

Introspection into a Stable Case of Variation in Finnish*

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One of the more common signs of language change is vacillation between two competing forms. But once the change has run its course the older form typically disappears from the language. This, however, is not always the case: sometimes the archaic form remains as a stable variant of the newer, unmarked form due to, e.g., borrowing from spoken and/or written archaic dialects. In a study of language change in apparent time these coexisting alternants would have to be taken to signal ongoing change but this conclusion would be false since the vacillation in only seeming. The present study explores one instance of this kind of apparent vacillation not signalling change in Finnish.

When reading a chapter on the changes in Finnish phonology (Hakulinen 1979) I realized that many of the older forms are still (in some sense) in my vocabulary. According to Hakulinen some of these still exist in conservative dialects (presumably as the unmarked forms); some are marked as archaic but many have completely disappeared from modern Finnish. Below are listed some of the forms mentioned in Hakulinen which I do find in my stylistic repertoire, which naturally cannot be totally idiosyncratic but is necessarily shared:

	ARCHAIC		NEW	
(1)	kalatoin	~	kalaton	'without fish'
(2)	kankahat	~	kankaat	'moors'
(3)	saalihin	~	saaliin	'of the prey'
(4)	tultihin	~	tultiin	'came' (impersonal)
(5)	urohon	~	uroon	'of the male'
(6)	harmaja	~	harmaa	'grey'
(7)	avajan	~	avaan	'I open'
(8)	tuleisi	~	tulisi	'would come'
(9)	meneisi	~	menisi	'would go'
(10)	menevi	~	menee	'he goes'
(11)	honkaen	~	honkain	'of the pine trees'
(12)	rukihin	~	rukiin	'of the rye'
(13)	tulkohon	~	tulkoon	'may it come'
(14)	hivus	~	hius	'hair'
(15)	muneilla	~	munilla	'on the eggs'
(16)	hevoinen	~	hevonon	'horse'
(17)	asja	~	asia	'errand; matter'
(18)	hipjä	~	hipiä	'skin'

The word pairs above were given in their historical order but, assuming that a naïve speaker at one particular point in time is not aware of the diachrony of his language, we could say that the second form in each pair is the basic synchronic form from which the first alternant is a deviation. For some of the 'deviations' we can write synchronic phonological rules by which these forms are derived from the new one. The form of the synchronic rule probably reflects the inverse of the

historical relation obtaining between the items in questions. For example, we could write a rule like

$\emptyset \rightarrow h/v _ VC\#$

to give forms like (2 - 5). Or, a j-insertion rule for forms like (6) and (7). But for many of the words it is difficult to formulate rules since they appear to be isolated elements and no generalizations can be extracted from them. Thus the archaic part of my language contains archaic words per se, and generalizations by which archaic vocabulary items are created from the modern forms.

Not Vacillation but Borrowing

Do these archaic items exist in my speech because they are the older norm forms which are now disappearing? According to the source (Hakulinen), as was stated above, some of the forms are still used in conservative dialects; some are archaic, but some have completely disappeared. My dialect is not one of the conservative ones and none of the items above is part of this dialect in the usual neutral synchronic sense. They are never used in lieu of the unmarked forms in unmarked discourse, not by my generation, nor by any other generation in the same dialect group - there is no vacillation between two competing unmarked forms involving these items. Thus it seems that they do not exist in my speech because they are the disappearing older variants of the modern forms. What is their source then? I propose that the source is borrowing from conservative dialects (with which I am not intimately familiar) and from literary sources like the Kalevala, and other folk poetry, and folk songs.

The reason why the literary works mentioned above are seen as a possible source is that every Finn has to read at least parts of the Kalevala at school at some point or another; also other folk poetry, such as the Kanteletar, is studied, and folk songs are sung in music education classes. And, what is more important psychologically, these works are highly valued - they are some of the "national treasures" and as such they belong to the whole population. This fact makes them "common currency". Since everybody is exposed to samples of these works, they would be an obvious candidate for the origin of the archaisms under consideration.

Naturally, it is difficult to pin down exactly the source from which a lexical item has entered one's mental lexicon. I may have learned them, for example, from my schoolmates or relatives or mass media, etc., but the ultimate source of the old forms is proposed to be the archaic language of above mentioned and comparable works, and possibly conservative dialects.

