Chapter 7

Language Ideologies and the Experiences of International Students

Deborah C. Clarke deborah.clarke@helsinki.fi

University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland

Abstract

Through their language policies, universities favour particular languages in the process of learning, and this challenges the value, inclusion and power of other languages. This chapter explores this issue from the perspective of international students through a series of task-based focus group interviews that concentrate on the University of Helsinki language policy and which have been analysed using discourse analysis methodology. The findings suggest that while the university is supportive of the development of language proficiency and values languages in general, many languages which are present in the international student body are not used actively for study purposes.

1.   Introduction

Since the nineteenth century, universities have produced locally, nationally and regionally bound knowledge. This knowledge would then be shared and studied within an international network (Marginson, 2011). Internationalization in this sense is not new. However, since the 1980s, internationalization has changed shape, and certainly but not exceptionally, within the Nordic context, universities have become increasingly market-based using the numbers of international students and foreign members of staff as indicators of successful internationalization (Haberland, 2014). Another indicator is the publication of research, mostly in English, in high-impact journals that provides personal and institutional bibliometrics (see Gingras, 2016, for an in-depth discussion) and, in part, determines international rankings and, consequently, the numbers of student applications. Internationalization can also be perceived to have societally focused aims, such as enhancing international ties and increasing cooperation between universities, regions and nations.

Nevertheless, whilst this may be true, according to Saarinen (2012) the aims of internalization in the case of Finland are largely economic, resulting in the commodification of Finnish education.

To attract students from outside the Nordic countries and thus meet the demands of internationalization, there needed to be a change in the language of instruction. In the 1990s, there was some experimentation with the provision of French- (Saarinen, 2014) and German-medium instruction in some Finnish universities of applied sciences, but these did not attract sufficient numbers of home or international students (Lehikoinen, 2004). Since then, as with universities in the other Nordic countries, internationalization is now linked to the provision of English-medium instruction (EMI) (Haberland, 2014). In Finland, this has been expanded from EMI for exchange students to the provision of EMI for entire master's degree programmes. This development is seen by some scholars as a threat to Finnish and Swedish, the two official languages of Finland, in university settings (Lindström & Sylvin, 2014; Saarinen, 2014; Saarinen & Rontu, 2018).

At the University of Helsinki (UH), which is the context of this study, two editions of a university language policy have been published (University of Helsinki, 2007, 2014). The policy specifies the roles of languages at the university in relation to the university's ambition for greater internationalization. As a consequence of the UH being legally a bilingual university (Universities Act, 558/2009), its policy stipulates that it bears responsibility for the national languages in that it "(…) supports the development of Finland's national languages as the languages of research and academic education (…)" (University of Helsinki, 2014, p. 47). Furthermore, it asserts that the university participates in the use of English as an academic *lingua franca* in its role as an international institution. References to other languages within both editions of the policy (2007, 2014) are minimal. However, the policy specifies an institutional belief in the use and value of other languages.

The literature problematizing language policies that describe the role of the national language(s) plus English (e.g. Hultgren, 2014; Lindström & Sylvin, 2014), and in some cases English and Spanish (e.g. Cots, Lasagabaster, & Garrett, 2012; Doiz, Lasagabaster, & Sierra, 2014), across Europe is relatively extensive. However, there has been very little attention given to language use in universities from the perspective of students who are speakers of languages other than English. When such students emerge in the data, they are not the main focus of research (e.g. Garrett & Gallego-Balsà, 2014; Lindström, 2012; Söderlundh, 2012).

This chapter, therefore, places the voice of international students at the centre of the discussion in relation to the use of language at university.

In the data used in this chapter, the students discuss their experiences and reactions to language use through the lens of the UH language policy in order to address this research question:

- How do international students react to the university language ideology, and how does this relate to their own experiences?

To answer this question, how the students navigate the points in the language policy, how they adapt to institutional practices and their levels of personal agency will also be explored.

2.   Language Ideologies

A language policy can be seen as a reflection of a nation's or an institution's language ideology. Woolard (1998, pp. 23–25) describes four main strands of thinking about ideology as a general concept. Briefly, these are ideology as a mental concept, such as consciousness, subjective representations, beliefs and ideas; secondly, as a representation of or reaction to the experiences and interests of particular groups; thirdly, as a struggle to maintain or acquire social, economic and political power; and finally, as an unrecognized distortion or illusion in the defence of power. In their review of language ideology, Määttä and Pietikäinen (2014) suggest that of these four definitions it is the interrelated second and third definitions where language ideology often falls. This also seems to be the case in relation to the context of the present is study, namely university language ideology as outlined by the university language policy.

