Morphosyntactic change in the vanishing Finnic communities of Russia

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Overview

- A follow-up to the introduction from the last time: on structural consequences of linguistic revitalization?

- Finnic: maps

- LD in Finnic of Russia in relation to layer of linguistic structure

  o Vocabulary

  o Phonology

  o Morphology

  o (Morpho)syntax

- Excessive variation in LD

Revitalization and creolization

- CREOLE: "a pidgin which has acquired native speakers and undergone non-contact-induced expansion, where the expansion process 'repairs' the reduction which occurred during pidginization" (Trudgill 2011: 67–68)

- A "successful" revitalization of a dying language seems to be accompanied by creolization.

  - Sasse (1992: 59): a receding language can be revitalized only by means of drastic creolization.

  - The variety, which is a result of revitalization after the interruption of the intergenerational transmission in LD, is a creole based on the obsolescent variety as its lexifier.

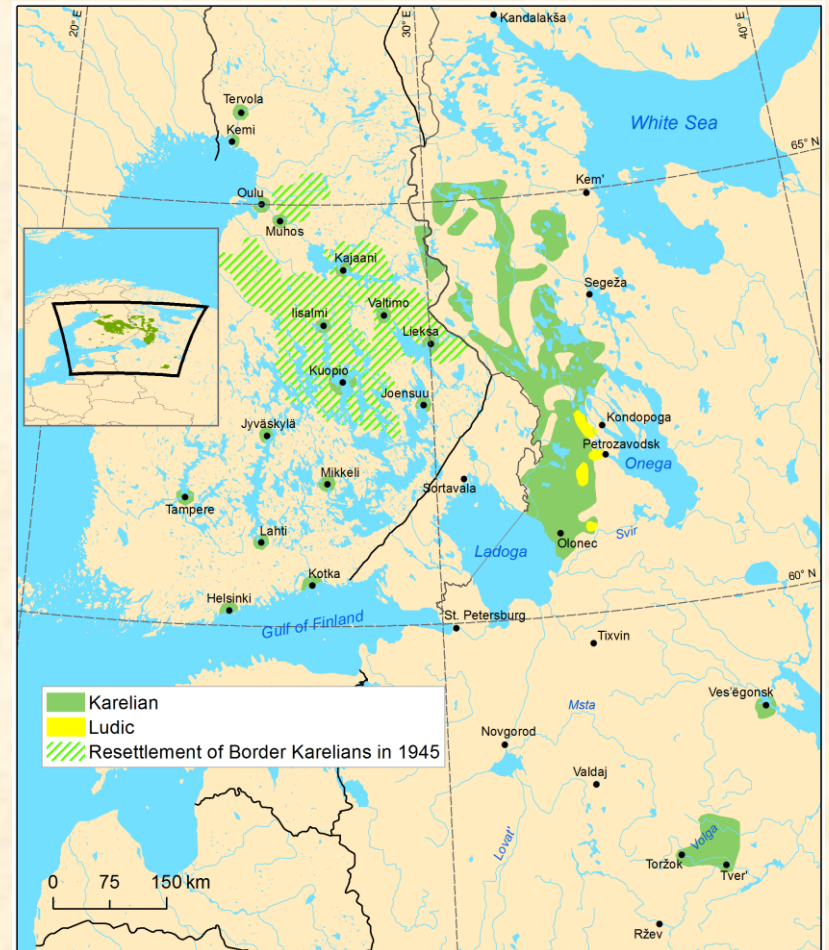- Can you think of the revitalized languages you know in such terms?

