

Lost features in Finnish Romani

**Kimmo Granqvist
Research Institute for the Languages of
Finland**

9icrl Sept 3, 2010

Early sources of Finnish Romani

- The diachronic development of Finnish Romani can be closely followed
 - a line of early written documents of FR since the late 18th century:
 - Ganander's (1741-1790) prize essay (1780)
 - Adolf Ivar Arwidsson's (1791–1858) notes (1817; published in Bugge 1858)
 - K. J. Kemell's (1805–1832) word-list (first half of the 19th century; published in Thesleff 1901)
 - Henrik August Reinholm's (1819–1883) notes; late 19th century)
 - Jürgensen and Schmidt conveyed data to Miklosich.
 - Arthur Thesleff (1871–1920): dictionary *Wörterbuch des Dialekts der finnländischen Zigeuner* (1901); song texts (late 19th century)

Features discussed

- I will discuss features that are documented in early written sources, but that have completely or mostly disappeared from contemporary usage:
- The following features will be discussed:
 - Phonology:
 - Loss of fortition of final **v** -> lenition
 - Morphophonology:
 - **s** in morphological paradigms -> **s/h** alternation
 - Morphosyntax:
 - Loss of definite determiners **o**, **e**, **i** -> **douva** 'it' has become functionally determiner-like
 - Specific location deictics/demonstratives in **k-** are lost/rare
 - "the great reconstruction of verbal system": loss of opposition between imperfect and preterite, and loss of synthetic pluperfect
 - Marker vowels in preterite 2pl: loss of **-an (-en)** -> **-e**
- Most features have been referred to as diagnostic in Romani dialectology

Phonology: Loss fortition of final **v**

- A Sinti-like fortition **v** > **b** (**ov** > **job** ‘he’, **abijav** > **bijab** ‘wedding’) has never been attested in FR
- Arwidsson’s notes suggest that a fortition **v** > **f** might have occurred in some idiolects: **tschaf** ‘son’ .
- In some 18th and 19th century sources **v** remained unchanged: Gan. **tschaw** – **tschawes** ‘son’, **me chammateh chaw** ‘I want to eat’; Kem. **o tschav** ‘son’; Jürg. & Schmidt **šov** ‘6’ .
- Lenition **v** > **u** has been documented in FR since the latter half of the 19th century: Reinh. **laau** ‘word’.
- A similar lenition is described in all modern sources: **ov** > **jou**, **abijav** > **bjau**.

Morphophonology: **s/h** alternation(1)

- goes back to the ER (Matras 2002: 68)
 - NE dialects only have forms with **s**
 - Sinti has mainly forms in **h**. (Matras 1999d; Tenser 2008: 272–273.)
- FR has undergone a diachronic change from mostly having forms in **s** into a dialect, in which **s** and **h** alternate:
 - in the present tense of the copula **s-/h-**,
 - paradigms of lexical verbs and instrumental cases of nominals,
 - not in the preterite of **s-/h-** and interrogative pronouns

Morphophonology: s/h alternation(2)

- Copula:
 - Pres. 3p. **si(n)** was far more frequently used in 18th and early 19th century written sources of FR than **hi(n)**:
 - e.g. Ganander (1780) **Api kulwasin joh** ‘he is on the floor’, **Fedider so sint telo boliba** ‘the best that is under the sky’, **Ochaben sin arre ja chaa** ‘the food is inside, go to eat’, but **Mo dad hi molo** ‘my father is dead’;
 - Reinholm’s notes (**Sin Raj apo boliba** ‘There is a king in the heaven’,
 - Modern written sources: exclusively **hin**; Koivisto (1994) Reinholm’s **si** in his dictionary.
 - Spoken language: almost exclusively **hin**, but **kyllä savo sin boori...** ‘yes what kind of daughter-in-law is...’ (P), **ja sin džuuso siivi, alti bastuva tassina** ‘and is clean gadže woman, always warming up the sauna’

Morphophonology: **s/h** alternation(3)