To reiterate, language policies tend to support particular groups of people in maintaining and acquiring economic, social and political power. Consequently, they can also be interpreted to be supporting the ethnocentric prejudice that languages are unequal in that some languages are categorized as unsuitable for particular purposes (Beacco & Byram, 2007), such as academic literature and university study. Risager (2012) conceptualizes language ideologies that support particular languages as language hierarchies. She uses Graddol's (1997) projection for language dominance in her analysis. Graddol (1997) predicts

that in 2050 English, Chinese, Spanish, Arabic and Urdu/Hindi will appear at the top of the language hierarchy, followed by the trade bloc languages, for example Russian, national languages and local languages. Taking into consideration language hierarchies both globally and locally within Denmark, Risager (2012) questions the presence of university language policies that consider English as the sole language of internationalisation. This practice empowers English and Danish over other languages present in the university. Moreover, the preference for particular languages in university language policies influences the languages in which knowledge is produced.

That language choice in higher education is connected with knowledge production can also be understood as supporting and maintaining the power of particular groups. For example, many European universities have adopted English as an academic *lingua franca*, alongside the national languages, for purposes of internationalisation, and they also produce academic research in English. English has thus become the dominant language for Western knowledge, although not in all domains (e.g. Kuteeva & Airey, 2014). The perception of Western knowledge as the legitimate knowledge (Doxtater, 2004) is far-reaching and is considered by Shih (2010) as academic colonialism that weakens meaningful "glocal" knowledge production. Additionally, Tukumbi (2016) states that some scholars have diminished social science in Africa by reducing cultural, social and historical knowledge to tribalism and irrationality thus enabling Western knowledge to dominate academic discourses. Although this issue goes far deeper than language, language still plays a key role, for example in translations of knowledge.

Language ideologies not only identify particular languages as authentic national languages but also stipulate the variety of language that can be considered the standard (Woolard, 1998). Desirable standard languages are also promulgated by the national state apparatus internationally through institutions, such as Alliance Française, the British Council, the Confucius Institute, the Goethe Institut, the Japan Foundation and Instituto Cervantes, to better control commercial market share (Heller, 2010). In his discussion of the critiques of language policy, Blommært (1996, p. 213) conveys Williams' (1992) argument concerning how the identification of standard languages is frequently biased. Williams (1992) criticizes the suggestion that standard languages are identified via societal consensus and highlights that the standard is a reflection of the often upper-middle social class with which it is associated. Williams (1992) also points out that states are beneficiaries of language planning and, therefore, the societal roles of language cannot be seen as solely objective.

Although academic research may contest state actions and policies, universities are regulated by the state and so their language policies, including their preferences for particular language varieties, can be seen as reflections of state values.

In summary, language ideology in relation to the ~~e present~~is study can be understood in terms of power and hierarchy, production of knowledge and standard languages. Along these lines, languages can be excluded or ignored, included or valued or can be seen as unequal or empowered within a given institution.

2.1. International Students' Use of and Attitudes Towards Language: Previous Studies

Research into the experience of international students in universities in connection with the use of and attitudes towards language in relation to language policy in the European context is limited. Nevertheless, to create a landscape that situates the present research, this section will delineate the issues raised by previous studies that have had more than passing focus on international students in the connection with university language policies.

Differences between language policy, which is a reflection of language ideology, and how languages are actually used are a common feature of the research on language policy and use. For example, Söderlundh (2012) reports her observations of an EMI master's degree course in business in Sweden, in which 19 of the 48 students are international. She observes that both English and Swedish are used on the course. Swedish is used when asking other Swedes for a vocabulary item in English, asking questions of and taking part in individual exchanges with the teacher and when Swedish students are working together in a small group. Although French and Spanish students ($n = 6$) were also on the course they did not deviate from English and, along with other international students, accepted the use of Swedish on the course because of its special position as the national language. Multilingual interaction did not occur, only parallel monolingualism as the four language groups clustered together. This is framed as the teacher's pragmatic rather than policy-approach to language use, but could equally be interpreted as the casual exclusion of international students in the process of learning, because when Swedish is used they cannot take part.

