

Struggles for identity

A Finnish university's identity transition in its own policies after reform

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Abstract

As a case of disciplinary struggle of discipline, this study introduces a Finnish university's struggles over its own identity of what it is as an institution of higher knowledge during a transition period. Although higher education as a discipline itself is not discussed in this article, higher education institutes, at the heart of higher education, shoulder the responsibility of disciplining disciplines. The struggle of a modern university in quest of finding its own voice brings our attention to the historical changes and our contemplation of the deeper meaning of this transition and its possible impact.

Keywords: institutional identity, marketisation of higher education, higher education reform, policy analysis, critical discourse analysis

Introduction

This study investigates a Finnish university's struggles over its own identity around the crucial period of Finnish higher education reform. Under the transition brought by the reform, Finnish universities are forced to think about a crucial question: who are we, and where do we go from here? The University of Eastern Finland (UEF) is chosen as a case study, and its own strategy policy during 2000–2015 is examined through critical discourse analysis (CDA). The results show how the identity transition is reflected in the policy discourse and how the policies are justifying the transition and further assisting the fulfilment of the transition. The identity struggle itself also reflects the emerging disciplinary struggle of the mission of higher education: should higher education still stick to its old purpose of conferring knowledge, empowerment and emancipation, or should it also adapt to the timely expectation of the society to improve the country's economy?

More recently, European universities, like their counterparts all over the world, have been going through a transition over recent decades (Enders & De Boer, 2009; Huber, 2016). Under such transition, European universities are experiencing an identity crisis through a status of confusion and institutional changes (Enders & De Boer, 2009). Besides this common European context, Finnish universities are also under a transition in their own special context, with immediate influence from the Finnish higher education reform. Previous literature is mostly focused on the transition at the macro level (Ek et al., 2013), thus, there is a need for this study to investigate the transition at the micro level, from the perspective of one institution's changes. This research cut into a specific perspective to investigate one Finnish higher education institute's transformation with the comparison of its own past during the time scale of 2000–2015. To investigate the transition, Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis (CDA) framework is adopted to examine the policy discourse transition in terms of how the social transition is reflected in the policy and how the policy will continue to facilitate the transformation in Finnish higher education.

The context – Where are we going after the reform?

The immediate context of the transformation is the Finnish higher education reform started by the new University Act (558/2009) in June 2009. The reform brings a massive and multiple-level transition to Finnish higher education, from a restructuring of the whole system, the funding model and the strategy direction to internationalisation, etc. Public funding is radically reduced, but unprecedented autonomy is granted to universities by endowing universities to use the identity change of becoming independent legal personalities to collect external funding (University Act, 2009) and generate revenue from commercial means. Due to the stress over the need for resources to survive, many universities have to change their strategies and prepare themselves to compete in the global market. Such transition is reflected in the policies discussed later.

Under the reform, three groups of universities merged into three bigger universities during 2007–2010 (European Commission, 2016). The University of Eastern Finland (UEF) is chosen as the case study because UEF went through both the merger and the overall reform, which provides a representative case. The new branding renamed the two merged universities (the University of Joensuu and the University of Kuopio) as the University of Eastern Finland (UEF). However, this study considers UEF as a whole for the matter of clarity.

Under this transition, UEF published a series of strategy policies about how to take the university into a new era of development, trying to make UEF stronger and more competitive. These policy documents are used as the data to inspect the transition.

The discursive construct of identity

The theoretical ground of this study's research on the identity transition of a university through discourse lies in the postmodernist view of institutional identity as a discursive construct and identity as the totality of the narratives of who we think we are (e.g. Humphreys & Brown, 2002). Identity is a complex concept, and the identity of a university, as a collective identity, is multi-vocal from multiple voices inside the organisation (Boje, 2001; Mayr, 2015). Thus, to

maintain the clarity of the study, this paper investigates only one important aspect constituting the collective identity – how the university portrays itself in its own policy discourse.

