Forty years of research in Romani Language

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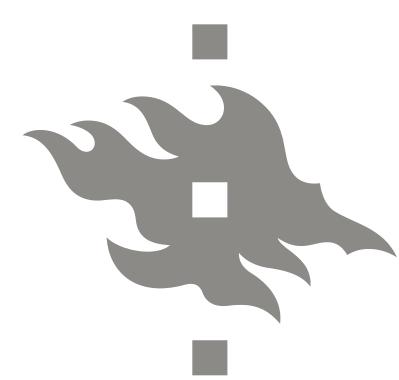
1.1 Introduction

- The history of Finnish Romani linguistics dates back to the end of the 18th century.

  - Kristfrid Ganander's (1741–1790) essay *Undersökning om De så kallade TATTERE eller Zigeuner, Cingari, Bohemiens, Deras Härkomst, Lefnadsätt, språk m.m. Samt om, när och hwarest några satt sig ner i Swerige?*

- Other early scholars and amateurs:

  - Adolf Ivar Arwidsson (1791–1858), K. J. Kemell (1805–1832), Henrik August Reinholm (1819–1883), **Arthur Thesleff** (1871–1920), Oskari Jalkio (Johansson) (1882–1952), Axel Kronqvist (1871–1956), **Paul Ariste** (1905–1990)

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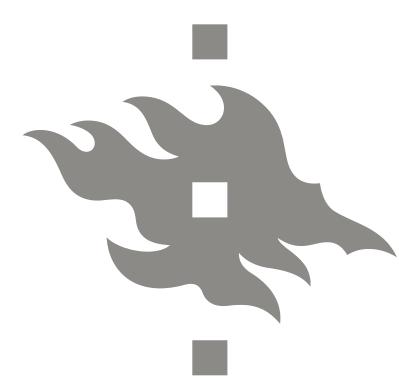
1.2 Introduction

- During the past 40 decades, work has been conducted on Romani at the University of Helsinki and the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland

- Four different eras:

I	1960-1970's	The first academic theses; historical-comparative paradigm
II	1980-early 2000's	"Fennistics"; lexicography, data collection
IIII	2000's-2012	"Linguistization"
IV	2012	European multi-disciplinary research

2.1 The 1960 – 1970's – the first academic theses

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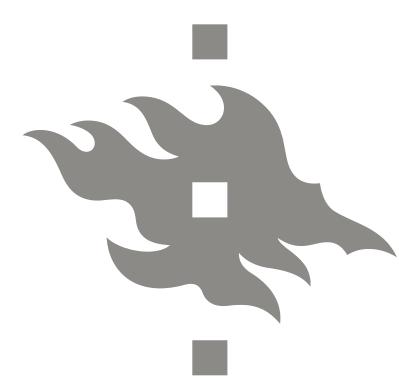
- **Pertti Valtonen** at the Institute for Asian and African Studies at the University of Helsinki:

  - master's thesis discussed the Indo-Aryan words in Finnish Romani (Valtonen 1964)

  - licentiate thesis discussed the diachrony of Finnish Romani in light of notes from different time periods and his own fieldwork (Valtonen 1968).

  - unfortunately he did not finish his PhD thesis *Indoarjalaisen perusaineksen säilyminen Suomen mustalaisten kielessä*: the manuscript is kept at the Institute for Asian and African Studies.
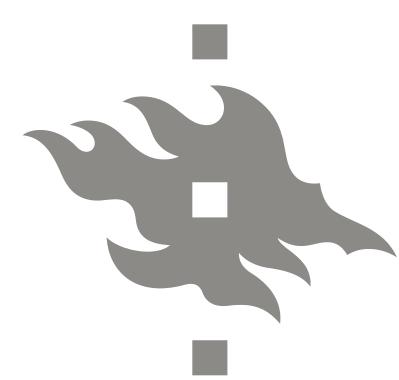
2.2 The 1960 – 1970's – the first academic theses

- Emphasis on the relationship of Romani with Old Indo-Aryan and Middle Indo-Aryan languages

- Historical-comparative paradigm had a strong impact still in the latter half of the 20th century
  - in Europe during the 19th and early 20th century

- In emulation of Sampson (1926), syntheses that attempted to cover all levels of language from phonetics to lexicon, but emphasizing morphology.

