

Contact-induced Phonological Variation in Border Karelian Dialect

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This paper examines how Karelian-speaking immigrants from the former Finnish territory of Border Karelia have adapted themselves linguistically to the Eastern Finnish dialect area after World War II. Border Karelia was mainly Karelian-speaking, while its neighbouring areas in the west were Finnish-speaking. Karelian and Finnish are closely related, which made it easy for the speakers to interact with each other for centuries prior to WWII. The Border Karelian dialect has remained little-known, and it has not been researched systematically. The present study utilizes sociolinguistic and contact linguistic research and the theory of speech accommodation in its analysis (see, e.g. Hinskens *et al.* 2005; Matras 2009; Tagliamonte 2011; Chambers 2013).

The focus of the study is on the adoption of the Finnish gemination phenomena (see, Paunonen 1973), namely primary gemination (*En ossoo sannoo*; cf. Standard Finnish: *En osaa sanoa* ‘I cannot say’), and secondary gemination (*Tyttö lähttöö juoksemmaa*; cf. *Tyttö lähtee juoksemaan* ‘The girl starts to run’), which are not characteristic of Karelian. It is examined whether other phonological features, such as the Karelian inter-vowel *h* (*kotihin* cf. *kotiin* > *kottiin* ‘SG:ILL home’), affect the emergence of gemination. The data consists of interviews made with 48 elderly Border Karelians in the 1960s and 70s, by which time they had lived in the Finnish-speaking area for 20–30 years. The data has been analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively; the methods include cross-linguistic comparison and phonetic measuring.

The findings indicate considerable areal and idiolectal variation in the occurrence of the phenomena. Gemination is most common in the idiolects of immigrants from westernmost Border Karelia, while it is almost non-existing in the eastern idiolects. In contrast, *h* is most common in the east. The co-occurrence of the phenomena has resulted in compromise forms (see, Clyne 2003) such as *kottih* (< *kotih* + *kottiin*).