The postmodern theoretical ground of studying an institution's identity through its discourse is how the connection of discourse and intuitions is conceptualised – the 'linguistic turn', with emphasis on the role of language use in social constitution, essentially views discourse as constitutive of institutions (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Mumby & Mease, 2011; Mayr, 2015). Mumby and Clair (1997) explain this point as follows:

Organizations exist only in so far as their members create them through discourse. This is not to claim that organizations are 'nothing but' discourse, but rather that discourse is the principle means by which organization members create a coherent social reality that frames their sense of who they are. (1997, p. 181)

That is to say, discourse plays a constituting role in shaping the institution's identity. Institutional identity is a socially constructed meaning by its own institutional members who share the idea of what it is, and it is not fixed but rather a dynamic construction (van der Walt 2007, p. 183). This study's investigation of the particular crafted changes imposed upon the university's identity exposes the deeper meaning of the direction the policymakers are leading the university towards and what kind of social reality they are trying to construct.

Research question and policy documents as data

The objective of the study is to make sense of the recent University of Eastern Finland (UEF) transition in policies and to analyse the identity changes of a Finnish university. The transition can be seen from the comparison of the identity presented in the university policies before and after the reform. It reveals the development and evolution of a Finnish higher education institute. The research question is: how is the identity transition of UEF reflected and justified in its policy discourse after the higher education reform?

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Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis (CDA) framework is adopted to examine the policy discourse transition. Fairclough's account of discourse analysis is three-dimensional, consisting of textual analysis, discursive analysis and social analysis. Within the CDA framework, a set of specific university strategic policy documents during 2000–2015 are the data for this study, as shown in the following table.

Table 1. The documents (coded as the year they were published)

Policy document	Code name by publish year
To a new millennium: The strategy of the University of Joensuu for the years 2000–2006	Document 2000
Strategy for the internationalisation of the University of Joensuu for the years 2007–2015	Document 2007
A university of the future – Strategy of the University of Eastern Finland (2010)	Document 2010
Internationalisation policy of the University of Eastern Finland 2012–2015	Document 2012
Interdisciplinary solutions – Strategy of the University of Eastern Finland for 2015–2020	Document 2014a
(Auxiliary document) Implementation programme for the strategy for 2015–2020	Document 2014b

The new policies after the reform (Documents 2010, 2012, 2014a and 2014b) form the data that present the new strategic priorities of UEF, which also provide the resource for the fragmented narratives of UEF's identity. In addition, the transition is seen through comparison to the old policies (Documents 2000 and 2007). I treat the new policies as a whole for the evidence after the reform, whereas the old policies as a whole provide the resources before the reform. The study only chose English documents as the data – the discourse in English is a medium that reflects how the university constructs its identity on a global scale. The university provides the English documents publicly to the global audience.

Findings

The analysis distils the distinctive discursive practices that help to shape the new reality, which provides the ground for the identity transformation. The new identity construction is justified and fulfilled by three predominant discursive practices: 1. justified by different layers of re-contextualisation; 2. legitimised by dominant ante-narratives; 3. intermediated by discursive practice normalisation.

Re-contextualisation

Re-contextualisation is a process in which one discourse or its meaning transfers into another context. Linell (1998) simply put it as ‘the dynamic transfer-and-transformation of something from one discourse/text-in-context ... to another’ (p. 154).

One prominent analysis finding is that the new University of Eastern Finland (UEF) strategy policies justify themselves by noticeably re-contextualising elements from European Union (EU) policies and Finnish national policies. This forms the top-down level consistency (EU level–Finnish national level–UEF institutional level) in policy direction, which I denote as EU–FI–UEF consistency in this study.

The most remarkable transferred discourses include establishing an increasingly concrete quality assurance system, the transit to a ‘student-centred university’, the same justification to exit the economic crisis, the encouragement to export following the European Commission’s country-specific recommendations, etc., which all indicate that UEF’s current development is in line with EU’s planning direction.