The literature emerging from Finland (e.g. Lindström & Sylvin, 2014; Saarinen, 2012; Saarinen & Rontu, 2018) is mostly concerned with language issues from a national perspective so international voices are largely absent from the literature. However, Lindström (2012) conducted a number of focus groups in 2007 to discuss the issue of the national languages and English at the UH and, exceptionally, one of his groups consisted of ~~1~~one international lecturer from English-speaking Canada and ~~3~~three students from French-speaking Canada, Denmark and Sweden. The Scandinavian students commented on how they have had to complete their studies in English because Swedish was not spoken widely enough despite the UH being an officially bilingual university. The non-Scandinavian participants agreed that the presence of Swedish is very limited and, consequently, they placed a higher importance on learning Finnish rather than Swedish, although they all found Finnish difficult to access. Furthermore, they remarked upon the sometimes poor quality of teaching in English. This was also a concern of the students in Saarinen and Rontu's (2018) study who observe that there is a need for linguistic support for teachers.

Whilst the UH is *de jure* a bilingual university, it is *de facto* a trilingual university in that it has a trilingual language policy that is published in Finnish, Swedish and English. While other universities that have a trilingual language policy have been the site of research, this research has been conducted in other parts of Europe. In their comparative study, Garrett and Gallego-Balsà (2014) surveyed the attitudes of international students towards internationali~~z~~sation and the official minority languages, Catalan and Welsh at the University of Lleida in Catalonia (UdL), which has a trilingual language policy~~,~~ and Cardiff University (CU) in Wales, which has a bilingual policy. Interestingly, in the reasonably substantial sample of 136 international students (75 from UdL and 61 from CU), none of the students, when asked to comment upon internationali~~z~~sation, made a connection between internationali~~z~~sation and the official minority language, focusing instead upon the benefits of internationali~~z~~sation on languages in general. This should perhaps not be too surprising given that the term "~~'~~international~~'~~" is likely to conjure multinational and multilingual images rather than local ones.

The studies reviewed in this section suggest that international students are not particularly engaged with national languages. However, this should come as no surprise because, as Risager (2012) states, bi/trilingual language policies are not written with international students in mind; for these students, such policies are monolingual in that they exclude their languages. Language policies are only bi/trilingual for home students.

Furthermore, the emphasis on English as the academic *lingua franca*, whilst accommodating international students, masks the linguistic diversity that is present and thus could be construed as making non-national students invisible. In this sense, the UH language policy is also monolingual.

Both editions of the UH language policy (2007, p. 40, 2014, p. 47) state the importance of languages other than Finnish, Swedish and English as a source of enrichment that generates understanding of other cultures and the ability to think creatively. This could be an important ideology from the perspective of students from countries other than Finland. The 2007 edition mentions foreign languages by name, for example Estonian, Russian, French and German (p. 44), but the 2014 edition refers only to foreign and Baltic languages (p. 50) leaving only Finnish, Swedish and English as named languages. This may be a way to avoid marginali~~z~~sing unspecified languages, but also could convey the message that only Finnish, Swedish and English are perceived as legitimate academic languages. This aspect of the policy and underpinning ideology reinforces power relations between certain languages (Määttä & Pietikäinen, 2014), supports language hierarchies at the university (Risager, 2012) and, importantly, does not reflect the actual multilingualism present in the university.

In th~~e present~~is study, the UH language policy is used as a lens through which to examine the tension between institutional language ideologies and international students' experiences and attitudes.

3.   Task-~~b~~Based Focus Group Methodology

The focus group data presented in this chapter were collected in March and April 2018 at the UH. The UH is an ideal site for th~~e present~~is study because it is an example of an international university which has a published language policy. This study could have been situated in a number of universities and so some of the findings are likely to be relevant outside the UH context.

For this study, three focus groups originally comprising ~~4~~four master's students, from the science faculties where I had been teaching, were organized. The students had all taken one or more academic writing courses with me, so were personally known to me and most of them had met each other before. The size of the groups is considered ideal for focus group

research (Wood & Kroger, 2000) and, importantly, wasere the maximum number that could be accommodated by the available space. Informed consent forms were sent to the students in advance and were signed on the day that the focus groups took place.

The groups were united by their status as international students who do not speak English as their first language (see Table 7.1) and were organized so that each group formed one membership category (Wood & Kroger, 2000). This is why neither the Spanish speakers nor Mandarin speakers were put in the same group.

