

How to treat (L2) attrition in Finnish Romani

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Studies on attrition in Finnish Romani

- Attrition and contact with Finnish have been studies since the beginning of the 20th century:
 - Ariste 1940; Valtonen 1968; Sammallahti 1972; Leiwo 1999; Granqvist 1999a, 1999b, 2002b, 2007 jne; Pirttisaari 2002, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c, 2005.
 - Most extensively on from language-internal point point of view: Valtonen (1968):
 - The notions of 'upper' and 'lower' style.
 - Borin & Vuorela (1998):
 - Insights into Romani show a considerable variation among the Finnish Roma, so that some of them are fluent speakers, while others have (almost) no command of it.

Surveys on the amount of use of Romani

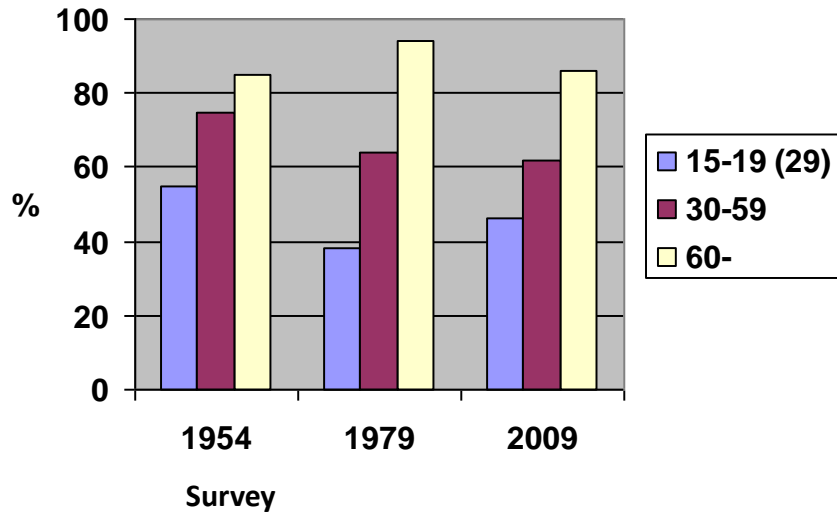
- A nation-wide survey of the living circumstances of the Roma, carried out by the Social research office (1954):
 - 3 569 Roma or persons living with them
- Raino Vehmaa's PhD thesis *The group character and acculturation of the Finnish Roma* (1961):
 - 89 Roma in Saarijärvi and Viitasaari areas (Central Finland), 88 Roma living in Helsinki
- A survey on the social and educational situation of the Roma, carried out by the Helsinki Welfare Office in 1979:
 - The heads of 185 Roma households or their spouses. The Roma households totalled at least 550 persons.
- Henry Hedman's survey on the amount and domains of use of Romani (2009):
 - 306 Roma in Finland and Sweden in 2004–2005.

Insights into Romani and self-assessment

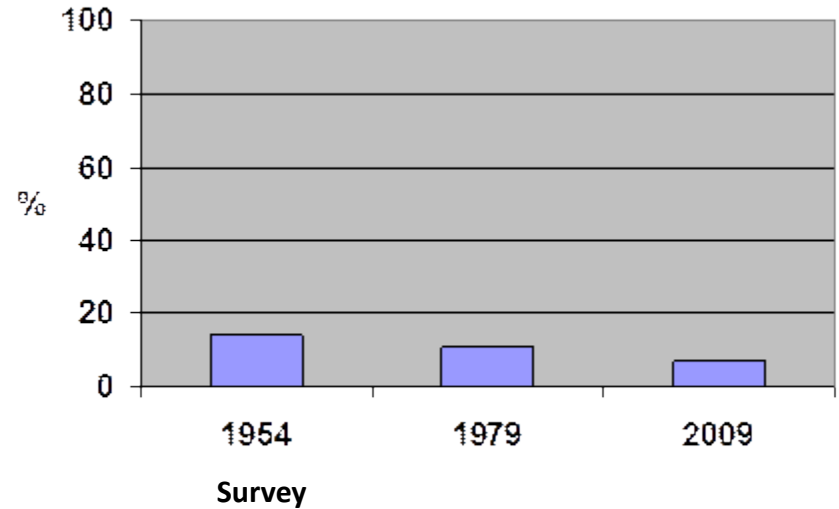
| Survey | Insights into Romani |
|--------|---|
| 1954 | 71 % of adults were able to speak Romani, 81 % at least understood it. |
| 1961 | 60 % of adults had a perfect or good command of Romani. 89 % could get along in Romani. |
| 1979 | 55 % were able to communicate with elderly Roma in Romani. 88 % were able to handle everyday conversations. |
| 2009 | 62 % of the Roma have at least a satisfactory command of Romani. |