- Pres.2sg. and 1.pl. markers
 - All late 18th and 19th century sources of FR suggest that **s** remained:
 - Gan: **tu drapaweisa** ‘you read’ and **so louwesa?** ‘why do you cry?’;
 - Arw. **tu bachhesa** ‘you want’, **ame bachhasa** ‘we want’.
 - Forms in **h** were rare:
 - Gan. **ame drapaweha** ‘we read’.
 - Thesleff’s (1901) verb paradigms: only forms with **h** in both his future (**phurjuvēha** ‘get old-pres.2.sg-fut’, **phurjuvāha** ‘get old-pres. 1.plk-fut’) and I potential (**phurjuvēhas** ‘get old-pres.2.sg-cnd’, **phurjuvāhas** ‘get old-pres. 1pl.-cond’).
 - Modern spoken and written sources: exclusively **h**.

Morphophonology: s/h alternation(4)

- Nominal paradigms:
 - the change is far from completed.
 - **s** is regularly retained in the instrumentals of:
 - abstract nouns in **-iba** and **-ben**, e.g. **bañibos-sa** 'playing-obl.sg-instr', **haabenes-sa** 'food-obl.sg-instr'
 - and 2.sg. and 3. sg personal pronouns: **tus-sa** and **les-sa** (c.f. Koivisto 1987: 142; Hedman 1996: 95, but Valtonen 1968: 121 mentions **tuha** and **leha**).
 - Instrumentals of other nominals tend to be formed using the (surface) suffix **-ha**.
 - Variation occurs to a minor extent:
 - » **beeres-sa** – **beere-ha** 'car-obl.sg-instr', **daades-sa** – **daade-ha** 'father-obl.sg-instr', **Deeveles-sa** – **Deevele-ha** 'God-obl.sg-instr', **phaales-sa** – **phaale-ha** 'brother-obl.sg-instr', **valpones-sa** – **valpone-ha** – **valpo-ha** 'child-obl.sg-instr'.

Loss of definite determiners **o**, **i**, **e**

- A later contact-induced development was the loss of definite determiners **o**, **i**, **e**.
- Definite determiners occurred regularly still during the 19th century, but were mostly lost at the beginning of the 20th century.
- The definite determiner **o** still occurs sporadically in some of the most conservative idiolects: **o drom** 'the way', **o džis** 'the heart', **o tšetli** 'the containers', **o vare tšaije** 'the other girls'.
- Relics in the prepositions (**o**) **apo** 'on(to)', **aro** 'in(to)' ja **kajo** 'towards'; in literary use only: (**i**) **api**, **ari**, (**e**) **ape**, **are**.
- **douva** 'it' has become functionally determiner-like:
 - cataphoric use: **douva džeeno, koonesta me rakkadom** 'the man, who I spoken about'
 - direction situational use: **na aahtas douva tšoňha jakkes langhto ta bohlo** 'the skirt was not that long and wide'

Specific location deictics/demonstratives in **k-** are lost/rare:

- FR retained still at the turn of the 20 the century, all four permutations of location deictics and demonstratives in **k-/d-** and carrier vowels **-a-/-o-**.
- The short specific proximate demonstrative **(a)ka** 'this' has remained in use, but the long form **(a)kava** disappeared. The specific remote (**kouva** 'that') occurs, but is very rare.
- **(a)kava** was still attested in Thesleff's song manuscripts:
 - **lovavena kale dakke bujderja** 'they promise to hit, the lovers'
 - **Cajenge kale bruna phoua** 'the brown eye-brows of the girls'.
- Result: a three-term-system of long demonstratives similar to Finnish:
 - simplex proximate (**dauva** 'this'), simplex remote (**douva** 'it') and (rare) specific remote (**kouva** 'that')

“The great reconstruction of verbal system”

18th-19th Century

Indicative

Present:

tšeereha 'you do'

Modern FR

Indicative

Present:

tšeereha 'you do'

Conditional

Present:

tšeerehas 'you would do'

Imperfect:

tšeerehas 'you did'