Table 7.1 The fictitious names and gender, ages and languages of the students by group and length of the focus group interview

Groups	Participants	Age	Languages that can be used for study purposes other than English
Group 1 (1- hour 30- minutes)	Gary (M), Carlos (M), Alisha (F), Eda (F)	23–37	Cantonese, Mandarin Spanish, French Hindi Turkish
Group 2 (1- hour 20- minutes)	Petra (F) Chun (M) Mahika (F)	22–24	Croatian, Slovenian, Serbian Mandarin Marathi, Hindi
Group 3 (1- hour 20- minutes)	Androulla (F) Thu (M) Kang (M) Ariana (F)	24–29	Greek Vietnamese Mandarin Spanish

The rationale for using focus groups over other qualitative methods is that they allow for socially constructed meaning through functions, such as giving opinions, agreeing, disagreeing and building on each other's ideas to come to a new understanding, or simply to demonstrate different understandings of the same phenomena. These interactions serve as a way to generate data, but also become the focus of the analysis (Kitzinger, 1994; Kitzinger et al., 2004, cited in Marková, Linell, Grossen, & Salazar-Orvig, 2007). To generate data of this

quality, the core task for the groups was to discuss a set of statements adapted from the English version of the UH language policy (see Table 7.2). The participants were asked to decide as a group how far they agree with the statements by discussing them, giving examples and justifying their opinions. When they had come to an agreement, they placed a sticky note, with the statement written on it, on to a larger piece of paper that had a scale drawn on it from "totally disagree" to "completely agree". The task was completed when they had stuck the 16 statements to the poster. However, only nine of these statements are included in this analysis. This is because the remaining statements relate to either intercultural interaction or the use of English as *lingua franca* which are beyond the scope of this chapter.

Table 7.2 Statements extracted from the policy (left) and how they were altered for the focus group task (right)

Sentences from the UH language policy (2014)	Sentences discussed in the focus groups
The University supports students and staff in their efforts to improve their language skills. (p. 47)	I feel supported by the university in my efforts to improve my language skills.
The University believes that learning and using other languages is valuable. (p. 48)	• I think that the university believes my languages are valuable. • I think that the university believes that learning languages other than Finnish, Swedish and English is valuable.
The University raises linguistic awareness, builds well-functioning bilingualism, highlights multilingualism as a strength and encourages the parallel use of different languages. (p. 48)	• I feel that the university highlights multilingualism as a strength. • As a student at this university, I think I have raised my linguistic awareness. • I think that the university encourages the

	parallel use of languages that I speak.
	• I think that the university builds well-functioning bilingualism.
The multilingual skills of students, researchers and staff are exploited in the development of the University's international efforts. (p. 50)	My multilingual skills are exploited in the development of the university's international efforts.
The University offers a wide range of teaching in different languages (…), with consideration for the special needs of students who do not speak either of the national languages. (p. 51)	In terms of the teaching offered, I am given consideration as a student who does not speak either of the national languages.

This interactive type of task encourages free as opposed to the transactional discussion and enables the construction of socially shared knowledge (Marková et al., 2007). The role of the researcher in this type of focus group model is peripheral in that they are not involved in the discussion (Marková et al., 2007). This arrangement somewhat circumvents the problem of the researcher becoming the discussion leader and inadvertently influencing the opinions of the group.

During the analytical process, the participants' disagreements became the primary focal point. Marková et al. (2007) consider disagreements a worthwhile subject of analysis as they offer opportunities to observe the construction of new forms of reasoning between participants, rather than focusing on exchanges of preformed ideas. Their disagreements easily lent themselves to the creation of two continua through which their comments could be coded and categorized. The first continuum relates to whether the students' language repertoires are excluded and ignored or included and valued. The second continuum refers to whether the participants experience language inequality or empowerment. Issues of individual and institutional agency have also been included in the analysis to explain why some may have greater feelings of inclusion than others.

4. Student Reactions to and Experiences of Language Use at University

This section examines the participants' reactions to and experiences of the use of languages at university. The analysis has been organized by the two continua (excluded/ignored to included/valued and inequality to empowerment) and by the statements (see Table 7.2) that their comments refer to. These statements serve as sub-headings. For the purposes of clarity, the extracts used in this section have had any false starts and repetitions removed. The meanings of the transcription notation can be found in Appendix.

