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What about Swedish?

Internationalisation, societal responsibility and national languages in Finnish Higher education

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Abstract

The chapter discusses discourses of “language” indexing social tasks of universities. We are interested in how talk of “language” is used to index the political, economic, educational, cultural etc. nature of higher education; in other words, what we talk about when we think we talk about language. We are mainly focusing on the position Swedish in the tensions of national language policies, higher education policies and internationalisation. In the chapter, we show the various ways in which higher education policies and language policies are intertwined, producing both intended and unintended language policy outcomes.

Keywords

Higher education policy, societal tasks, Swedish, English, internationalisation,

Index words

higher education policy, societal responsibility, societal interaction, student recruitment, staff recruitment, regional policy, internationalisation, profiling

1. Introduction

When we think we talk about language, we usually talk about the speakers of a language, or the embedded societal structures constituted in and by language (Saarinen, 2020a). In our earlier research we have found that language can index for instance race and ethnicity (Ennsner-Kananen et al., forthcoming), hierarchies of languages and higher education systems (Saarinen & Nikula, 2013), and new nationalist higher education policies (Saarinen, 2020a). This chapter discusses links between language policies and the legislative or negotiated societal tasks and responsibilities of Finnish higher education institutions.

By discussing language indexing social tasks of universities, we are not interested in language use as such, but rather in how talk of “language” is used to co-constitute the political, economic, educational, or cultural nature of higher education. We will be combining data from our previous studies (Saarinen, 2020b; Saarinen & Rontu, 2018; Saarinen & Taalas, 2017) as well as new data, and show the dynamics between language policies on one hand and the societal tasks and responsibilities of higher education institutions on the other. Our examples range from student and staff recruitment to so called “profiling” of higher education institutions, showing that when different higher education policy objectives and measures meet, they may have unexpected or even conflicting effects on language policies and practices of the universities. Our analysis focusses

particularly on the position of Swedish in Finnish higher education, either in monolingually Swedish or bilingually Finnish - Swedish contexts.

2. Language policies, higher education policies and societal tasks of higher education

In Finland, constitutional bilingualism has traditionally been the defining factor of the universities' official language policies. However, university language policies are also influenced by various other goals, such as the legislative responsibilities of producing education and research, as well as societal interaction. (Saarinen, 2020b.)

2.1 Societal role of higher education

The basic tasks of higher education have traditionally been understood in the Humboldtian tradition as research and teaching, and the "third mission" or "societal" task of higher education was originally conceptualised as co-operation of higher education with governments, industry and the society. (Etzkowitz, 1998). In Finland, the liberal fiscal politics of the late 1980s and early 1990s, the consequent overheating of the economy, the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the resulting decline in Soviet trade combined with problems with international trade were a massive hit to Finnish society. (Välimaa, 2019.) This, combined with the late twentieth century developments in global higher education models, especially brought by the global economic crisis of the 1970s and the ensuing austerity pressures, caused a renegotiation of the public mission of universities.

Managerialist and neoliberal ideologies began to replace the social ones (Etzkowitz, 1998), naturalizing (Laredo, 2007) an "entrepreneurial" and "innovative" (Montesinos et al., 2008) ethos of higher education. This naturalisation of the third mission has also been criticized (Laredo, 2007, p. 446) for its demands for (short term) accountability, efficiency and effectiveness. Together with accountability demands, pressures for higher education to show more societal relevance (Kivinen et al., 1993), often defined in terms of labour market relevance of degrees or economic and political relevance or research.

The third mission was explicitly added into university law in 2004: "universities managing their tasks have to cooperate with the rest of the society and promote the societal impact of research findings and artistic activities". [Tehtäviään hoitaessaan yliopistojen tulee toimia vuorovaikutuksessa muun yhteiskunnan kanssa sekä edistää tutkimustulosten ja taiteellisen toiminnan yhteiskunnallista vaikuttavuutta.] (Act Amending Universities Act 715/2004). Thus, in Finland, the legislative societal role of universities is defined through the impact of research and artistic outputs on society rather than through their service activities in the immediate community or society at large (Kankaala et al., 2004).

