If inclusion is understood as a process of attaining inclusiveness in communities, *linguistic inclusion* refers to language-related processes aiming for inclusiveness. This most often is conducted through language policies but can also be affected by language attitudes and choices (Fettes & Karamouzian, 2018; Hipsi, 2019).

Attaining linguistic inclusion in multilingual settings is a topic of research still, because finding the appropriate solution varies in all contexts and requires resources (Csata & Marácz, 2021; Xiao, 2021; Fettes & Karamouzian, 2018). On the one hand, sticking to one language, in this case English, allows for all students to understand the topic of conversation. However, this is not always the most natural way for speakers to engage when they share the same native languages. For example, a study examining Chinese student engagement in a Canadian university found that language was the main issue influencing the lack of student engagement between Chinese international students and others: "some Chinese people do not really like speaking English. They only want to hang out with people who can speak fluently in Chinese […] not only because of language barrier, but because some of the things you can only understand in Chinese" (Xiao, 2021, p. 10). Hence, naturally students may gravitate towards

those who share similar linguistic repertoires and breaking apart these connections may affect those student's abilities to express themselves through their own identities.

In addition, the 'English' spoken varies across different communities, but some 'inclusive' practices see the solution as teaching one variety, the 'native' variety of English, as the only possible communicative method, failing to see linguistic diversity as a resource (Källkvist & Hult, 2020; Canagarajah, 2013). In a recent study of "inclusion of education", Fettes & Karamouzian (2018, p. 226) state "where they exist, policies promoting linguistic inclusion may underestimate the challenges involved […] teachers often lack skills and training in working in multilingual and multicultural settings, while school budgets may not allow for the hiring of additional staff with appropriate linguistic and cultural skills". The study highlights how language policies often include ambitious objectives of providing information and guidance in multiple languages, proficiently, without ensuring that the staff are equipped with resources and time to learn the necessary languages (Fettes & Karamouzian, 2018). Finding the funds to provide these services, or necessary translation, also becomes an issue when challenges occur.

Previous research looking at internationalization and the use of English in higher education has found that especially in social gatherings, speakers switch from the language of instruction to the community or majority languages, which may exclude some participants (Hipsi 2019; Lau & Lin 2016). For example, Lau & Lin (2016) found that in a bilingual university in Taiwan, at social gatherings most participants spoke Mandarin, which led the international students to require help in translation, or in some cases, avoid attending gatherings that were not held in English. Hipsi (2019) also made similar findings in his master's thesis research, which looked at how English is used in the international university programs at the University of Helsinki. The research was conducted through interviews with the students, where the focus of the thesis was more on the quality and use of English especially in academic and informative settings, like the classroom and university webpages. However, in the interviews, students still brought up issues concerning feelings of exclusion from social events that are only held in Finnish or Swedish, which suggest that this topic is an important one to examine at the University of Helsinki.

Backus et al. (2011) argue that conflict concerning language choice is likely to arise in multilingual settings, specifically when there is no clear-cut answer as to which language to use. To combat this issue, Backus et al. (2011) provide a toolkit for multilingual communication

designed for organizations to manage linguistic diversity. The toolkit consists of four possible solutions to the problems: 1) English as a lingua franca, 2) use of a regional lingua franca, 3) receptive multilingualism, meaning speakers use their own native languages, and 4) codeswitching. How students feel about these different approaches will be examined in their responses to this thesis. However, the concept of code-switching will be extended to translingual practices in general since, as mentioned above, students in this study are not necessarily bilingual speakers of the same languages, nor is this necessary for translanguaging to occur. It is expected that the first option, use of English as a lingua franca, in the classroom, is the one that most students will agree is the most effective way of promoting inclusion, as this is the language that all speakers share in order to be accepted into the international programs at the University of Helsinki. However, it may be the case that other solutions from the toolkit provide feasible solutions towards inclusive language policy in less academic settings. For example, House (2014) argues that multilingualism and code-switching are needed to ensure that English as lingua franca is not a threat to maintaining other languages. This is also important to the University of Helsinki, which hopes through language policies to maintain the role of Finnish and Swedish in the university's academic and social contexts.

2.3 Language policy at the University of Helsinki

The University of Helsinki has two important language policy documents relevant to this research paper. The first is the official language policy document of the University of Helsinki (2014), which presents the overall strategies of language policy for the University as a whole. The University of Helsinki aims to set an example of "genuine multilingualism" (University of Helsinki, 2020, p. 19), by providing master's programs in Finnish, Swedish and English. The university offers 36 master's programs in English, intended also for recruiting international students. The second important policy document is the language policy of the Student Union of the University of Helsinki (2018). The student union, most commonly referred to as HYY[2], is the umbrella organization for all the student associations at the university. These associations play an important role in integrating students to university life.

Important to note is that one of the four core values in the University strategy plan for 2021-2030 is "inclusivity" (University of Helsinki, n.d.). The University does not provide a definition of "inclusivity" but it can be understood as a concept derived from "inclusiveness". These two

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[2] Derived from the Finnish word for Student Union of the University of Helsinki (Helsingin Yliopiston Ylioppilaskunta)

terms are used often interchangeably in speech, however, the term inclusiveness has been chosen to refer to the concepts in this study, as it is the term most often used in research into the topic (e.g. Hipsi, 2019; Karamouzian, 2018; Talmage & Richard, 2017; Fettes & Karamouzian, 2018). However, "inclusivity" does appear in this thesis, as it is the term used colloquially by the students to refer to inclusiveness. This could possibly be since the University uses this term in their values. Inclusivity is not mentioned in either of the language policies of the University, but 'inclusion' is mentioned in the policy document from HYY.

The first section of the university language policy examines the status of the university languages. Already in this section, the policy highlights the main challenge for defining the policy. The challenge comes from balancing between the two responsibilities of the University. The policy states that as an educational institution, the university "bears a particular responsibility for Finland's national culture as well as for the position of the national languages (Finnish and Swedish) as languages of science" (p. 47). The main outcome of safeguarding the national languages is that research continues to be conducted in Finnish and Swedish, and students can become knowledgeable members of the society of their own culture, in their native languages. However, "as a research institution, the University bears responsibility for internationalization" (p. 48). Whilst recognizing that bi- and multilingualism are assets for everyone, the document highlights the need to find policies for managing multilingualism without threatening the status of the national languages. English as an academic lingua franca is seen as the solution for recruiting and communicating with international students and staff that do not speak Finnish or Swedish. The policy then states that all necessary information and guidance that non-Finnish/Swedish speaking students need is then provided in all three languages. Thus, students coming to study that do not speak the national languages must provide proficiency in English, and staff working or teaching these students must also be trained to speak and communicate in these languages. The university monitors the language policy at the level of teaching, research, services, operations, and staff. For example, pedagogy lecturers are currently researching ways to use translanguaging in teaching, to present working guidelines for translanguaging as a solution (see e.g.: Mickwitz et al., 2021; Darling, 2022).

The Student Union of the University of Helsinki published their language strategy for 2018-2023, meaning that during this research and after the publication of this thesis, a new strategy is under development. The Student Union (HYY) plays a role in integrating students into the community with services and events, and their goal in the 2018-2023 language policy was to

create a 'genuinely international and trilingual community'. 'Inclusion' is mentioned in this policy document under the key values, stating that "when the Finnish- and Swedish speaking members find information and services in their native tongue and the international students find the same information in English, the representatives of these groups can act in the Student Union and find their own student union identity" (p. 2). Hence, HYY combats the challenge of multilingualism, by attempting to ensure that all information is available in all three languages. On practical level, the policy states that this means that all committees and organization working under HYY that need support for communicating, serving, or acting trilingually can contact HYY to resolve any issues. Internally, HYY has representatives and committees to monitor and work on these issues and keeps track of members and organizations to ensure that all students can be part of the community, regardless of their linguistic background. HYY's External strategies of ensuring that students can navigate their studies trilingually include monitoring and reaching out to different university services, such as university health care (YTHS), university sport services (Unisport), student housing (HOAS), and even the city of Helsinki. HYY also monitors the University of Helsinki, claiming "the University of Helsinki can be genuinely international only if the international members of the community can influence decision-making" (Student Union of the University of Helsinki 2018, p. 4). With this statement, the union indicates its objective of ensuring the inclusiveness of international students, as including all members of community in decision-making is one example of the process of inclusion (Talmage & Richard, 2017). This thesis presents some feedback to HYY on how international students experience this language policy to be attaining these objectives.

3 Materials and methods

This is a case study of student's experiences of inclusiveness and language practices at the University of Helsinki. As the purpose of the study is to explore students' experiences in an in-depth manner, an interview approach was selected as the appropriate method. When selecting participants for the interview, it was important to consider another aim of the research, which is to provide feedback to the university and student union on how the current language practices are affecting international students' university experiences. Therefore, international students from different programs were invited to take part in the interview, to provide insight into what the situation is overall in the different international programs. However, only participants from two programs were found to take part, hence only a comparison between these two was made possible.

By definition, a case-study is a bounded system, meaning that it takes upon itself a certain research focus, and a certain set of individuals or entities to examine (Hood, 2009). In this case-study the focus is on international students at the University of Helsinki from two programs, how they experience inclusiveness. The boundaries (Hood, 2009) by which the research participants were selected is elaborated on in the following section.

3.1 Participants

The study included 3 students (CE1, CE2, CE3) from the Changing Education (CE) master's program and 3 students (MB1, MB2, MB3) from the Microbiology and Microbial Biotechnology (MB) master's program at the University of Helsinki. Students were recruited for the interview both via e-mail invitations and through WhatsApp groups. Recruitment via e-mail would ensure that all students studying in international programs could see the invitation for research participation. All students from the Microbiology and Microbial Biotechnology program responded to the invitation through the WhatsApp invitation. Two of the Changing Education (CE) students responded to the invitation through e-mail and one of the students to the WhatsApp messages. These different methods of recruiting participants were chosen as within the timeframe for the research, it was difficult to find students with time to take part in this interview. Although the initial plan was to provide an overall image of international students' experiences in general, now that participants only came from two programs, the data would also allow to see if students from their respective programs had experiences that were program specific, and if these experiences can be compared between programs.

To narrow the scope of the research and allow for this comparison between programs, only master's students were selected. Master's students were chosen over bachelor's students for the following reasons. One reason was that the university has more international master's programs offered in English, making it easier to find participants. Another reason is the fact that in order to study a master's degree at the University of Helsinki, students must have completed a bachelor's degree. Thus, the students taking part in the interviews would have some experiences from university, which they could refer to when comparing their experiences of inclusiveness and language practices in this university. These different experiences could then possibly provide alternative solutions to the language practices at the University of Helsinki.

It is also relevant to briefly mention some background about the participants, which they mentioned having affected their experiences of inclusiveness or language barrier. For example, all students except CE1 had prior experiences of studying in international programs, or in a language that is not their native tongue. CE2 and CE3 both took part in an exchange program at the University of Helsinki, which led them to apply for the master's program in Finland upon graduation. MB students and CE1 had not experienced studying in Finland prior to the program, but all wanted to apply, because the program or courses provided aligned with their career path. Also, relevant to mention of the experiences of CE1 and CE3 is that they both are active in the student organization work for different associations in HYY. In this sense, they had more in-depth experiences of language practices in student organizations. MB1 and CE1 shared in experiences of moving to Finland from a non-EU country, something that the other students had not experienced. When the students background seems relevant to the analysis, it is mentioned again in the *Findings* section.