4.1. Continuum 1: From Excluded/Ignored to Included/Valued

Whether languages are excluded and ignored or included and valued is important especially in the European context where not all of the many languages can be awarded privileged positions in educational systems (Beacco & Byram, 2007). In this section, some extracts from the focus groups, which exemplify the repeated theme of linguistic inclusion and value, are discussed.

4.1.1. "I think that the university believes my languages are valuable"

The statements in the focus group task that relate to whether the students believe the university values their languages create a number of disagreements that mark differing levels of perceived value awarded to the languages they speak. Those whose first language is a smaller national language, in this case Greek and Croatian, perceived their language to have no value in the institutional context:

(1)

I don't think they do much I don't think they're I mean valuable for what in my um major no they're not valuable.

(Petra)

(2)

in this case for my language NO!, hah (All: hah) *totally disagree*.

(Androulla)

Others who speak regional (Chinese), national (Hindi) and official languages in national states (Marathi) (Graddol, 1997) were able to evaluate the different experiences and knowledge they have about the presence of their languages at the university and responded in a more neutral or balanced way:

(3)

Chun: (…) they kind of think Chinese is valuable because I know that they have this kind of Chinese language lessons and er they have this kind of Confucius department (…) so yeah I guess they kind of think it's valuable but I don't know much about it (…) when it comes to like research or study yeah I don't think so

Mahika: (…) was thinking maybe I should say yes yeah some bad because there are a lot of people from India (…) and since a lot of students er coming here maybe, they would value the language to not let the students feel I don't know but as you [Petra] said I don't think it would matter that much but just maybe on the administrative level I don't know because I've come across a lot of um professors er from Indian origin (Petra: yeah me too) so maybe, so then I would be somewhere the agree

Others believe their languages are valued. Ariana mentions that there are Spanish conversation groups available at the university and so feels that her language is valued by the university. Additionally, comments from Carlos also indicate high levels of inclusion of Spanish:

(4)

actually they have a lot of languages (…) there's like every semester around (…) twenty [courses] in Spanish and sometimes they teach politics or science in Spanish

like for people that just want to learn the language but like they have to they want to learn.

<div align="right">(Carlos)</div>

The continuum here suggests an approximate hierarchical order to the values awarded to languages shown through their presence at the university which is similar to Graddol's (1997) 2050 global language hierarchy projection and suggests investment in languages that enjoy political, social or economic power (Määttä & Pietikäinen, 2014).

4.1.2. "The university believes that learning languages other than Finnish, Swedish and English is valuable"

In relation to the status of other languages, the UH language policy states that "[g]lobal developments and European integration have generated a need for skills in other foreign languages in both the academic community and Finnish society at large" (University of Helsinki, 2014, p. 50). This need has resulted in a wide range of language courses available at the university's language centre. Knowledge of these courses is evident in the participants' discussions in which they all conclude that the university does value languages other than Finnish, Swedish and English, with one exception:

(5)

yes but I've tried looking for other languages from English to Spanish English to Russian er they have but only for C2 level yeah so you cannot start from the beginning if you didn't know it before (Mahika: oh okay) there are many languages from Finnish to something <u>a lot</u> of those options but em.

<div align="right">(Petra)</div>

This exception concerns the instructional language of some courses which could possibly lead to barriers to building language repertoires through the courses organized by the university.

4.1.3. "I feel supported by the university in my efforts to improve my language skills"

In the participants' discussions about whether they feel supported in their efforts to improve their own language skills, there is a similar level of agreement to the previous statement. Their discussions mainly focus on learning Finnish and improving their command of English. While courses in Finnish are provided for international students, most of the students who have taken Finnish courses appear to be demotivated by the typical teaching practices that overly emphasize grammar and the standard language variety; for example:

(6)

(…) I've been taking a Finnish course here in the university and they mainly focused grammar our teacher said that er the university want international students to speak like proper Finnish so you don't really learn spoken Finnish you're focused grammar [Thu nodding] and it's so strict (…).

(Ariana)

As they discuss the support they have received in developing their skills in English, they give many examples of the different academically-focused courses they have taken:

(7)

also with English like we [have] the academic writing lecture for instance and then there are these pitching lectures (Gary: hm) that you have so just I completely agree.