Insights into Romani and self-assessment

At least satisfactory command
Of Romani in three age-groups:



No command of
Romani:



Trends of attrition

- 1) Generalization of paradigms of masculine nouns into feminine. (Phrase 10; Granqvist & Pirttisaari 2003: 36–37; Granqvist 2007: 376, 381–832).
- 2) Paradigmatic levelling in certain irregular nouns: *gr-es* ~ *grai-jes* 'horse-obl.sg', (*mos-*) ~ *muijes* 'mouth-obl.sg', (*ran-*) ~ *raijen* 'mister-obl.pl.' (11; Bourgeois 1911: 9; Granqvist 2007: 341).
- 3) Analogical leveling in the case inflection of abstract nouns: : (*džaanib-os-:*) *džaanib-es-*, *džaanib-a* 'knowledge-obl.sg'; (*džaanib-on-:*) *džaanib-en-* 'knowlegde-obl.pl' (18, 20; Granqvist & Pirttisaari 2003: 36; Granqvist 2007: 377, 2010a).
- 4) Use of Finnish allative instead of Romani dative (15; Valtonen 1968: 170; Granqvist 2010a).
- 5) Use of Finnish adessive in possessive constructions instead of Romani oblique (6; Granqvist 2010a).
- 6) Paradigmatic leveling in the case inflection of personal pronouns: *maanesta* pro. *manna* 'l.abl' tilalla (22; Granqvist 2010a).
- 7) Difficulties in producing complex numerals (21; Kovanen 2010: 33–35; Granqvist 2007: 334, 2010a).
- 8) Use of Finnish negation *ei* as a negation verb similar to Finnish (2, 5; Granqvist 2000, 2010a; Kovanen 2010: 40).

Trends of attrition

- 9) Use of Finnish *olla* 'to be' as an auxiliary in analytical perfect and pluperfect instead of *s-/h-* (*aaññ-*) *sijasta*' (3; Kovanen 2010: 38–40; Granqvist 2010a).
- 10) Use of the Finnish modal verbs *pitää*, *täytyä* 'must' instead of *mostuv-*, *moste* and *mote* (1; Granqvist 2000, 2010a; Kovanen 2010: 38).
- 11) Use of the Finnish modal verb *tarvita* 'to need' instead of *hyövuv-* (4; Granqvist 2010a).
- 12) Use of Finnish person endings in indicative present (7, 8; Valtonen 1968: 256; Granqvist 2010a).
- 13) The endings of the indicative present 1.sg and 3.sg spread analogically to the 2.sg (9, 16; Valtonen 1968: 256; Granqvist 2010a).
- 14) The ending of the indicative present 3.sg spreads analogically to the 1.sg (13; Granqvist 2010a).
- 15) The endings of preterite 1.sg and 3.sg spread analogically to the 2.sg (19; Granqvist 2010a).
- 16) Preterites of *v-* 'to come' *veelo* 'come-pret-m' ja *veijas* 'come-pret-pret.3.sg' (17; Granqvist 2010a).

Trends of attrition

- The (un)grammaticality of attrited forms was tested using a questionnaire:
 - Roma who had spoken Romani since their childhood were asked to comment on phrases that contain (un)grammatical forms.
 - The Roma were asked to grade each one of the 22 phrases using the scale 0 (definitely ungrammatical) – 5 (definitely grammatical). They were requested to tell, what they consider ungrammatical in each phrase.
 - The judgements were provided by four Roma of different ages, of whom everybody works with language: three women, 34 (D), 53 (C), 54 (B) years of age, one 58-year-old man 58-vuotias mies (A).