For example, the discourse of marketising higher education, with the same presumption of treating higher education as a product/service that can be exported, is transferred from EU policies and Finnish policies, as shown below:

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Table 2. Example of how education export discourse is re-contextualised from EU to UEF

From the EU level: Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth	Unleash Europe's innovative capabilities, improving educational outcomes and the quality and outputs of education institutions, and exploiting the economic and societal benefits of a digital society. Europe 2020 Strategy (2010, p. 12)
From the Finnish national level: Finnish education export strategy	Educational know-how will be a Finnish export cluster in the future. Educational know-how will be an increasingly important part of industrial and service products and in this way, it will bolster other export sectors. Education export strategy (2010, p. 7)
From the UEF institutional level: Interdisciplinary solutions – Strategy of the University of Eastern Finland for 2015–2020	We promote the transfer of the university's research findings to support knowledge-based growth ... Document 2014a, p. 6 We are known as a partner ..., and as a producer of research data and education ... Document 2014a, p. 3

As the analysis of other core discourses shows, the EU crisis rhetoric is transferred into the Finnish higher education context, and the same justification to escape the economy crisis, to be 'competitive' and 'succeed', is adopted to justify the transition of the Finnish university. It suggests that the Finnish university's priority is aligned to the economic priorities of the EU and the state in a synchronised way. The compliance to EU policies' economic initiative to take a share of global market and occupy a competitive position therein has spread to Finnish higher education.

Dominant competition ante-narratives

The ante-narrative, namely 'before narrative', is a concept defined by Boje (2001) to study those fragmented pieces of narratives in an organisational context because,

in organisational settings, narratives are often articulated only in fragments. Ante-narratives, simply put, are pieces of discourses before they become a complete story.

The reoccurring rhetoric patterns that formulate the constituent ante-narratives of the new identity after the reform are the 'global competition' ante-narratives. The competition-focused storytelling constantly serves as the background to justify the transition.

The new policies set out the tension for competition at the very beginning. For instance, Document 2012 sets up the backdrop that 'Europe is failing' before any story is being told:

... according to analyses by the European Commission in 2005 and 2006, only a few European universities are recognised as global leaders. Indeed, European higher education institutions are failing to attract enough students, researchers and investments from outside the EU. Currently, the United States is the leader in attracting the best students, while China and India are also emerging as rivals to European higher education institutions. (Document 2012, p. 3)

At the very beginning, the discourse states 'the fact' that European universities are 'failing', which gives a sense of imperativeness – it is an unavoidable obligation to deal with the 'failure'. The competition ante-narratives also harbour the presupposition that it is the European higher education institutes' primary duty to compete in the global market, such as Document 2012, with some specific major competitors given, e.g. 'the United States, China and India' (p. 3). The discourse 'only a few European universities are recognized as global leaders' (p. 3) implies that European universities not only must compete in the global market but also should dominate the market.

Higher education institutions used to be expected to cradle the civic development and intellectual competence of the society, but now 'a high level of expertise and international networking' is expected (Document 2010, p. 4). They have to 'meet the demands of operational efficiency' (Document 2010, p. 4), they are expected 'to succeed' (Document 2010, p. 4), to 'attract the best students' (Document 2012, p. 3) and to 'attract researchers and investments' (Document 2014a, p. 3, p. 4, p. 6) and to be 'global leaders' (Document 2012, p. 3).

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The university henceforward is also expected to increase the attractiveness of the country and serve to help the country to ‘become one of the world’s leading education-based economies’ (Document 2012, p. 4) and ‘increase the export’ (Document 2012, p. 4), e.g. Document 2012:

The attractiveness of Finland as a business, work and living environment must be increased ... The strategy ... strives towards Finland becoming one of the world’s leading education-based economies, which relies on the high quality of its education system, as well as towards significantly increasing the proportion of education and knowledge exports in relation to overall exports by 2015. (Document 2012, pp. 3–4)

‘Competition’ is accelerated on an unprecedented level in the new UEF policies compared to those before the reform. Competition as the motif of the new documents is set as the background to justify the policy direction – to justify the transition of the university’s identity.