Dowty has proposed that speakers are "potentially capable of remembering that they have heard a newly derived word for the first time, in a way that they very rarely recall hearing a sentence for the first time" and thus "speakers are able to distinguish between actual and merely possible (but well-formed) words in a way that they are not able to distinguish between actual and merely possible sentences" (1978: 120). These facts suggest to Dowty that lexically derived expressions

would be learned individually, unlike sentences. I do not agree with this for all lexical acquisition but it is certainly plausible in the present case. The deviant derivations are learned by persons who already are fluent speakers of Finnish. At this time they are, however, learning something that they know is deviant, and maybe for this reason some features of the source get attached to the set of connotations of the non-normal forms.

It is known that the writing system for a language can change language at the phonological and even the morphological level (Polomé 1981) but more relevant for the case on hand is that written material can function as a source of borrowing. Bloomfield (1933) cites examples of dialect borrowing of this kind which actually have led to change. Misunderstood archaic words may introduce new words or new meanings for words, e.g., derring do was 'daring to do' but became 'brave actions' (ibid., 487). But even some obsolete words may become reintroduced into the language from written sources: sooth and guise are examples of such words in English (ibid.).

Spelling pronunciation of English is one of the sources of variation and change comparable to literary borrowing: often is often pronounced with a [t]. Also completely new words come to language from writing: Cosmopol, prof, and lab are such items. Bloomfield's examples make it indeed plausible that the ultimate source of these now archaic forms of Finnish could be the Kalevala and other similar written works.

The first page of the Kalevala gives us some of the forms mentioned above (the translation comes from an English version of the collection (1963)):

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Mieleni minun tekevi | It is my desire, |
| 2. Aivoni ajattelevi | it is my wish |
| 3. Lähteäni laulamahan, | to set out to sing, |
| 4. Saa'ani sanelemahan, | to begin to recite, |
| 5. Sukuvirttä suoltamahan | to let a song of our clan to glide on |
| 6. Lajivirttä laulamahan; | to sing a family lay. |
| 7. Sanat suussani sulavat, | The words are melting in my mouth, |
| 8. Puhe'et putoelevat, | utterances dropping out, |
| 9. Kielelleni kerkiävät, | coming to my tongue, |
| 10. Hampahilleni hajoovat. | being scattered about my teeth. |

The first two lines give samples of type (10) given on the first page:

OLD NEW

(10) menevi ~ menea

And lines (3) - (6) illustrate types (2) and (3):

(2) kankshat ~ kankaat

(3) saalihin ~ saaliin.

Line (8) has a form parallel to

(11) honkaen ~ honkain

Later in the Kalevala (1943, 44) we have

Sio silkillä hivusta! 'tie up your hair with silk ribbons'

where we have the archaic hivus as in (14).

Actually even whole phrases are used in the same stylistic contexts as the other forms:

Vaka vanha Väinämöinen 'Steadfast old Väinämöinen'

This phrase is repeated over and over again in the Kalevala. A thorough search would probably give citations of most of the older forms, if not in the Kalevala, then in some other archaic work which is still available and read today.

There are other, non-Kalevalaic words in the above mentioned chapter by Hakulinen (1978: ch. 2) which I use but for which the stereotype (to be discussed below) is somewhat fuzzy. It seems that while using these one is trying to evoke a foreigner image or an image of someone not quite mastering Finnish. These are, I believe, also borrowings from some unspecified written works. For form (20) below, for example, Hakulinen (p. 38) gives as one source a document from the 16th century (Agricola) samples of which are read during history classes. These forms are used stylistically like the other archaic forms and in that sense they have the same status as the Kalevalaic forms and therefore they are also problematic in the same way, as we will see below. Some of these other forms are the following:

	OLD	NEW	
(19)	vodottaa ~ odottaa		'to wait'
(20)	söö ~ syö		'he eats'
(21)	töö ~ työ		'work'
(22)	nyyt ~ nyt		'now'

Well-defined Stylistic Function and Value

Synchronically these older forms have an archaic and humorous value while the modern forms are unmarked. Thus they would seem to exemplify Kuryłowicz's fourth "law" of analogy: when two morphemes are undergoing differentiation the new form corresponds to the basic function while the older one has a derived, secondary function (1945). For example, the extension of the archaic [hevoinen] 'horse' is the same as that of the new [hevonen] but the intension is somewhat funny. The same holds for all of the pairs and thus the older elements are relegated to some special functions alone. The phenomenon is comparable to the one Searle refers to in his question "Knowest thou him who calleth himself Richard Nixon?" This question gets a different response than the following: "Do you know Richard Nixon?" (1975: 76). The hearer understands the intended meaning and responds accordingly, i.e., differently.