3.2 Semi-structured interviews

The interviews were semi-structured in nature, allowing for "rich talk", which Magnusson and Marecek (2015) define as participants "speak[ing] in their own ways and on their own terms" (p. 48). This was to ensure that the participants' experiences are truly their own and not defined by the nature and structure of the interview. An interview guide (see Appendix 1) was designed in January 2022 and piloted in February. During the pilot interview, it was noticed that international students were also experiencing issues concerning language barrier and inclusiveness at the workplace. Since the focus of this study is on the university academic and social settings, it would be important that the students were engaging and involved in these settings. Therefore, one requirement to participate in the study was that participants were studying full-time. To find more comparative data between courses within programs, it would

also be important that students are partaking in a variety of courses. Since in their second year of master's programs students are mainly working on their theses, first year students were selected for this study.

The interviews were held between February and April in 2022. This period was selected to ensure that students would have ongoing courses, so their experiences would be based on recent memories. The interviews were conducted in English and lasted between 40 to 60 minutes. It was important to ensure that the setting for the interview was familiar for the students, so they can share their experiences as comfortably and openly as possible. The students could choose between face-to-face or Zoom interviews. MB students chose to have the interviews online, mainly because it was easier for them to schedule a Zoom interview than travel to meet in person. The three CE interviews were conducted in person, held in study rooms on the university premises. All interviews were audio recorded. Overall, students seemed relaxed and shared openly their experiences both online and in-person.

3.3 Transcription

In qualitative research, it is common that data collection, analysis and interpretation occur simultaneously, so each stage can provide feedback for the other (Croker, 2009). This was also the case for this study, as the transcription process began immediately after the first interviews (CE1 and MB1) were conducted, so the interview data from these transcripts could aid the upcoming interviews to be more focused to the intended research. For example, in the later interviews, less time was spent on the background questions, as it became increasingly easier to move the conversation from the background questions towards how it relates to the topic of the study. Also, the interviewing process became more focused on the individual, so that more follow-up questions were asked specifically about their topics. This also means that not all interviews followed the same structure as the interview guide, but it provided a base so that each discussion would explore some of the same themes, still allowing for the participants to bring their own perspectives and topics.

The interviews were transcribed manually on Microsoft Word. The *dictate* function on the word-processing program was used to ease the process of transcription. Since this function does not perfectly hear the conversation and does not know how to structure the content into an interview form, the interviews had to be listened to several times in order to fix the initial transcriptions. Hesitations, pauses, overlapping speech, were all included in the transcriptions. These are presented in the findings where they seem relevant to the analysis (see transcription

conventions under Appendix 2). The transcription process was therefore also part of the analysis, as it was a way of familiarizing with the data.

3.4 Analysis

Once transcription was completed, it was time to decide how to further analyze the data. Since interview data is qualitative in nature, the appropriate analysis method would also be qualitative. Finding the appropriate qualitative research method became a bit complex. It was important that it should be data-driven, allowing the participant's own voice to be heard through the analysis, so that the themes and topics explored would present their own narratives of the experience. Therefore, the perspective of narrative inquiry was considered. However, it was also important that the content could be categorized to provide overall feedback to the university. The choice of the research method thus fell on Murray's (2009) narrative inquiry. Murray (2009) looks at participant stories, drawing on a Lieblich et al.'s (2018) categorical content analysis and Glaser & Strauss' (1967) constant comparative method. Murray's (2009) combination of these methods allows for each individual participant's narrative to first be explored in detail in solitude, before comparing it to the other interviews, to form themes. Since the interview transcripts provide a narrative of the student's experiences, the method suggested by Murray seemed appropriate for analyzing the data collected for this study. This was seen as the main strength of adapting this method to this case study, because each individual experience was very personal and individualistic, so it is only fair to first examine the student's experiences of inclusiveness as individual narratives. Murray (2009) presents a step-by-step method of narrative inquiry that has been adapted to suit this case study.

The first step in Murray's (2009, p. 52) method is coding the interview transcripts, to break up the data into more manageable bits, so they can be classified, categorized and/or compared. In this study, the Atlas.ti software was used to aid with the coding, as it provided help both with finding appropriate codes and grouping them together. Once the interviews were uploaded onto the software, it would form a word cloud of frequent words in all the interviews. Based on the word cloud, a few preliminary codes were set, that seemed appropriate for answering the research questions. These codes were selected before reading through the interviews again but were intended to give some direction when reading through the interviews. Below is a table presenting these preliminary codes.

Table 1. Preliminary codes created for analysis of data

Preliminary codes	*Rough meaning*
Definition of a concept	How students define/struggle to define language barrier or inclusiveness
Inclusive experience	Student shares an experience that they feel was inclusive
Non-inclusive experience	Student shares an experience that they feel was not inclusive
Language barrier	Student shares an experience of language barrier
Academic experience	Student has an experience in an academic setting, like in a lecture, research group, or
Social experience	Student has an experience outside of the classroom, like at an event or when conversing with peers.
Translanguaging and/or Multilingualism	Students share experiences where translanguaging occurs, or many languages are being used at the same time.
University languages	Students mention Finnish, Swedish or English
Administrative issues	Students share experiences with administration, such as the application period, starting their studies in Helsinki, the platform for enrolling to courses (SISU), etc.
University services	Students mention the university services for health care (YTHS), sport (Unisport), food (UniCafe), website (https://studies.helsinki.fi/) or student information system (Sisu)
Background	Background factors that affect students' experiences

When reading the interviews again, a lot of new concepts emerged and repeated themselves in the interviews, so new codes had to be created. It is common in exploratory qualitative research that new codes emerge since the findings should be data-driven (Croker, 2009). Once all these codes were added, a total of 38 new codes emerged from the data. These are not presented here, as some of them were not used in the final analysis, and many of them were combined in the next step of data analysis, to be more manageable. For example, in the first two interviews, students CE1 and MB1 mentioned how e-mail communication from the university was affecting their experiences. Thus, an "e-mail" code was added to the list, to see if it came up in future interviews, and if the experiences were similar in terms of inclusion and language barrier. Another example of new codes that emerged through the data is the 'university social

committee' code as CE1 and CE3 shared many experiences of working in student organizations under HYY. The code turned out to be relevant in all interviews because the other students also had experiences from attending events organized by these committees. Finally, the code 'experience of a friend' was one that was first used to see what kinds of experiences students shared in general about inclusiveness and language practices. In some cases, this included sharing experiences of their friends. However, since the focus in this study is on these students specifically, and what they share, the quotations and codes linked to these experiences were then omitted from the final findings.

In the next step, Murray (2009) asks to "look for connections between codes and start [grouping them] into categories". Once the first step of coding was complete, the Atlas.ti project had 48 codes and approximately 200 quotations from the transcripts that were relevant for answering the research questions. However, it is not possible to present this many quotations in the scope of this research paper, so the different codes and quotations linked to them were looked at individually, to see if they could be linked to each other, grouped together, or omitted entirely. For example, one code was just a tag 'HYY', linking only to one quotation. Reading this quote again, it seemed to fit well into the 'University social experience' code, therefore this one could be deleted. One quote at a time, the codes could be merged into categories that provided the basis of the *Findings* section. This final table presents which kinds of codes were categorized under each section of the findings.

Table 2. Final themes and the codes related to the topic

Findings section theme	*Codes related to topic*
Student definitions of inclusiveness	Definition: Inclusiveness
	Definition: Language Barrier
	Feel included
Relationship between language and inclusiveness	Definition: Inclusiveness
	Definition: Language Barrier
Providing information and guidance in English	Lack of information
	Lack of guidance
	Teacher's role
	English as an academic lingua Franca
Providing opportunities for English-only speaking students	Research group
	Internship

	Optional courses
	Learning Finnish
Translanguaging between Finnish and non-Finnish speaking students	University social committee experience
	Bridging gap between Finnish and non-Finnish speaking students
Maintaining linguistic inclusion in university services	E-mails
	Unisport
	Website
	Administrative issues: Application process
	Administrative issues: Finnish ID/banking
	Administrative issues: Resolved with a friend
Student's personal and emotional experiences	Feeling heard
	Feeling seen
	Expectations
	Personal experience: Active role
	Personal experience: Privileged
	Non-school related experiences

In *Table 2.* you can see how the codes for the definitions overlapped into to themes, because the definitions students provided were lengthy, and displayed a link between the two definitions. This will be elaborated on in the *Findings* section of the thesis.

In the next steps of Murray's (2009, p. 53) research, he "configures the participant's story", meaning that he writes the interview into narrative form. In this study too, a similar process is done in presenting passages from the interview, to ensure that the findings are presented in their own words. In this process, small words such as "um" "yeah" or unnecessary repetition is omitted from the passage so it can be easy to understand what is being said. Murray also sends these stories to the participants, asking for comments to ensure the story is told as the participants intended. This step has not been done for this study, since participants were not able within the timeframe to be contacted for comments. The final step in Murray´s (2009) method is conducting a cross-story analysis, meaning in this case that each interview is read and coded to see where the same themes occur in each interview. These themes are then noted

down as they emerge in the data. In this study, the four themes and the subcategories are those that are presented in the table above, forming the basis of the Findings.

3.5 Ethical considerations

Taking part in the interview was entirely voluntary and students could withdraw their responses at any point. Students agreed to take part in the interview by signing a consent form and they we provided with the privacy notice to account for the GDPR regulations of the EU (see Appendices 3 & 4), explaining the purpose of the research and that the interviews would be recorded, the data transcribed, and the findings presented in this thesis. The findings presented in the thesis are anonymized to ensure that the students cannot be identified from the responses. In addition, this thesis aims to analyse and present the data in the way that the students intended for their experiences to be shared, to ensure that the analysis process of the interview is also ethical (Hammersley, 2014). Therefore, as much as possible, the findings are presented in the student's own words.

3.6 Limitations

Before moving on to the findings, it is also important to highlight some of the limitations of the study. The findings from this study are from a small sample of six students studying in two different master's programs at a Finnish university. While this means that the findings cannot capture the perspective of the non-Finnish/Swedish speaking international student community as a whole, as there may well be international students that have experienced inclusiveness in an entirely different manner, the sample allows me to explore these students' perspectives in detail and to shed light on the kinds of challenges they have faced. However, already through this small sample of experiences, a variety of solutions for improving the inclusiveness of international non-Finnish/Swedish speaking students can be found, through the ways in which these six experiences both differ and align.

Although the interview method is the most suitable for this kind of exploratory study, for in-depth experiences, interviewing as a method itself has limitations, stemming from the positionality of the researcher. As a researcher, I am also part of the community of students, interacting with international students at the University of Helsinki, which may affect the questions I choose to ask and how the responses are analyzed. Having a different person conduct the interviews or analyze the data could result in different findings, but also having the student position may have helped me understand the interviewees and helped them feel more comfortable sharing their experiences. Also, sometimes respondents had difficulties

understanding the interview questions, or expressing their thoughts in English, which meant prompting was needed in these situations to reach an understanding. This may have guided students to respond with answers differently than how they intended to on their own. However, the interview situation is an interaction, and in analyzing the findings I attempt to keep these limitations in mind. This is done, for example, by including excerpts and explanations of the actual interview questions to present how the interaction has taken place.

4 Findings

This section presents the key findings of the research that are relevant to responding to the research questions. Segments of the interview transcripts have been included in this section, to allow students' own words to respond to the questions. These segments have been numbered with a small marking before each segment to make it clear which example is being discussed. First, the study examines the student definitions of inclusiveness (4.1), presenting how students understand the term. Since the interview responses presented a link between language and inclusiveness, section 4.2 explores this relationship. Section 4.3 presents the students experiences of inclusive practices, and this section is the most relevant for answering the question of what policies students suggest could improve their inclusion. The section is divided into the four main themes found through the analysis: *providing information and guidance in English* (4.3.1), *providing opportunities for English-only speaking students* (4.3.2), *translanguaging between Finnish and non-Finnish speaking students* (4.3.3), and finally *maintaining linguistic inclusion in university services* (4.3.4). The last section, 4.4, gives space for each student to be recognized as an individual, to highlight how experience of inclusiveness affect students differently and have an impact on their emotions.