Discursive practice normalisation

There are prominent discursive features in the new policies that bring out a striking contrast to the old documents before the reforms. These discursive practices facilitate the transition for the social changes with fine subtlety. Without comparison, they are almost undetectable because they appear very natural. Just as Fairclough (2007) suggests, it is through this naturalising and normalising of certain discourses and their backgrounded ideologies that the engineering of a certain legitimacy is achieved.

The most pervasive discursive practice change is that the new policy discourses largely incorporate commercial- and business-style discourses, resulting in hybrid quasi-advertising and quasi-corporate discourses.

A new discourse feature from the new documents with the integrated business and advertising style can be found from the individual word-choice level, to the discursive-style level, to the overall visual-layout level.

From the choice of vocabulary, there is a notable increase in self-promotional words such as ‘efficient’ and ‘top-level’, which clearly indicate the significance of the university; see the table below.

Table 3. Promotional words from the top 30 most frequently reoccurring words list

Before reforms			After reforms					
<i>Document 2000</i>			<i>Document 2010</i>			<i>Document 2014a</i>		
Word	Count	Density	Word	Count	Density	Word	Count	Density
high	5	0.16%	international	35	0.98%	international	23	1.26%
better	5	0.16%	high	15	0.42%	strong	10	0.55%
			strong	8	0.22%	efficient	7	0.38%
			significant	8	0.22%	active	6	0.33%
			competitive	8	0.22%	top-level	6	0.33%
			attractive	6	0.17%	global	6	0.33%
			versatile	5	0.14%	scientific	6	0.33%
						tomorrows	5	0.27%
						high	4	0.22%
						achievement	3	0.16%
						modern	3	0.16%
						strengthened	3	0.16%
						actively	3	0.16%
						efficiency	3	0.16%

Another example from the quasi-advertising choice of words is the pervasive use of ‘we’, for example:

- We are an international, multidisciplinary and student-centred university whose high standard of research and appealing academic offering build the competence base of the future.
- We make use of the expertise of the entire academic community in our activities.
- We are an internationally attractive university, which seeks to find interdisciplinary solutions to global challenges.
- We are home to Finland’s best academic learning environments and most efficient study processes. (Document 2014a, p. 3)

The following Table 4 shows the frequency of the use of ‘we’ in the strategy documents.

Table 4. Use of 'we' in strategy documents

Before reforms			After reforms		
<i>Document 2000</i>			<i>Document 2014a</i>		
Word	Count	Density	Word	Count	Density
we	6	0.18%	we	30	1.57%

As shown in the above table, the pervasive use of 'we' is one of the many discursive features contributing to a discourse style shift after the reforms. The pronoun 'we' is used as a personalisation of the institution and is used 30 times in the latest strategy paper, Document 2014a. This personalisation style of addressing readers directly is commonly used in advertising practice, which is an example of the hybrid quasi-advertising genre (Fairclough, 1993). Using 'we' as a reference to self resembles a style of conversation, as if the text is directly talking to the audience. This kind of conversationalising policy discourse is regarded by Fairclough (1994) as a type of commodification of public discourse, which is also an indicator of the marketisation of higher education (Fairclough, 1993, 1994).