- But could never reach the same level of detail as Sampson did.
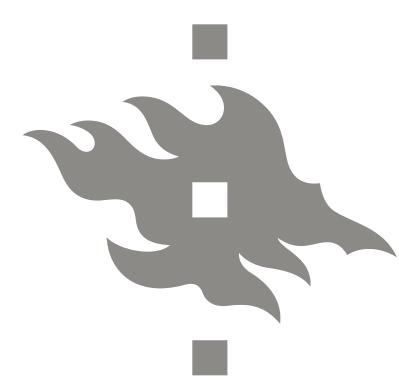
2.3 The 1960 – 1970's – data collection

- The academic interest in Romani increased in general in the 1960's and 1970's
  - Pekka Sammallahti, Matti Leiwo and Pekka Jalkanen began to tape-record the language.
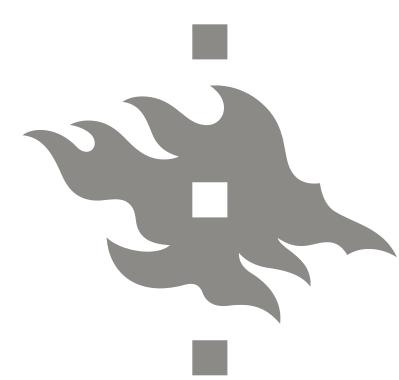
3.1 The "Fennistic" era 1980's - early 2000's

- At the **Research Institute for the Languages of Finland**, much emphasis was put on **data collection** and **lexicography** during the 1980's and the early 2000's.

- The **data collection** included:

  - obtaining and saving as computerized corpora a number of old written materials

  - collecting and transcribing a spoken language corpus.

Corpus	Size
Spoken Romani	168,000
Romano Boodos	46,000
Gospels	27,000
News in Romani	24,000
Thesleff	7,600
Jalkio	7,600
Temo	4,500
MNS	3,000
Kronqvist	2,700
Total	290,400
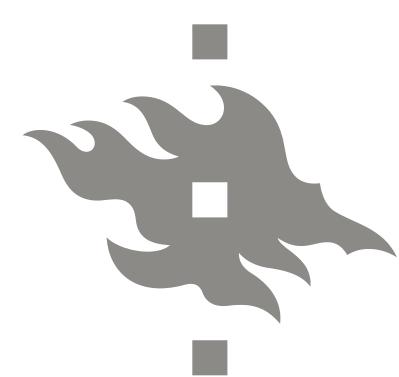
3.2 The "Fennistic" era 1980-1990's

- Lexicography (August 27, 1984-2001):

Granqvist, Kimmo 1997. Suomi-romani-sanaluettelo. Helsinki.

— — 1999. *Suomen romanikielen käänteissanasto. Reverse Lexicon of Finnish Romani.* Kotimaisten kielten tutkimuskeskuksen julkaisuja 111. Helsinki.

Jussila, Raimo 1997. Den finländska romanin och dess ordböcker. *LexicoNordica.* Nordisk forening for leksikografi, vol. 4 , s. 75-81.

Koivisto, Viljo 1994. *Romano-finitiko-angliko laavesko liin = Romani-suomi-englanti sanakirja = Romany-Finnish-English dictionary.* Kotimaisten kielten tutkimuskeskuksen julkaisuja 74. Helsinki: Painatuskeskus.

— — 2001. *Suomi–romani-sanakirja. Finitiko–romano laavesko liin.* Suomalaisen kirjallisuuden seuran julkaisuja 811. Kotimaisten kielten tutkimuskeskuksen julkaisuja 117. Helsinki: Suomalaisen kirjallisuuden seura.
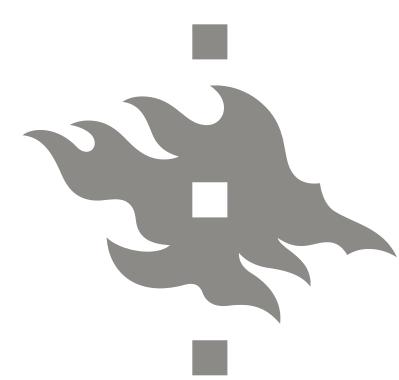
4.1 "Linguistization" in the 2000's

- The connection of Finnish Romani linguistics with the Fennistic tradition was broken.

- Stronger links to General Linguistics and Romani Linguistics elsewhere in Europe.

- The central themes of research shifted to **phonetics**, **phonology** and **morpho-syntax** as well as **functional typology.**

- Theory formation gained an important position as a part of its scientific goal.

- Corpora still play a significant role in the current research work.