Morphological aspect was lost

Analytic past tenses do due to contact with Finnish

preterite/Aorist

tšerdal 'do did'

preterite/Aorist/Imperfect:

tšerdal(las) 'you did'

Perfect:

sal tšerdal(las)
'you have done'

Perfect:

aañhelas tšerdal(las)
'you would have done'

Pluperfect:

tšerdallas

'you had done'

Pluperfect:

sallas tšerdal(las) 'you had done'

Marker vowels in preterite 2pl: loss of **-an** (**-en**)

- 19th century sources:
 - preterite/pluperfect 2pl forms with both marker vowels **-a-** and **-e-** were used:
 - Reinholm **djabbidannas** ‘sing-pret-pret.2pl’,
 - Thesleff (1901) **džānidan**.
 - Arwidsson **bachten** ‘want-pret-pret.2.pl’
 - Modern FR:
 - pret. 2pl forms end virtually always in **-e** analogically to 3pl:
 - » **tume tšer-d-e** ‘you do-pret-pl’ – **joon tšer-d-e** ‘they do-pret-pl’.
 - 2pl preterite forms in **-en** are extremely rarely attested: **tume tšer-d-en** ‘you -do-ret-pret.2.pl’.

A typology of lost features

- A. Northern innovations adopted late or not at all
 - **s** in morphological paradigms -> **s/h** alternation
- B. Contact-induced changes: FR specific:
 - “The great reconstruction of verbal system”
- C. Contact-induced changes: (superficially) shared with NE dialects (but not with Sinti):
 - Loss of definite determiners (Finnish has no such; close contact languages of NE dialects have no such)
 - Specific location deictics/demonstratives in **k**- are lost/rare (Finnish has a three-term system; Russian, Polish and Latvian have two-term-systems (Tenser 2008: 92-3))
- D. Innovative simplifications: (superficially) shared with NE (but not with Sinti):
 - Lenition instead of fortition of final **v**: Lenition **v** > **u** is shared with Est. Čuxny, LV Čuxny, Loftika and some of variants Lithuanian Romani; however, lenition is most natural in word-final position (Bauer 1988)
 - Marker vowel **-e-** in preterite 2pl: loss of **-an -e-** shared with NE dialects, **-en-** shared with Russ. and Pol. dialects of Romani, e.g **khel-d-en**, **kin-dl-en**; however, **-e-** is motivated as a spread of the unmarked 3p form; **-en-** analogical to pres.2/3p **-en**

Finnish Romani in the periphery NW dialects

- northern innovation center is located in the German-speaking areas of NW Europe
- Finland has been geographically isolated
- many northern innovations have FR late or have not reached it at all:
 - ablative preposition **katar** was lost late
 - participles such as **džeelo** 'gone', **aulo/veelo** 'come', **diilo** 'given; gave', **liilo** 'got', **muulo** 'died' still occur as pret.3sg form along with **džeijas**, **aujas/veijas**, **diijas**, **liijas**, **merdas/muulidas**
 - **s** -> **s/h** alternation
 - many FR innovations have made it less Sinti-like

Multilingualism; linguistic dominance of Finnish

- Structural influence of Finnish language on Romani is visible since the latter half of the 19th century,
- suggesting that first at that time, Finnish was the linguistically dominant language of the Roma. No other close contact language has had such a deep influence on FR as Finnish.
 - Germanic influence has been predominantly phonological (quantity-sensitivity, š > ħ (šeel > heel 'hundred') and lexical.
- The latter half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century:
 - phonological imposition:
 - during that period were adopted a Finnish-like vowel harmony and svarabhakti vowel, and long vowels were diphthongized
 - replication of Finnish morphosyntactic patterns (pattern transfer):
 - Finnish has supplied most of the abstract grammatical structure such as the syntax including the word order and the principles of case licensing. Contact with Finnish has caused a number of typological changes in FR.
 - categories and oppositions not found in Finnish have been lost
 - transfer of lexical items from Finnish has been extremely limited in contrast to the influence of Scandinavian languages
 - in particular in the 20th century, increasing use of Finnish morphological exponents: secondary cases > oblique > verb forms
- Decreasing use of Romani (in particular after WWII)

Interaction between different Roma groups?