Finnic: maps

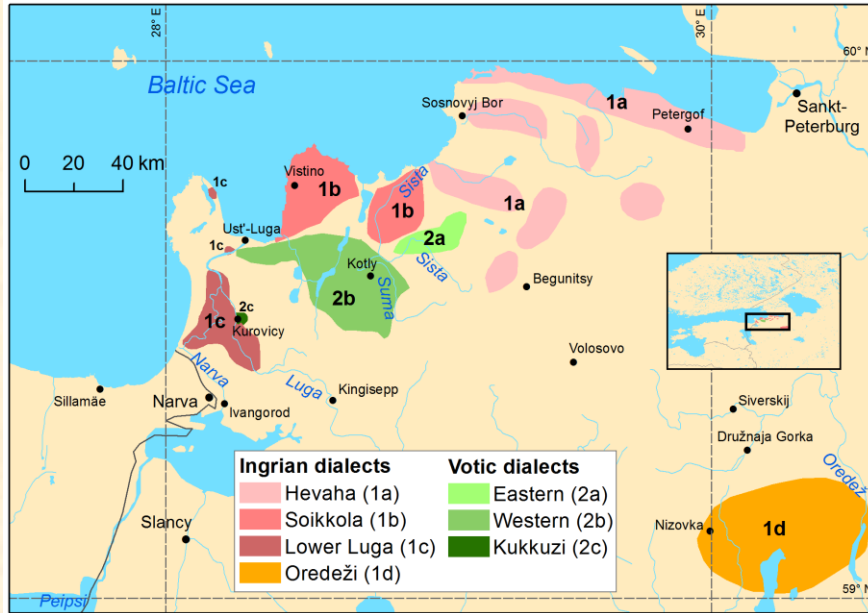Geographical database of the Uralic languages

Karelian and Lude 1900
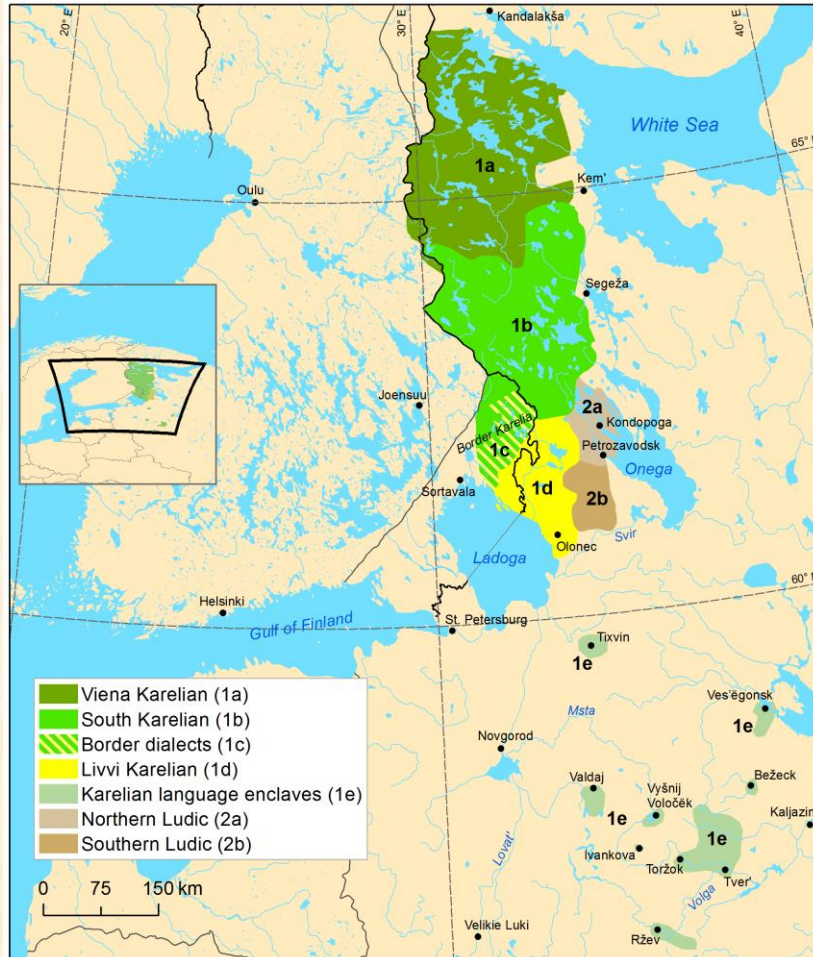
Karelian and Lude 2000

Geographical database of the Uralic languages

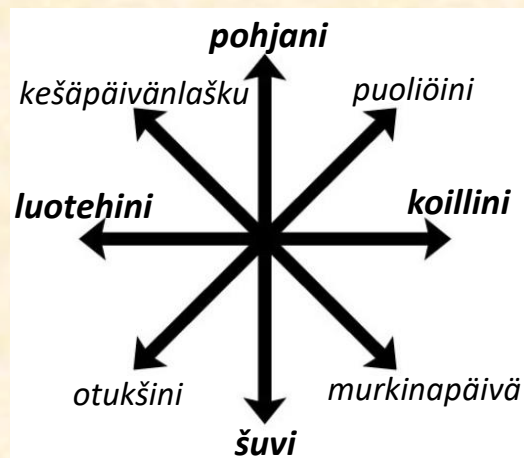# Ingrian and Votic 1900

Ingrian and Votic 2000

Geographical database of the Uralic languages

LD in Finnic of Russia
Vocabulary

- Compass directions (attributive)

