

# Studies of Finnish in North America and Scandinavia

## Part II



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**I**n the first part a basic description of the settings and the targets for the studies in terms of linguistic levels were given. Here, the studies are scrutinized slightly more in detail from other angles.

### Approaches and targets of studies

#### *Basic approach in studies*

Table 1 basically tries to track down whether, 1) the studies have included both languages of the individual speaker, 2) the studies have either compared data from one language at language level to those of the other language, or 3) individuals have been used as sources for one language but not for the other. For example, one language may have been studied at the individual level of the speaker, but data on the other language are taken from written sources or from other speakers' (normally group level) data. This would be labeled a "Monolingual" language contact study in Table 1. A "Bilingual" (contact) study would be one which includes data on both languages from the same individual or samples of corresponding informants.

Reasons for this kind of taxonomy are, i.a. that most studies prior to the 1990's have been of the monolingual language contact type. This normally implies that

reference data and the level of comparison for the other language is the written standard. Tentatively, this could mean that the studies of languages in contact have carried severe theoretical bias (cf. Linell 1982). Hypothetically, studies using the same individuals for the study of both languages in contact may find themselves in need to modify basic assumptions of language contact at speech and language level. What becomes a matter of interest in this respect is then, whether attempts have been made to avoid such bias.

The label "Interlingual" (Table 1) covers cases, where linguistic features have been studied and described in theoretical frameworks, which are either connected to assumptions of universal features in human language, or which have stated that there are linguistic features worth considering, which neither emanate from Finnish nor its contact language. Regarding features that have been termed "neutralizations" (e.g. Andersson *forthc.*) in various studies, they are covered by the "Bilingual" label, since they have features in common with both languages.

In Table 1 there is a gap or less widespread representation in the column referring to interlingual, and to some extent, to bilingual studies. This partly reflects the fact that interest in Finnish has been shown by scholars, whose interests have not been grounded in recent theoretical frame-

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**Table 1. Basic descriptive approach, "linguistic world view", to data at speaker level. Linguistic theory/paradigm**

	Monolingual	Interlingual	Bilingual	
<i>Norway</i>				
Autochthonic	X	-	X	
Assimilated	X	-	(x)	
Immigrants	(x)	-	(x)	
<i>Sweden</i>				
Autochthonic	X	-	X	
Assimilated	X	-	(x)	
Ethnic Min. /	X	X	X	
Immigrants	(x)	(x)	X	
<i>Canada</i>				
Ethnic Min. /Immigrants		X	(x)	X
<i>USA</i>				
Ethnic Min. /Immigrants		X	(x)	(x)

works, even though examples of this can be found as well.

*Linguistic and time perspective of studies*

Basically three perspectives (with some subcategories) recur in linguistic studies on (spoken) language. One may study a) the synchronic *product*, b) the *process* of language change *in apparent time*, and c) the *process* of language change *in real time*.

"Product" studies refer to those, which include one undifferentiated population or one cross-section of a population, studied at one point in time. "Process in apparent time" refers to studies, which include comparisons between different cross-sections of speakers at the same point in time, or between one population and other kinds of data or other populations from another point in time, in order to state an accomplished change or a change in progress. "Process in real time" in this con-

text refers to studies, which involve representatives of the same sample at different times, with the same individuals (occasionally with additional individual informants). The most tedious sampling and analysing procedures of the linguistic material can probably be found under the third alternative. This gives, however, the most reliable results regarding lasting changes. It is further the most demanding method in terms of manpower and economy.

Linguistic *products* have been studied in most settings, except among recent immigrants. Almost no studies on recent immigrants' use of Finnish may be found, but some on their use of the target language (English and Swedish, for example).

In quantitative studies the use of *apparent time*-changes, i.e. the differences revealed by comparisons between different subgroups of speakers (by age and

sex), has been a methodological short-cut to estimations on changes in the linguistic system. The apparent changes may also be inferred by comparing material from different times. This dynamic aspect is not easily adapted to studies on the lexicon, and has thus not been used to any noteworthy extent in settings characterised by a predominantly lexicological direction.