4.1 Student definitions of inclusiveness

In order to understand students' experiences of inclusiveness, it was important to understand how students define inclusiveness, to see if this affects their experience of it. However, so that they would be able to find a definition, they were first prompted to share their experiences of inclusive- or exclusiveness in the university settings (see interview guide, appendix 1). Asking for the definition of the concept highlighted that although students can share extensively about their experiences of inclusiveness, they still struggle to define the concept. For example, below, in Example 1, Student CE1 provides a lengthy definition, and still wonders if they answered the question:

(1)

> Interviewer: Well, then, well, what is then your understanding of inclusiveness? And you gave a lot of examples, but could you maybe provide, like some kind of definition that you would give?
>
> CE1: I guess inclusivity to me would just mean like, understanding that we are here, and we exist as English-speaking students and if the university is taking on international students, and having English speaking programs, they need to remember that like, they can't just have us come here and then forget that we're here and not bothered to keep us informed or bothered to accommodate the events, to

have us be able to understand them and stuff like that. I don't know if I answered the question.

In this first example, CE1 expresses how inclusiveness to them means being acknowledged as a non-Finnish/Swedish speaking student that exists at the university. To the student, it is the responsibility of the university to not only acknowledge the students, but also to accommodate events and provide information to the students in a language that they understand. When students have an understanding of the information, and are acknowledged for their different background, it gives them the opportunity to be included in the events. This definition very much aligns with the one provided in the background for this paper, although the student is unsure if this definition answers the question.

Including in the response phrases such as "I guess" and "I don't know" (example 1) suggests that students were more nervous to define the concept, even though all students could share experiences of feeling included/excluded. In the following example, MB3 presents a difficulty to define the term with expressions like "I don't really know" and "I can't really define":

(2)

> Interviewer: based on this [discussion of what makes you feel included] how would you like - how would you understand or define like inclusiveness?

> MB3: I don't really- I mean just ensure that everyone feels comfortable in a group I guess I don't know like I can't really define but like in a way that you know everyone feels comfortable nobody wants like 'oh my goodness I wanna leave I hate these people'

The students describe the need to ensure students are "comfortable" and "accommodated", which shows that students perceive that they need to have a place to stay where they feel welcomed. CE3 also defines inclusiveness through needing to feel "safe and respected", and part of a "group". Students report that inclusiveness can be both about feeling welcomed through safety, comfort, and solidarity, but CE1 sees that it is also important to keep students informed about what is happening at the university. In both examples (1 and 2) students describe that inclusiveness, by definition, would require that the student's existence is acknowledged in a welcoming manner.

Student CE2 seemed the most prepared for this interview and especially the question of defining inclusiveness. In the beginning of the interview, they wanted a definition of the term, but they were told that one aim of the study was also to explore how students define the term themselves. The interaction went as follows:

(3)

> CE2: Yeah I wanted to ask you like how exactly you understand like inclusiveness? […]

> Interviewer: […] well actually um I'm like interested in how you define inclusiveness and like kind of trying to figure out like in this interview kind of also how students you know define it so then what like makes you feel included in in like academic or social settings […]?

> CE2: yeah okay so I have been like introduced to like two different definitions of inclusiveness like a narrow one and then like a broader one (.) the narrow one would just be like kind of like just integration whereas the broader one I feel like goes more into the direction of like equity like abolishing differences and then also providing the yeah just necessary whatever it is like guidance resources whatever to to meet the individual characteristics of the of the student which I guess is specifically important in an international setting um which is not only international but also like very like different age groups different backgrounds etcetera so there is like a great palette of different needs um so yeah so when I approach inclusivity I go with the broader one because I do think it makes more sense and it is what like education should strive for

It was interesting to notice that the student had prior to the interview considered that defining inclusiveness is difficult. Student CE2 notes that although it can be defined in many ways, to them education should strive to accommodate to individual differences and not simply integrate students into the same system. Student MB1 mentions the same idea that students' different needs in terms of inclusiveness should be considered:

(4)

> MB1: Well, for me, it's that the conditions are, like, met so that everybody can have the same opportunities or have the same chances to understand everything or to take part of any activity. So, it's not always like, giving the same things to everybody. Some people will need more things than other but that they have enough to be able to take part in the same degree.

In their own words, both MB1 and CE2 describe how it is not just about "giving the same things to everybody" (Example 4) but also providing what students need based on their "individual characteristics" (Example 3). So, whilst CE2 recognizes that there are different ways of understanding inclusiveness, it seems that MB1 would also go around the definition in terms of the "broader" approach, which aims for a shift from equality to equity. In these two examples, students highlight that they have individual needs that need to be acknowledged for inclusive practices to take place. The students discuss the importance of "providing the necessary resources" (Example 3), depending on the students' individual needs, but do not mention who is responsible for doing this. This finding highlights a need to examine how the university

defines inclusiveness, which approach they aim for, and how they perceive their role, as an institution, for attaining inclusiveness. In examples 5-6, CE3 explains how they perceive the role of the institution.

One interesting aspect to point out about these definitions is how some of the students defined the concept through the ways in which they have experienced exclusion. For example, CE1 shared experiences of feeling excluded due to a lack of communication in English especially in events held by the university and student union. The student defines that inclusiveness requires "communication in all three languages" and "accommodating" international students in the events. CE3 felt that in the beginning of their studies, due to work, they were not able to attend events that would help feeling included. In their definition of inclusiveness, they highlight the need to also recognize those who may be working or not attending classes or events:

(5)

> CE3: well inclusive is (.) well that everyone in the room, or if it's virtual like everyone present, or even the non-attending people who are sick who are working whatever, are considered that we acknowledge that you are here we agree - I think inclusiveness in my mind (.) there is an effort put by the institution or teacher or everyone to make everyone feel safe um and part of the group that is how I would roughly define inclusiveness - and respected I think yes safe and respected

Hence, it seems that although students may find the concept difficult to put into words, their own experiences of exclusiveness, shape their understanding of how settings could be more inclusive. However, it was also difficult for students to determine the degree of inclusion or exclusion. Students explained that although an experience may be non-inclusive, it does not necessarily mean that the experience is exclusive. For example, when CE3 took part in a student organization meeting that was held mostly in Finnish they explained the situation as challenging their inclusion:

(6)

> CE3: I wouldn't say I felt excluded, but I felt challenged challenged in my inclusion (.) we want to open, internationalize our university, we want students [to] be present in the decision-making bodies et cetera but then we made them feel they should be here but hmm maybe not entirely part of our (.) how to say (.) organization

It was not entirely exclusive for the student that the meeting was held in Finnish, because they further reported that there were some good arguments for why it should be so. For example, having the meeting in Finnish meant that Finnish-speaking participants could express themselves in their own language. Having this explained provided some level of inclusiveness

for CE3, but the student still felt challenged, "not entirely" part of the organization, because now they struggled to participate in the communication. Also, in these examples (5 & 6), CE3 points out that to them, the institution has a role, at least in putting an "effort" to making students feel included.

CE2 also shared of an experience where they felt excluded, because they could not participate actively in a group discussion, because the articles and websites they were reading in class were only in Finnish, with the intention that Finnish-speaking group members would translate and explain these to the rest of the group. This experience had the following impact on the student:

(7)

> CE2: I did feel excluded in that [experience] […] but then there are like people here luckily who can then help you know and then it's and then it's fine like um it is I don't know it's it's I'm wondering about like the degree of like exclusion but it's like it is a disturbance and it is like it is recognized and yeah but there then is like a solution to that most often

Like in example 6, where CE3 "felt challenged in their inclusion", in example 7 CE2 recognizes that they feel excluded but are not entirely sure if this can be considered exclusion or just a disturbance, because a solution to the problem is found. This was something that also the other interviewed students explained that although they have some experiences of non-inclusiveness, the problems can often be solved with help from their peers.

One thing to highlight is also the comparison between the length of definitions that students provided. For example, in comparison to the extensive definitions that CE1 and CE2 shared, MB3 had the most concise definition for the term:

(8)

> MB2: umm it's when like nobody is discriminated (.7) and yeah that's about it.

Overall, it was the case that MB students kept their definitions shorter, with less speculation on the possible definitions. They shared that they somewhat struggled to talk about these issues since they are not studying social sciences or education. CE students on the other hand felt ready to talk about these issues, but through that also recognized that there are different definitions to the term, as presented by example 3.

Overall, students shared that they do feel relatively included at the University of Helsinki, which can be summarized by CE2's words: "the average day here is inclusive to a degree that I do not feel actively excluded". Generally, all students shared in this experience, that even though they

do have examples of situations where they have felt excluded, they all reported that they feel included in their studies at the University Helsinki. Therefore, it is important to note that after students defined inclusiveness through their experience, they were asked how included they feel in their studies at the university. Students reported feeling "quite included" (CE1), "pretty well included" (CE3), "pretty much okay" (MB2), and even "pretty good" (MB3). MB1 even claimed at the beginning of the interview that they have only had one experience of exclusion at the university (See example 10). However, with a bit of prompting, they too could think of a few areas of improvement. All students were able to share suggestions of improvement through their experiences of non-inclusive practices at the university. Language was recognized by the students as one of the main factors contributing to ensuring more inclusive experiences, and therefore, the following section presents how language and inclusiveness are interlinked, and how linguistic practices can help shift students' experiences more towards a feeling of being "actively" included.

4.2 Relationship between language and inclusiveness

The study intentionally left language-related questions to the end of the interview, as there was a research interest in the interviews to find out all things that make students feel included in their studies. Therefore, the full extent of the interviews included questions on non-linguistic issues of inclusiveness that are not elaborated on in this study, as it is not the focus. Still, when asked if and how included students felt in general in their studies, language often came up in the answers of what kinds of practices are inclusive. Students reported feeling included when the necessary opportunities, information and guidance is provided in English. What the necessary guidance opportunities and information is depends on the context – is it a classroom setting, non-academic social setting, social committee setting (by HYY), or a university website. For example, in the interview with MB1, the student reported feeling included, because their teachers ensured that English was maintained as an academic lingua franca:

(10)

> Interviewer: what makes you feel like included in your studies? Do you feel included in your studies?

> MB1: Yeah I have only had one case where I'm not I didn't feel included but where I feel included for example in this lab course so nice that the teacher even though ten or eleven people were Finnish speaking even the teacher she made it everything in English

In this interaction, language was not mentioned by the interviewer, but the student brought the topic up themselves. The "one experience" of not feeling included was also language-related, as it was an experience, where a teacher had not provided or translated contents of the lab course in English, but instead non-English speakers had to manage on their own. Students felt that language was linked to their experience of feeling included without the interview question directing or indicating that this question should be answered in terms of language practices. In the following example, 11, CE1 shares how they had a similar experience, with the interaction following a similar pattern, where the interviewer asks about what makes them feel included, and the student responds with maintaining English as a lingua franca:

(11)

> Interviewer: but yeah, so what makes you feel included?
>
> CE1: I think when the information is in English, is really helpful. […] So definitely having like, language in all three languages that people speak here, so like English, Swedish, and Finnish is - helps me feel included as an English speaker.

CE1 was throughout the interview extremely vocal about how important it is for international students to have the relevant information provided to them in English. CE1 is aware of the language policy at the university, indicating that they do not think that inclusiveness means just accommodating to English-speakers, but also providing information in a local language, when possible, whilst still ensuring that everyone can understand in some language, and at least in the languages the university promises to provide information in. CE2 often talked in the interview how the university has made a "contract" (See example 17) to provide education and some opportunities also to English-speaking students, and to ensure inclusiveness, they must then also do this. However, if some things are in Finnish because the student lives in Finland, then that is acceptable and understandable for the student.