(Alisha)

(8)

(…) when it comes to English I do feel that it's well-supported because when I first arrived in here, so there is one mandatory course you have to do in our department it's a called like how to read and write scientific papers (Mahika: hmm) er in computer science so at I also taken the (…) the academic writing course so yeah it's this course really gives me a lot of help so (…) if it's just about English I would say I completely agree with this.

(Chun)

These extracts demonstrate how the university participates in the development of English as the academic *lingua franca* (University of Helsinki, 2014, p. 48) and how, as with other institutions, it promotes standard Finnish over other varieties of Finnish (Heller, 2010).

4.1.4. "In terms of the teaching offered, I am given consideration as a student who does not speak either of the national languages"

The participants' discussions indicate that as international students wishing to develop their language skills, they feel included because they are offered a great deal of support in developing their academic skills in English. However, when addressing the question of whether they are given consideration as students who do not speak either of the national languages, the reactions and experiences of the students fall at either end of the continuum. Some students have found course lecturers to be very accommodating; for example:

(9)

there was like this course that it was all in Finnish and I asked the teacher like can I take the class and she was told me like yeah like the info it's in English you can totally take it in like she told me like the instruction teaching it's in Finnish like I have to give the class in Finnish because it's for like bachelors'? students? but um you I mean everyone there speaks English and you can ask me and if you want to enter the class there's no problem >like sometimes they're like< say no sorry like you cannot enter this one (…).

(Carlos)

Others discuss the opportunity to earn course credits through an exam rather than face-to-face teaching. At the UH, students are given an option on a great many courses to take a book exam as an alternative to taking a course and attending lectures. The book exams entail the reading of some set texts followed by a written examination. While some of the students consider book exams to be an inferior form of learning, Gary indicates this is an inclusive practice because he believes this allows participation in courses otherwise unavailable to him as a person who does not speak Finnish:

(10)

I tend to see this from this perspective as in like you know there are courses which are conducted in Finnish for example but you are allowed to do a book exam for example in English so therefore if it's a question of no barriers then totally agree.

(Gary)

Both the flexibility of the course lecturers and the potential to take book exams when courses are not available in English are constructed by some of the students as considerate of their needs. However, in each of the focus groups, there was some discussion of the students' experiences of being on courses arranged in English where the linguistics needs of international students were ignored in that some teaching was carried out in Finnish. Extract (11) is a typical example, and further examples will be shared in the next section:

(11)

Petra: oh so I don't know I have had experiences in large courses with majority of Finnish people where the professor would start to explain in English and then give up because he got stuck and would then explain that thing in Finnish and then just continue in English without explaining the thing

Mahika: oh no I haven't

Petra: or em also if a Finnish person asks a question they would ask in Finnish and the professor answers in Finnish and maybe I also wanted to hear the answer to the question and the question I don't know so maybe if I ask a question in English I'd just repeat the question because I didn't know. (…)

This section has explored the extent to which students feel that their languages are valued and whether through institutional language practices they are included in the learning process. In summary, the extent to which languages are valued, as Thu points out, "[is dependent] on where you are from". If the language in question is one of the big languages such as Mandarin, Spanish and English (Graddol, 1997), then the language is more visible and by extension valued and included. Whilst there were some examples of exclusion, where lecturers would switch languages during instruction leaving students unaware of what had been discussed, some students gained a sense of inclusion through support for the development of their skills in English, flexible teaching and alternative modes of assessment.

4.2. Continuum 2: From Inequality to Empowerment

In this section themes of inequality and empowerment are explored. Inequality refers to whether students, based on their language skills, experience equality in terms of, for example, accessing learning and formally using their languages whereas empowerment means that they have been able to use their languages for study or in a formal capacity.

4.2.1. "In terms of the teaching offered, I am given consideration as a student who does not speak either of the national languages"

Some of the discourse relating to whether the students are given consideration as students who do not speak either of the national languages could be considered as an issue of both exclusion and inequality in that they have been unable to participate fully in a course because of language issues; for example:

(12)

Kang: (…) sometimes maybe like the Moodle page of some course they are still in Finnish for me and also the teacher will enrol me in the Moodle page but she will still upload some Finnish document or (Androulla: yeah; Ariana: oh that's horrible) instead of English documents but and (…) they will just tell that try to Google translate it [Thu nodding] because we still haven't translate it into English for you so you better do it yourself and (Androulla: *okay*) and there maybe next year who knows then it is annoying and sometimes during the lectures some Finnish students raised up some questions in Finnish