For Kvens, Lindgren (1993a) has tried to describe the apparent changes between different sources. Winsa (1991) has studied how the dialect border between Tornedal Finnish and Gällivare Finnish has changed since the days of Airila (1912). Lainio (1989, 1990, 1991) has compared adult Sweden Finns both inter-generationally among Sweden Finns and to their respective source country dialects. In a bilingual project on adolescents and their parents, similarities and differences between them, both in Finnish and Swedish will be studied (Lainio *forthc.*). Kainulainen (1993) has made an inter-generational study with a third-generation Canadian Finn, as compared to his parents. Larmouth (1974; cf. also Hirvonen & Lauttamus 1994) has compared four generations' preferred case forms, and the increasing use of analytical means.

The *real time* changes have for practical reasons been rare, also internationally, but some long-term studies on Finnish may be found. Paunonen & Wande (1990; cf. Winsa 1993) have designed a project studying both language attitudes and language use among the same speakers in the 1960's and 1990's. In the project *Bilingualism at School*, school-aged children have been followed up both in Finnish and Swedish for several years (e.g., Viberg 1988; Juvonen et al. 1989). Pietilä (1989:17–18) has compared American Finns at two points in time, mainly

regarding their English, but she also discusses code-switching and Finnish abilities among the informants.

Related to this classification is the one concerning the time aspect of comparison. Despite the fact that most studies have traditional dialectology as a theoretical starting point, few have actually explicitly included the diachronic aspect. Most studies have aimed at a synchronic description. The borderline is apparently between traditional studies on the regional minorities (VäFi = Värmland Finnish, KvenFi and ToFi = Tornedal Finnish) and the more recent migrant populations. The social and linguistic complexity of the latter make such comparisons a cumbersome task: both methodologically and practically the amount of potential source varieties is high, and the compatibility is sometimes questionable between different kinds of data.

#### *The researcher's perspective*

The perspective of the researcher is crucial for the presentation of a minority language and partly for the choice of the descriptive means. I will briefly discuss its general importance below.

In Norway, the autochthonic group of Finns has been treated as Finns abroad until the late 1980's. The growing interest in minority aspects among the Kvens themselves, and the influx of empathetic researchers has changed the perspective in a more minority-oriented direction. There are also Kvens who have started participating in basic research. The more recent immigrants have not been paid much linguistic attention thus far. The situation seems to be that both Kvens and recent immigrants still see the latter as representatives of Finland Finnish. Some preliminary observations on the language of the second generation have been made (e.g., Niiranen 1993; Paavola 1994).

The Swedish situation is more complex. The ToFi situation has been faced with most of the mentioned perspectives: Finns abroad, autochthonic and recently, ethnolinguistic minority. Changes have been noticeable during the last decade. The descendants of the migrant community have first faced neglect, then been seen as Finns abroad and most recently, been understood as an ethnolinguistic minority. The second and later generations are now normally treated as representatives of a minority. Recent immigrants have also been paid attention in language learning and learner language studies.

As far as I know, the Finnish-speaking communities in North America have been studied as Finns abroad, even recently. In other social sciences the view has changed to slowly categorize the Finns and their descendants in North America as an ethnic minority group. However, so far linguistic studies have not taken this as a starting point. From one point of view this is logical — there are not very many speakers in the later generations left to uphold ethnolinguistic claims. Both Canada and the US have faced a continuous, but small immigration from Finland to the larger cities: Vancouver and Toronto in Canada, New York, Florida and the Pacific coast in the US. Normally, it is implied that they constitute temporary immigrants and not part of a continuous American Finnish migrant tradition. On the other hand, this view has been shared by thousands of earlier migrants, not the least among Sweden Finns. The Finnish of Finnish-speaking newcomers to North America has not been studied in any larger studies thus far.

Reasons for discussing the perspective of a researcher are not trivial. If a researcher has his/her background in Fin-

land, it is natural to consider the Finnish studied as an exodus variety, a variety spoken abroad. Several implications may be expected to follow from this. Firstly, the reference is usually mainly standard Finland Finnish (=FiFi). Secondly, a result of the description may be that the exodus variety is found to deteriorate and regress from FiFi. Changes have not been seen as development, but as retardation from an inferred evolutionary progression (however, recent studies of e.g. Martin, Jönsson-Korhola and Virtaranta try to avoid this implication). Thirdly, degree of involvement regarding the future prospects of the variety under study may be one of indifference.