All students reported that the most non-inclusive experiences were those where English was not maintained as a lingua franca, in situations where they felt it should have been. However, looking at the most appropriate language practices for inclusion is more the focus of section 4.3. In this section, that looks at the relationship between language and inclusiveness, it is also important to examine whether language practices always affect student's experiences of inclusiveness/exclusiveness. Students were therefore asked about language barrier, how they define it, and whether they feel this is linked to feelings of inclusiveness. In relation to this, MB2 defined language barrier as follows:

(12)

> MB2: umm it means when […] people are talking, and they don't really know, each other languages […] umm I have like an example. We have a visiting researcher right now from France - like she does not speak English and it's very, very hard to communicate with her and she does not understand what you're saying like it takes time to communicate when there is like a language barrier.

In example 12, MB2 defines language barrier through this difficulty of communicating with another person. When the student was asked if they feel that this is linked to inclusiveness, they responded as follows:

(13)

> Interviewer: Yeah. So do you feel like language barrier is linked to like, inclusiveness or?
>
> MB2: mmm yes, I think like to be inclusive, they have to take down the language barrier. But like, English is already considered like, the common language now. And I think the university is doing like a good job in this.

MB2 reported that language and inclusion are linked in the way that "tak[ing] down" language barriers is a practice of inclusion. Once again, the question lies of who is responsible for doing this. According to the respondent, the university is doing a good job by including English as one of the main languages within the community, as this is one way of managing the barrier. MB3 shared a somewhat different experience of language barrier and inclusiveness. They argued that language does not always have to be an excluding factor:

(14)

> Interviewer: So, do you think that language barrier and inclusiveness are then like, kind of connected?
>
> MB3: I mean, I think they definitely can, but they don't generally have to. Umm I think, in a big group where all people but one doesn't speak that language, and they're all um communicating in that language, and forgetting that one person, then definitely exclusion occurs. So that's like language barrier included in that sense […] but [language barrier] doesn't necessarily have to be excluding […] I guess [be]cause [it] depends on the situation.

The respondent had difficulty coming up with examples of a situation where language barrier is not excluding. However, possibly the example 12 provided by MB2, where the French researcher could not speak English, would suffice as a situation where language barrier is not an excluding factor in a conversation, but merely one that hinders the flow of communication. Thus, these examples 12-14, from the MB students would suggest that language barriers by

default are not exclusive, as it depends on the situation. If speakers could speak in a language that all people in the group understand, then, as MB3 states, "exclusion occurs". On the other hand, if a researcher cannot speak English, and students cannot speak French, a barrier just exists that doesn't exclude anyone, but must be navigated in some way to be able to communicate.

CE students also mentioned that the main way, in an academic setting, that language barriers are exclusive, is when they pose a barrier to success in education, especially in situations where students should not be assessed linguistically. For example, student CE2 shares:

(15)

> CE2: when for instance when [the teachers] said [they] won't grade your linguistic level [meaning] it's fine if you have some language errors in your assignment I feel like that was like a very active or that I very actively felt included […] I guess there are some inclusivity mechanisms I feel like [having an] academic writing [course] could be one you know to like prepare us for the master's thesis but I actually don't know if that mechanism of inclusion works the way that it should be because I don't find them to be very effective

CE2 makes an important remark about how having an academic lingua franca does not in itself ensure that education in that language is inclusive. As students come from different linguistic backgrounds to study in this shared language, it should be expected that they have varying levels of communication or writing skills in that language, which might affect their learning and achievement in the courses. Thus, students appreciate, when possible, that teachers are more flexible with assessing the linguistic abilities of the students, if it is not a relevant aspect of grading the coursework. Students do see that academic writing courses could potentially help students to reach the same level of academic writing, but currently, according to CE2 these courses are not effective enough in this attempt. However, the student was unable to pinpoint what exactly is causing this feeling that it is not quite as effective as it could be, or what could be a better solution.

4.3 Student's experiences of inclusive practices at the University of Helsinki

As mentioned above, the interviewed students' experiences of inclusive practices revolved a lot around the language practices of the university services, students, and staff. This section presents the students experiences, and strives to do so in a positive manner, providing suggestions for policies to help students feel more included rather than merely presenting problems. To summarize the section, 4.1.1. examines how, in the classroom setting, it is most important that information and guidance is provided in English, as this is the language students

expected to receive their education in. 4.2.2. presents how in the academic setting, both in and out of the classroom, it is important that the university provides opportunities for students in English, in the same way it provides opportunities for Finnish-speaking students. 4.2.3. looks at how translanguaging can be used as a tool to bridge the gap between Finnish- and non-Finnish speaking students, to help students integrate into the Finnish setting. Finally, 4.2.4. focuses on linguistic inclusion specifically in the university services, so non-Finnish speaking students can benefit from these services as well.

4.3.1 Providing information and guidance in English

In general, the students interview reports suggest that ensuring education in English is essential for inclusiveness in academic settings. Many of the students mentioned proving their English language abilities as part of the application process, so it makes sense for them to expect that the studies would also be in English. When asked about their experiences of inclusiveness in EMI settings, the overall experiences seemed positive mainly because English was maintained as an academic lingua franca. For instance, CE1 shares that:

(16)

> CE1: I feel quite included [in the academic setting] because the only classes I really take are in English […] and so because of that, I don't really have any issues.

In this example 16, CE1 mentions that when classes are in English, there are no issues complicating their studies. The student was then asked if other languages are used outside of the classroom, and if this is an issue to them. The student responded that they could think of some situations when different languages are being used within the university context, and it does not always bother them. The student reported that the solution is not that the university should be an English-only space, as the use of different languages makes sense in some social settings (such as casually spending time with friends who speak different languages). They explained that if information necessary for them to understand something is only presented in Finnish, then that becomes an issue affecting their experience of inclusiveness. CE3 was asked this same question, and they shared:

(17)

> Interviewer: So what do you think is like [stumbling on words] what's the difference like why sometimes it [the use of different languages around you] bother[s] you know like -?

CE2: yeah so like every time it is like about like about my education I would say about because like we do to some degree have like a contract with the university right they are supposed to give us like learning possibilities or you know they promise us and we signed up to and whenever I feel like there is a barrier for me or for some other students within that contract within that setting then I experience it as disturbing [yeah] I did not like make a contract like you know it did like when it comes to like Unisport you know this isn't like this is at the end of the day this is not important if I know whether I have to lift my right or left arm [both laughing] you know so but you know when it's about like this like small because it is like it is at the end like about information

This is the example 17, that was mentioned before, where CE2 explains that they have "a contract with the university", where they expect that the education is provided in English, and any information necessary for their education should also, therefore, be provided in English. This means courses, lectures, and all the necessary tools needed for coursework. The student contrasts education with free-time activities, stating that knowing what to do in a gym class "is small", and there is no contract in free time. However, to CE2, education is an important concern, where information should be provided in a language that they do understand. To CE2, it is the insitution's role to provide this information in English. Therefore, CE2 felt "challenged in their inclusion", in two different courseworks, where the required reading to complete the task was only provided in Finnish. These were both groupworks, where it was ensured that a Finnish-speaking student could then translate the readings, but to CE2 it would have been important that they could have had a role in the groupwork and be able to understand the information themselves.

CE1 had not experienced these groupwork tasks, but when asked the same question, they also spoke about the importance of receiving the necessary "information":

(18)

Interviewer: Okay. Well, can you then explain the difference between these situations? […] what is it that makes the fact that people are using a different language feel exclusive? Like –

CE1: I think it has to do with when it's something that would pertain to me. So, for example, emails or text messages of a group that I'm in, or language that's used at an event, these are all forms of information that I need. And if someone is having a private conversation, I don't need to know what they're talking about. That's their own conversation. But if I'm getting communicated to – someone is sending me something actively, or you're talking to me actively, but it's not in my language, then I'm missing out on information that others around me can understand. Because I don't speak that language. And that's the difference.

CE1's experiences of lack of necessary information came less from the classroom or coursework setting, but often through their experiences from organizational work in an international student organization for HYY. These experiences will be elaborated on in section 4.2.1, but for the purpose of this section, it is important to notice how in these examples (17 and 18) the students reported that using different languages that are not spoken by all people present is only exclusive is information needed for them to take part is not provided in English.

According to the students, there is one person who has the role of maintaining and ensuring English as a lingua franca in the classroom: the teacher. Examples of non-inclusive experiences were situations where teachers failed to maintain English in their own teaching, for instance, not translating slides or student comments that were in English, or in the worst cases, giving assignments that can only be completed with knowledge of Finnish. For example, MB1 shares:

(19)

> MB1: No, like all almost well, he used English, like in the presentations for the whole course that he said in front and everybody watched. But then, like every other explanation, or when he approaches tables or something, everything was in Finnish, even to my table where I was. So he was like, in Finnish, and then my partner in the lab knew that I didn't speak Finnish. So [the lab partner] translated later everything.

Example 19 shows how the teacher can create a situation where the student feels excluded from the class due to language barrier causing a lack of information. Luckily, the student can manage the situation thanks to their Finnish lab partner, who is able to translate what is going on, but it still feels somewhat unfair to the student that the lab partner has to translate everything. This is similar to the briefly aforementioned experiences of CE1 and CE2, the former who could not participate in a HYY inclusion training (CE1's case, examined in more detail in example 29) and the latter who could not participate in a class groupwork (CE2), since information was only provided in Finnish in both cases. In these situations, the international students had to rely on the translations of the board members (CE1) or groupwork members (CE2) who spoke Finnish. In all three examples, CE1, CE2, and MB1 reported feeling that it was unfair to have to rely on and place the responsibility on the Finnish-speaking student to attend the class/meeting, listen, and translate the necessary information. In example 20, MB1 explains that a major issue, when these language barriers occur in class, is that it results in a lack of knowledge. They share:

(20)

> MB1: Well, it's also like, there's some times when [the lab partner is] not the teacher, so [the lab partner] doesn't understand everything to also be able to explain

it. Or, like, there were some parts where it was too long to actually remember everything to say again. […] now if we have to write reports and stuff, I have to do a lot of research extra to go at the point that all of the others on […] the other two students that are international also told me they didn't really like that lab too much because it was like, we didn't feel included there that much

These three cases, of CE1, CE3, and MB1, present how the language barrier affects the non-Finnish speaking student's access to information and knowledge that is relevant to them. Having a Finnish-speaking student translate the information does not suffice, in a situation where it would be the responsibility of the authority, in this case the teacher or HYY, to provide that information in a language that the students can understand. Not only does the Finnish-speaking student have the responsibility to ensure that the student feels included, but they also have to ensure that all the relevant information is passed on to the non-Finnish speaking student. Essentially this means that they have to teach the other student either the content of the lab course, or in CE1's case, the content of an inclusion training (see example 29). However, since all students are on the same level of information, it would be a more inclusive policy to simply make the information accessible in English, so no information is lost due to a student translation.

Students also had positive experiences, where teachers would make them feel included despite having different languages spoken around them. For example, MB3 felt very lucky to be part of a lab course, where the teacher was inclusive of the international students:

(21)

> MB3: I'm thinking is we had one lab course where the students of - often ask questions in Finnish and the professor answered in Finnish and then - but then the professor actually addressed this issue from themselves saying 'hey I realize I'm answering a lot of questions in Finnish so I would rather prefer if you could ask the questions in English or the students that do not understand it and say, hey, we do not understand just speak up so it can be changed'. So I heard of a lab course where it was the other way around, where it was really bad. But I didn't take that one, I took only the one where I was lucky in the way of the professor themselves recognised the issue.

When English was maintained as the academic lingua franca, students reported feeling included and "lucky" to be part of these classes. However, in a course when this is not done, the experience is described as "really bad". Hence, the teacher also has the possibility to create positive, inclusive experience, through the use of English as a lingua franca. However, in this case, the teacher also encourages non-Finnish speaking students to take a role, and also communicate when they are not understanding something, so the situation can be changed.