- Valtonen (1968) suggests the possibility that data have been acquired from persons representing different Roma groups as an etiology of some of the linguistic variation in the early documents of FR.
- The Roma arrived to Finland in small groups during the centuries.
 - a large-scale movement of Roma to Karelia (Eastern Finland) first took place at the end of the 18th century. (Miika Tervonen, p.c. July 20, 2010.)
 - A few families are known to have arrived from Sweden at the turn of the 19th century. (Miika Tervonen, p.c. July 20, 2010.)
- Their migration routes have been under debate
 - all Finnish Roma migrated to Finland via Sweden? (Thesleff 1901, 1904)
 - they came from Russia? (Miklosich 1872–1880 iii:36; Vehmas 1961: 53)
 - several migration routes? (Kopsa-Schön 1996: 60)
 - there is evidence that some Roma families have their roots e.g. in Russia, Poland and Hungary.
 - visits of Roma from Eastern and Central Europe almost yearly between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of 20th century have been documented. Central European last names such as Zitron suggest the possibility that some of the visiting persons or families could have settled in Finland. (Miika Tervonen, p.c. July 20, 2010.)

Summary

- I have discussed a number of changes in FR that have resulted in a loss of earlier documented features:
 - A: Features that seem superficially indicative of movement of FR closer to the NE group of Romani dialects, but may be:
 - changes induced by the contact of Romani with Finnish (similar changes in NE dialects are induced by their contact languages)
 - innovative simplifications or other types language-internal erosion:
 - natural linguistic processes; explainable teleologically through preferences of language processing (economy, least decoding effort)
 - similarly motivated in NE dialects
 - B: Changes that may have taken place as different groups of Roma interacted with each other in Finland?

References

- Bauer, Laurie 1988. What is lenition? *Journal of Linguistics* 24: 381-392.
- Hedman, Henry 1996. *Sar me sikjavaa romanes. Romanikielen kielioppiopas*. Jyväskylä: Opetushallitus.
- Koivisto, Viljo 1987. *Rakkavaha romanes. Kaalengo tšimbako sikjibosko liin*. Helsinki: Ammattikasvatushallitus – Valtion painatuskeskus.
- – 1994. *Romano-finitiko-angliko laavesko liin. Romani-suomi-englanti sanakirja. Romany-Finnish-English Dictionary*. (Kotimaisten kielten tutkimuskeskuksen julkaisuja, 74.) Helsinki: Painatuskeskus.
- Kopsa-Schön, Tuula 1996. *Kulttuuri-identiteetin jäljillä. Suomen romanien kulttuuri-identiteetistä 1980-luvun alussa*. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura.
- Matras, Yaron 1999d. s/h alternation in Romani. An historical and functional interpretation. *Grazer Linguistische Studien* 51: 99–129.
- - 2002. *Romani. A Linguistic Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Miklosich, Franz. 1872–1880. *Über die Mundarten und Wanderungen der Zigeuner Europa*, X-XII. Wien: Karl Gerold's Sohn.
- Schoultz, Karl von 1955. *Huoleton heimo*. Lahti.
- Tenser, Anton 2008. The northeastern group of Romani dialects. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Manchester.
- Thesleff, Arthur 1901. *Wörterbuch des Dialekts der finnländischen Zigeuner*. (Acta Societatis Scientiarum Fennicae 29(6).) Helsinki: Finnische Litteratur-Gesellschaft.
- – 1904. *Zigenare. En inledande öfversikt till det af författaren vid Skansens vårfest 1904 anordnade zigenarlägret*. Stockholm: Centraltryckeriet.
- Valtonen, Pertti 1968. *Suomen mustalaiskielen kehitys eri aikoina tehtyjen muistiinpanojen valossa*. Lisensiaatintyö. Helsingin yliopisto.
- Vehmas, Raino 1961. *Suomen romaniväestön ryhmäluonne ja akkulturoituminen*. (Turun yliopiston julkaisuja, sarja B, osa 81.) Turku.