Some models used:
Autosegmental phonology,
Feature Geometry,
Optimality Theory,
Item-and-Arrangement morphology,
Item-and-Process morphology,
Word-and-Paradigm morphology,
Stem-and-Paradigm morphology,
Minimalist syntax
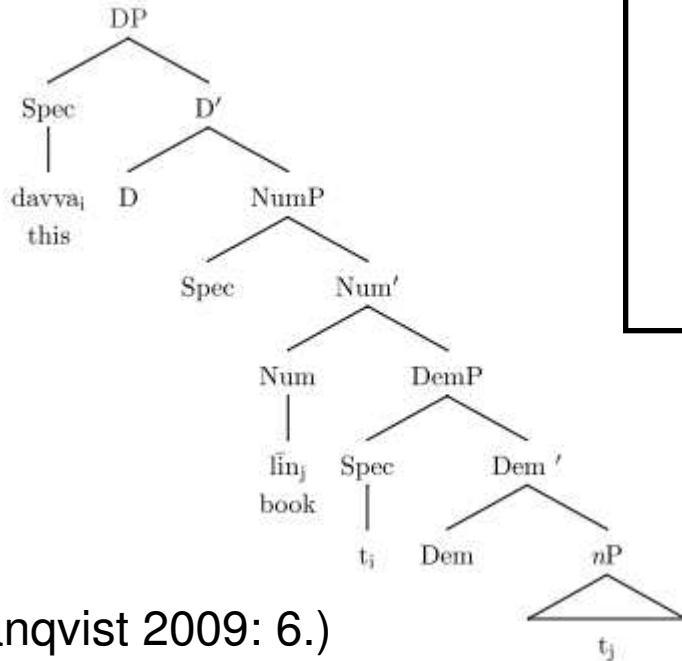
(58)

(Granqvist 2007: 227.)

(11)

(Granqvist 2009: 6.)

3. Transitiivisuuden tunnus.

(a) VX > V(r) / C + _ + Do, V = {a, u}, X = {v, r, rv}, (r) > r /_ +do, D = {d, l}

Poikkeus:

(b) av > Ø / Vr + _ + do

  /_ + to

Poikkeus:

(c) av > a / Xr + _ + do, X = {pha, tše}

(d) Xav > Ø / C + _ + Do, X = {j, l}, D = {d, l}, D = l > C = {k, m}

Poikkeus:

(e) (j)av > a / C + _ +do

(f) juv > u / Xu + _ + lo, X = {ȟ, th}

(g) juv > i / X + _ + lo X = {truȟ}

(h) Vv > V / X + _ + to, X = {baȟ, ȟiml, spiik, tromm}

4. Metateesi.

(a) (ar > ra / C + _ + do)   (r:n metateesi)

(Pirttisaari 2002: 142.)
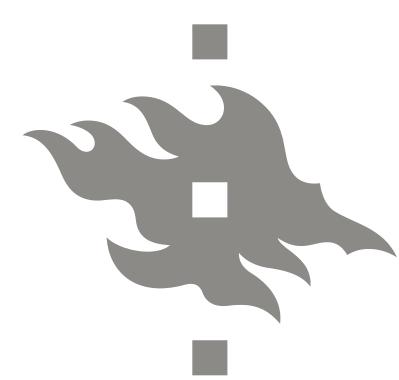
4.3 "Linguistization" in the 2000's

- **Other themes**

  - sociolinguistics (linguistic taboos, Romani as a secret language), language planning, code-switching, computational linguistics (ROMTWOL)

- **Actors and outputs**

  - Lars Borin (2000), Pia Brandt-Taskinen (2001), Emilia Erkama (2012), Henry Hedman (2003, 2004), Petra Kovanen (2010), Helena Pirttisaari 2002, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c, 2005), Anna Maria Viljanen (2002, together with Kimmo Granqvist)

  - Four MA theses (Department of General Linguistics, Department of Finnish); a number of papers; and a 739-page monograph that comprises a detailed account of Finnish Romani phonology and morphology.
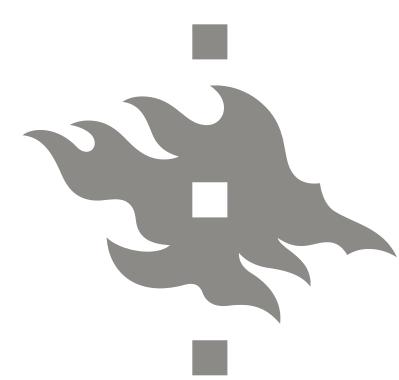
5.1 European multi-disciplinary research 2012-

- Romani language and culture started as an experiment in fall 2009 at the Institute for Asian and African Studies

  - The first introductory courses in Romani language, basic course in Finnish Romani in spring 2010, continuation course in Finnish Romani in fall 2010, translation course in spring 2011

- Has been a minor subject (60 cr.) **at the Department of Finnish, Finno-Ugrian and Scandinavian Studies** since August 2012