However, individual universities have recently also been assigned specific tasks and profiles in addition to this general legislative requirement. These are either defined by legislation (particularly regarding the language roles related to Finnish constitutional bilingualism and its implications to universities; Saarinen, 2020a), or negotiated in the so-called performance agreements between the Ministry of Education and Culture (where universities and the ministry agree on specific tasks to be carried out in the four-year agreement; Välimaa, 2019). These tasks or profiles may be educational, research based, or societal.

In the 2000s, the so-called profiling activities of higher education have become more prominent, as Finnish institutions are required, with financial incentives from the Ministry of Education and Academy of Finland, to strategically profile their activities into distinct strength areas. (Academy of Finland, s.a.) Thus, since the 2010s, individual higher education institutions have been required to

profile and take up certain specialized academic and societal roles, in a neoliberal ethos of excellence (see Välimaa, 2012, for a discussion of the new Universities Act 2009).

2.2 Language policy and higher education policy as multi-layered

Our current universities are an outcome of developments that are by nature historically layered (Välimaa, 2019) and politically contingent, i.e. unexpected or unforeseeable. The current Finnish universities include traditional elements such as expectation of critical thinking or public knowledge and a tradition of collegial model of organization, but also more modern understandings of research, teaching and managerial practices (Välimaa, 2019). These may emerge simultaneously, making universities resilient and able to adjust to changes, but also causing clashes between different traditions.

Language policies have been a part of the societal tasks of higher education in different ways during history (Saarinen 2020a). The medium of instruction has been linked to the education and research conducted at universities, and consequently also with the societal tasks of construing knowledge and providing a labour force for the needs of society. (Jalava, 2012; Välimaa, 2019.) The economic, cultural and social goals of internationalisation have in different historical phases been backed up with language policies, resulting in recent years in explicated university language strategies (see for instance articles in Hultgren et al., 2014; or Kuteeva et al., 2020).

Language policies are nowadays acknowledged as multi-layered and complex phenomena, intertwined with and linked to other societal phenomena, structures and actors (Hult, 2015; Johnson, 2013; Spolsky, 2004). They may form a nexus point where different policies meet. The different political goals may collide, leading into what appears to be conflicting policies, and what makes the different interests visible in the field. (Halonen et al., 2015.) Focussing only on formal policies and structures inevitably fails to consider the temporally and spatially fluctuating networks and contacts between human or institutional actors (Saarinen, 2020a).

The view of policy as linear and dichotomous has been criticized elsewhere in the field of education, as reviewed concisely by Kauko and Wermke (2018), or in the field of higher education, as discussed by Marginson and Rhoades (2002) in their glonacal (GLObal, NAtional and LOcal) agency heuristic. Dale and Robertson (2009) have in particular criticized the practice of conceptualising globalisation merely by adding the global as another layer on top of the macro-meso-micro structures, which simplifies both university administration and its relationship with globalisation and internationalisation. We as higher education and language policy researchers should, thus, challenge the ways in which we understand the mechanisms behind the apparently linear and dichotomous higher education policies. Our aim is to make visible these multi-layered and sometimes even apparently random and conflicting connections that language policies have with other higher education policies and goals.

3. Data, method and analysis

This chapter discusses language policies and the societal tasks and societal responsibilities of Finnish higher education institutions as co-constituting each other. We do this by analysing language policy discourses of national languages and the ways in which these discourses are linked to the societal tasks of our three case universities: Aalto University (AU), University of Helsinki (UH) (both bilingual universities) and Åbo Akademi University (ÅAU) (monolingually Swedish medium university).