MB1 also shares of a positive experience, with a teacher who made the class feel more inclusive through offering a class in English, although Finnish-speakers were there as well:

(22)

> MB1: in [another] lab course last year, we were 15. And like 10 of them were Finnish people and five of us were international. But we made a really nice group. Because the teacher like not many of those, but encouraged that we speak to each other, and like really made the whole lab in English. So, we could all become good friends, and we still speak and hang out until today.

MB1 also shared that they can understand if teachers speak Finnish amongst themselves prior to class, because this pre-class communication, according to MB1, "is not for the student to listen to". Hence, when the information is not relevant to the student, the use of Finnish is not a problem. However, when addressing the class, even minor things should be translated, so students that do not speak Finnish are not left feeling confused, as CE2 felt in a workshop:

(23)

> CE2: I was in a workshop um I don't know I think like last week or two weeks ago when the professor like said goodbye um she wrote that in Finnish umm and I was like hey like what is going on […] it wasn't something important as it turned out but then I thought well why couldn't you have like written this in English as well you know […] so that everyone like would be able to understand I guess this is a minor thing and this doesn't have like any consequences really

Although the situation, as the student states has no consequence, it was a moment of the classroom that they still remembered and felt important to raise in a discussion about inclusive practices in the university setting. According to the students, teachers and staff should therefore strive to stick to English as an academic lingua franca, as this is the language students expect class to take part in, so they can understand. In section 4.2.3 we look at how translingual practices, such as the one in example 23, where the teacher says goodbye in Finnish, can still be inclusive if the translingual practice is handled in an inclusive manner.

4.3.2 Providing opportunities for English-only speaking students

Borrowing CE1's words, since the international students "exist here at the university, as English-speaking students" (example 1), they should be provided with the same opportunities for both educational and professional development, as their Finnish-speaking peers. Students shared how one of the ways the university can accomplish this is through ensuring that non-Finnish speaking students can also find optional courses, internships, research groups, and/or student organization work to take part in. This section examines students' experiences with

these opportunities, and how this has affected their feelings of inclusiveness. Students from both the CE and MB program shared that when they were restricted with opportunities to join a research group or take part in optional courses due to language barrier, it challenged their feeling of inclusiveness.

In the following example, MB3 shares how they struggled with finding suitable optional courses, since the ones they were originally interested in when applying, turned out to be available only in Finnish. The student thought that the courses would be in English, as the course descriptions provided on the website and the course enrolment platform (SISU), were in English. To their disappointment, they could not take this course. MB1 shares a similar experience, however, they could not partake in a mandatory course, as it was organized differently for the students that did not speak Finnish. Example 24 present this experience in the students own words:

(24)

> MB1: for the mandatory courses, there is one thing that I have to take either one book exam that is like super long to do or to study two courses. But those both courses are in Finnish. So I don't have an option. I have to take the book exam for that. That would have been super nice to have the courses in English because like in courses, you always learn more than only reading the book, you also get the experience of teachers.

This issue was not completely related to the student's feeling of inclusiveness, but something they wanted to mention as restricting their opportunities at the university. It also hindered their learning, something that would be important to ensure that students are receiving the same quality of education. When students experience many of these restricting factors, then it tends to challenge their inclusion.

CE students especially discussed issues of inclusiveness in regard to joining research groups in the university. CE1 shared that in their own research group, they feel very included since they accommodate to the English-speaking students, although the research group operates in Swedish:

(25)

> CE1: they now hold the meetings that we come to in English so that actually is a really good part of inclusivity. Like on their part, they're doing a really good job of still allowing us to join and still keeping us engaged. But then, I think, with other research groups that are operating in Finnish for example, like, it would be under support a small group. So, it's not too hard, but like bigger groups, like sometimes

it's like, oh, sorry, like this group operates in Finnish, like you can't, like really join. And so that's definitely like, a setback and like, makes it hard for to feel included in an academic setting.

CE1 proposes a way that research groups can make students feel more included, by also hosting meetings in English and inviting the students to this group. However, CE1 also notices that this is not the case in all research groups. CE2 also shared that they and a couple of their friends have been struggling to join research groups, since language barriers restrict students from joining some of them.

In terms of internships, students had varying experiences. For example, CE3 shares that they have seen many opportunities for English-speaking students to take part in traineeships, which has made them feel included. They were unsure if there are more opportunities for Finnish students, but at least felt like this was something the university was doing well in terms of providing opportunities. Also, MB1 saw that this has been quite equal, when they were asked if opportunities are equal for both Finnish- and non-Finnish speaking students:

(26)

MB1: I feel like the same opportunities, I have not really applied to anything […] but some of my friends - international friends have have gotten jobs. And I have also seen like, Finnish friends not gotten them. So […] there is no distinction between if you are Finnish, you have more chances just because you are Finnish.

Both MB1 and CE3 agreed that the university is providing opportunities for non-Finnish speaking students, and when these opportunities are available, students who do not speak Finnish have equal opportunity. However, CE3 said they are unable to compare the situation to Finnish-speaking students, because of course, as the students live in Finland, there may be more opportunities available. Relating to this, MB1 states in example 26 that Finnish people have "more chances", because there are more places to apply for. However, that is not something that the university can affect, as all they can do is provide opportunities within the university. Both MB1 and CE3 students feel content with the opportunities available within the university. MB2 on the other hand, has not had this same experience. They share:

(27)

MB2: I have one thing to say um international students in thesis, master thesis and internship settings. It's very hard to get paid. And I have Finnish people in my lab, they get paid a lot to work three days a week for their thesis. Now, I've been working there since October, and I haven't seen a single cent and like if everybody else is getting paid, and then it's me and the other international students that are the ones that work the most because we are always there and we don't get paid even though

our like big boss keeps saying yeah, yeah, you're gonna get the pay for the three months but it's 400 euros. But we've been working there like I've been working there since October. My friend has been working there since July. And we're basically just work[ing] for free.

In example 27, MB2 claims that Finnish students may be treated differently, or at least for some reason are getting paid to work in the same lab, whilst MB2 and their international peers are not receiving pay for the same work. It still remains unclear why this is the case, whether this means the Finnish students are working under a different contract, with more clear guidelines for what they should do to be paid, or if the international students have just not been informed about how they could also be getting paid. Whatever the reason may be, it would be fair to provide international students with the same opportunities for paid internship work as their Finnish peers.

Students CE1 and CE3 were both active in student organization work under HYY. Therefore, they both shared many experiences from these events, about what was working towards inclusiveness and what could still be improved. CE3 shared that overall, being part of the student organization work was an important experience towards feeling included:

(28)

> CE3: being able to be part of this [role in organization] or attend events also that [are] organized I think that's the main or central part in how I feel included and I compare it to my exchange where I was not familiar at all with Finnish universities and from in my home country it's not that it's not this tradition of student organization so it's not that strong so when I arrived I was not really meeting people […] I would say once I um got to know a bit how it works here with the time then I was able to be more active again and feel more more included

The student's exchange was also in Finland, but at the time they were not aware of how student life in Finland is centered around student organization work and attending these events. Hence, during their exchange, they met mostly other exchange students or tutors. Although this exchange experience was positive and led the student to apply for a master's at the University of Helsinki as well, CE3 reports that only now, having the opportunity to take part in student organization work and events, do they feel included in Finnish student life. CE3 has even started studying Finnish now, showing how much they are taking a role in integrating into the culture. Hence, having the opportunity to take in the same kinds of activities as Finnish-speaking students, provides international students with opportunities to feel more included within the Finnish student community, in comparison to being included only in the international student or exchange student community.

Although both CE1 and CE3 reported feeling lucky to be part of organizational work under HYY; they both shared how the main issue challenging their feeling of inclusiveness in this work occurs when it is unclear which languages should be used in the events, meetings, or trainings. For example, CE1 mentioned an event-related experience, sharing a concrete issue that they think HYY is responsible for resolving. As part of a student organization work, CE1 was provided with the opportunity to take part in a training for student organizations, where one of the trainings was about how to include international students within the community. However, this event was only held in Finnish. CE1 reported:

(29)

> CE1: the entire training was in Finnish and no interpreter was provided […] so that was really confusing to me, if they're going to talk about how to promote inclusivity of international students, […] at least provide some kind of interpreter or something like that

CE1, together with the other students from their organization, took it upon themselves to inform HYY that they in fact need English language interpreters to take part in this training. However, the response from HYY was that they do not have the funds to provide an interpreter or translator for the event and suggested that a Finnish-speaking student from the organization should take part in the meeting. CE1 did not take this issue lightly, and the following lengthy interview passage attempts to portray the extent that this experience had on the student and their emotions:

(30)

> CE1: as an organization, as a board, it was really frustrating, because it's like, we only have a couple Finnish speaking people in our board. And it's like a lot to just put all the responsibility on them. When also we operate in English, like we should be able to go to these events and these trainings that are put on by HYY. […] the University has a bunch of International Programs like it's not just us […] if HYY is putting on events like this they should accommodate for Swedish- and English-speaking students as well like without us having to ask and then saying they don't have the budget, because like, that's really important that all the organizations are able to come to these trainings.

CE1 reports feeling "frustrated" and "excluded" as an international, non-Finnish speaking student due to this event only being held in Finnish, when it is highly relevant for international students to attend. The student highlights the irony of hosting an event intended to improve inclusiveness for international students at the university, that excludes international, non-Finnish/Swedish speaking students. Especially, when the solution to the problem is finding a

Finnish-speaking student within the organization to take part in the training and translate it to the others, this simply further differentiates Finnish and non-Finnish speaking students within the organization, putting responsibility on the former and excluding the latter. Especially when the students would be eager to take part in these events, it appears to be very frustrating that they are unable due to language barrier, when the training should be given to all organizations. In this quote, CE1 repeatedly mentions how important it would be that all student organization members could take part in trainings that are intended to improve their organizational work, particularly when it is international students that are not as familiar with student organization work in Finland. The ones operating in English are still a part of HYY and these students should therefore still have the same opportunities to feel included. This was an example of a case where CE1 was not be acknowledged as an English-speaking student, and not provided with the necessary information in English, hence leading them to feel excluded.

4.3.3 Translanguaging between Finnish and non-Finnish speaking students

Although students expect teachers and students to stick mostly to English in the EMI settings of the university (excluding pre-class talk), what the students consider to be appropriate language practices in social settings vary. In general, students appeared to be understanding of translanguaging in more casual social settings, because they come from multilingual backgrounds. Hence, they may even appreciate hearing other students speak in their native languages, because they find this warming from their own experiences. For example:

(31)

> CE2: when I was in Norway I really missed just like […] my native language and I was happy that I had a roommate who also spoke the language so that we could talk […] but then we also had like a roommate who didn't speak that language and sometimes you know it was like it was totally okay and sometimes I would say you […] I just have to like just briefly like talk about something which I might not be able to express as well in English […] and it is like because for some people it is really like part of their part of their identity and it is different I am like a different person to some degree in the different languages and it's like […] I just hear people like speaking other languages I'd rather like I enjoy it and I know how beneficial it can be for one's own like identity and staying connected to its cultural background

CE1 shared in the background section of the interview, that this is their first experience studying in a multilingual university, where English is not the majority local language. CE1 speaks mostly only English and was also most vocal about maintaining an English as a lingua franca policy in the classroom. However, even to CE1 it is not necessary to speak English in social contexts, if the conversation is not relevant to them:

(32)

> CE1: if I'm having a conversation with multiple people that speak the same language, I've never had an experience where they just shut me out of the conversation and start talking in their native language (.) like generally if two people are talking in their native - two or three or whatever people - are talking in their native language it'll be because like I'm not part of that conversation (.) I'm just like overhearing it and that doesn't bother me.

