

English abstract

Oulu as a language community

The ostensibly homogeneous Oulu, which can be easily deemed a monolingual area, actually includes several languages whose situations are on the focus of this study. Besides Finnish, also Swedish, Sámi, Karelian and many immigrant languages are spoken in the area.

There are three main chapters in this study. At first, we take a look at Swedish, the other national language of Finland besides Finnish. The focus is in examining the status of the Swedish in Oulu and the language choices made by the Swedish speakers in Oulu. We explore how the bilingual city of Oulu became practically monolingual when Finnish more or less took over the place of the Swedish language. In this section, we also study the Swedish-speaking society from the point of view of a language island. Furthermore, the code-switching between English, Swedish and Finnish in the texts of an individual is studied in one article.

Secondly, we look at the use and the perceptions of minority languages spoken in the Oulu region. Even though Sámi languages have their own legislation, the rights of the Sámi speakers are often disregarded. In this section, we also bring the language community of Karelian speakers to light in the Oulu area. Karelian is an autochthonous language of Finland and it is probably one of the most invisible languages to the general public. Surprisingly, all of the varieties of Karelian language can be heard in the region of Oulu also in the 21st century. In this book, we also study the attitudes towards the Finnish language spoken by immigrants, the new speakers of Finnish.

The third main chapter of this study considers the variation of Finnish, the main language of the area, and the perceptions concerning the dialect spoken in the region of Oulu.

In the articles of this book, many different kinds of (socio)linguistic approaches are employed. We study issues of multilingualism both historically and synchronically and also from the point of view of

groups and individuals alike. The situations of different languages are studied, for example, from the perspective of language sociology, variationist sociolinguistics, the research of language perceptions and code-switching. The authors are linguists from the University of Oulu.