Traditional (Kiestinki Karelian)

pohjani

kešäpäivänlašku　　*puoliöini*

luotehini　　　　*koillini*

otukšini　　*murkinapäivä*

šuvi

Kolvitsa Karelian 1972

pohjani

koillini

šuvi
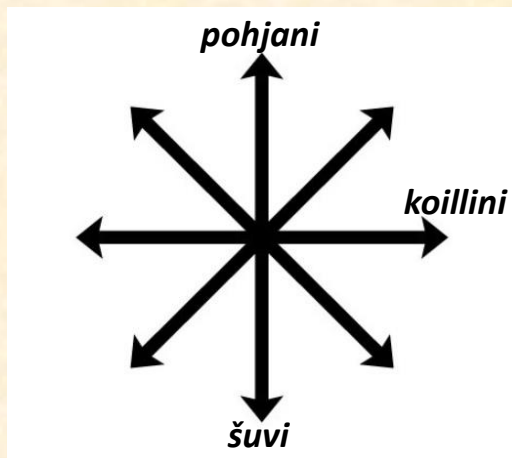
Kolvitsa Karelian 2017/2018

pohjani

Barents Sea

Kolvitsa

White Sea
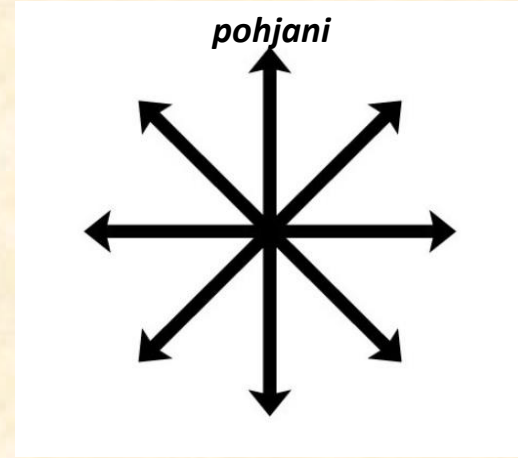
Kola peninsula

We are not sure why 'north(ern)' is the last surviving direction name!

The surroundings of Kolvitsa

Kolvitsa

White Sea

Phonology

- An example of analogy:

  – Lude is characterized by the sound change ***j > d′*** in the beginning of the word (cf. Fi *joki* 'river', Lude *d′ogi* 'id.') and ***rj > rd′*** in inlaut (cf. Fi *marjoineen* 'with the berries', Central Lude *mard′oŋke* 'id.')

  – In receding Central Lude:

    - Anlaut: ***j > d′*** : ***i > d′i*** (*ild* 'sundown' > *d′ildad* 'sundown.PART') : ***e > d′e*** (*eht* 'evening' > *d′ehtād* 'evening.PART')

    - Inlaut: ***rj > rd′*** : ***lj > ld′*** (cf. Fi *neljää* 'four.PART' and Central Lude > *ńeld′ä* 'four.PART').

Morphology

- Analogy

  – Karelian Proper 'young wife; bride': NOM *moršien* – GEN *moršieme-n*, ADE *moršieme-lla* etc. **:** receding Kolvitsa Karelian NOM *moršie*(*n*) – GEN *moršie-n*, ADE *moršie-lla*

  Loss of stem allomorphy: the word had two stems – a short (in the Nominative and Partitive singular) and a long one (in other singular case forms). By analogy with one-stem nouns, the short stem is generalized and the long one (will be) lost.

  ☞ Increase of morphotactic transparency and iconicity: a single form (of the stem) corresponds to a single meaning

  ☞ The word is transferred into a simpler and richer inflectional class but at the price of ambiguity (homonymy of the Nominative and Genitive form).