AU, UH and ÅAU each have a national responsibility to uphold the position of Swedish and educating Swedish-speaking academic professionals for Finnish society; in itself a core societal function of higher education (see section. 2.3). While UH and AU do this from a bilingual position, ÅAU has been unequivocally Swedish speaking since its foundation in 1918. UH continues to have regulations on the number of Swedish professors, and students have the right to use Finnish or Swedish in their exams. AU is, as is UH, a bilingual university, though the bilingual task does not extend to all the academic disciplines within AU as it is a merger of three Finnish medium and bilingual universities in the fields of engineering, economics and arts. AU has the obligation to offer education in Swedish in arts, design, architecture and engineering sciences. The field of economics at AU, in turn, is by legislation Finnish medium, meaning that AU includes both bilingual and monolingually Finnish traditions. Moreover, AU used to have a similar regulation of the number of Swedish professors and lecturers as HU. This has, however, been abolished since the introduction of the tenure track career system for professors (for an overview of the Finnish tenure track recruitment reform, see Pietilä, 2015).

Our selected three institutions have witnessed different language policy developments in recent years that appear to challenge Finnish constitutional bilingualism (Saarinen 2020b). At ÅAU, the degree regulations (Åbo Akademi, 2018), and the language programme (Åbo Akademi, 2016) regulate the use of languages other than Swedish in this Swedish medium university very specifically and in some case in much detail.

UH, in turn, operates bilingually and offers students the possibility to take examinations in either language, regardless of medium of instruction, but also recognises the position of English as a de facto third medium of instruction (University of Helsinki, 2014). The recent introduction of bilingual bachelor's programmes at UH give the students a possibility to study the 180 ECTS bachelor's degree by conducting 60 ECTS in Finnish, 60 ECTS in Swedish, and the remaining 60 ECTS in a language of their choice. This is an exceptional system in Finnish higher education, where higher education degrees have until recently been distinguished as either Finnish- or Swedish-language degrees, keeping the two national languages institutionally separate (see Saarinen, 2020a).

AU language guidelines emphasise internationalisation, multiculturalism and Finnish bilingualism. In practice, AU has Finnish, Swedish and English as its working languages, but the main languages of instruction are Finnish, English and, in the fields of science, art and technology, also Swedish.

Our data consists of a) interviews with students and staff in one monolingual (Swedish) and two bilingual (Finnish - Swedish) universities and b) institutional policy documents from these three institutes. The interview data is presented in table 1.

Table 1. The interview data

University (date of collection)	Students	Academic staff	Administrative staff
AU (2016-2017)	8	7	5
UH (2017-2018)	6	4	3
ÅAU (2017-2018)	2	4	

Some participants were recruited as key actors in their institutional contexts, others were identified by way of snowball sampling, as the interviewees suggested potential participants from within their circle. The original purpose of the interviews at ÅAU and UH was to analyse the position of Swedish at the universities as use of English increased. The original purpose of the interviews at AU was to study the implementation of the language policy of the university in practice. The focus was on the role of internationalisation and the use of English as well as the role and the use of the national languages.

As the data was collected for different purposes, we by no means claim that the data is comparable or generalisable. Rather, we hope to illuminate the different tensions between societal roles and language policies of our three cases, particularly when it comes to the Swedish language.

The interview data has been analysed by employing critical discourse analytical (e.g. Fairclough, 2003) and historical-structural (Tollefson, 2015) analysis. In practise, we have analysed not just the current language policies and regulations, but also the dynamical interplay of the Finnish constitutional bilingual legislation and the underlying ideological constructs (see Lindström & Sylvén, 2014; Saarinen & Rontu, 2018); the recycling of Finnish discourses of bilingualism (Saarinen, 2020a); and recent higher education policy and societal developments (Välilä, 2019). This enables us to analyse higher education policies, and particularly policies of societal tasks and responsibilities, through the lens of language policies at AU, ÅAU and UH.

4. Results: Swedish and societal tasks of universities

The legislative responsibilities and other societal obligations intermingle at ÅAU, UH and AU with different emphases, effecting their language policies and practises, and ultimately promoting an understanding of the role of these universities in Finnish society.