Androulla: and they continue to have the conversation in Finnish

Kang: yes and then it could be better if the professor explained [Thu nodding what they have discussed in English for us because we feel like we are just wasting our time waiting for them to end the discussion we've got nothing from that (Ariana: hmm true)

Although this example echoes extract (11), a feeling of inequality in terms of accessing learning is more strongly expressed. Interestingly, in another focus group, Eda relates an anecdote that is very similar to these commenting that "[the lecturer] disregarded us

and continued in Finnish until the point we said like hey we're also here and this is an English course". Whilst it is probably not the intention of the lecturer to disregard the students, such examples provide the perspective of non-national students on EMI courses who did not appear to have a voice in Söderlundh's (2012) study.

4.2.2. "The university encourages the parallel use of languages that I speak"

When discussing whether they are encouraged to use their languages in a parallel fashion, Chun, Mahika, Petra and Ariana comment on how they have difficulties in imagining how the parallel use of their languages could be realized in their current context. Carlos, however, gives an example of how on his course he has been encouraged to use Spanish:

(13)

it's kind of tricky because I think they do want you like to because they have like sometimes this like oh like write something in your own language? like for journal or something like that and they encourage that but I think it's in specific cases.

(Carlos)

For Androulla, it is evident that this particular policy statement is not intended for international students: "I get the feeling that the purpose of this [statement] is to protect Finnish and Swedish then it makes sense *at least for them*". The hint of sarcasm at the end of her sentence conveys a sense of inequality, and her statement as a whole reflects the notion raised by Risager (2012) that for international students, university language policies are monolingual.

4.2.3. "My multilingual skills are exploited in the development of the university's international efforts"

Although the students do not use their languages in a parallel fashion and face some challenges on courses organized in English, there are also examples of empowerment in

connection with their other languages which derive from both the institution and from the students themselves.

As part of one of her courses Petra was instructed to update a Wikipedia page in another language, and in the focus group discussion she used this as an example to demonstrate how her multilingual skills have been used at university:

(14)

I can think of only one thing I had a seminar, and with the last part of the course we were supposed to edit a Wikipedia page in any language we wanted I did it in Croatian because *less trouble there* hah.

(Petra)

This example, admittedly, was not in connection with the university's international efforts as indicated in the statement that Petra was discussing. Nonetheless, such a practice is potentially empowering in that it was a deliberate use of a student's linguistic repertoire in the process of learning.

The students who are speakers of higher status languages, namely Mandarin and Spanish, have opportunities to use their languages in an institutional context for which they earn course credits. Both Ariana and Carlos have taken part in the university's language centre programme where they work as course assistants to language teachers, Kang has also considered this opportunity:

(15)

actually I have applied for to be a how to say that (Ariana: teaching assistant) teaching assistant at the Chinese teaching course in language school but I didn't go there actually but I applied for that so I know there are opportunities if I want to teach some.

(Kang)

Taking the role of a language course assistant within the institution can be constructed as empowering because it not only draws on the students' linguistic repertoire but also legitimizes the students' languages for use in the university context. This activity can also be

understood as contributing to the university's international efforts in relation to potential student exchanges with countries where the language is spoken.

While institutional agency is important in terms of the students accessing learning through English and creating occasions for students to use their linguistic repertoires, individual agency is also very important. The participant who appears to be most empowered in terms of employing their linguistic repertoires is Carlos who is very active in seeking opportunities to use his skills in Spanish. He describes himself as having a working relationship with the university:

(16)

well at least in my case? they are they always call me when they need someone that speaks Spanish so I have been working with the university like for a year already (Alisha: hmm) [Gary nodding] like with Finnish and Swedish speakers that they want to learn Spanish or the embassy in Mexico as like a translator so.

(Carlos)

In response to Carlos' level of agency, the other students in the group reflect on their own levels of motivation and contemplate whether the reason why they are not active in using their languages in the institutional context is simply because they have not approached the university with suggestions for how this might be realized:

(17)

Alisha: honestly it's not even like I have promoted myself to be like oh my god I know Hindi and you know let's get rolling its (All: hah) *I haven't done that so*

Eda: [no I haven't said] let's get rolling either

Eda, whilst admitting that she has not made her skills in Turkish visible to the university, points out that Spanish is a more desirable language suggesting that individual agency may not be the deciding factor. Gary, on the other hand, simply states that there is no chance at all of his multilingual skills being used by the university and concludes that "it could be a situation where I'm just completely *inactive I'm just not on the radar*".