- Loss of suppletion (as a type of lexical allomorphy)

    – The adjective 'good' has a suppletive comparison across Karelian Proper: *hyvä* 'good' – *parempi* (or *parembi*) 'better'

    – Some speakers of receding Kolvitsa Karelian have lost the suppletive inflection: *hyvä* 'good' – *hyvempi* 'better'

- A phenomenon in receding Finnic varieties, which contradicts previous claims in the literature on LD:

  – Dressler 1981 and Trudgill 2011: 22 claim that advanced stages of LD are characterized by a loss of syntagmatic redundancy

  – I observe an upsurge of redundant structures (morphological overmarking of grammatical relations):

  (1) The inherited Conditional is doubled by the Russian Conditional particle
  Tšīrep   tuli-z-bj   tšesa!
  fast:CMP   come-COND.3SG-COND(Rus)   summer.NOM
  'I wish summer came faster!' (Votic)

  (2) The inherited Conditional is reduplicated
  Tallotti   jotta   hän   näi   veny-si-s
  stomp:IMPS.PST PURP   it.NOM   this_way   stretch-COND-COND.3SG
  'It (the seaweed) was stomped, so that it would stretch.' (Kolvitsa Karelian)

  NB! Redundancy guarantees understanding under difficult communication conditions (Lehmann 2005: 120)

(Morpho)syntax

- Rule reduction:

    - symmetric vs. asymmetric negation (Miestamo 2013: 1)

        - SYMMETRIC NEGATION is a structure which is identical to the structure of the affirmative except for the presence of the negative marker(s).

        - In ASYMMETRIC NEGATION, the structure of the negative differs from the affirmative in other ways too.

    - Russian has symmetric (*ona znaet* 'she knows' – *ona **ne** znaet* 'she does not know'), Finnic has asymmetric negation (Fi. *hän tietää* 's/he knows' – *hän **ei tiedä*** 's/he doesn't know').

        - Occasional occurrence of symmetric negation in Finnic: Soikkola Ingrian *jaksoin* 'I was able' – *en jaksoin* 'I was not able'; Kolvitsa Karelian *eli* 's/he was living (there)' *ei eli* 's/he wasn't living (there)'

    ☞ Contact-induced rule reduction: building asymmetric negation from the affirmative requires two changes, whereas the symmetric negation requires only one change.

- Analogical change in syntax

    – Analogy is not always a relationship between material properties (forms), but often involves association between forms and functions (VERTICAL ANALOGY)

    – Spread of the condition–time polysemy among conjunctions in Kolvitsa Karelian:

CONDITION	*ku(i)n*	:	*jesli*	*jos*
TIME	*ku(i)n*	:	?	?

(3) *Jesli hän   menöy   kotih   šyömä, tyttäri   svoih*

    if   he.NOM   go.PRS.3SG home:ILL   eat:INF   daughter:PL.PART   own(Rus)

    panou,   i   hyö   karaulitah

    put.PRS.3SG   and   they   guard:PRS.3PL

    'When he goes home, he puts his daughters to guard.'

(4) *I   hyö   **jos** miula šoitetah,   i –   muamo   kärissä*

and they.NOM if   I:ALL   call:PRS.3PL and mother.NOM   fry.IMP.2SG

potakkua –   mie   šuuren   skovorodkan   kärissän   potakkua

potato:PART   I.NOM big:GEN   frying_pan:GEN   fry.PRS:1SG   potato:PART

'And **when** they call me – mother, fry potatoes, I fry a pan-full of potatoes in the frying pan.'

- Emergence of redundant structures in syntax

    – By overloading the meaning with form, the speaker acts in accordance with the Gricean Maxim of Manner (especially with the expectation to avoid ambiguity), and violates the Maxim of Quantity – Do not make your contribution more informative than is required

    – Redundance in adpositional phrases:

        - Russian locative preposition + Finnic locative case ('in'): *elä **v** linna**s*** 'she lives in the town' (Central Lude)

        - Russian separative preposition + Finnic separative case ('from'): *vahnin **iz** mužikoi**s*** 'the oldest of the men' (Central Lude)

    – Redundance in purposive clauses:

    (5) *Ei   olluv‿   vielä šilloin rahua,   [jotta štob] opaššuttua*

        NEG.3SG be:PST.CNG yet   then   money.PART PURP   PURP study:INF

        'We didn't have then money for her to go and study.' (Kolvitsa Karelian)

