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Abstract

af Hällström-Reijonen, Charlotta, charlotta.afhallstrom-reijonen@focis.fi, Ph.D Student, Researcher, Research Institute for the Languages of Finland, Finland: “Finlandisms in academic speeches”. Språk och stil 21, 2011, pp. 57–80.

The study examines specific characteristic features of the Swedish spoken in Finland (academic Finlandisms) and how frequently they appear in academic speeches by Finland Swedes. By tradition, Finlandisms are to be avoided in academic speaking and writing, so the specific question is what characterizes those Finlandisms that are still used. Further questions investigated pertain to issues of age and gender: Do young academics use more Finlandisms than older ones, and is there a difference between men and women in their usage?

The study shows that Finland Swedes have difficulty avoiding Finlandisms completely. On an average the 15 informants in the study use approximately 0.27 Finlandisms per minute. Most of these Finlandisms are phrasal and influenced by Finnish, although none of the Finlandisms is a direct loan from Finnish. There are only a few syntactic Finlandisms in the material, but these recur often, while many of the lexical Finlandisms occur only once in the material. The most common Finlandisms are used by informants of all the ages represented and by both sexes.

Some of the most common Finlandisms in the material appear to be difficult for Finland Swedes to avoid, while others are easier to learn to avoid. The study provides support for the view that language-planning efforts that focus on raising awareness of “avoidable Finlandisms” stand a greater chance of succeeding.

Keywords: Finlandisms, Finland Swedish, academic speaking, language planning, language corpus planning, Swedish.