Increased visual content is also another feature. Visual content, as non-verbal messages, in CDA is also considered a part of discourse (Fairclough, 1992). A comparison of the data shows that from 2000 to 2015 the documents become increasingly more concise. Especially the new documents after the reform display a clearer emphasis on the major features of UEF. In addition, these major features can be considered as the selling points of UEF from the perspective of branding and marketing. The style and layout of the new documents, especially Document 2014a, is more than that of just an ordinary policy document. The format is getting closer to a commercial brochure that provides more promotional information and visual content. For instance, the following table compares the same content but in obviously different forms:

Table 5. Visual contents

Before reforms	After reforms
<p>3. A COMPETITIVE RESEARCH AND TEACHING UNIVERSITY</p> <p>3.1 ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW AREAS OF EXPERTISE IN RESEARCH AND EDUCATION In addition to the above mentioned areas of expertise in research, the University of Jyväskylä has also selected two regionally and nationally recognised fields to which resources and education will be further strengthened. These fields are impact-based expertise, remaining in areas, and selected fields of teacher education. Impact-based expertise pertaining to Finnish and cross-border cooperation aims among the central goals of the University of Jyväskylä in research relating to Nordic, European borders, border regions and fringe areas. The university seeks to gain international recognition as one of the leading experts in the field. Furthermore, the university is strengthening its research and education pertaining to the Russian language, culture, history and commerce. The university develops its cooperation with Russia especially through the expertise focused in the areas of expertise in education and research.</p> <p>The University of Jyväskylä Finland offers extensive and versatile teacher training. The university's particular strengths in teacher education include the development of special education and guidance counselling, as well as the improvement of the preparations for subject teacher training in natural sciences. Its research relating to learning, modern learning environments and technologies and their introduction are emphasised and the goal is also to simultaneously improve the research and teaching infrastructure between the university campuses.</p> <p>The university will place special emphasis on these fields through strategic funding and through a comprehensive development plan addressing the university's teaching and research.</p> <p>3.2 INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION Through being part of the international scientific community, the university ensures a high standard of research and teaching and the university works actively to find new ways and means for international cooperation. These include, e.g., education and research activities at the university's overseas campuses, cooperation with international partners in Finland, teacher-exchange programs, and degree-oriented education for which tuition fees are charged.</p> <p>The university's research groups are international and well-networked with leading international universities and research institutes. The international cooperation of the university's research groups is self-directed and the areas of cooperation are defined on the basis of academic research interests. The university works actively to recruit leading international researchers and supports the international mobility of its own research staff.</p> <p>The university's strategic areas of cooperation in research and education include Europe, North America, Russia, China, and Southern Africa in particular. Moreover, the university emphasises the possibilities for launching a 3 overseas campus projects with its international partners. The university also emphasises the activities of the Finnish-Russian Cross-Border University thus far and in future based on the university's areas of expertise.</p>	<p>I Solutions to global challenges</p> <p>Working solutions to the complex challenges of our changing world calls for an ability to think and resolve things in a novel way. Research and education are expected to provide innovative solutions and skills to create a responsible and sustainable future.</p> <p>4 Global challenges</p> <p>The University of Jyväskylä Finland has adopted the global challenge for which an aim is to find solutions for areas related to our planet. In the future, science and research-based education also aims to challenge (continue) or change it.</p> <p>RESEARCH EDUCATION</p> <p>RESEARCH CHALLENGES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ageing, wellbeing and health Learning in a digital society Cultural assessment, multilingual and borders Environmental change and sustainability of natural resources <p>The university's staff and students aim to meet important areas. The university is a research, innovation and dialogue-driven scientific community and an active and responsible actor in society.</p> <p>The achievement of the university's strategic goals calls for bold decisions and collaboration with research organisations and other well-established partners across the recruitment of staff and students, and increased international activity are needed.</p>
<p>Document 2010</p>	<p>Document 2014a</p>

In this table, the left (Document 2010, p. 8) and right (Document 2014a, p. 2) columns show pages that express the same discourse on UEF's emphasised research areas. Clearly, Document 2014a is more concise, with an artistic design making it easier and attractive to read and highlighting certain important information.