4.1 Societal responsibilities based on language policy

Our first subchapter analyses the specifically designated language policy responsibilities and profiles of the three universities. According to the Universities Act, ÅAU, Hanken School of Economics, UH, the University of the Arts Helsinki, and AU are “responsible for educating a sufficient number of persons proficient in Swedish for the needs of the country”. The responsibility is thus most societal in nature, defining the way in which these universities serve the need to educate Swedish speaking professionals for the society. In this subchapter, we will analyse the interpretations of this societal responsibility as the language policy requirements are (re-)negotiated at the case institutions.

ÅAU has a very specific role in Finland because of its role as the only monolingually Swedish medium multidisciplinary university. In recent years, however, it seems that while Finnish constitutional bilingualism has remained relatively unchallenged, the monolingual language policies have clashed with other higher education policies related to profiling, internationalisation, and student and staff recruitment, not only at ÅAU (Saarinen, 2020b) but also at UH (Lindström & Sylvén, 2014) and AU (Saarinen & Rontu, 2018).

The ÅAU strategy for 2021-2030 emphasizes the language policy of ÅAU not only from the perspective of Swedish medium instruction but also from offering a multilingual and language sensitive study environment, as well as for offering a study environment for students whose “non-native” language is not Swedish, both nationally and internationally.

The interviewees at ÅAU basically agreed on the specifically Swedish medium role of ÅAU. Based on different aspects of language and higher education policy, most ÅAU interviewees framed the monolingual tradition as necessary for the future existence of ÅAU.

One ÅAU interviewee referred to the so-called Taxell's paradox (i.e. monolingual institutions being needed to sustain societal bilingualism; Boyd & Palviainen, 2015), suggesting that bilingualism in ÅAU would lead to disappearance of Swedish:

Q: Could Åbo Akademi be a bilingual university?

A: Mmm... Yes, if you want Swedish to disappear then it should be bilingual

Q: Okay (laughing) yeah so you think it would lead to that

A: Well it would. Absolutely. It really rarely works as it does with you and me (note: the interviewer was speaking Finnish and the interviewee Swedish) That's how it is, in most cases when there is a bilingual working group or meeting with people from both Åbo Akademi and the University of Turku (note: neighbouring Finnish medium University), all discussion takes place in Finnish. (ÅAU 11, administration)

From a language policy perspective, ÅAU and UH appear quite different, regardless that they both have Swedish language responsibilities. Several ÅAU interviewees commented on their understanding of the difference between UH and ÅAU being that UH, in focussing on students right to take exams in also in Swedish, mainly ends up supporting Finnish medium tuition. From the ÅAU point of view, on the other hand, it was significant that both the medium of instruction and the medium of examination is Swedish, thus guaranteeing a more systematic and thorough Swedish medium instruction:

That. OK, [at UH] you can do your exams and write your essays with the other national language [implying Swedish], but then everything else is completely in Finnish (ÅAU 16 teaching and research)

At UH, on the other hand, the bilingual language policy was referred to as "flexible" and "pragmatic", "flexible" interestingly given in the meaning of "either Finnish or Swedish" rather than mixing the languages in situated language use. The increase of the use of English made the situation language policy wise, however, more complex. One of the interviewees at UH had work experience from a Swedish medium institution before UH, and they commented specifically on the more complex dynamic between different languages, especially as English entered the scene as a third language. This seems illustrative of what was termed a more pragmatic approach to language at UH; i.e. that English, Finnish and Swedish were used somewhat in a parallel manner, which in turn caused pressures particularly on Swedish (see Lindström & Sylvén, 2014).

At AU, rapid intentional internationalisation policies seem to have compromised the bilingual obligation in bachelor and master level education. This is clearly seen in the diminishing role of the minority language Swedish, but also in the narrowing down of the use of the majority language Finnish. One manifestation of this are the annual course offerings in the bachelor level degree education. Currently 34% of the basic, mandatory courses, i.e. studies during the first study year(s), are offered only in English. In master and doctoral level degree education most of the courses are offered only in English.