Trends of attrition

TAULUKKO 2. Romanikielen parissa työskentelevien romanien arviot esimerkkilauseiden hyväksyttävyydestä.

| Esimerkkilause | Vastaaja | | | | Keskiarvo |
|---|----------|---|---|---|-----------|
| | A | B | C | D | |
| 1. Doori <i>piti</i> aahhel rankanes. | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0,75 |
| 2. Me <i>en na</i> džaanaa. | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1,25 |
| 3. Jou <i>on</i> liijas siivanenna louvo. | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1,25 |
| 4. Na hajudiine <i>eikä tarvinnut</i> hajuvenkaan. | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1,25 |
| 5. Ame <i>ei na</i> džaanaha. | 4 | – | 0 | 0 | 1,33 |
| 6. <i>Kaaleilla</i> hin kaan barviba. | 3 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1,75 |
| 7. Me <i>minsavaan</i> douva. | 4 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1,75 |
| 8. Kai tu <i>rigavaat</i> douva? | 4 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1,75 |
| 9. So tu <i>tšeeraa</i> ? | 4 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1,75 |
| 10. <i>Daijesko</i> daad sas lesko daad. | 4 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2,00 |
| 11. Jou hin <i>graijesko</i> džeeno. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 2,25 |
| 12. Me džaa <i>Hyvinkäälle</i> . | 4 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 2,50 |
| 13. Naa me <i>tšeerela</i> butte illiba. | 4 | 3 | 1 | – | 2,67 |
| 14. Naako tu <i>aahtom</i> doi? | 4 | 3 | 1 | – | 2,67 |
| 15. Me phenjom <i>Henkalle</i> , te jakkesha douva hin. | 3 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 2,75 |
| 16. Tu <i>lela tšinnel</i> paani daarita. | 4 | 3 | 3 | – | 3,33 |
| 17. Kurribosko tiija <i>veelo</i> . | 4 | 3 | 3 | – | 3,33 |
| 18. <i>Passibako</i> saaki hin fuortune. | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3,50 |
| 19. Kai tu hin kaan <i>aahtas</i> ? | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3,50 |
| 20. Jou liijas <i>bolibengo</i> guruħħa. | 4 | 4 | 3 | – | 3,67 |
| 21. Me som <i>oħta ta triin</i> berħ phurano. | 5 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 3,75 |
| 22. Joon na rikkavena <i>maanesta</i> . | 5 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 4,00 |

Speaker profiles of six Roma

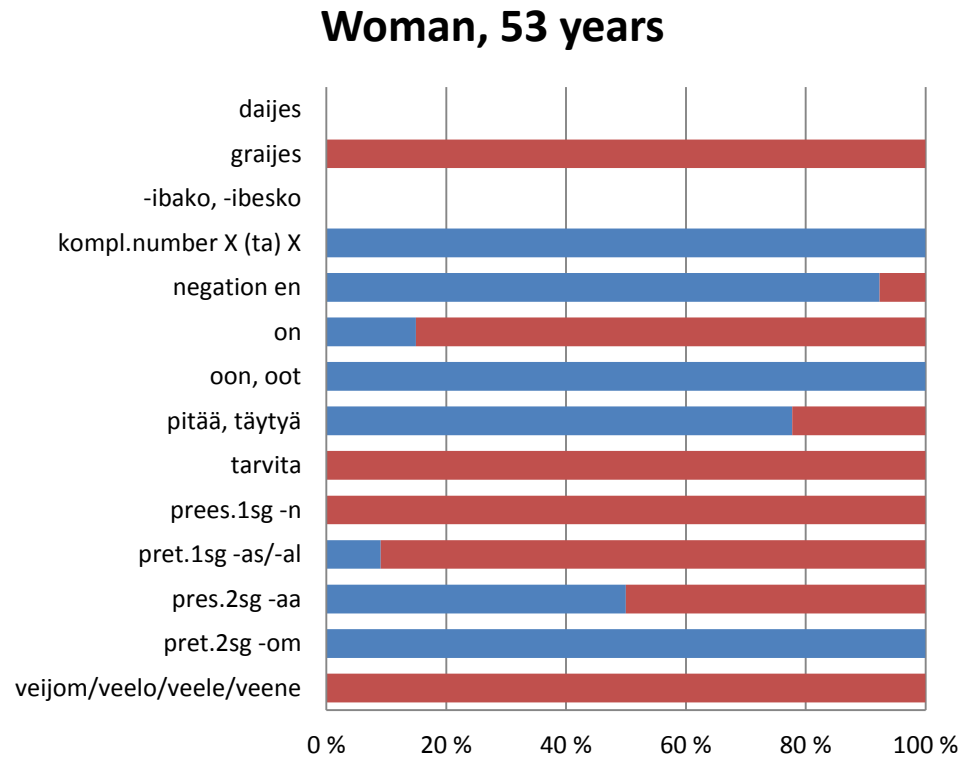
- The six informants were selected so that each one of the following included a woman and a man:
 - 40–59-years, 60–69-years and 70- years.
 - Age and sex are the most factors that define the social status in Roma community.

