

## Bokmelding

**Hultgren, Anna Kristina, Frans Gregersen, & Jacob Thøgersen (eds.): *English in Nordic universities: Ideologies and practices*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins 2014, 268 pp.**

This timely and thought-provoking volume discusses the contemporary *Englishisation* of the universities of Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland. The Nordic countries are at the forefront of a global trend in which English is supplanting national languages in the four functions of academia: knowledge production, dissemination, education, and administration. The contributors study this trend both in terms of how Englishisation is discussed as well as how language choice is negotiated in real time by students, faculty, and staff. Book-ended by an introduction and a brief commentary are ten report chapters, two per country, which cast into stark relief the sizeable gap between ideology and practice, utilising a panoply of disciplinary approaches, to include sociology, language policy, historical linguistics, discourse analysis, ethnography, and survey research. This work should prove enlightening to a wide spectrum of readers, be they specifically interested in language (e.g., sociolinguists, contact linguists, linguistic anthropologists) or more generally in the supra-economic consequences of globalisation on the university in late modernity.

Chapter 2, by Andrew R. Linn, forges a contiguity between the bokmålnorsk language strife of the mid-nineteenth century and the English-Norwegian *paralellingualism* of the present day. Following emancipation from Denmark, bokmål was created as a radical Norwegianisation of Danish, to compete with nynorsk, a standard based on diachronic and dialectological analysis of Norwegian itself. The aforesaid strife itself was not between bokmål users and nynorsk users per se, but rather against language ideology from above promoting a synthesis of the two varieties into a common standard, samnorsk. This was met with widespread disapproval from below, with the Riksmålsforbundet (an advocacy group for a hyperconservative form of bokmål) arguing that language management on the part of the state is a human rights violation. The backlash from this era turned Norway away from interventionist language planning and towards nurturing conditions for productive side-by-side use of English and Norwegian. Ragnhild Ljosland builds on Linn's work in her study of language planning in Norway in Chapter 3. She identifies two interest groups: language-centred actors, who operate from a position of obligation to the Nor-

wegian language, and internationalisation-centred actors, who appeal to the logic of the free market. Ljosland finds that not only do the two groups encounter trouble in justifying their concerns to one another, they encounter further difficulty in harmonising their ideologies to the actual linguistic practices at the micro-level.

Linus Salö conducts a Bourdieusian analysis of the ideologies of Swedish language planning in Chapter 4 and concludes that the “*doxa* of the field has nationalistic footings” (p. 99). In the 1960s–80s, anxiety regarding the sustained influx of English loanwords in Swedish, concurrent to a spike in asylum seekers in the 1970s, fed a metalinguistic discourse on so-called *Swenglish*, in which the intrusion of English lexical influence was positioned as low-valued symbolic capital associated with vanity and ignorance. This purist ideology underwent a Foucauldian ‘crossing’ with immigration restrictionist ideology, as “heartily acclamations about the splendiddness of Swedish in fact dabbled in the same troubled waters as those who do not only demand that all foreign words must leave the Swedish language, but all other ‘foreign elements’ must leave Sweden” (p. 91). Salö observes that this discursive crossing produced a sort of guilt by association, ultimately shifting the focus of language planners from lexical purity to domain loss, so that “Swedish may have the position locally that English enjoys globally” (p. 96). This reformulation remains steeped in the national project (in which Swedish is reinforced as a neutral emblem of the unified nation-state) and a sort of geographic essentialism (in which the link between Swedish and Sweden is naturalised), with not always ideal consequences on the linguistic and other rights of long-established minority groups and recent migrants. This bird’s eye view complements Hedda Söderlundh’s close reading of five studies of language practices in Swedish higher education in Chapter 5. Whereas Salö exposes (dis)continuities between language planning ideologies and nationalist ideologies, Söderlundh’s focus is on the discontinuities between policy and practice, which have been assumed to coincide in earlier work.

In Chapter 6, Taina Saarinen identifies two periods of language visibility and one of invisibility in the history of Finnish higher education. In the period of national awakening in the mid-nineteenth century, Latin dominance gave way to the use of Finnish and Swedish as languages of instruction. Immediately following independence, the relationship between Finnish and Swedish became more fraught, culminating in Finnish being named as the official language of the University of Helsinki, with a proportion of Swedish-language professorships set aside. At present, a wish for increased internationalisation and for the attraction of global student flows challenges the fundamental identity of the