If the researcher has his/her background among or shares some life experiences with the speakers of the language in question, s/he may be expected to see it as a minority language with a potential development towards its own standards, a language in its own right. This may also imply future prospectives and more of an involvement in the possibilities of maintenance for the variety in question. Representatives from a third group of researchers, the non-Finnish (general) linguist, may be expected to follow the "abroad" perspective (cf. Aikio 1990; Lainio 1990 for discussions).

On the other hand, an in-group minority researcher may start out to compare the minority variety from a low-prestige and low-status angle. This is the result, e.g., when the minority variety or language is not studied from its own perspective, as a developing language. Retarding features, differences compared to a Finland Finnish norm, error analyses and attrition, may be paid main attention. The language development is seen as not having the potential to change in the future. Such comparisons, though not intended to,

Table 2. Informant type: children, adolescents or adults

	Children	Adolescent	Adults	Seniors
Country				
<i>Norway</i>				
Autochthonic	X	-	X	X
Assimilated	-	-	-	X
Immigrants	(x)	(x)	(x)	-
<i>Sweden</i>				
Autochthonic	-	(x)	X	X
Assimilated	-	-	-	X
Ethnic Min.	(x)	X	X	(x)
Immigrants	-	(x)	X	-
<i>Canada</i>				
Ethnic min./ (Immigrants)	-	(x)	X	X
<i>USA</i>				
Ethnic min./ (Immigrants)	(x)	(x)	X	-

may thus result in a deficit view on the minority variety and its speakers. It has been shown by Huss (1991), that tremendous changes take place in the use and ability of the languages of a bilingual from the very first years of childhood. Attitudes in the bilinguals' closest environment but also researchers, may influence in which direction the development will go.

#### *Informant types in studies*

The following classification (table 4) both reflects the dominance of the traditional Fennistic paradigm (dialectological, lexical, Standard Finnish (=StFi)) and its preferences regarding choice of informants, but also the fact that younger speakers are no longer easily available for study in all of the settings. The difficulty of distinguishing between "imperfect learning" (Thomason & Kaufman 1988), contact-induced transfer and attrition for shifting speakers also presents itself in many of

these cases. The problem of how to deal with different informant types, i.e. where on a language shift continuum an informant is situated, has not been settled and hardly discussed explicitly in these different settings.

#### **A country-wise generalization of studies on spoken Finnish as a contact language**

Using the tables given I will try to summarize briefly the situation of each of the four mentioned settings/countries.

#### *Norway*

The Norwegian situation for Finnish has recently shown a remarkable increase in studies dealing with Finnish in Norway, predominantly the Kven Finnish speakers. This can partly be explained by the factors mentioned in the Introduction, i.e. change of paradigm, ethnic revitalization and the increasing number of in-group representatives.

These have further had the effect that the Norwegian Council of Research (NAVF 1992) launched a research programme concentrating on the cultural and sociolinguistic situation in Northern Norway. It has resulted in the activities wished for. Several theses have been finished and several are on their way. In addition, the Finnish Academy supported both the fieldwork and publishing of the studies, in parallel to the Norwegian funding. The epicentrum of this activity is the University of Tromsø, though also the Distriktshøgskole in Kautokeino and Alta have initiated several studies on the sociology of language. Speakers of Finnish in Northern Norway have not been the objects of study from only one perspective, but research is fairly varied and adapted to the situations.

Among the studies published, Lindgren's (1993a, 1993b) study on three Kven dialects' verb morphology and variation, is not only of Fennistic interest. Her results, among which the observed extensive morphological variation should be mentioned, are interesting for minority language contact descriptions at a general level. The lack of impact from standard Finnish and its prescriptive implementation, is taken into account in her attempt to evaluate differences between the dialect settings studied.

Among the fields that seem to be lacking here, which have been represented in other settings, could be mentioned studies of phonology, code-switching, and studies on recent immigrants' Finnish in a wider perspective. Different styles and situation-bound language use have not been studied. Linguistic descriptions of child and adolescents' language have not been completed as yet (cf. Niiranen 1993, however). As in the other settings, conclusions about the typological situation in

the minority setting are missing (however, cf. Lindgren 1993a). Since the start of many of the studies was late, several of them have not been finished, and new ones are continuously being started.