Students appreciate hearing languages around them, and translanguaging provides opportunities for students to learn from each other, laugh and communicate in ways that include everyone in the conversation despite varying levels of linguistic knowledge. For example, MB2 presents an experience of how a lack of understanding can still be considered humorous:

(33)

> MB2: I have a friend a Finnish friend she speaks Italian, English, Spa- Spanish, and something else. And sometimes, I'm like, I can't find a word in English. And I'll just say it in Italian. And she's like, yes, this thing and she says [it] in Finnish. And I'm like - you think I know what [that] means? But like it's very funny. and it's just a friend group so

Hence, students can understand the use of different languages, and even appreciate translingual practices as a method of inclusion. Such practices enable students to express themselves, and their own identities, using their varying linguistic repertoires, building bridges between the language barriers. These different experiences students have had, from different backgrounds, display that students do not require that, under all circumstances, the university should strive for an English-only policy. Instead, translingual practices in appropriate and understandable situations actually help students feel comfortable, safe, and able to be themselves.

As CE1 mentioned, the feeling of exclusion would require that the student is intentionally left out of a conversation that could have been relevant to them, had they understood the language. In these situations, students suggest it is helpful to either translate or switch back to a common language. MB1 shares their experience of how code-switching can serve as an inclusive translingual practice:

(34)

> MB1: because it's automatic, you start speaking in your language, but then they always try to switch to English again. So it felt like really nice to be included. There, you make a lot of friends and you learn also a lot by what they speak, even when you're not in the conversation, but like just hearing in the lab, whatever people are saying. So yeah, everything together has been really nice. Also, when we hang out with them later, they also always speak English with us. And when they find out

like there is an activity they like, we have our WhatsApp group and they put it there. So we go. It's always like a mix between internationals and Finnish people.

In example 34, the student shares how through a lab course, where the teacher encouraged all students to speak in English, they met Finnish-speaking students, who then have the knowledge of different kinds of "activities", such as social events, going on in the university. Hence, even within the classroom, by making active decisions towards bridging the gap between English-only and Finnish-speaking students, international students can become more aware of events that are only known to Finnish-speaking students. Although this has helped MB1 take part in these events, this of course still highlights the issue that those students that do not have Finnish-speaking friends may have less awareness of the activities that could interest them within the university. When students are involved in these activities, they do not need to be completely in English, if translingual practices take place to make them more inclusive. For instance, MB1 shares the following experience:

(35)

> MB1: we went with [a student group] to a city like last year and like they explained everything in English and Finnish. So, it was good, well-organized because everybody could understand. The[n] like [the] activities they made were mostly in Finnish. But I can imagine, of course, like it's a Finnish thing and the songs are in Finnish so you can translate those. But everything, like all the explanations were in English, too. And we had the books with the song so we can like, follow what it said there even though we didn't understand it. But it was that was like fun thing to do.

This is one way of allowing international students to have similar experiences as their Finnish-speaking peers, so they can be included in the university context and within the Finnish context. In this example 35 and the following one, 36, both students mention that they can understand why some things are in Finnish, because of being in Finland. MB1 states that "of course" some songs will be in Finnish because "it's a Finnish thing" (Example 35). Similarly, CE3 shares how they expect some communication to occur in Finnish, because they are living in Finland. They share the following example from a gym class:

(36)

> CE2: when I'm in a Unisport course and there's a course only in Finnish and not in English I don't mind like you know this could be something where I could feel excluded I feel like because I could why isn't there like a broader you know like why do they why don't they have more courses in English but yeah it's that's just the way it is and that is fine but when it's yeah when it's like it in an educational

setting or a teaching setting um it's very it's just very easy to identify the things you don't understand

The student not only recognises why someone could view this as non-inclusive but highlights that they think it is not as important for the sports class to be in English, in comparison to something related to their education (yet again contrasting between education and free-time activities, and how the former requires a need for information to be translated). However, CE3 made some arguments for why even free-time activities organized by the university services, should also be provided in English, to be inclusive of non-Finnish/Swedish speaking students. This argument (example 41) is explored in section 4.3.4., as the statement falls more under the topic of maintaining linguistic inclusion in university services rather than student experiences of translanguaging in social settings. However, what is important to note here is that for some students, a Unisport class is an example of a social, leisure activity that can be in Finnish, as students live in Finland, whilst other students view it as something the university provides as a service that should therefore also be in provided in English.

Students mentioned different examples of how they do understand the use of Finnish, within the Finnish context. For example, MB3 could explain this from their own experience of living in their home country, in Europe, where nobody speaks English. They often had to be the one translating and helping their friends navigate the different linguistic barriers at the university, and therefore can understand why not all things can be in English, in a country where the local language is not English:

(37)

> MB3: so I think I lived through it from the other side sometimes. […] So therefore, I'm like really fine with it happening to me in a way.

Although the student says they are "fine" with this situation, it does not necessarily mean that there is nothing the university can do to help. One way that the MB students suggested could help bridge the gap between English and Finnish-speaking students is through making language studies more accessible for the students. MB1 shares how they have been feeling included, when Finnish-speaking students help them learn instead of switching back to English:

(38)

> MB1: Well, mostly with this group of friends I tell you that like my group of friends from the university that they are, half of them are Finnish and sometimes I hang out only with the Finnish people and but yeah I always feel included […] they speak Finnish but then when they notice that I'm near they they speak in English or if they

know that I'm learning they also try to speak slower and to explain me words or things and I try to answer in Finnish and they always correct me because it's so hard to speak Finnish.

Hence some students are willing to learn the majority local language Finnish, as they recognise that inclusiveness does not mean that everything should always be in English. Students also see that inclusiveness is also up to the individual to make an effort of including themselves in the interaction. It makes sense that students must see some effort, because they can only be included in communities that they wish to be a part of. Therefore, even if the institution or other students have some role in accommodating to the students, the students themselves also have a role in including themselves.

If one way that students can help themselves feel included is through learning the local languages, then the university can provide support for students to accomplish this. For example, by providing language courses. MB3 shares that is one way of helping students that are planning to stay in Finland after their studies integrate into the community, although that is not what MB3 intends to do at the current moment. However, they would appreciate having more language courses available, so students seeking to learn would have the opportunity. In their own words:

(39)

> MB3: Language courses that are offered are a bit messed up. So that's also an issue. […] I took a course, which was for period 1 and 2, 1A, and then I wanted to take 1B. But I wasn't able to do that in period three, because it's not offered because it's only offered in period four. So I had to wait an entire period. And then I forgot everything, obviously, like I don't remember. And then when this course started, I needed to drop out because it was impossible for me to like know anything. […] and especially for people that actually want to learn Finnish, and then the courses are only offered in one time slot' it's very difficult for you to say, hey um, I'm actually interested in learning Finnish, because I want to build my life here, then you cannot actually learn it because courses are clashing.

Overall, students reported feeling very included in the international settings, where translanguaging takes place in inclusive ways. Students that were learning Finnish (e.g., CE3, MB2) explained that this helped their sense of belonging in Finland, which they at least experience as positively impacting their feeling of inclusiveness. However, whether students were learning Finnish or not, they recognized that in order to feel more included, they would appreciate bridging the gap between Finnish and non-Finnish speaking students, so that all international students can still have the experiences of studying in Finland. Translingual

practices provide one way of ensuring that students from different backgrounds can come together to feel included in the university and learn to communicate in shared languages with one another.

4.3.4 Maintaining linguistic inclusion in university services

This section looks at the kinds of experiences students had with the university services that challenged or improved their experiences of inclusiveness. Students talked about the application process, the university websites, and also about the student cafeteria (UniCafe) and sports facilities (Unisport). Also, this section looks at the student experiences with communication from the university, specifically focusing on student's experiences of e-mail communication, which came up in many interviews.

The first example looks at the case of Unisport, as in the previous sections it was mentioned that CE2 reported it is not expected for these services to be provided in English, since they are free-time activities provided in a Finnish-speaking country. However, CE3, coming from a background of organizational work, viewed the case of Unisport services from a different perspective:

(41)

> CE3: It's not my personal experience but it's still a relevant to mention [that] […] every degree student even international ones we have to pay the fees for the student union right the HYY then we have a lot of services like uh healthcare or Unisport but there are still in the number more events or more um I'm searching for the word - services basically accessible in Finnish and we pay the same fees you know so it's like maybe we could I'm not saying we should have everything in English I really am also defending multilingualism and languages but I'm just saying maybe we could find other solutions or reflect at least on it and not being like either no no no we don't want to give up Finnish or yes we want everything in English

Important to mention about example 41 is that CE3 studies linguistics, and in their organizational work for HYY often discusses these issues of how to balance between multilingualism and providing equal access to English-speaking students. What CE3 notices then, and points out, is that since non-Finnish speaking students still have to pay the same fees, it would be important that they would receive equal level of services for this money. However, it is still not clear from this response whether the fact that the services are mostly in Finnish is directly affecting students' experiences of inclusiveness, or more just something that the student union should consider and be aware of. As CE3 states, this is not directly their experience, but more something they wanted to point out.

In the application process, students had both experiences that made them feel welcomed, but also experiences that challenged their feeling of inclusion. For example, CE2 was on their first attempt rejected into the program because they failed to provide the correct document proving their language abilities, although their degree is in English. They understood that it is enough to prove that they have a degree in English, but the university would have wanted a specific exam. The student wishes that this would have been communicated more clearly. MB2, on the other hand, felt that the application process and starting their studies at Helsinki was made very easy due to clear communication on the website:

(42)

> MB2: But then there were there is like a whole page web page on the University website that um ex-explains very well what to do. And so that helped me a lot I think the university has a lot of services for to get international students like acquainted like it helps a lot having the guidance from the university in the first like month or so that you're here that they tell you 'yes, you have to do this this this this and that' so yeah, that that helped a lot

Hence, having websites and clear guidance also in the application process is something that students appreciate, to feel more welcomed by the university.

One main concern mentioned by the students was how difficult it is to navigate e-mails, as often they are only in Finnish and/or Swedish, so students are unaware of whether they should react to these. Originally e-mails were not mentioned as one of the prompts in the interview guide, until CE1 and MB1 mentioned it in the first interviews. Example 43 presents CE1's report:

(43)

> CE1: A lot of the times I get like emails that are completely in Finnish and it's just like I don't even bother to try because it's like I put it into Google Translator and then it's like usually really not accurate and like doesn't really make that much sense and then it's like a lot of effort to just like, figure out what one email says sometimes […] it could be telling me about an event but I wouldn't even know because if it's just in Finnish like I'm not going to bother to read it

After this statement, CE1 mentioned how important it would be to have the e-mails, again, in all three languages, so they would not have to struggle with translating the e-mails, sometimes to find that the e-mails are not even relevant to them. Since students are receiving multiple e-mails a day, as CE1 mentions, it is not worth the effort. MB1 also brought up the e-mail communication, as a language barrier that is inconvenient, but does not necessarily challenge their inclusion, since these e-mails have often not been relevant:

(44)

> MB1: Sometimes I get emails, like only in Finnish but then I - for those I use Google Translate […] And mostly they have been only two words like Finnish students, so it doesn't really matter that it comes in Finnish because like it's not for us.