To sum up, the section has explored discourses of language inequality and empowerment. Some students report negative experiences on courses where they have not been accommodated as students who do not speak Finnish, while others have been invited to use their languages in the institutional context. Such empowering opportunities, however, are very much dependent on the languages a student speaks which can be construed as an inequality that points to power dynamics between languages (Määttä & Pietikäinen, 2014). The role of individual agency is also highlighted as an important factor in empowering students, with those seeking occasions to use their languages demonstrating higher levels of empowerment.

5.   Discussion and Conclusions

The comments and exchanges between the students indicate that linguistic power structures exist at the university. This is particularly evident in Sect. 4.1.1 where the students discuss the value awarded to their languages at the university. Although the data in this section reflects subjective experiences, it seems reasonable to deduce that there is a tendency for the big languages (Graddol, 1997) to be more visible at the university, suggesting investment in the languages with the most social, political or economic potential (Määttä & Pietikäinen, 2014) but at the expense of other languages. One consequence of this is continued neglect of less valued languages for academic purposes.

The discourse of power and hierarchy can be detected in other comments made by the students in relation to standard languages. For example, discussions about the teaching of Finnish that favours the standard language over the Helsinki dialect, which could be more useful for the students to learn, indicates valorization of one variety of the language (Woolard, 1998). The existence of standard languages is also evident in experiences of the speakers of the big languages (i.e. Chinese and Spanish) who discuss empowering opportunities to work as teaching assistants, but who most certainly engage in the teaching of the standard variety. To exemplify, the Chinese students have the opportunity to work for the Confucius Institute known for its promotion of standard Chinese (Heller, 2010) and the Spanish students can work at the university language centre, which regardless of the background of the teachers and the students, most likely engages in the teaching of Castilian Spanish.

Whilst it is clear that some lecturers consider language when planning their teaching (e.g. extract (14), other lecturers' teaching practices provide further examples of hierarchies of power in connection with the use of Finnish on EMI and language courses. Whether intentional or unintentional, the use of Finnish on EMI courses as described by the students in extract (11) and Sect. 4.2.1 has the same consequence: perceived inequality of or exclusion from accessing learning. Furthermore, if an international student wants to develop their language repertoires but is prevented from doing so because they are not proficient in the teaching language, Finnish, then this could also be perceived as an inequality. Although it could be argued that international students' language learning is outside the remit of master's degree programmes, proficiency in language is likely to be important for the careers of all students.

The way the students navigated the meanings of the statements from the language policy also revealed their own language ideologies. The ideologies of the students for the present purposes can be understood as related to subjective representations, beliefs and ideas (Woolard, 1998). It was clear when they discussed parallel language use (see Sect. 4.2.2) at the university that they understood that that particular policy statement was not intended for them as international students (Risager, 2012). However, it was also apparent that they had never had the expectation or belief that they could use their languages in such a way. Their belief seemed to be based on the idea that they would use only English for academic study, Finnish for integration purposes, which also seemed to be the case in Lindström's (2012) study, and those who were studying other languages seem to be doing so as a hobby. One student, Carlos, is an exception in this study because he reports drawing upon French and Spanish academic texts for his studies and is able to write scientific texts in Spanish. He is also a very active and highly motivated student of languages. It is important to remember that students come to university with a range of experiences and beliefs about language use.

One consequence of the disjunction between the students' language(s) as largely non-academic languages and English as their academic *lingua franca* is the production of culturally-bound knowledge. As stated in the University of Helsinki Language Policy (2014, p. 47), languages are resources which are essential for participating in international research and for building communities. With this being said, perhaps opening students up to the idea of drawing upon knowledge produced in their full language repertoires could demonstrate a more earnest adherence to this ideology. By actively using academic knowledge from

different regions and in different languages, alternative information and understandings can be shared and valued.

A.   Appendix: Transcription Notation

!   Animated or emphatic tone

words   Laughter

(…)   Text omitted from transcription

[word] Non-verbal communication or word added for clarity by the writer

<u>word</u>   Indicates emphasis

,   Continuing intonation

?   Rising inflection

>word<   Faster than the surrounding talk

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