### *Sweden*

The most well-known of the Swedish settings is the ToFi situation, which has been comparatively extensively studied, a great deal thanks to older, pre-war dialectological studies, but also thanks to the debate initiated by Nils-Erik Hansegård on the semilingualism of Tornedalians. ToFi cannot, however, be said to be satisfactorily or fully studied. Most levels of ToFi grammar would need basic descriptions and case studies. Both diachronic and synchronic studies dealing with contact language aspects of ToFi are in progress.

Värmland Finnish, though now extinct, is facing a similar problem as was threatening studies of American Finnish (=AmFi) for several decades: much data was first collected, but little was analyzed or published about it after the traditional dialectologists had made their contributions (for AmFi, see 3.3). Even for VåFi, however, new projects have been initiated and analyses of the rich dialectological material are being performed at the moment. For VåFi, more clearcut than for the other contexts, there is no way to collect additional data — the speakers are irrevocably gone. For the other varieties of Finnish these studies still have a contrastive value.

Despite the fact that revitalization among Sweden Finns occurred earlier than in the other countries, and the question of e.g. educational achievement and programmes were discussed early in Sweden, hardly no main linguistic contributions regarding Finnish in Sweden were published prior to the mid-1980's

(e.g. Nesser 1986). Many studies considering Finnish-speakers' acquisition of Swedish as a second language, and two decades of studies within psychological, social and educational sciences have been accomplished. Sociopolitical, theoretical and attitudinal factors among researchers were initially of importance for a delay within linguistically oriented research on Sweden Finnish. Recently, several projects have been started on Sweden Finnish from various angles.

Among the research fields that have been lagging behind somewhat until recently are:

- cross-generational studies including the early and later arrived immigrants, as well as first vs. second and later generations of Sweden Finns (such projects have been started already)
- studies of stylistic and situational language variation
- extensive studies of L1 acquisition in the minority setting.

Some other areas that are being planned to be examined are:

- studies involving generalizable descriptions of the development of the old as well as the developing every-day borrowed vocabulary
- typologically oriented studies regarding specifically Finnic features and their degree of retention.

Some fields not studied to any noteworthy extent in the other settings have been represented in Sweden, e.g. regarding discourse and pragmatic/communicative competence among second generation adolescents (in both Finnish and Swedish). During the next five years main contributions to the study of Sweden Finnish and language contact aspects of Sweden Finns' languages may be expected. These cover bilingual and interlingual aspects of Finnish in contact with Swedish.

### *Canada and USA*

There is a practical and methodological complication in the research on American Finnish, namely that the linguistic situations in Canada and USA are taken for granted to have shared developments. One could argue that results hitherto have not revealed any obvious differences, but on the other hand this might be due to the fact that the linguistic material regularly has included informants from both sides of the border.

It has been noted that the attitudinal basis and the general linguistic settings differ in the two countries, but linguistic studies have deliberately overlooked this. However, Canadian Finnish cannot be said to be identical to USA Finnish (American Finnish), since the external characteristics of their language contacts are different. To take two extreme examples, the Montréal Finnish community, which is surrounded by Francophones and in the background by the gross Anglophone society, as well as the by now mostly shifted small communities of Finnish-speakers in the Maritimes with Hiberno-English as their contact English, have not been studied, but would hypothetically confuse the homogeneous picture of AmFi. (This would hypothetically concern levels of language which differ between the Englishes and English vs. French, e.g., certainly regarding pronunciation.)

The question is, whether this calls for another term to be used for these specific settings, or whether the Canadian case as such should be separately studied from the USA Finnish setting. Hypothetically, the main settings given above differ from each other, despite the fact that American and Canadian English are not considered to reveal main linguistic differences,

especially in the major contact areas of the Great Lakes (for a description of Canadian English, see Chambers 1991). Some reports (Larmouth 1974; Jönsson-Korhola 1989) do, however, mention that the local English has occasionally caused some deviations from the general American Finnish language use. It is possible that this has influenced language contact at some grammatical level more than on others, but so far, this has not been studied.