Speaker profiles of six Roma

- Informants:
 1. Woman, 53 years, from Rovaniemi (Lapland).
 2. Man, 48 years, from Kotka (south-east), has worked as a trot trainer.
 3. Woman, 64 years, from Lappeenranta (east), mother of a big family, has lived a typical Roma life doing sometimes business, too.
 4. Man, 78 years, from Kuopio (east), father of a big family, has worked with horses.
 5. Woman, 80 year, from Ylikiiminki (north).
 6. Man, 87 years, from Jyväskylä (central Finland), has worked with horses.

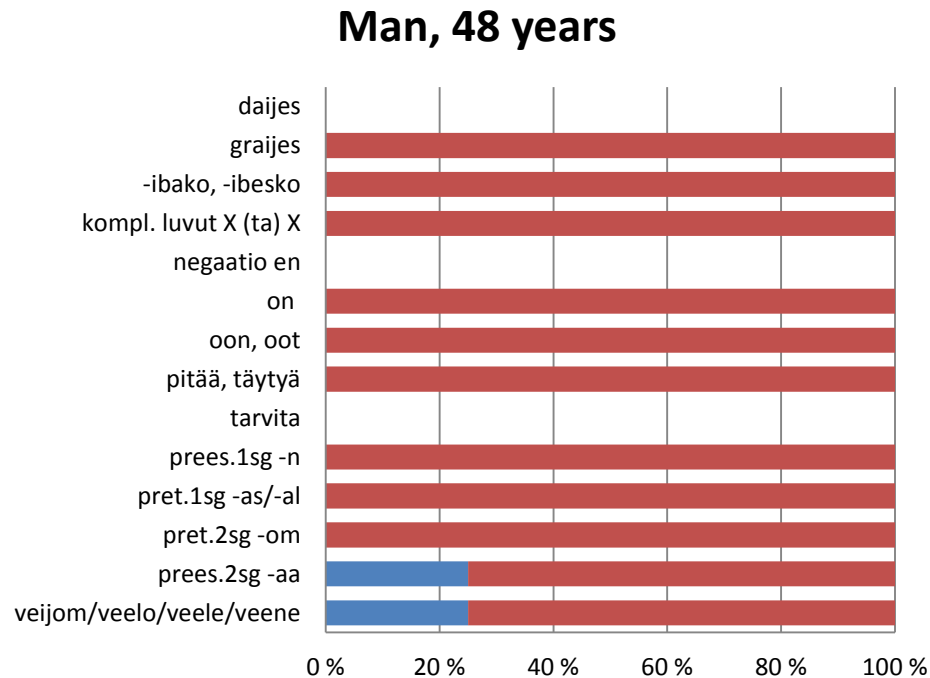
Speaker profiles of six Roma

1. Woman, 53 years



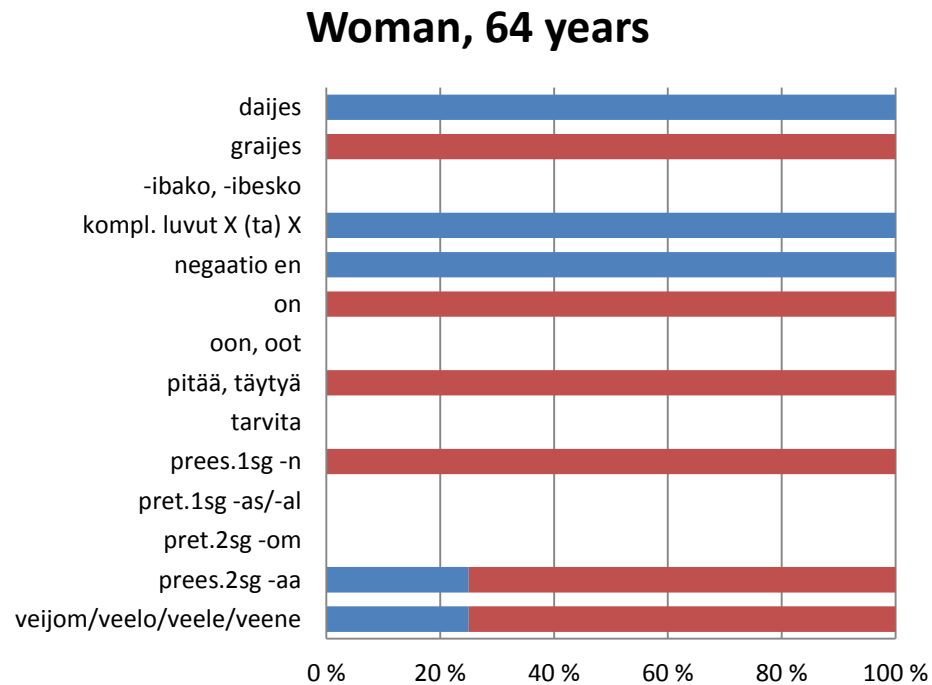
Speaker profiles of six Roma

2. Man, 48 years



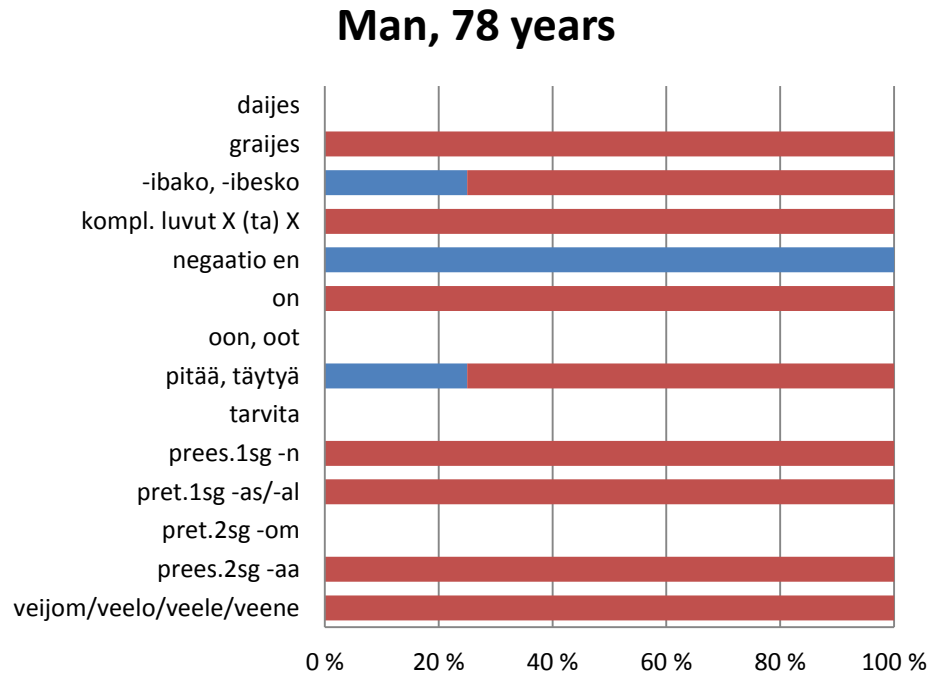
Speaker profiles of six Roma

3. Woman, 64 years



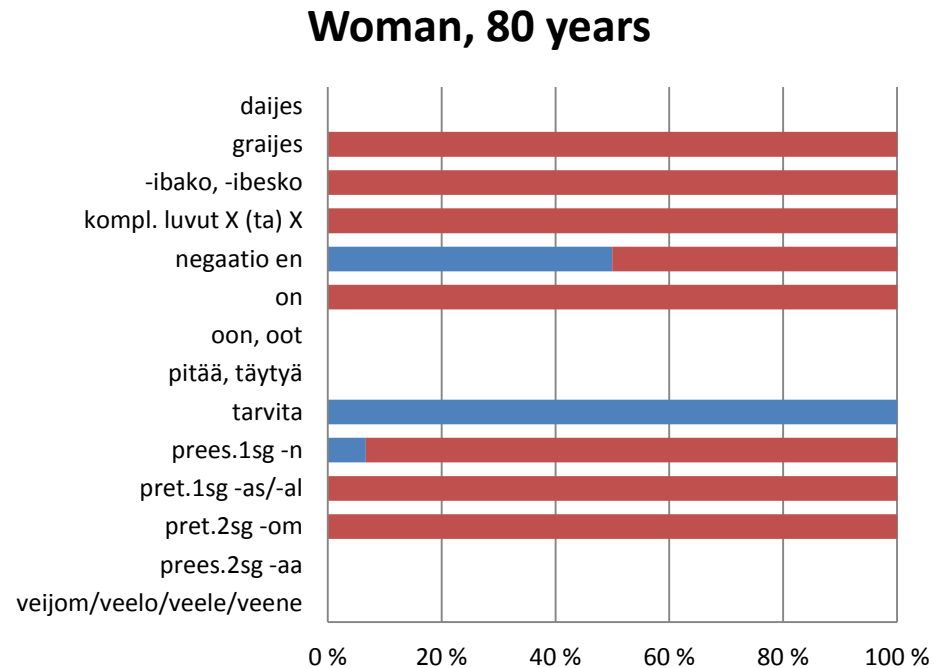
Speaker profiles of six Roma

4. Man, 78 years



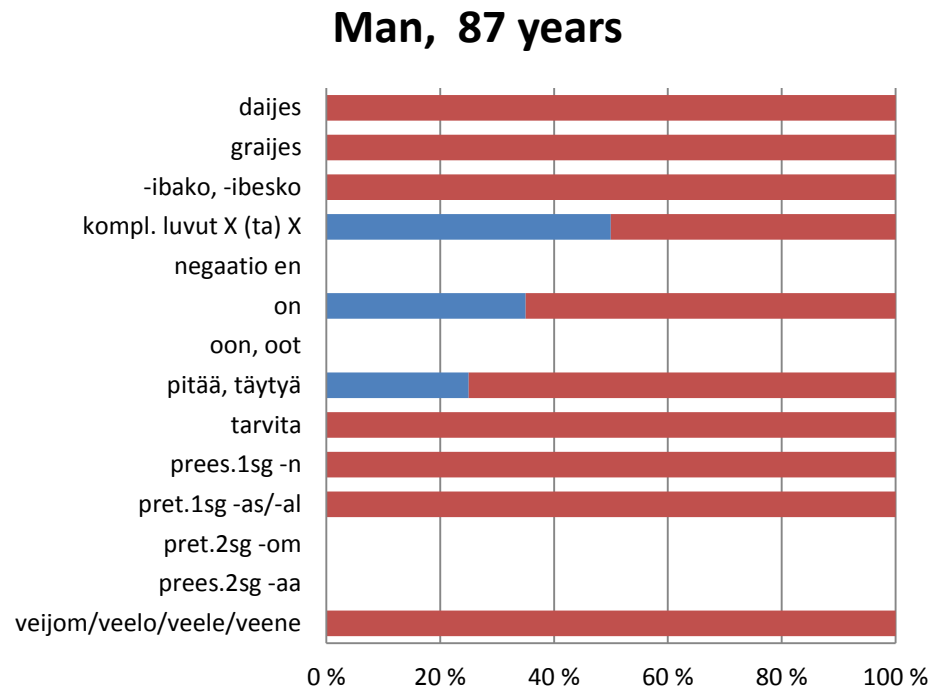
Speaker profiles of six Roma

5. Woman, 80 years

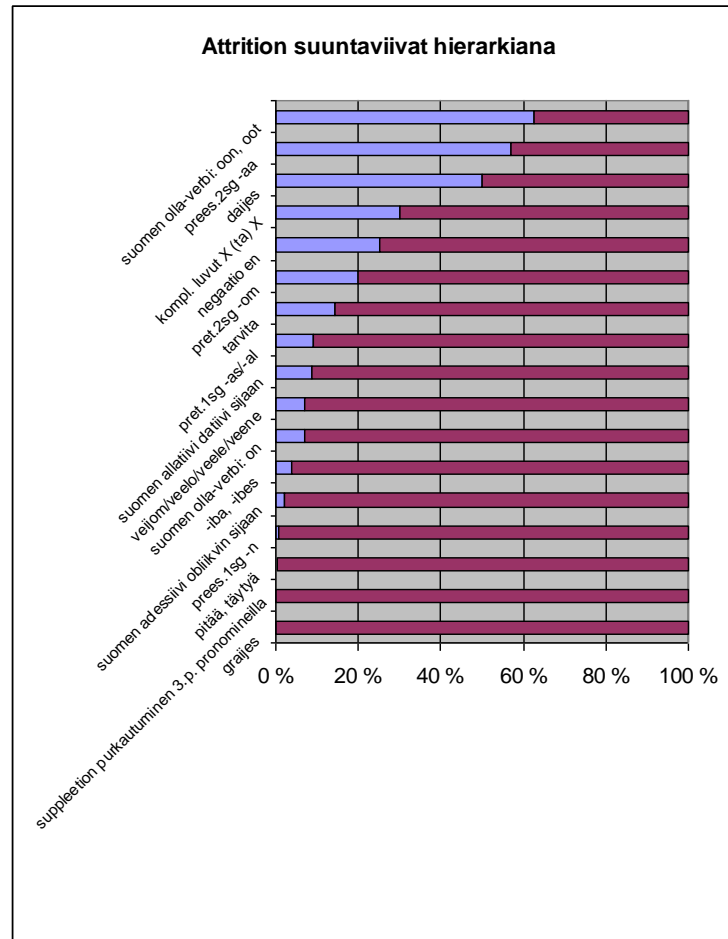