Thus, sometimes e-mails may intentionally be only in Finnish, as that information is not seen to be relevant for international students. However, students cannot always make this assumption, for example, after being prompted about this, MB3 shares:

(45)

> Interviewer: and yeah what about like email communication like -
>
> MB3: oh my goodness that's what I actually forgot yeah [e-mails] are a lot of times in Finnish and I just delete them because if they're in Finnish I'm just like yeah you know what bother not I won't understand it anyways so I think this is why I'm also not bothered about it but this is actually an issue I didn't realize that a lot of the times the emails are just in Finnish and you just don't know what's going on and then you're just like OK I guess I delete it and then as I said the party room is downstairs and if there's a party announced in Finnish and then I just deleted it I'll be upset in a few days or so because it's gonna be freaking loud so if there's something important I'm definitely gonna miss if it's completely in Finnish because I'm just too lazy to bother to Google translate it

The interview question is left in this excerpt to portray that the response came through prompting. The response shows how prompting raised an important aspect of the topic that the student might have forgotten had it not been mentioned by the prompt. Hence, MB3 also has had this experience of wondering whether or not to Google translate the e-mails they receive in Finnish. However, they reported that when they choose not to try to understand the message, this is "laziness" on their part instead of exclusiveness from the sender of the e-mail, yet again raising the question of what the roles are in terms of making students feel included.

However, students do report feeling "upset" if the information would have been relevant for them to know has not been translated. For instance, in example 43 CE1 would have liked to know about events relevant to them (even if they are in Finnish) and in example 45 MB3 would have wanted to know about the parties in the common room to be aware of the disturbance. It was interesting that although all three students had noticed this issue of e-mail communication only being in Finnish, it affected them differently. MB1 felt seemingly less bothered by the e-mails, as after translating them they found that they were not relevant to non-Finnish speakers. Meanwhile, CE1 felt that it would be more inclusive to have these also in English, since putting the e-mails into Google Translate takes time and does not always provide accurate translations.

MB3 was more bothered by the e-mails than MB1 but did not mention this issue necessarily challenging their inclusiveness, but instead just being a bit of a burden. Hence, students do not always experience the same kind of behavior to be exclusive/inclusive, and it varies depending on their understanding of what their role is in the situation to be included.

4.4 Inclusiveness as an individual and emotional experience

As these experiences of inclusiveness were based on the students' personal accounts, it became clear that the experiences of inclusive and exclusive practices vary between individuals, and emotionally impact each one differently. These experiences were not always directly related to linguistic concerns, but some of them are worth mentioning in this section as relevant findings, as it relates to the students experiences as non-Finnish international degree students at the university. For example, one of the students struggled to receive the appropriate medication for a diagnosis. Their diagnosis was from another European country and was not recognised by the student healthcare service YTHS. The student was therefore unable to buy medication for it in Finland. The student explained how this experience was not necessarily exclusive but has certainly challenged their inclusion by creating some obstacles in studying without the medication they would need for their condition.

One of the main concerns that CE2 reported was the of feeling not being "an agent of their own learning", which would be important for them to feel included in their studies. Their main example of this has been how the master's thesis seminar is organized in the program. They share:

(46)

> CE2: I feel like that our learning or like our professional development was not necessarily the center of attention but rather I don't know that we finish on time [laughs] that there is this very specific climate this is how we do [our master's thesis] […] we all have to have our like topic ready at the same time and like kind of- you know kind of like know what we wanna do [and who are our] supervisors [which] is for me like in complete violation of inclusiveness

The student would have preferred that they would have just been given the tools and instructions for writing the thesis but given the academic freedom and flexibility to then come up with a topic, supervisor, and theoretical framework, in their own time. Having to complete these tasks on a specific schedule makes the student feel they do not have the space to reflect on and learn the important things for themselves, but instead that they must complete the thesis as soon as possible, and to graduate as soon as possible – preferably on time and with their peers.

CE2 also felt that admission into the university itself is more difficult for international students, as they need to apply over a Christmas break with a short window from December to January. Within the application process they need to submit documents such as a transcripts of records that need to be signed, translated and stamped copies of the original documents. MB2 shared this same experience, adding on to it that this was expensive and difficult to acquire, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, over a Christmas break. Regarding this, it would be important to understand what the reason is for the university having an application period for international students different to the one for Finnish-speaking programs. Having a clearer understanding would allow international students to better determine whether this is exclusive, or if there is a reasonable explanation for why the university must organize the admissions for international students in this way.

Somewhat unrelated to the university context, when asked about administrative issues, CE1, MB1, and MB3 all shared examples of the struggles of being non-Finnish speaking when having to deal with registration into the country, receiving a bank account, and, at that time, COVID-19 vaccines. They shared that most Finnish webpages for public services, such as healthcare (for COVID vaccines) and transportation (student discount for the public service HSL) require strong identification through a Finnish bank account. But already the process of opening a bank account is difficult, when most of the webpages and mail coming from the bank are only in Finnish. Students did find their way around this, by asking for help from Finnish-speaking friends. MB3 however highlights that this is not always the best option for everyone:

(47)

> MB3: [when] applying to the bank, all documents tend to be in Finnish or Swedish, or rather, only Finnish sometimes […] so basically, these are sometimes challenges, but then you can also ask people for help. So that's at least something even though I'm not sure you should get used to sharing with everyone your bank details, maybe not

Whether it is a good idea to share banking details with peers is a personal affair, but it is alarming if students feel that this is the only or best way around the problem. Although the university is not responsible for translating these documents, it should be something they would be aware of as another barrier that non-Finnish speaking students must deal with when starting their studies at the university, to see if better solutions could be found.

Whether students felt excluded, included, challenged in their exclusion, or found themselves "pondering about the degree of inclusion", overall the responses showed that inclusiveness is

an emotional experience that everyone undergoes individually and personally. Students reported feeling "frustrated", "challenged", "like they are not being listened to" whenever they felt that something could be handled in a more inclusive manner. However, when they felt "heard", "comfortable", or noticed, they reported feelings of inclusion. Providing students with these positive emotional experiences can be done in simple manners by both students and professors. For example, looking back at example 21, MB3 reported feeling lucky that the teacher recognized the issue, pointed it out, and addressed the class to act in a certain way, so all students can understand what is going on. When students have these concerns about inclusiveness, the interviewed students at least reported that they would appreciate if teachers could take the time to listen to the feedback and reflect on what could be done better. Students often mentioned in the interviews that they have been "lucky" or "privileged" to have teachers that recognize them. Students also felt better when they were helped by peers or found their own ways to include themselves in the setting. These findings based on positive experiences can be used as good examples when creating policies for linguistic inclusion.

5 Discussion

The research aim of this study was to provide feedback to the university on international student's inclusiveness, by examining the current state of it through the following research questions:

1. How do international master's students define the concept of "inclusiveness" based on their experiences of inclusion and exclusion at the University of Helsinki?
2. How do language practices in social and academic contexts at the university affect students' experiences of inclusiveness?

The overall experiences of inclusiveness, as the students experience and define it, has been positive for all six students interviewed in this study. The findings in section 4.1. present how students have varying ways of defining inclusiveness, and somewhat struggle to define it, even though they can depict ways in which they feel included. Students defined inclusiveness through having a place where one can be included, which resembles the idea of community in Talmage & Richard's (2017) definition. In other words, for students to be included, they should feel part of the student community. However, student responses highlighted that, depending on each individual student, there is variation in between which communities they wish to be a part of, and to what degree. For example, two students (CE1 and CE3) wanted to be part of organizational work, and for them it was important that HYY matters are discussed trilingually, so they can be active members in decision-making (Talmage & Richard, 2017). How students feel included also varies, because for some, all information (even Unisport classes) must be available in English, whilst for other's language barrier does not always pose a challenge to inclusion, if it is managed well. When students want to be part of a community, it is important that the information and opportunities available are communicated in an understandable manner, so students can participate in the activities of the community (Talmage & Richard, 2017). Students have the role of finding which communities they want to be part of and vocalizing this to the university. Recognizing that international students are present in these communities, that not all of them speak the national languages, and therefore some information needs to be translated or communicated through translingual practices, would be important for the students to feel accommodated to by the university.

This brings up the question of what are then the appropriate measures that need to be taken to ensure this outcome of inclusiveness. It is important to notice that, as the students reported,

there are varying levels to feeling included. It is not just a binary of inclusion vs exclusion, but there are layers. Students shared that sometimes they simply feel "challenged" in their inclusion or that there is some degree of inclusion that is not being met. Finding ways that make students feel "actively" included is difficult, but section 4.3 presents a list of possible ways that at least these six students suggest helps them feel actively included. Firstly, it is important to provide necessary information for the students' education in the agreed lingua franca, and possibly some opportunities as well for students to participate in the community activities, which can help them build a life in Finland. When research groups or traineeships are available to students that do not speak Finnish or Swedish, these should be communicated to international students directly. Students want guidance, support, and education in English, but it does not have to be the only language used. In addition, some students pointed out that as students come from varying linguistic backgrounds, it would be important to at least acknowledge the variety of English spoken by the students (Canagarajah, 2013). In cases where it was possible to not assess students work based on linguistic measures, students appreciate when teachers avoided this (e.g., example 15), and see it as an active method of inclusion. Hence it would be important to question to what extent it is necessary to assess students in their academic English, which varieties of English are accepted in academia, and, if they are needed, whether current academic writing courses provide students with necessary skills in 'academic English'.

Similar to the findings of previous research (Xiao, 2021; Lau & Lin, 2016; Hipsi, 2019), in social settings, international students at the University of Helsinki engage in conversation through translanguaging. This can be seen in the way that all students had experiences of feeling included even when languages that they did not understand were being used. Students also shared how translanguaging can be a way to learn languages and interact with Finnish-speaking students. Having these interactions can help students engage in the student community, instead of solely being viewed as a separate, international community. At the moment, international students feel included within their international student programs, especially in class, but finding the bridge to feel included also with Finnish- and Swedish-speaking students could still be improved. This study presents that one possible way is to have Finnish and non-Finnish students taking classes together, learning from each other through translanguaging as a communicative tool. Thus, this study argues that all the four methods of multilingual communication from Backus et al.'s (2011) toolkit are useful also in the university context to increase student experiences of inclusiveness.

Although the students in this study reported that language choice and practices affect their feelings of inclusiveness, in social settings, the interviewed students were still comfortable with their peers engaging also in shared languages that they did not understand. This finding somewhat contradicts prior research, which has argued that language barrier is one of the main issues affecting international university student's experiences of inclusion (e.g., Lau & Lin, 2016; Xiao, 2021). Language barrier was not necessarily seen as the issue, but instead the ways the barrier was dealt with. In EMI contexts, students agree that it is necessary and important that teachers and students stick to English, as this is the language of instruction intended for the master's programs. This is because in the classroom, the information that students are receiving is vital for their education. If teaching is not through English, or through some translingual practice that ensures student understanding, students are restricted from the possibility to participate in the act that they came to Helsinki to take part in – studying. By definition that is an example of non-inclusive practice (Talmage & Richard, 2017). Generally, the students interviewed in this study did not have many experiences of linguistically exclusive classes, however there were a few examples of this in the lab courses at the MB program. If students have these experiences, there should be a way for them to share them and provide feedback, so that teachers and staff are aware of these instances, and something can be done to prevent them.

The students also brought to light some of the struggles that they face particularly in student organization work under HYY. Although the HYY language policy (Student Union, 2018) suggests possible strategies for including international students through trilingual policies, it does not always happen in practice. The response from HYY in the specific situation presented by student CE1 was that the organization does not have the funds to provide the necessary solution, which in this case would have been an interpreter to translate a meeting. This finding correlates with Fettes & Karamouzian's (2018) research findings, that institutions may set language policies that seemingly ensure inclusion in communities, but in practice might not have the resources to stick to these policies. Based on these interviews, the HYY language strategy plan for 2023 should then include a plan for the funding and how they intend to provide trilingual services. The current language policy does correctly recognize and consider the issues that international students face, but the solutions provided are not always occurring in practice (such as in example 29), because methods and resources to implement and monitor the policies are still lacking.