- The subject has rapidly evolved into an internationally significant and well-networked multidisciplinary cluster of academic research activities in Romani language and culture; works within a wider European scope
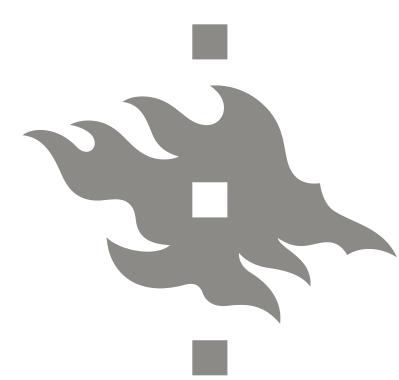
5.2 European multi-disciplinary research 2012-
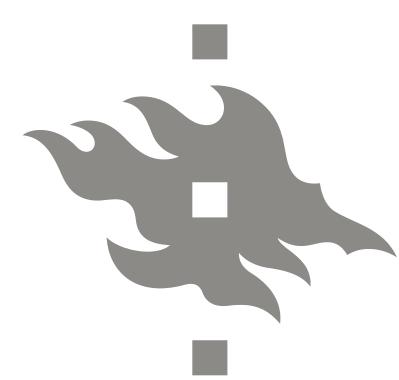
5.3 European multi-disciplinary research 2012-

Three research projects are ongoing (a–c)

a) Finnish Romani and other Northern dialects of Romani in the Baltic Sea area (2013–2016, funded by the Kone Foundation Language Programme)

b) Language, identity and authenticity among the Roma in East Europe (2013–2017, funded by European Studies Network at UH)

c) Bank of Finnish Terminology in Arts and Sciences (Linguistic terminology in Romani)

Complementing research funding has been applied for for additional projects.
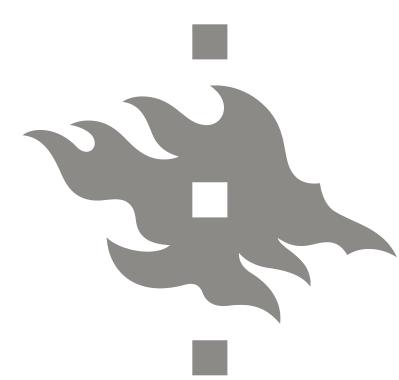
5.4 European multi-disciplinary research 2012-

The conducted research combines:

- general and applied linguistics, phonetics:

- several other disciplines, including Indo-European and Balkan studies, Slavonic and Germanic languages and Fennistics;

- sociology, anthropology and history.

The focus is on language structure and dialectology, variation and change, language contact, mixed languages, attrition, domains of use and discourse, sociolinguistic status, and language (education) policy.
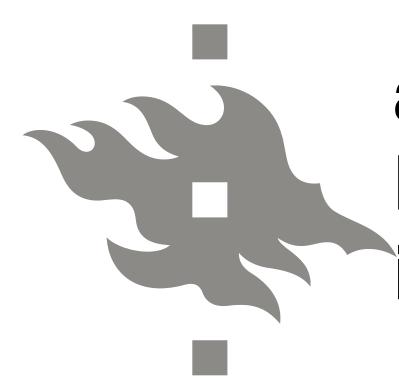
a) Finnish Romani and other Northern dialects of Romani in the Baltic Sea area:

The aim of the project is to produce and make available extensive documentation of Finnish Romani and other Northern dialects of Romani spoken in the Baltic Sea area.

Some of the main goals of the project are:

- To collect and analyze Romani dialect samples;

- To document dialect classification, grammar and lexicon;

- To document the structure, history and sources of Finnish Romani as well as the overall meta-group of Northern dialects.
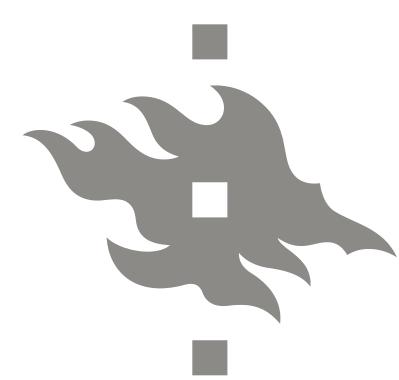
b) Language, identity and authenticity among the Roma in East Europe
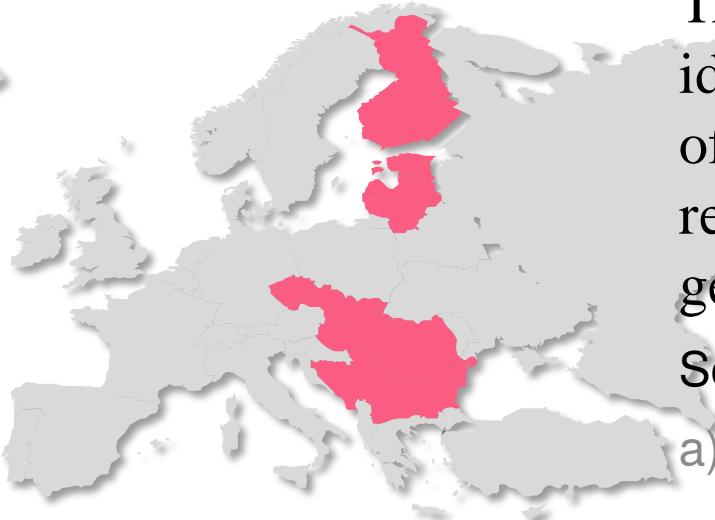
The project studies the questions of diaspora, identity and hybridity from the points of view of political sciences, anthropology, migration research, anthropological and general/Romani linguistics.

