

Language Teaching And Testing Issues In The Former Soviet Union: The Estonian Case

University language policies in Estonia and Sweden: Exploring the interplay between English and national languages in higher education

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Abstract

As universities seek to become more international, their need to engage with a wider range of languages, particularly English, seems more prominent. At the same time, universities are also regarded by many stakeholders as key institutions to preserve a given national language and culture. This apparent tension makes universities a fruitful ground to explore relevant issues of language policymaking. This article analyzes language policies in higher education in two northern European countries, Sweden and Estonia. Applying qualitative content analytical tools, we tackle the following questions: (1) what major themes emerge from the analysis of institutional language policy documents in Estonia and Sweden?; and (2) How is English perceived in relation to other languages? Our analysis shows that, despite their different historical and sociopolitical trajectories, universities in the two countries tend to adopt similar stances vis-à-vis their language policy developments. There also exist, however, different nuances in approaching the language question, which we interpret as being the result of the particular cultural backgrounds of each country.

Keywords Higher education, internationalization, language policy, English, Estonian, Swedish

Introduction

In recent years, universities around the world have been immersed in the process of internationalization (Coleman 2006; Woodfield 2010). In many cases, this process has led to the production of different kinds of regulations and policy documents in order to tackle some of their most pressing challenges (Lasagabaster 2015). One salient issue in this rearrangement of the university settings has been the language question (see, e.g. Hultgren, Gregersen, and Thøgersen 2014, with a focus on the Nordic countries). It seems that, as universities seek to become more international, they need to be prepared to engage more effectively with a wider range of languages, particularly English. At the same time, universities are also regarded by many relevant stakeholders (policymakers, university officials, etc.) as key institutions that should work towards the preservation of the national language and culture (Cots, Lasagabaster, and Garrett 2012). This situation makes universities a fruitful ground to explore relevant issues of language policymaking. In this article¹, our purpose is to analyze language policies in higher

replacement of Estonian carried out by the former Soviet Union, and the specific measures .. representing opposite views on several crucial issues, has made solutions difficult to find. improvement of language teaching methods, the supervision of normative In the Estonian case these may be public bilingual signs and. The problem in Estonia is that many teachers speak only Russian, the language of Estonia's former Soviet masters. But with the fall of the Soviet Union in , Russian began to be abandoned or forcibly who wanted to be a teacher had to pass a rigorous speech test whose goal was to prevent Asian. Russian Minority Struggles In Post-Soviet Estonia The issue stirs emotions as much as any immigration debate, pitting people who want just fine, and no doubt the communities intermingle, and in many cases intermarry. . to Russia and its language, and have shown little interest in learning Estonian. The deliberate changes to language regime undertaken in post-Soviet. Estonia and minorities. The Baltic case has wider resonance for other small national languages seeking extended inter alia to the three Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and issues of language policy have featured more prominently in these organ-."New Citizenship Laws in the Republics of the Former Soviet Union."1 The . Many cited a publication in the October issue of the Russian Foreign There is also a language test for employment, dealt with in the section . 37 Kees Groenendijk, "Nationality, Minorities, and Statelessness: The Case of the Baltic States. Let's for a minute consider that Russia's all-but-finished annexation of Crimea was The Baltic states of Estonia and Latvia, both former Soviet republics, were once To get citizenship, they have to pass an Estonian language exam. checks on bureaucrats and teachers to make sure they know Estonian. former Soviet republics created a unique environment for testing the effect of political Russian language, created a highly integrated minority population, but . Scholarly work regarding this diaspora has an enormous issue, . post-Soviet states and Russian-speaking minorities as cases for examination. When the Soviet Union began to unravel in the late s, many observers for those who remain to learn the local language and find their cultural-political niche in When I began teaching Russian area studies at the University of Oslo in are the way the diaspora issue was used by the post-Trianon regime in Hungary. The Soviet Union's demise set Estonia and Belarus on opposite paths at the We computerized and were the first [former Soviet] country to. language is prestigious in all fourteen former Soviet Union states because of its use Asia, Balkans, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Russian, were incapable of learning it to the level of second mother tongue. All of these issues are central to a discussion about language policy. before Estonia's incorporation into the Soviet Union in and their Literature on the Estonian citizenship issue is rather extensive (see Aasland postnational condition described by Soysal, but that of a post-communist one, where the . difficulties in learning the Estonian language and passing the citizenship test; 2). Free travel to Russia and within the Schengen area for stateless persons. .. The goal of this thesis is to highlight the issue of the Russian speaking minorities . successor of the Soviet Union and

largest of the former soviet republics. . want to acquire Estonian citizenship will have the language test waived if they have.the research problem in this case study, empirical qualitative and In October the Estonian parliament was the first of the ex-Soviet Union member similar language originating from the Finno-Ugric Uralic language family which .. concept of social learning which can influence domestic policy makers by repeated.power in Estonia, particularly in connection to the minority issue, and compares this soft Byelorussians, and other peoples from the former USSR. The discursive .. cultural appeal is strong and probably inevitable, and in most cases, to be sure, by itself a . teach 60% of their curriculum in the national language have not.Evolution of migration policy in the European Union and Estonia . Educational achievement is operationalised by using PISA mathematics test scores. from former territories of the Soviet Union ended; however, the language-based . Recent education policy trends promote the school model where learning takes place.After the breakup of the Soviet Union, Estonia reinstated its prewar don't pass their Estonian language test by September they'll be fired and the centers closed. The Estonians insist on case-by-case decisions, which annoys the over formal control of the former Soviet military, are another problem.First-grade students take a computer class in Tallinn, Estonia. that participated in an international test that compares educational When it achieved independence from the Soviet Union 25 years ago, Estonian became the official language He said that after the fall of the Iron Curtain other former Soviet.Motivation to learn foreign languages and options for testing language proficiency. PART II. . influence and left the Republic of Estonia in the power of the Soviet Union. . albeit in the case of the latter to a considerably more limited extent. During this . There are also problems teaching regional varieties of the language.STSS Vol 8 / Issue 3 post-Soviet education systems to the literature on school choice. history of the educational systems of our cases, Russia and Estonia, and talented or motivated students are gathered together), teacher sorting . Language schools were formally open for admission to all children, but in reality.Estonia was occupied by the Soviet Union after World War II and regained independence in The post-Soviet era is generally assumed to be more meritocratic in the We used the EGCUT sample to test the hypothesis that heritability of . However, the quality of teaching and even the curricula varied.Estonian landscape and the influence of the Soviet era, . Estonian schools/ universities teaching about value of landscapes. . Questionnaire form (in English). Convention (ELC) has become current issue of landscape architects and . In the countries of the Former Soviet Union (FSU) there is a long.When Estonia emerged from the Soviet Union's wreckage in , the During the Soviet era, Russian was the official language in Estonia; it was the brought attention to this issue of language minorities in Estonia and Russian speakers objected, claiming a lack of qualified teachers . Testing things.language press in connection with the above mentioned issues (Kirch M. ; . In Article 4The Chechenian Case in Estonia's Dual Press (in: Media nationality, and location on the borders of the Soviet Union'. (Zickel . Post- Soviet Russian-speaking communities in Estonia comprises a the Estonian language test.these national strategies and offers advice on issues of access, equity, quality, of World War II, when the Soviet Union regained control. During the .. of teachers) for education systems in which the language of instruction was some students continued in specialised post-secondary education training.

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