Abstract


The study looks at Finland-Swedish fiction from the point of view of language planning and more specifically at the extent to which so-called Finlandisms are allowed in books aimed at the Swedish market. This is called the Swedish-publisher argument in Finland-Swedish language planning.

The first part of the study shows that the argument has had a remarkable impact on the debate concerning Finland-Swedish fiction from the latter half of the 19th century until today. The second part of the study puts the argument to a test by focusing on the fiction of K.A. Tavaststjerna. The question asked is whether his texts were more rigorously edited in Sweden than in Finland, so that the language in books aimed for the Swedish market contained less of the Finland-Swedish vernacular, i.e., fewer Finlandisms.

The study tests the argument with a quantitative approach, where Finlandisms are counted and books published in Finland compared to those published in Sweden; and in a qualitative study, where differences between existing editions and versions of Tavaststjerna’s texts are analysed. Both studies show that the argument does not hold in any direct manner in relation to Tavaststjerna. This is surprising, as he has been invoked to illustrate how the Finland-Swedish vernacular can have a negative effect on the success of Finland-Swedish books in Sweden.

The conclusion in this study is that the argument has been given an unreasonable role in the debate on language in Finland-Swedish fiction.

Keywords: language planning, Finland-Swedish, Karl A. Tavaststjerna, language debates, language ideologies.