To sum up the language policy responsibilities at the three universities, it seems that while all pronounce formally to follow the Finnish language legislation and the language paragraphs of the Universities Act (2009), the role of these universities in fulfilling the societal needs for Swedish

speaking professionals varies. ÅAU seems to be most determined to maintain Swedish as the medium of instruction and examination (but see Saarinen & Taalas, 2017; Saarinen et al., 2016), while at UH and AU English seems to be more or less pushing Swedish (at AU also partly Finnish) out of the equation.

4.2 National profiling of higher education challenging language policies

In addition to the specific language profile of our case universities, they also have national profiles in research and education. ÅAU, in addition to its role as the only monolingually Swedish medium multidisciplinary university in Finland, also has a Nordic cooperation role, negotiated with the Ministry of Education and Culture as a part of the funding negotiations every four years.

The ÅAU Nordic orientation implies that internationalisation of the university is negotiated as specifically a Nordic activity:

[...] It is defined in the agreement between Åbo Akademi University and the Ministry, which is done every three to four years. And in general, in recent years it has included mentions that the task of Åbo Akademi is to internationalise precisely towards the Nordic countries [...] (ÅAU 14 administration).

The Nordic orientation seems natural to ÅAU, considering the language connections to other Scandinavian countries. It, however, also causes some more unexpected developments (see also 4.3 for a discussion of its effect on recruitment policies), implying that ÅAU may be at something of a turning point. While the position of Swedish at ÅAU as well as Finnish constitutional bilingualism appear relatively unchallenged both at the ÅAU, as well as nationally (Saarinen, 2020a), some cracks in this policy are emerging. One interviewee in a leading administrative position at ÅAU referred to the monolingual language ideology as somewhat outdated and called for societal alternatives for a more flexible use of different languages. This may imply that the monolingual policy may be challenged not just from the outside political pressures of new nationalist and populist politics (Saarinen 2020a), but also from inside ÅAU, as its other responsibilities may not always align with the language policy tasks. It seems that particularly policies of higher education profiling are challenging traditional Swedish language policies, as suggested by a turn by a senior administrator:

It is a language issue to start with, [...] that more focus shifts from the language policy angle to the substance and then language. So I would say this is changing. We are not yet ready to say that [ÅAU] could be a bilingual university. But substance is very important if we are to maintain high quality research and teaching. The focus is shifting so that substance first, and language, the importance of language is changing, not weakening, but is changing. (ÅAU 13 administration)

In other words, while the role of Swedish seems unchallenged at ÅAU, cracks on that ideology seem to be emerging. In a survey to Finnish higher education institutions (Saarinen et al., 2016), even Swedish medium institutions seemed to prioritise teaching Finnish rather than Swedish to international students for labour market success. Pöyhönen & Simpson (2020) make similar observations on refugee language education, as Finnish appears to be prioritised even for refugees located in the Swedish speaking Ostrobothnia.

At UH, regional policy interests appeared to be intertwined with language policies, as evidenced by a discussion on providing Swedish language law tuition in Swedish in Vaasa, bilingual Ostrobothnia. This goal combines a regional language policy goal with UH goal of producing professionals for the needs of Swedish speaking society. This work apparently also had local financial support:

So the goal is precisely to get lawyers who may stay there and know both national languages. Yes, it has been partially realized. And that is why the Vaasa unit has quite important regional financial support as well, there have been investments. (UH27 teaching and research)

Both interviewees at ÅAU (ÅAU13, administration) and UH (UH27, senior academic) suggest that while ÅAU would still prioritise language over other profiles, the UH would go “asia edellä” (literally “issues first”; i.e. prioritise activity or profile and put language policy on second place. Whereas at ÅAU, the Nordic profile and the language profile are not always in sync. (see 4.2)

