

Proposal topic for Autumn 2020

Grammatical change in the Finnic language in the 20th century.

In the middle of the 20th century, the Finnic languages of the Uralic family were subject to overwhelming contact with Indo-European languages, including the change of superstrate due to the subjugation of indigenous language for the means of political interest (Leppi-Green). The nature of this enforced multilingualism alters the linguistic atmosphere of the people in a given corpus. The greatest corpus of speakers of each Finnic language are within the nation-state that are politically involved. Efforts to reinforce the Finnic languages of the state have reoccurred throughout the century—despite these efforts natural change has occurred due to the optimality between multilingual communities.

To provide support that the Finnic languages have been affected from the overwhelming precedence of exo-linguistic influence, the varieties of the largest corpora will be observed compared over two snapshots of time while being compared to the other influencing languages. I expect that traits that are in the influencing languages will be present in the latter samples of Finnic language. Of the Finnic varieties, the largest corpora and those with the greatest expected difference in the variety are Estonian and Finnish. The languages that influence changes in the Finnic corpus are predominately from German and Russian languages.

Examining the typology of the Finnic and Indo-European languages, the grammaticality there is a predictable difference between any language in continuum. If the exclusive traits of a corpus at one point in time are then found within another corpus where such a trait was absent, there is reason to suggest that the contact between families has indeed affected the other in a way that would not coincidentally be independently found in natural continuum. If varieties of Estonian are observed before the annexations of Germany and the Soviet Union, and again after, we will find that traits in later Estonian varieties will be different from the former, with traits that resemble those found in the superstrate.

Evidence of other Uralic languages under the superstrate of another variety have been shown to deviate from the father language. Such examples can be found in multilingual communities such as Veps, Livonian, and Ingran varieties. Evidence shows that language transfer occurs phonologically, in syntax, as well as morphemes. Changes that occur between these languages frame the time of exposure required for the superstrate to have an effect on a language corpus, whereas other studies measure the endurance and survival rate of subjugated languages under the superstrate. This measurement on the affected languages would be based on the dates which the states' official languages were altered. Since these measurements have been by generations, and traits from one language less than a generation and the other from greater occur, then we are able to assess a ratio from language contact to extralingual trait