

Multilingualism – a European Union goal – and incoming exchange students' language learning and language use in Scandinavia

Multilingualism, or plurilingualism, is a European Union goal, which is supposed to be realized through programs such as ERASMUS. This presentation is based on a three-year research project partly funded by the Nordic Council and seeking to determine which factors influence exchange students' language learning and use in study abroad contexts. The study involves exchange students – but not language students – at four Scandinavian universities – two traditional ones and two specialised ones. Data for the project, which closes at the end of 2007, were collected through semi-structured individual interviews and subsequent tests. Students were interviewed three times during their first semester in Scandinavia and once more if they stayed for a second semester. Each interview concluded with two tests: a picture description test and a basic vocabulary test; all interviews were recorded. Findings relating to the interviewees' language goals, interaction with others and language use in such interaction will be presented and discussed in the light of the goal of multilingualism.

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