- Global developments: from head-final to head-initial phrase structure

Phrase	Head-final		Head-initial
PP	Noun–Postposition	->	Preposition–Noun
NP	Noun:GEN–Noun *lapšin izä* 'childrens father' (Soikkola Ingrian)	->	Noun–Noun:GEN/PART/ADE *izä lapšin* 'father of the children' (Soikkola Ingrian)
AdjP	Noun:PART–Adjective:COMP *minua nuorempi* 'younger than me' (Finnish)	->	Adjective:COMP–Noun:PART *nūremb minnua* 'younger than me' (Soikkola Ingrian)

- Intrasentential switch of grammar ("code mixing"). Elements of Finnic and Russian grammar co-occur within a clause and even within a phrase; examples from the VP in Kolvitsa Karelian:

<u>content verb – predicative adverbial</u>

(6) *A   toatto   konša* [*PREDSEDATELEM työjeli*]*,*   *ei*   *ollu*

and father.NOM when   leader:INS.SG   work:PST.3SG NEG.3SG be:PST.CNG

konša   männä ... Velikanov   [*työjeli*   *RYBNADZOROM*]

when   go:INF   Velikanov.NOM work:PST.3SG   fisher_supervisor:INS.SG

And when father worked as executive of the kolkhoz, there was no time to go there ... Velikanov worked as a supervisor of the fishermen.'

(7) *mie   Maijan   [muissan   vielä   DEVUŠKOJ*]

I.NOM   Maija:GEN remember:PRS.1SG still   girl:INS.SG

'I remember Maija as a girl.'

verb – direct object

(8) *šemmon'i hän*   *oli,*   *oikei*   [*vieri*   *BOKHA*]
such.NOM s/he.NOM be:PST.3SG very_much believe:PST.3SG   God:ACC.SG
'She was like this; she firmly believed in God.'

verb – infinitival complement

(9) *häntä*   [*halutti*   *RAZKULACHIVAT'*]
s/he:PART want:PST.3PL   dekulakize:INF
'They wanted to dispossess him as a kulak.'

verb – adverbial complement

(10) *laivalla*   [*viijäh*   *V   ARKHANGEL'SK*]
ship:ADE.SG   transport:IMPS.PRS   in   Arkhangelsk.ACC.SG
'It will be freighted with a ship to Arkhangelsk.'

modifier – verb

(11) *i   pusurunkka*   [*nii hyvin SOKHRANILAS'*]   *meilä*
and knitted_sweater.NOM so   well   preserve:PST.F:REFL we:ADE
'And the knitted sweater was so well preserved in our home.'

Excessive variation in the language of the last speakers

- Paradox: the language of the last speakers seems richer than its "healthy" version spoken by earlier generations

- Occurrence of parallel forms with the same function abounds in contemporary material from endangered minor Finnic varieties

- Linguistically unmotivated (or free) variation can be observed at different levels of structure: vocabulary, morphology, syntax

- Excessive variance across speaker varieties, but also within idiolects

… an example:

- Kolvitsan Karelians use two postpositions with a dependent noun in Genitive to express concomitance ('with; by means of'): *kera* (e.g. *naisen kera* 'with [his] wife') and its Adessive form *keral*(*la*) (e.g. *tuaton keralla* 'with dad', *heposien keralla* [about farm work] 'with horses')

- The choice does not seem to depend on structural factors, semantics (both are used with a 'companion', 'tool' and 'material') or the ancestry of the speakers in Karelia.

- Speakers use both forms, but there are preferences; frequency:

			kera	*keral(la)*
1972	Σ		26	27
	speakers with at least ten occurrences in total	AKA	5	6
		FSK	3	10
		MKA	17	3
2017 2018	Σ		43	68
	speakers with at least ten occurrences in total	LEZ	1	54
		AAG	12	5
		SSA	20	0
		OAP	8	2

- What causes languages going hog wild before they vanish?

  - Lack of practice of individual speakers & lack of contact between them?

  - Lack of convention (How is one supposed to speak)?

  - Freedom, opportunistic choices?

  - Insecurity

  - Concurrent use of two or more "codes" (languages)?

Conclusions

- Before revitalizing a moribund language, we should probably ask ourselves what would be the result of a successful revitalization, and is that what we want?

- Most of the observed changes in severely endangered languages can be accounted for in terms of analogy.

- Speakers of receding Finnic languages tend to use (syntagmatically) redundant structures.

- "Switch of grammar" can occur within any syntactic unit.

- We observe an excessive variance of form (and form–meaning relations) in the speech of the last speakers.

Sources

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