Another factor, which has not been studied explicitly, is the urban vs. rural setting of language contact. It is problematic for such a comparison, that language shift has proceeded further in the urban areas, and that collecting data is more complicated, e.g., in New York than, say, Hancock, Michigan, or Sudbury, Ontario.

American Finnish data, in the traditional meaning, has been most extensively collected and cannot be matched by any other available corpus from the other settings. This is thanks to the long term work of Pertti Virtaranta and *Suomen kielen nauhoitearkisto* (The Finnish language recording archival; see Jönsson-Korhola 1982; Virtaranta 1993). Both the work of Martin (1989) and Jönsson-Korhola (1989) (These reports have been summarized in English in Martin, 1990, and Jönsson-Korhola, 1990, which have become the long-needed foundations for further studies of American Finnish, have developed from the project of Virtaranta's (cf. Virtaranta et al. 1993).

The collection of spoken language material in the American setting, has been comparatively uniformly collected, which is not only an advantage. Traditional dialect data collection was the original starting point, which implies that younger speakers were not shown the same interest as older, "good" speakers of Finnish. However, practical problems

do arise, when such attempts have been made lately (e.g. Kainulainen 1993).

Situational variation has hardly been studied at all. The concentration of studies on lexicon has on the one hand resulted in a unique minority Finnish dictionary of American Finnish (Virtaranta 1992), but also in a lack of studies of the other levels of grammar. One general consequence of this seems to have been that the concept of AmFi has come to imply lexical deviations from FiFi, and, that these abound in the speech of American Finns both assumptions have been refuted by accurate data. The ways of collecting data have restricted the possibilities to adapt more than a fairly traditional dialectological approach to the study of spoken American Finnish. Some recent attempts are trying to complement the picture (e.g. Hirvonen 1992, 1993; Hirvonen & Lauttamus 1994; Lauttamus 1991, 1992).

Until the late 1980s comparatively little was published about AmFi. The project of Virtaranta's has by now produced four major contributions to the study of AmFi. After the publication of these works, it unfortunately seems that the study of transatlantic Finnish has come to an end. Since language shift is progressing continuously in both Canada and USA, new studies would be of great importance. Generally, the available data allows further basic descriptions to be made. There would still be time to collect new data, as well as a need to analyse available data from other types of speakers.

Recently, some studies dealing with code-switching have been initiated and results have been published both from the Canadian (Wheeler 1987; Poplack, Wheeler & Westwood 1987), and USA settings (Lauttamus 1991; Halmari 1993, 1994; Halmari & Smith 1994). The



work of Halmari represents qualitatively new directions in the study of Finnish-speakers in America. She has concentrated on code-switching (mostly among children) and intercultural discourse from the point of view of conversational analysis and government theories. Her informants have arrived fairly recently.

As in the other minority Finnish settings, language contact studies involving the typological approach are missing concerning American Finnish. Studies of child language development of Finnish in the North-American setting are generally lacking (however, Bowerman 1973; Halmari 1993, 1994; Halmari & Smith 1994). In addition to the mentioned works on spoken AmFi, there are several important unpublished Finnish pro gradu-theses on newspaper language (cf. Haakana et al. 1993 for a bibliography).

*International, typological and comparative perspectives*

There is a need to include macro-level language contact studies, in order to achieve a general overview of the state of affairs among the different minority Finns. Suffice it here to mention some typologically oriented and general linguistic directions that may be valuable in such an undertaking. In the general description of Comrie (1989) Finnish is often referred to as a representative of the Finno-Ugric/Uralic languages.

Areal linguistic studies (e.g. Décsy 1973; Bradean-Ebinger 1989) may also be of interest. Finnish is occasionally used as an example of various linguistic features in typological studies. Recent works by Dahl et al. (1992) and other proceeding work by the European Science Foundation typology programme (EUROTYP), may be expected

to contribute to the picture, and more directly so the project on Baltic language contacts (cf. Dahl & Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1992). A project on the pragmatic aspects of language use in contact in the Baltic sea area has been initiated by Raukko & Östman (1994). The treatment of migrant languages, such as Finnish in Sweden, is scarce in their approach thus far.