Some of the main outputs of the project are:

a) two edited volumes, approx. 250 pages each, published in print;

b) b) two PhD theses, published in print and online.
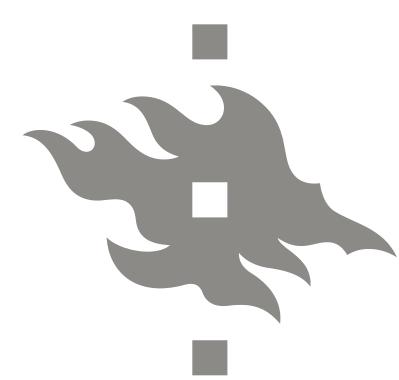
c) Bank of Finnish Terminology in Arts and Sciences

The goal is to add Linguistic terminology in Finnish Romani to the Bank of Finnish Terminology in Arts and Sciences (http://tieteentermipankki.fi/wiki/Termipankki:Etusivu/en)

Currently included in Finnish, Swedish and English; Finnish Romani will be the fourth language used:

- At least 200 terms will be added with definitions in Finnish Romani

- A blog will be produced

- Wiki user interface will be translated to Finnish Romani
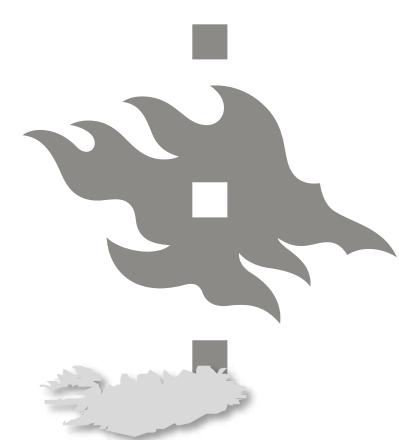
6.1 The future

- **Areas of emphasis and planned projects:**

  a) Romani dialectology and grammar:

  - **Micro-dialectological studies** of Romani:

    - **Large micro-dialectological projects** a) in Finland, and b) in the Baltic area and Poland, as well as parts of Russia, Belarus and Ukraine, c) in Sweden and Norway in 2016–2020.

  - **Unevenly mixed Romani languages** in 2015–2018

  - **A multi-authored handbook of Romani dialectology** in 2020–2021

6.2 The future

b) Revitalization of Finnish Romani

- **Participation in revitalization projects** in 2015–

c) Migration studies

- A multidisciplinary project to **explore, analyze and elaborate the concepts of marginality, resilience and mobility of Eastern European Roma to the Scandinavian countries** (2017–2021)
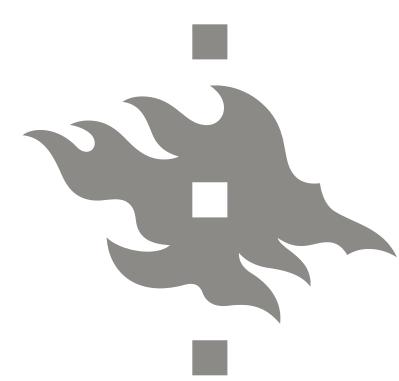
6.3 Future

- **<u>National and European co-operation</u>:**
    - Continued and extended co-operation with all main academic institutions active in Romani studies internationally
    - Development of a joint European infrastructure for Romani linguistic data storage in close cooperation with Finnish national actors such as CSC and other universities working on Romani

- **<u>Additional goals</u>:**
    - **<u>Strengthening teacher and student exchange</u>**
    - Developing a post graduate program at UH on Romani Studies, including post-doctoral positions
    - Developing joint teaching and supervision of PhD studies between UH and other academic institutions active in Romani studies