Finnish Centre of Excellence for the Study of Variation, Contacts and Change in English (VARIENG)

Department of English/
University of Helsinki
Department of Languages/ University of Jyväskylä

Terttu Nevalainen 15 Jan. 2009
VARIENG staff

- 57 junior and senior members from Helsinki and Jyväskylä (incl. assistants)
- 13 senior researchers
- 9 post docs
- 28 doctoral students
- 5 research assistants
- 2 other staff (IT support, statistician)
Structure of VARIENG

- **Focus domains and theme groups**
- The work of the CoE is carried out interactively in a research space consisting of three focus domains:
  - **Language in Society**
  - **Language as Discourse**
  - **Linguistic Processes and Typology**
- Each focus domain is divided into three theme groups.
Concept of research space

LANGUAGE IN SOCIETY
- social dialectology
- language and dialect contacts
- meaning and changing culture

VARIATION, CONTACTS & CHANGE

LANGUAGE AS DISCOURSE
- genre and register variation
- discourse patterns
- sociopragmatic processes

LINGUISTIC PROCESSES AND TYPOLOGY
- modelling semantic change
- grammaticalisation
- variationist typology
Objectives (CoE application)

¢ The CoE will create **new, interdisciplinary methodologies** in the study of *language variation, contact and change*.

¢ The **new syntheses** to emerge will consider *variation, contact and change both in the language system and in language use*: genres and patterns of discourse, their social embedding and construction by language users.

¢ In its dynamic research environment the CoE will produce **new findings and baseline evidence** in and across its three focus domains of Language in Society, Language as Discourse, and Linguistic Processes and Typology.
Special relevance of the Academy and University funding to the operations of the Unit

- guaranteed basic funding for a 6-year period
- ’risk’ projects
- infrastructure: premises, equipment, software
- staff
  - VARIENG coordinator
  - eVARIENG planning officer (part-time)
  - IT support (Helsinki), statistician (Jyväskylä)
Sources of Helsinki funding

2006

- Helsinki University basic funding: 38%
- Academy of Finland CoE funding: 28%
- Other outside funding: 23%
- Ministry of Education bonus: 11%

2007

- Helsinki University basic funding: 35%
- Academy of Finland CoE funding: 30%
- Other outside funding: 25%
- Ministry of Education bonus: 28%

2008 estimate

- Helsinki University basic funding: 39%
- Academy of Finland CoE funding: 21%
- Other outside funding: 28%
- Ministry of Education bonus: 39%
’Immaterial benefits’: collaboration within and outside the CoE

- Information Technology
- Statistics
- History
  - History of Medicine
  - Social and cultural history
- Cognitive science
- Cultural studies
- Education
Multilingualism as a problematic resource/FiDiPro

- The English in Finland research team of the National Centre of Excellence in Research on variation, contacts and change of English
- Finnish as a second language
- Language and literacies in multilingual education
- Finnish sign language
- Sami language and culture
- Finnish Romani language
- Swedish in Finland
- Literacy practices of immigrant groups
- Russian
- Beliefs about language, including beliefs about bi- and multilingualism
- Multilingual discourses of tourism

Prof. Jan Blommaert
National survey on Finns’ uses of and attitudes to English

carried out in 2006-07 by the Jyväskylä team in cooperation with Statistics Finland

- Who uses English in Finland?
- Why is English used?
- Where and how is English used?
- What do Finns think about English and its impact on Finnish society?

the Survey report will be published in 2009.
open-access publication

- Studies in Variation, Contacts and Change in English

online resource for corpus linguistic research and teaching

- Corpus Resource Database (CoRD)
VARIENG annual publication output 2000-2007
Domain 1: Language in society, major publications 2006-08


The Dynamics of Linguistic Variation: Corpus Evidence on English Past and Present (Studies in Language Variation 2),
Ed. by Terttu Nevalainen, Irma Taavitsainen, Päivi Pahta and Minna Korhonen
Domain 2: Language as discourse major publications in 2007-08

- *Methods in Historical Pragmatics*, Ed. by Susan Fitzmaurice and Irma Taavitsainen
  Topics in English Linguistics [TiEL] 52, Mouton de Gruyter 2007

- *Speech Acts in the History of English*, Ed. by Andreas Jucker and Irma Taavitsainen
  *Pragmatics & Beyond* 176, Benjamins 2008
Kolmas kotimainen

Kolmas kotimainen,
Lähikuvia englannin käytöstä Suomessa,
Ed. by Sirpa Leppänen, Tarja Nikula and Leila Kääntä
Helsinki: SKS
Domain 3: Linguistic processes and typology: major publications


International Conferences organized by VARIENG members 2006-08

‡ Helsinki:
  ‡ ICAME 27 (2006)
  ‡ FINSSE 4 (2007)
  ‡ Hel-Lex 2 (2008)

‡ Jyväskylä:
  ‡ Mediating Multilingualism (2008)
More information

http://www.helsinki.fi/varieng/

http://www.jyu.fi/varieng