Not just the content but also the style has drastically changed compared to the old documents; the following table shows an example of the difference:

Table 6. The first page of the documents

Before reforms	After reforms	
<p>Strategy for Internationalisation of the University of Jyväskylä for the Years 2007-2015</p> <p>The University of Jyväskylä, founded in 1850 in the North-Karelian city of Jyväskylä, in western Finland, is a research-oriented public university with eight Faculties: Humanities, Education, Forest Sciences, Information Science, Law, Medicine and Biological Sciences. Since its founding, the university has developed into a research institution in the main subjects in Jyväskylä. The University has a campus in the city of Jyväskylä, in Finland, and in 2005, the number of students studied was 12,724, of whom 9,100 were Finnish students and 3,624 were international students. The university has 2-12 months' exchange international students worldwide (1% of whom 70%) and exchange students (10%) on degree studies worldwide (22 months) from the 2-12 months. Currently, the University of Jyväskylä is linked through bilateral agreements to cooperation with 57 international hosts in 40 different countries.</p> <p>The University of Jyväskylä coordinates the Finnish-Swedish Cross-Border Cooperation Cells and leads the Finlands of the EU's Network of Universities of All European universities (Finland, Latvia and Czech) a degree programme in Finnish. The University of Jyväskylä is a member of the European University Association (EUA), the European Association of Universities (EAU) and the European Association of Public Administrators (EAPAA). The University is also a member of the Nordic Council of Higher Education (NORDIC) and the Nordic Council of Ministers (NORDIC). In 2005, the University of Jyväskylä was designated a Partner University of the United Nations International Programme (UNIP) on Technology of Science as also actively involved in the development of the United Nations University of Science.</p> <p>Research Profile</p> <p>In its efforts to serve the needs of society, the University of Jyväskylä relies on its strengths and areas of expertise. These include research and teaching relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - education and development; - forest and the environment; - sports, recreation, and sports medicine/science; - health, medicine and health. <p>The University takes special pride in its tradition of interdisciplinary cooperation. The Swedish Institute of the University operates its research in the Information and Social Sciences, the European Institute Institute of the University focuses on interdisciplinary research on aquatic ecology.</p> <p>The University has been used an international scientific cooperation and has received national recognition in several fields. The University's Finnish Language Research Project was designated 'a success of scientific research' by the President of Finland Jouni Paavola in 2006. In recent years, the Finnish Rights Institute has been granted an award of the highest quality for the development of some 10 years of research in research workers in the Information and Public Studies, Education, Preparation, in the Department of Psychology, in the Department of Biology, in the Department of Chemistry, and in the Faculty of Education.</p> <p>Objectives of Internationalisation</p>	 <p>Internationalisation Policy of the University of Eastern Finland 2012-2015</p> <p>UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND</p>	 <p>20 UEF</p> <p>INTERDISCIPLINARY SOLUTIONS uef.fi/strategia</p> <p>UEF of University of Eastern Finland STRATEGY FOR Years 2012-2015. Revised 4 April 2014</p>
<p>Document 2007</p>	<p>Document 2012</p>	<p>Document 2014a</p>

The above table shows that there are increasing visual contents added to the documents after the reform. Most notably, Document 2014a has a brochure version with large-scale/full-page images used, which resembles a modern magazine.

The latest documents as public policy exhibit remarkably promotional property, which shows the blurred boundaries between a public service discourse and an advertising discourse.

The hybrid discourses also indicate the shift of the functionalities and the objectives of Finnish higher education discourses. The additional consideration of the promotional function of discourse practice comes from the change of the university's identity marked by implementing the new Universities Act.

The quasi-corporate discourses can be found among the newly emerged discourses of indicators, measures, accountability and measurability (which do not exist in the documents before the reform.)