university as a national institution providing a public service, catalysing the growth of *vieraskieliset ohjelmat*—strictly speaking, ‘foreign language programmes’, but in practice English-medium programmes. Saarinen argues that the conflation of ‘English’ with ‘foreign’ and ‘international’ invisibilises English and suggests a detachment of language from nation, even as more conservative ideologies about the ownership of English are fortified, in the sense that university language policies privilege the Western hegemonic varieties of the Anglo-American nations. Notably, non-native English emerges in this ecology as its own kind of asset, as indicated by this testimony from a German student: “I knew that Finland... would have a high quality of English... but it’s still not their mother tongue, so it’s OK to make mistakes as a student” (p. 141). Jan K. Lindström and Jenny Sylvin provide an in-depth investigation of how the above ideologies are implemented at the University of Helsinki as well as pan-Nordically, finding that the more international an environment becomes, the more monolingual it tends to be, as linguistic diversity is resolved by the use of English as a lingua franca. The authors argue for increased opportunity creation for the use of local languages.

Ari Páll Kristinsson’s contribution in Chapter 8 juxtaposes the renowned linguistic protectionism of Icelanders with their pragmatism as regards the spread of English. Icelanders are argued to be highly linguistically aware, as well as committed to discourses of language management in which Icelandic is conceptualised as an invaluable cultural artefact. The Icelandic language regime is characterised by a high level of lexico-grammatico-orthographic purism: specialist terminology is forged from native lexemes (e.g., *veðurfræði* ‘weather studies, i.e., meteorology’); borrowed affixes are resisted (e.g., English *-ation*); foreignisms are spelt using native conventions (e.g., *eróbikk* ‘aerobic’). Yet this preservationist bent is restricted to keeping Icelandic free of foreign *forms* and does not form the backbone of a criticism of the spread of a foreign *language*, even as English continues to take up more and more of Icelanders’ work and leisure hours. In 2002, three-quarters of Icelanders used English weekly and over a quarter did so daily. One hundred percent of survey respondents agreed that Icelandic politicians must speak English, so as to reify the image of Iceland as a well-educated nation deserving of international cooperation. Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir and Hafðis Ingvarsdóttir concretize this context in Chapter 9 by zooming in on the University of Iceland, which like other Icelandic institutions employs a policy of *simultaneous parallel code use* (SPCU), in which courses are taught in Icelandic while course materials are in English. Faculty publications in English-language journals are more highly rewarded

than those in Icelandic-language ones, creating tensions between the pursuit of international recognition and the public university's role in protecting the mother tongue of a small language community. The authors find that students overestimate their own English ability and are unprepared for the domain-general SPCU classroom on the basis of a domain-specific secondary education that focusses on reading literature, and suggest that this may be a contributing factor to the high dropout rate of first-year students, averaging 38% over the last few years.

Janus Mortensen and Anne Fabricius present a qualitative analysis in Chapter 10 of language ideologies in the *transient multilingual community* (TMC) of an international study programme in Denmark. Less interested in top-down policy initiatives than the above contributors, the authors conduct interviews with students, seeking meta-reflections on their own and others' linguistic practices in a short-lived community that differs strongly in character and purpose from the idealised, stable communities of practice that form the basis of traditional sociolinguistic theory. A number of *construct resources*, or ideological postulates about language variation and social meaning, emerge from this work, to include the "performance pressure" of "native" English: "interactions with 'native speakers' have... a focus on form, grammatical correctness and linguistic formality rather than content and communication... with non-natives, you just 'talk normal'" (p. 210). In the TMC, speaking a non-native variety of English is often more appropriate or effective—leading to cases in which a student with a higher proficiency of English forced herself to use a more heavily-accented "Danglish" in order to be understood. The last report, Merike Jürna's Chapter 10 on the linguistic practices of international academic staff at the University of Copenhagen. Across 203 respondents, it is found that the majority of respondents (95%) use English in their work, 32% use Danish, and that while Danish is rarely a language of science, it is useful in administering science. Short-term staff at UCPH experience life in an "expat bubble", whereas longer-term staff find Danish skills more necessary to their work, particularly receptive skills.

This work is impressively pan-Nordic in its coverage, while simultaneously managing to provide insights into Englishisation as a global phenomenon. Regrettably, it is less *cross-Nordic*, and has little to say about how the spread of English has affected intra-Nordic communication and coordination. In recent years, speakers of Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish, particularly nonstandard dialects thereof, more quickly resort to the use of English where earlier generations would have conducted non-convergent discourse. Relatedly, there is no discussion on how English has edged out Danish in its prior role in integrating

Icelanders, Faroe Islanders, and Greenlanders into the larger Nordic and higher education communities. Regardless, the volume remains a significant contribution to the study of dynamics and processes that will continue for many decades yet.

*Tran Truong*  
University of Chicago  
1115 East 58th Street  
Rosenwald Hall #224  
Chicago, IL 60637 (USA)  
elixir@uchicago.edu