All of these archaic items belong to specific styles: mainly (in Joos's terms) to the intimate and casual styles. The use of these styles

involves intimate friends and/or members of a group equal in terms of age or social status, and more or less informal situations. Thus these archaisms occur only in limited, nonlinguistically definable contexts. But they are nevertheless widely shared since, for example, they can be heard on TV and radio shows. The function of their use is that of humor, e.g., to announce "let's keep the situation relaxed and informal", but their specific meaning or connotation has to do with something we might call Kalevalaic (excluding the "fuzzy" set (19) - (22) from Agricola's times); the stereotype being evoked has a Kalevalaic character. I do not wish to claim that each single item above has exactly the same stereotype for every user but that a significant subset of them is shared and this subset has a Kalevalaic flavor.

Psychologically there is a difference in the stereotypes between the archaic forms and those of some synchronic dialect forms. For example, words like (23) - (28) are at present unmarked forms in dialects other than mine.

(23)	mie, mää = minä	'I'
(23)	kolome = kolme	'three'
(24)	palakka = palkka	'salary'
(25)	syära = syödä	'to eat'
(26)	tehrä = tehdä	'to do'
(27)	hyö = he	'they'
(28)	hää = hän	'she/he'

The use of these evokes different stereotypes than the archaic ones. In this case the character is clearly synchronic and actually even geographically circumscribed. Thus in both cases the forms are used for stereotyping but the images being evoked are different. And this would fit neatly with the ideas of Dowty's mentioned above: the initial context of learning is remembered and consequently it has become part of the derivation.

Scott (1982) has discussed what she calls 'vivid language', and its role in language change. Vivid language, according to her, is characterized by intentional but interpretable deviance, and novelty. By this definition the archaic forms clearly count as vivid language: they are intentionally deviant and also interpretable, and they have novelty value, at least in particular contexts. Scott gives examples of how vivid language may become conventionalized and result in changes in a language. Thus vivid language is relevant to historical studies and therefore vivid language, like different styles, must be part of the corpus in diachronic explorations. I will return to this point below.

Unlikely Future Kyriolexia

If the archaic forms under consideration indeed have become conventionalized, and since they exist alongside the new forms, is it to be expected that they become one day the kyriolexia (Householder 1983) or the modern unmarked forms? Householder discusses how a speaker has a subconscious norm (or as I would call it, a pragmatic template) against which lexical items are matched when they are heard or used. One item typically is the norm or kyriolexia (16. hevonen) while the other (16. hevoinen) is the tolerated deviation (cf. Kuryłowicz and Scott above),

and when the tolerated deviation is "promoted" it "overthrows" the previous norm and becomes the new kyriolexia.

Since these archaic forms are stylistic variants, i.e., vivid language, and their use is nonlinguistically governed, and they are not the kyriolexia, is it to be expected that they will become the new norms? It would not be impossible, but in the present case this would seem very unlikely because of their well-defined stylistic function, strong archaic flavor and humorous value. They are not in competition with the new forms but have a clearly assigned place in the language use. But on the other hand, they are not likely to disappear either, partly due to their above-mentioned function, but also because their proposed sources are continuously available and they enjoy some kind of prestige.

In-group Prestige

It is commonly assumed that the source of borrowing possesses prestige, but as Labov has made it clear, prestige is not a unidimensional concept. He stresses that language change in general and thus also borrowing cannot be understood apart from the social setting where it takes place (1978:23). Social meanings thus get attached to certain alternative forms, and, to quote Sturtevant, these "rivals shall acquire some sort of prestige" (ibid.: 3). But the crucial point is that the prestige lies in the eye of the beholder - if someone is perceived as possessing some desirable feature(s) he may well be imitated regardless of his actual social standing.