The study also raised a simple question that the university services should consider: what is the most inclusive way of e-mail communication? The University of Helsinki (2014) has a strategy plan for trilingual communication, but at the moment, at least six students are not experiencing that this is the case with the e-mails they receive. These come sometimes only in Finnish and Swedish, often are not relevant, but can also include information that could be relevant to non-Finnish/Swedish speakers. Students react differently to these e-mails, but still it is somewhat frustrating for all of them, as it was worth mentioning in the interviews. If the university sees that all students should receive all e-mails, then it would be necessary to provide at least a brief translation for the students that do not understand the content, even when it is not necessarily relevant to them. Although this is most likely the intention of the University, at least according to its trilingual language policy (University of Helsinki, 2014), it does not appear to be working in practice. Figuring out where the issue lies and what possible solutions work best could be examined in future research.

Since the interview questions were heavy on providing feedback to the university, a lot of the responses looked at the ways in which the students see the teachers, institutions, services, and student union can help students feel more included in their studies. However, the responses also displayed a lot of findings in terms of how students can help themselves feel more included. Students already have quite good knowledge of the communities within which they want to feel included: for some it is their own international group of students, for other's it may be organizational work, social events, sports activities, or simply just taking part in their studies, as part of the educational 'contract'. In these situations, students can find ways of making themselves more included, such as learning the Finnish language, asking Finnish-speaking peers for help, or staying vocal about the issues concerning inclusiveness. Whilst students do see that the institution has a role in accommodating them to the university community, through engaging with the community and putting in their own effort, students show the university which communities they want to be included in, so changes can be made.

This study was exploratory in nature, presenting a starting point for future research to continue. Extending research into this topic is very much welcomed based on these findings. As mentioned in the limitations, more student perspectives should be examined so that there could be a more holistic view of the issue for international students in general. For example, surveys could be conducted asking students these questions to find out how students overall experience this issue. These surveys could then also compare the situation in different programs at the

university. For example, finding solutions to the issue of e-mail communication could possibly be resolved through survey research. In addition, data specifically on issues of inclusiveness that are not related to language should also be gathered, as it was not examined as extensively in this study as would be necessary.

Another interesting perspective to examine would be to see how these experiences vary between other, non-Finnish/Swedish speaking student communities at the University. For example, exchange students or bachelor's students could likely be just as interested to share their experiences of the issue. Also, hearing the experiences of Finnish-speaking students would also provide insight into how they are experiencing inclusiveness and if the experience is different. For example, a bachelor's student who did speak Finnish would have wanted to take part in this interview but was rejected for not fitting into the requirements for the study. This shows that students do want to speak about the topic and providing a space for them to do so would be important for research but also for improving the conditions for the students. Also, HYY has shown an interest in hearing about these findings, showing that continuing the research could have positive implications for the university.

With more time, Murray's (2009) fourth step in narrative inquiry, contacting the students for their comments, would have been conducted in this study, to ensure that students feel their voices are being represented accurately. However, the passages have been kept as much as possible in the student's own words, so that the findings would represent their view. Hopefully students feel their voices are being represented, and this study encourages any students reading this paper to reach out to faculty staff, teachers, HYY, and the university, if they feel language strategies are not inclusive to them. The policies that the Student Union (2018) and the University of Helsinki (2014) have created do show an intention to be a trilingual community, so giving feedback when this does not occur is needed for changes to be made.

6 Conclusion

This thesis examined how language practices at the University of Helsinki affect student's experiences of inclusiveness in two international master's programs: Changing Education and Microbiology & Microbial Biotechnology. The study found that in the EMI context, it is important that English is maintained as the lingua franca, so that students feel included and that their education is not affected by language barrier. However, in social settings, students are more flexible, and accepting towards translingual language practices. In theory, the university's language policies support these expectations of the students. However, in practice, international students still face some situations where failure to follow trilingual policies challenge their experiences of inclusiveness. To further provide information to the university on how to improve international student's experiences of inclusiveness, this study could be extended to interview more participants. To reach more participants, based on these findings, a survey could be constructed to provide numerical data on how many students are experiencing issues relating to inclusiveness, so more generalizable conclusions could be made.

The findings from this study can and should be used for developing the language strategies for the Student Union and the University of Helsinki. The current language policy of HYY does already meet the expectations that students have, namely that information is provided to students in all three languages. However, students do experience that this is not always the case, and based on their reports, this has been due to a lack of resources and/or funding. Ensuring that HYY does also have the funds to provide trilingual events, trainings, and meetings would be important for the non-Finnish speaking student organizations working under the student union. In terms of the university language policy, students highlight that their main concern is that English is maintained as the academic lingua franca of the classroom, to ensure that the quality of education remains the same for all students. However, translingual policies are also welcomed by the students, as they can be used to build bridges between students of different linguist backgrounds. University services should also stick to a trilingual language policy and look at ways to improve this especially in e-mail communication.

To end on a positive note, based on these findings, the six interviewed students do feel quite included in their studies at the University of Helsinki. This is because students are given the possibilities to take part in organizational work, learn the national languages, and find the communities that they wish to be included in. Hence, students also recognize their own role in ensuring inclusiveness. Although students had a lot of feedback to provide to the university

about how to ensure inclusive practices, many of these examples were also from what the university has been doing well for linguistic inclusion. Welcoming international students to Finland helps the university grow to be a multilingual, thus more resourceful community. Therefore, the conversation about linguistic inclusion in university should be continued, both in future research and within the institution, by teachers, students, and staff.

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Appendix 1: Interview Questions

Background questions

☐What is your educational background? Where have you studied prior to coming here?

☐What languages do you speak/have you studied?

☐Why did you come to the University of Helsinki?

☐What kinds of classes are you currently taking part in, distance education, self-directed teaching, face-to-face lectures, etc.?

☐What kind of social activities are you currently involved at the university?'

Questions on inclusiveness

☐What makes you feel included in academic/social settings?

        Follow up: Based on this, what is your understanding of "inclusiveness"?

☐How included do you feel in your studies in Finland?

☐How were your experiences in terms of administration into the university?

        Prompts: application process, sisu, housing(?)

☐ How do these experiences differ from your experiences outside of Finland?

☐ Have these experiences made you feel included/excluded?

☐What challenges are you facing concerning feeling included in academic/social settings?

☐How are you overcoming these challenges?

☐What were your expectations of this program in terms of inclusiveness? Have these expectations been met?

Questions on language practices

☐ Can you think of a situation where you have experienced language barrier at the University?

        Prompts if interviewee can't think of anything: the linguistic landscape of the
        university/city, interaction in classroom (online vs. on-site), consultation sessions,
        library, student services, HYY student union / student organizations and their events,
        lunch/coffee with fellow students, email or other written communication)
        Follow up question: Based on this what does "language barrier" mean to you?

☐ Based on your experience, how are different languages used in academic and social settings?

☐ Have there been any situations where the use of different languages has made you feel excluded?

☐ Have there been any situations, where, although people are speaking different languages, you still feel included?

> Follow-up: Can you explain the difference between these situations, and why they affected you differently?

☐ If any, what kind of challenges are you facing due to language barriers at the university?

☐ How are you overcoming these challenges?

☐ In your opinion, how does language barrier affect your learning or understanding?

☐ Proficiency of the teachers in English affecting learning?

☐ Own proficiency of English affecting learning/opportunities?

Learning and well-being

☐ How are these experiences affecting your learning/understanding/enjoyment of your studies at the university?

☐ Have these experiences had any effect on your mental well-being at the university?

☐ Do you feel that you have restricted, equal, or more opportunities at the university than your peers?

> Follow up: Why or why not?

Suggestions

☐ What kind of suggestions would you provide for the university with regards to improving international student's inclusiveness in academic/social settings?

Closing the interview

☐ Do you have anything to add/questions?

☐ Thank you so much for taking part in this interview! May I still contact you via e-mail for follow-up questions?

Appendix 2: Transcription conventions

(.) short pause, duration of pause indicated next to decimal point

- topic change/starting a new sentence

[] word rephrased to improve clarity of the text

[…] omitted speech

'' speaker is quoting someone else

Appendix 3: Consent form

Consent form

Project title: Language barrier and inclusivity in a Finnish university: A case study of international students

Investigator:

This consent form is for taking part in an interview for Laura Ramula's master's thesis examining language barrier and inclusivity issues in a Finnish university. In the following text, I will describe the aims and procession of my research. Please read the following information, do not hesitate to ask if you need clarification, and consider if you have the possibility to take part in this study.

Purpose of the research

The purpose of this study is to examine international student's experiences of inclusivity in academic and social contexts at university. Participants will be asked about what kinds of practices and experiences have made them feel included or excluded from the community. Participants also have the chance to provide suggestions for improving practices at the university concerning these issues.

Data collection and participation

The interview is conducted using qualitative methods, more specifically, a semi-structured interview held on Zoom and recorded. The interviews will be transcribed to aid analysis of the content. Participation in the interview is voluntary and the participants are free to withdraw at any time.

Anonymity and data storage

The interview will be audio recorded, and the recording will be transcribed, translated (if needed) and stored electronically. Passages from the transcripts can be used in the master's thesis. Your identity as an informant will be protected: any documents labelled with your name or personal information will be anonymized.

Participant's Permission

I have read the consent form and conditions of this study. I have had the opportunity to discuss the consent form with the investigator. Any questions I have about this research have been answered to my satisfaction. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent.

Please choose the specific conditions of your participation below by selecting the options and sign the form.

- I will take part in the study.   ☐

Signature _____   Date _____

Name _____

If you have any further questions about this study, please contact:

Laura Ramula (laura.ramula@helsinki.fi)

Appendix 4: Privacy notice

The data collected with the *University Inclusiveness Interview* will be processed according to the GDPR of the EU. This data protection notice provides research participants with information on how their personal data are processed.

1. Data Controllers. Laura Ramula

2. Principal investigator. Laura Ramula, email: laura.ramula@helsinki.fi

3. Contact person concerning in data protection matters in the project. Laura Ramula, email: laura.ramula@helsinki.fi

4. Description of the research project and the purpose of processing personal data. The *University Inclusiveness Interview* collects information about international student's views about inclusiveness in university education. Information about respondents' linguistic and educational background, as well as any personal values they share in the interview, will be used for explaining their experiences of inclusiveness at the university. The data will be analysed with qualitative methods and reported as summaries. In addition, transcriptions will be used to portray word-for-word, in-depth experiences of the participants. These transcriptions presented in the report will not include any personal identifiers. The results will be presented in the researcher's master's thesis. Summaries may also be shared with the faculties that the students are studying in, in order to provide feedback to them about the experiences of the students.

5. Personal data included in the research data. This interview collects information about respondents' experiences as an international student at the University of Helsinki, linguistic background, educational background, and personal values. This research project does not collect direct identifiers (such as names, email addresses etc) other than voice. The interviewees have given their consent for their voices to be recorded, and once the recordings have been transcribed, the voices can no longer be identified from the data. All data, including the voice recordings, will be deleted according to section 11. Under GDPR of the EU, personal data includes also indirectly identifiable data, such as a combination of socio-demographic and other background information.

6. Sources of personal data. The data will be obtained through an online interview.

7. Sensitive personal data. No special categories of personal data (i.e., sensitive data), as defined in Article 9 of the GDPR, will be processed in this research.

8. Lawful basis for processing personal data. Personal data are processed on the following basis (Article 6(1) of the GDPR): task carried out in the public interest: scientific purposes.

9. Recipients of data. Only the researcher, Laura Ramula will have access to the data.

10. Protection of personal data. The research dataset will be processed and kept protected at Luke and UH so that only those who need the data can access them. The data processed in data systems will be protected using access control, username and password.

11. Management of the research dataset after the research project. The research dataset will be stored on the Laura Ramula's personal laptop and deleted two years after the completion of her master's thesis.

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  ○   **I accept that my responses to the interview will be processed as described in this data protection notice.**