Variation and change in today’s vernacular Finnish around an old, distinctive dialectal boundary

Elina Martimo
University of Turku, Finland

In the province of Satakunta lies one of the most distinctive dialectal boundaries of Finnish (Wiik 2004: 21–22). It separates the Southwestern dialects from the other Finnish dialects, the neighboring group being the Transitional dialects between the Southwestern and the Häme dialects. However, this boundary area has not been thoroughly studied since the 1940s although many smaller studies have been made and other areas have been studied (see e. g. Rapola 1947, Hakanen 1985).

Satakunta is a historical province in Finland, and has for centuries been an administrative unit. Nevertheless, the local communities have traditionally turned towards two old towns, which are located on opposite sides of the dialectal boundary. Recently, though, these towns have become more connected due to administrative changes, people’s increased mobility and other societal changes. Crossing the boundary is significantly more common than before. This likely affects the dialects and possibly even the dialectal boundary itself.

In my doctoral dissertation, I will study today’s vernacular in Satakunta by examining phonological and morphological variables in the local speech. I will investigate the interplay of linguistic and social factors (e. g. age, hometown, social networks and identity). My ongoing study is a part of the project Satakunta in speech (Satakuntalaisuus puheessa) in the University of Turku where the aim is to investigate the current development in the vernacular of Satakunta (Kurki–Siitonen 2009). My goal is to get a good overview of the area’s current situation and future. How do the changing social networks affect the language use?

References


Keywords: dialectal boundary, language change, social variation.