What justifies the existence of Åbo Akademi University is the language, and it's important from the point of view of identity, and whether we can offer also in the future Swedish language tuition [Niin se mikä sitten jotenkin oikeuttaa Åbo Akademin olemassaolon, niin kyllähän siinä on se kieli just voimakas ja se on just identiteetin kannalta tärkeä ja se, että pystytäänkö me tarjoamaan jatkossa myös ruotsinkielistä opetusta tällä tasolla.] (ÅAU 16 teaching and research)

While the language policies at ÅAU and UH appear to be changing somewhat unintentionally, as influenced by conflicting profiling policies, the situation at AU appears different. In the contract with the Ministry of Education and Culture for the contract period 2017-2020 the international profile of AU is emphasised (Aalto University, 2017). The international profile is targeted to recruitment to research tasks and to professor posts. Interestingly, the national role in providing education in engineering and in arts in Swedish is not mentioned at all.

At AU, the conflict between the national language task and the higher education profiling task is apparent in entry examinations, as the following comment by a student shows:

Entrance exams work only in national languages; strange from the student's point of view, because English then strongly emerges ... AU 2 (student)

Both in administration and in teaching positions, concern for national languages emerges:

... national languages are side-lined, English occupies more territory all the time--- (AU13, administration)

...the use of national languages should be supported, encouraged. If nothing is done, Finnish and Swedish disappear as expert languages, English strongly occupies ground (AU10, teaching and research and administration)

To sum up, the higher education policies of regional, Nordic or international profiles would seem to affect the language policies in all our case universities; at ÅAU and UH maybe coincidentally and at AU more intentionally. The higher education policy profiles of these institutions seem to conflict with their language policy tasks.

4.3 implications to student and staff recruitment

As the recruitment policy is not only linked to higher education policies of internationalisation but also to the national task of the universities in Swedish medium education of professionals, the student and staff recruitment policies also have unintended language policy outcomes, creating situations that potentially challenge the delicate language balance of the university in question.

As ÅAU is monolingual, it focusses on Swedish language tuition and exams, but for several reasons also recruits Swedish speaking students, who are expected to be able to work and study in Swedish and also need to prove their Swedish skills before enrolling. One major reason for recruiting also Finnish speaking students at ÅAU is demographic: there are not enough Swedish speaking potential students to fulfil the needs; the same applies to the bilingual programmes at UH.

Both students and staff at ÅAU have, according to the interviews, also been expected to be able to operate in Finnish to some extent, with textbooks, meetings, and cooperation with the local Finnish language university. Thus, in the tradition of Finnish parallel bilingualism, where institutions rather than individuals are perceived as bilingual, this has meant that while the language of teaching and degrees at ÅAU has been (and still is) Swedish, both the staff and students have been (expected to be) able to operate also in Finnish in a parallel.

However, while on the surface this recruitment seems to affect only the use of Finnish at ÅAU, it also influences Swedish. In addition to Swedish speaking Finns (a lot, but not all of whom also operate in Finnish), ÅAU also recruits students from Nordic countries, particularly Sweden.

... we need more Finnish speaking students, and then we would like to recruit more from Sweden and Norway. But it is easier to recruit Finnish language students rather than students from Sweden or Norway. (ÅAU 11. administration)

... Our recruitment from Sweden is pretty determined, and we have a lot of employees who live in Sweden, in Stockholm for instance, who come here weekly. And they, naturally, they get by in English, but Finnish is difficult. (ÅAU 14, administration)

Combined with the recruitment of staff from other Nordic countries, it is not self-evident that everyone also knows Finnish in addition to Swedish:

[...] it can be problematic with practical stuff here, for example, people who have no Finnish language skills, and then it is just that, for example, we have to cut down from the courses that these [Nordic professors who do not know Finnish] have, so Finnish literature is excluded. Or even in cooperation [with the local Finnish language university], it is more difficult now, for example, we need to use English, which feels really silly. So that if we have joint seminars with the University of Turku and we have to use English [ÅAU 16, teaching and research]

One interviewee (in a leading academic position) also described the difficulties in recruitment at the Swedish language University, explaining them with the declining Swedish skills in Finland, which he in turn explained with Finnish language policy:

[...] On the staff side, let's say at the postdoc researcher level, it is easier for us to recruit from Sweden than from Helsinki. And that is the consequences of Finnish language policy. [ÅAU 14, administration]

The previous excerpt came in the context of an example on recruitment of staff, where Finnish applicants are expected to demonstrate excellent skills in Swedish, whereas international recruits are not expected to do the same. Thus, a Finnish speaking Finn needs to demonstrate excellent Swedish skills, whereas a Swedish applicant is not required Finnish. This also contributes to situations where previously bilingual Swedish - Finnish events turn English.

At AU the profile of internationalisation has been implemented in the recruitment of faculty since the beginning of the university. Today over 40% of teaching and research staff are international. This internationalisation among faculty has led to a rapid increase in teaching offered in English.

Moreover, the decreasing future generations of Finnish students have raised the interest to establish more English-medium degree programmes. English-medium education is seen as an effective way to broaden the pool of potential applicants. The intentional internationalisation at AU seems to lead to an unintentional language change of a decreasing use of Finnish and Swedish to more English.

In sum, all our case universities are looking outside the Swedish language recruitment pool both for staff and students. The direction of recruitment at ÅAU and UH is Finnish and, in the case of ÅAU, Nordic, whereas AU is recruiting heavily internationally. All this has a decreasing effect on the use of Swedish, but for different reasons.

5. Conclusions

The above analysis indicates that the societal responsibilities and language policies in Swedish language or bilingual universities in Finland are intertwined in complex ways, having both intended and unintended effects on the language policies of these institutions that navigate different pressures from language policies and higher education policies. Consequently, Finnish societal bilingualism plays out in societal tasks of these three universities in different ways depending on the activity we analyse. As a result, language policy may seem random or conflicting when analysed from different perspectives.

The societal tasks related to language policy, higher education and science policy, and staff recruitment and student recruitment policies are just a part of the societally linked activities of universities that they need to take up and fulfil, but which often seem to have conflicting aims and lead to conflicting outcomes. Constitutional bilingualism, legislative tasks of universities, and the result negotiations and agreements with the Ministry as well as their research, education and societal profiles both enable and constrain their activities in society.

While constitutional bilingualism is often appealed to in public policies and declarations, it is not among the first specific arguments when decisions are made that influence language policies and regulation in the universities in question. The ostensibly conflicting policies and politics recycle different, often clashing discourses about academic work, Finnish and Swedish language populations and the positions of these languages and their speakers (Saarinen, 2020a).

From a language policy perspective, the discourses of constitutional bilingualism differ from one university to another in our cases, appearing to recycle different historical discourses (Saarinen, 2020a). Monolingual ÅAU has a language policy task that still appears strong, defended with ideological discourses of Taxell's paradox (monolingual institutions and parallel use of Finnish and Swedish), but we are also witnessing emerging cracks in this monolingual tradition, somewhat surprisingly from profiling and recruitment specifically from Nordic countries.

In all universities, demographics seem to play a role that also affects language policies: as domestic cohorts are declining, ÅAU seems to fill the gap from Nordic and Finnish language students; UH from Finnish language students; and AU from international students. All these developments have different language policy effects.

From the perspective of societal responsibility, the language policy implications are unclear. Different fields and actors make decisions that affect language policies - unintended and intended, as the recycled language policy discourses (Saarinen, 2020a) meet discourses of excellence, profiling and internationalisation of the neoliberal third mission. While it is cumbersome to get discussions of autochthonous minorities like Sámi and Karelian on the policy table, the political discourse on Swedish is somewhat locked into a constitutional debate on its role as a national language. Swedish

still emerges in popular media discourse as a hegemonic language compared to minority languages that never made it to similar position in Finnish higher education in the first place. If the position of Swedish continues to decline, it may find itself in the company of these minorities in the end. The language policy implications of the societal mission of higher education are currently on shifting grounds.

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