

The spelling of stops in 16–17th century Finnish translations of psalms

The first Finnish language texts date back to the 16th century. These are typically of religious nature, and they are mainly translations of certain parts of the Bible. The present paper studies the changes in the spelling of stops in four translations of *The Book of Psalms* (Agricola, Jaakko Finno, Hemminki Maskulainen and the full translation of the Bible from 1642) published in the 16–17th centuries. For the sake of comparability, only those psalms were included in the corpus that are included in all of these translations.

The word-initial [p] and [t] are uniformly represented by *p* and *t*, while [k] is marked by *k* and *c*, and in the case of foreign words, sometimes also by *ch*. In words containing *ku-* as the root, the three earlier translations use *q*, while Agricola also uses the *ki* letter combination in some cases to mark the [k] phoneme.

The spelling of word-internal [p] is consequently with *p*. In the case of [t], the notation is most often *t*, but it is sometimes *th* in foreign words and in some cases Finno and Maskulainen also use *d* when the sound is positioned before a [k] sound. Word-internal [k] is generally marked by *k* or *c*, but Agricola and Finno also use *ck* and all of the translations apply *ch* in foreign words. In the compound word *ninquin* (*niin kuin*) 'as ... as' Agricola marks the sound with *q*.

Although today's Finnish language does not allow the sound [p] to stand in a word-final position, a few of such cases occur in Finno's and Maskulainen's translations because of the loss of the word-final vowel. In these cases the sound is spelt with *p*. Word-final [t] is always marked by *t*, with a few exceptions in Maskulainen's work, who used *d* as well. Similarly to [p], word-final [k] occurs only in Finno's and Maskulainen's translations, due to word-final vowel loss. The spelling is inconsequent: *k*, *c* or *ck*.

Word-internal geminated [pp] and [tt] are consequently spelt with *pp* and *tt*, while in the case of [kk], *ck* is more frequent. There are also a few occurrences of *c* in all of the texts besides the full Bible, and Agricola uses *k* in two instances. Geminated [tt] and [kk] are rare in word-final position in these works, it is again in Finno's and Maskulainen's translations, due to

word-final vowel loss. [kk] is uniformly spelt with *ck*, while [tt] is most often marked by *tt*, although Finno also uses *t*.

The [lt] cluster is spelt both with *lt* and *ld*, but *ld* is more predominant. [rt] is generally marked by *rt*, but Finno also applies *rd*, while Maskulainen uses *rdh* at some places. Voiceless stops are marked as voiced next to nasals: [mp] > *mb*, [nt] > *nd*, [nk] > *ng*. [ks] is spelt as *x* in all of the translations.

Voiced stops did not exist in the Finnish sound system of the era, so these can only occur in foreign personal and geographical names. [b] and [d] are consequently spelt with *b* and *d*, while no [g] occurs in the corpus.

The spelling of various stops is not equally uniform in the case of the individual phonemes. The most consequent spelling is observable in the case of [p] and the least consequent is the notation of [k]. The standardization process of Finnish orthography is well-represented by the fact that Agricola's translation contains 27 ways of spelling for 17 positions (1.58 ways/position), while this ratio is 1.55 for Finno, 1.50 for Maskulainen and as low as 1.12 for the full Bible translation.

Keywords: orthography, Finnish translations of psalms, the spelling of stops (p, t, k), Mikael Agricola, Jaakko Finno, Hemminki Maskulainen

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