How would prestige explain the present case of borrowing? As stated above the Kalevalaic works are highly valued by the Finnish people in general; moreover, there is some degree of identification with the Kalevala in the historical sense, for the Finns sometimes address themselves as the Kalevalaic people:

"Mehän ollaan tämmöstä Kalevan/kalevalaista kansaa!"
we are this Kaleva's/Kalevalaic people
"We are, after all, this sort of Kalevalaic people"

The identification is in the sense of continuity, in the sense of sharing something that forms one of the roots of "Finnishness". Even if I speak here of introspection, the forms are shared, as was pointed out above, so that they can even be heard on TV and radio shows. Maybe there is something similar going on here as was on Martha's Vineyard (Labov: 1978): these archaic forms with their Kalevalaic stereotypes are shared linguistic conventions, and they are used to convey some kind of humorous in-group sentiment. Their use is stylistically governed but they are part of the stable linguistic repertoire; the forms are used only with "insiders". But Finland is small and culturally relatively homogeneous, and all the Finns are apparently seen to be insiders.

Relevant Data from Styles

Hammström suggests that "in synchrony, neither "older" nor "younger" forms...nor change can be considered, as they are not part of that knowledge which is used in communication" (1982: 51). For him the

use of older forms of a language, or of foreign words in one's speech, is more like a case of mention rather than of use, and thus must be eliminated from the synchronic description of a language. As has been shown above the archaic forms are used in "true" communication, in true social discourse; they are not instances of mention at all but carry their own intended, situationally relevant meanings.

Buccellati notes that too often anything "formally bizarre" or unexplainable is assigned to stylistics and thus discarded from the data (1981). For Buccellati, style is not a synchronic phenomenon either, but exclusively a diachronic "distributional category": "a recurrent selection of relatively idiosyncratic features" (1981: 808). In linguistics these features can be morphological, syntactic or lexical items "sufficiently distinctive to acquire stylistic value" (ibid.: 809). Idiosyncrasy in this definition refers to the distinctiveness of the items within a given "assemblage" of language as opposed to another "assemblage". Here styles can be seen as particular assemblages and the archaic items have distinctive value in some styles since they are not found in all styles.

I would agree with Buccellati, and Scott above, and consider stylistic choices as 'vivid language' relevant for diachronic analysis, but contrary to both Buccellati and Hammarström, also for synchronic analysis. After all, many parts of language in general could be allocated to certain styles alone, but we would not discard those parts. The use of slang and jargon, for example, is also stylistically governed. If archaic items are to be eliminated from linguistic analysis, so too, then, are jargon and slang.

Problems for Diachronic Studies in Apparent Time

Now that the archaic forms are seen as part of the relevant corpus, their retention in the data may pose problems for a study of language change in apparent time. In this kind of study we need real time evidence to show that the part of the data being studied has been the unmarked data at some earlier time (Labov 1978: 275). We do have this evidence for all of the forms: they have been the neutral forms at some earlier point in time. But if a linguist now in his apparent-time study of Finnish finds these archaic forms alongside the unmarked forms, he would not have any motivation for saying that these forms are not in competition with the unmarked forms. Consequently he would be forced to conclude that he is facing the typical vacillation situation of language change and that Finnish is undergoing change. Additionally, he might not find these elements in the speech of the very young population which has not yet been exposed to these writings and this fact would only support his conclusion. But this conclusion conflicts with the facts: most of these archaic items are synchronically living, stylistic variants of the unmarked synchronic forms. They exemplify the fact that a native speaker of a language knows a considerable range of facts about this language. The sources may be old texts, ordinary school books, mass media, home and friends, etc. We cannot forget in historical or synchronic studies that our language is a multidimensional entity in terms of styles and registers and speakers have mastery of this entity.

Summary

We have examined the use of some archaic lexical items of Finnish everyday discourse. These items occur only in specific, nonlinguistically describable contexts. They involve a Kalevalaic, archaic stereotype and they probably are instances of dialect borrowing, partly from literary sources, possibly also from conservative dialects. Since they are part of the stable linguistic system, they are valid data for both synchronic and diachronic analyses. Their coexistence, however, gives the wrong impression that the speakers are alternating between two competing forms. But this is only apparent vacillation; actually the phenomenon is something resembling a "Kalevalaic diglossia". Thus not all variation between archaic and unmarked forms is vacillation signalling change in progress.

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