For practical reasons, no direct reference has been made to source country studies on the state of art for Finnish. There are abundant relevant representatives to be found among Fennists and general linguists in Finland also for my purposes, to complement the various fields above, but a discussion of these sources has for practical reasons to be presented elsewhere. Changes of FiFi can further be inferred from the variationist, so-called "city-Finnish" studies (e.g. Paunonen, Mielikäinen & Suojanen 1976; Mielikäinen 1980; Suojanen 1985; Paunonen 1993a, 1995) and studies relying on various dialect and archival corpora of Finnish.

Though macro-level studies are called for to be included in definitions of the typological state of minority Finns, the step from here to direct predictions, both nationally and areally, is daring (cf. Décsy 1973:299 ff.). Societal changes may easily disturb any prevalent equilibrium and initiate future language change, shift and revitalization.

### Discussion

If we want to develop a sense of understanding about what is going on in a wider perspective regarding Finnish, both minority and majority Finnish, I believe an overview of the kind given above is useful. Each study may add a further piece of information to what is happening to Finnish under the pressure

of surrounding Indo-European (=IE) languages, also to FiFi. Each study may reveal some of the characteristics that a speeded-up development of language change may contain, which route it might take, and to what extent a language shift is approaching. Knowledge about the present-day processes, in which minority Finnish speakers participate, may have explanative power for the description of Finnish at large. But to understand what is going on within the minority Finnish varieties, the majority speech community must also be taken into account and be studied in somewhat similar ways.

The studies reviewed also tell about the position of minority Finnic languages within the Fennic linguistic community. They partly reflect the directions of Fennic theories during the post-war era, and what the gaps of study are regarding various aspects of Finnish in contact with other, IE languages. To some extent they reflect the evaluation of the varieties and their speakers, both from a Finland Finnish and an internal minority point of view. In most respects, the gaps show that profound additions to the study of Finnish outside Finland are needed, despite important contributions in some areas.

Nowadays, in the era of EC/EU conformity, there are single voices heard that Finnish is threatened as a language in its own source area, Finland. Though this, according to my view, is far-fetched and hardly the case, the linguistic processes involved in the studies mentioned above may give further clues as to whether this really is a relevant scenario. The Finnic languages studied outside of Finland are threatened, there should be no doubt about this, and they are changing. Studies of minority and majority varieties of Finnish may thus benefit mutually from comparisons. One requirement is, how-

ever, that the studies are methodologically compatible.

As could be observed from the overview, there is a heavy overweight for traditional (dialectological, lexicological) approaches in the studies. Only lately have other directions contributed to the study of spoken Finnish. One direction that could be of common interest and which is increasingly being adopted is a typologically influenced one, which can be approached from various angles. Another is the growing amount of clarifications of different Finnish discourse modes. For Finnish outside of Finland, they have hardly been adopted in the studies mentioned. For comparisons within these frameworks the problem of speech vs. language level representation is, however, likely to become a major obstacle for reliable and valid conclusions regarding the varieties studied. For scholars of minority Finnic languages, and maybe partly for FiFi, the challenge is not to lose sight of each other, from methodological points of view. When compared to Finland Finnish in adequate ways, I believe that the minority Finnic languages under scrutiny in the by now considerable amount of reports, show that they are both worth studying in their own right, and that their linguistic characteristics have a bearing for the study of majority Finnish.

From a linguistic point of view, there are no "pure" languages; this is a social classification. Processes of change as a consequence of language contact are natural to any language or variety, though the direction and speed may differ. Minority languages have suffered more from this misconception than majority languages have. There is, nevertheless, probably a social-psychological critical limit for a linguistic borrowing process, also for minority languages. In order for

such changes to be kept under control by the speech community, measures have to be taken to avoid an approaching shift to the majority language. The responsibility of developing and using minority Finnish according to the changing demands of the environment lies with the minority speakers themselves. Attitudes to minority languages depend largely on the prestige attributed to them, within the group

and among outsiders. Researchers influence, they may like or not, the process of language maintenance both by their choice of method and their perspective on the minority variety, like these Finishes, and their respective speakers. The overview indicates that there has been an increasing sensitivity to such basic sociolinguistic facts among the studies reviewed here.

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