From Document 2012 onwards the policies include a new section of 'measures'. For instance, Document 2012 clarifies 'measures' at the end of every chapter:



Figure 1. Measures for indicators

Accountability and indicator discourses are new discourses after the reform that only appear in Document 2014b; see the figure below for an example:

Measure	Responsibility	Resources	Timetable
The principles of UEF's innovation policy (incl. technology transfer) are confirmed	Academic Rector University Services	Basic funding	Year 2015
Encouraging participation and influencing in national and international committees and forums	Rectors, Deans	Basic funding	Annually
Preparing a development plan to enhance alumni activities with a special emphasis on international alumni	University Services	Basic funding	Year 2015
Continuing the creation of the UEF brand	Development Services	Basic funding	Year 2015
Monitoring			
- Number of technology transfers and spin off companies - Credits completed in Open University - Number of alumni			

Figure 2. Accountability discourse of the secession of ‘social impact’ (Document 2014b, p. 5)

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Indicator	Monitoring of the strategy	Funding model	Indicator defined by the ministry	Performance agreement
Success in international rankings	x			
Publication forum classification (weighted number, categories 2 and 3 / teaching and research staff)	x	x		x
International peer-reviewed publications		x		
Other scientific publications		x		
Scientific publications / teaching and research staff			x	
Competitive research funding / overall funding	x		x	
International competitive research funding		x		
Other competitive research funding		x		
Number of doctoral degrees	x	x		
Doctoral degrees / research career stage IV, staff-years			x	
Share of teaching and research staff of all staff (excl. Teacher Training Schools, University Pharmacy)				x

Figure 3. Discourse of indicators (Document 2014b, p. 7)

The increased clarity for measurability, from an abstract description to a more concrete illustration of the goals, tries to concretise the traditionally indefinite goals of education (e.g. social impact), transferring to something that can be measured and can be monitored and evaluated by quantity. I call this transition in this text the ‘quantifiability turn’, where the shift to a results-based orientation, with all the discursive practices (e.g. ‘ranking’, ‘measurement’, ‘accountability’) that try to break down the intangible higher education quality and development into tangible and measurable units.

Quantifiability turn corresponds to the marketisation rituals, with the new University Act changing universities to independent legal entities, enabling them to operate like corporates. So, the quasi-corporate discourses are in line with the identity change of Finnish universities. The increasing quasi-corporate management rhetoric in the new policies also indicates a changed ideology of university operation underneath.

In the broader social context, on a worldwide scale, these results correspond to Fairclough’s studies about the marketisation process, that the colonisation of advertising and corporate discourses over higher education discourse is just one aspect of the marketisation of higher education. These changes in higher education are just one part of marketisation and commodification in the public sector in a more general sense (Fairclough, 1993).

Conclusion

The realisation and legitimisation of the transition is fulfilled at different levels, and they are interconnected and complement each other. Together they construct a consistent and compelling storytelling of a new imaginary construct of the university – a competitive, high-standard, world-class, top-ranked, attractive international university, with an emphasis on transferring knowledge to smart economic growth. It contrasts the old identity of a collaborative university with local and regional development as the priority, committed to promoting tolerance and equality in society.

The discursive change in the university policies creates a convincing representation of the institution, which is only loyally serving the ideology change of the policies. With the social constitutive power of the discourse practice, the policies are devised to construct certain aspects of reality – as if the policy is saying, this is the new reality of the university.

The identity struggle and transition reflected in the policy changes are largely steered by economic rationales and neoliberal ideologies, which are justifying the transition. The policy is furthering the implementation of this transformation.

The results show substantial evidence of the marketisation of the higher education discourse, which indicates the marketisation process of the education system and its influence on the development of the Finnish universities after the reform.

This case study documents a detailed account of a university's recent development and its struggles within the broader frame of 'Europe under transition'. It contributes to the wider empirical research on higher education marketisation and its impact on social changes.

Part of the goal of the study is to shed light on the ways in which systems of power can affect higher education via the meanings they construct and represent in the policy texts and processes. The power is constructed by the policy, and one examination result is that some power has transferred to the university through the autonomous authority granted by the 2009 University Act. However, this aspect is beyond the scope of this research and will not be further discussed here. The analysis of the discursive transition of university discourse also indicates the changing governance of higher education in Finland. The relationship changes

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between the state and the university are reflected in the discourses of operational anatomy, university responsibility and funding. Part of my research project addresses these issues, and the results will be presented in later papers.

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