Speaker profiles of six Roma

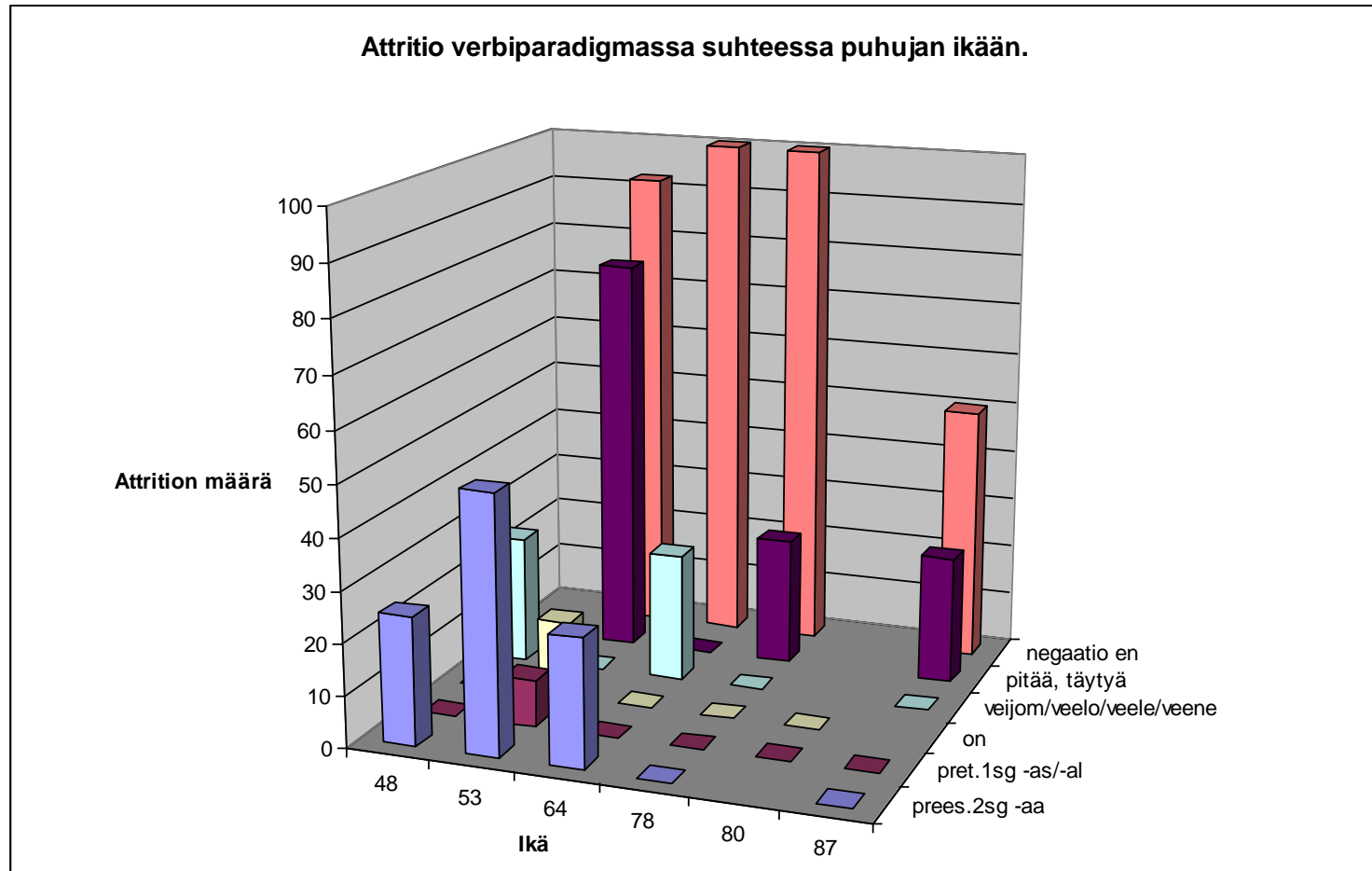
6. Man, 87 years



Speaker profiles of six Roma



Speaker profiles of six Roma



Speaker profiles of six Roma

- A comparison of the six speaker profiles to data based on tape-recordings from 1960s shows dramatic differences.
 - In the speech of a Roma man born in 1885 and interviewed by Pertti Valtonen in 1965, the only sign of attrition using the variables of this paper is sporadic use of the Finnish negation verb.
 - On the other his speech contains a number of conservative features that has been entirely lost in contemporary Romani.

Conclusion

- ***Comparison of speaker profiles gives a more pessimistic impression of changes in the command of Romani than surveys based on self-assessment.***
- One problem with the self-assessments is that the notion of good command of Romani is invariant with time and conforms to the linguistic competence of the oldest Roma:
 - Vehmas points out that in the 1950s only a certain old Roma were considered to have a perfect command of the old Romani language. The young Roma were said to speak the Romani language of their generation.
 - Many of the Roma are able to mention other, usually older members of the community, whom they regard as more fluent speakers of Romani than themselves. Even fluent speakers tend to refer to deceased Roma as more competent speakers.
 - Many Finns consider themselves as semi-competent in the Romani language.

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