



On the Border of Language and Dialect

Edited by

Marjatta Palander, Helka Riionheimo and Vesa Koivisto

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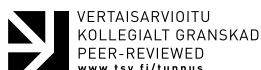
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Introduction: Creating and Crossing Linguistic Borders

The present volume aims to shed light on the various complex dimensions and manifestations of borders between languages and dialects: how language varieties have emerged because of geographical or administrative borders; how linguistic borders are created by contrasting varieties with each other; how borders are mentally maintained by individual language speakers, how they are ideologically co-constructed through interaction; and how different borders are crossed so that language contacts begin to shape language varieties. Multidisciplinary border studies have a long history at the University of Eastern Finland where the border theme has been approached within various academic disciplines, including social sciences, history studies, cultural studies, and linguistics, among others. In 2014, an international symposium took place titled “On the Border of Language and Dialect”, which in turn spawned the current volume. The symposium was organized by the FINKA research project: “On the Borderline of Finnish and Karelian: Perspectives on Cognate Languages and Dialects”, and the articles in this volume bring together different fields of linguistics, as well as related disciplines, thus, presenting a fascinating multifaceted picture of the complex notion of linguistic border.

In their most concrete form, borders are administrative, sometimes (especially in the case of state borders) visibly demarcated in the terrain. Contrary to nation state ideology (still commonly held by laymen), these borders are not natural language borders but rather often cut across areas that have been linguistically and culturally uniform. However, once established, administrative borders begin to affect the language varieties spoken both within the borderline area and on the other side of it. Since borders steer the social networks of language speakers, contacts inside a border increase and contacts across a border are hindered. In this way, state borders are dual in nature as they cause both convergence and divergence: varieties spoken inside the border area begin to influence each other and develop towards convergence, whereas the varieties spoken on the other side of border begin to diverge and may even ultimately evolve into a new language. One such instance is the case of the Eastern Finnish dialects and the Karelian language, which are very closely related as they share the same ancestor language origin (Proto-Karelian) and form a dialect continuum. However,

the presence of the border between Finland and Russia has caused changes: the Eastern Finnish dialects have begun to converge with the other varieties of Finnish (and have also been influenced by Standard Finnish), whereas the Karelian varieties spoken in Russia have maintained many of their old features while still being strongly influenced by the Russian language. (For details, see Vesa Koivisto's article in this volume.) The turmoil of the events of World War II, and indeed more recent events, have left their mark on the linguistic map of Europe, and these offer further illustrations of the effects of shifting borders. The dialect divergence between Polish and Belarusian illustrates diverging development (see Woolhiser 2005), and reunified Germany, by contrast, presents a case of convergence (see Auer, Barden, and Grosskopf 1998; Auer, Barden, Grosskopf, and Mattheier 2000). A further well-known recent example of divergence is the division of Serbo-Croatian into several languages (Serbian, Croatian, and Bosnian) after the collapse of Yugoslavia in the 1990s. Once new political states were established, their inhabitants sought to distinguish their languages from the varieties spoken in neighbouring states (see, e.g., Hawkesworth 2006, van der Wouden 2012).

An extreme case of the impact of political borders (together with many other political, social, and cultural factors) is the endangerment and extinction of the small minority languages that are spoken within the same given administrative area, along with a much more dominant language, and that do not have official status in that country (see, e.g., Thomason 2015). The situation of the Karelian language exemplifies language endangerment, and several articles in this volume examine this issue. Varieties of Karelian have been spoken in two countries, Russia and Finland, and wherever Karelian has been spoken, it has been a suppressed minority language, which has led to the present situation where the language is now rapidly losing speakers despite efforts and activities to revitalize it (see, e.g., Laakso et al. 2016, Sarhimaa 2016). In Russia, the dominance of Russian has led to a large-scale language shift and the same phenomenon has occurred in Finland, aided by the close resemblance of Finnish and Karelian. Indeed, the fate of the Karelian language is the focus of the articles written by Vesa Koivisto, Niina Kunnas, and Marjatta Palander and Helka Riionheimo.

Unlike administrative borders, actual linguistic boundaries are not sharp, rather they are expansive and vague areas where the distinctions between varieties are gradual and can be subtle, and where the isoglosses of linguistic features do not necessarily coincide with state borders. Consequently, the boundary of a language and a dialect is nebulous and is, in practice, often based on political and administrative borders rather than on linguistic differences or mutual unintelligibility. For instance, Swedish and Norwegian are quite easily mutually intelligible, but, since they are languages spoken in separate states, they are generally considered distinct languages. A corresponding situation exists in Western Europe where national boundaries divide some dialects of the West Germanic dialect continuum, resulting in some classified as Dutch and others as German. Still another example is provided by Meänkieli and Kven, both originally dialects of Finnish, but which are now often referred to as languages in their own right because they are spoken outside the state of Finland, and because

both have official minority language status in the country where they are spoken (Sweden and Norway, respectively) (see, e.g., Sulkala 2010, 10–13 and Lindgren & Niiranen in this volume).

It should be noted, however, that inside administrative boundaries, linguistic reality is not uniform but consists of many kinds of mental and subjective borders. Human beings are sensitive to more overt and subtle differences in the ways other people speak, and they tend to contrast languages and groups of speakers on the basis of linguistic features (also known as the social indexicality of linguistic phenomena). Numerous minority languages confront this very situation because their speakers form a small minority amongst speakers of a dominant language. To illustrate this, the fate of the Border Karelian speakers in Finland after World War II will be highlighted. Border Karelia is a border zone that has, over the past centuries, belonged at times to Russia (and the Soviet Union) and at other times to Sweden, and later to an independent Finland (see Sarhimaa 2000). After World War II, the area was ceded by Finland to the Soviet Union, and its Karelian-speaking inhabitants (who were citizens of Finland) had to evacuate their homes and resettle in other parts of Finland. In their new Finnish-speaking environment, these evacuees were faced with many kinds of prejudice due to their different religion (Eastern Orthodox Church), different customs, and different language. Throughout the first post-war decades, the Karelian spoken by these people was officially considered a dialect of Finnish, but the linguistic differences between the Finnish dialects and the Border Karelian dialects drew the attention of Finnish members of society, and Karelian speakers often came up against negative attitudes. In this way, Finnish speakers created a language barrier between themselves and the evacuees, even though the languages in question are very closely related. (For details, see, e.g., Raninen-Siiskonen 1999.) In this volume, the articles by Kunnas and Palander and Riionheimo focus on situations in which language barriers seem to exist between closely related language varieties.

One additional salient point when dealing with borders is recognizing the fact that political or linguistic borders are not absolute barriers, but may act as bridges that may be crossed. Throughout history, trade has been an activity that has united people, and many cultural as well as linguistic influences have travelled across the world via trade routes. Migration and travel are another ancient phenomenon that leads to crossing all manners of borders (political, cultural, linguistic, etc.) by individuals or larger groups of people. In the modern world, many additional forms of international collaboration bring together people from different countries and with different linguistic backgrounds. Language contacts, i.e., the encounters between people who speak different dialects or languages, thus make it possible for words and grammatical features to be borrowed by one language from another. Cross-linguistic influence may thus be seen as a manifestation of crossing linguistic borders. The linguistic effects of language contact – especially lexical borrowing – are discussed in the articles by Anna-Riitta Lindgren and Leena Niiranen, and Vesa Jarva and Jenni Mikkonen.

Furthermore, large-scale migration waves cause linguistic changes in both the migrating group's language and the language of the host population.

This is demonstrated dramatically by the languages of colonization in the Americas, Australia, and Asia, which have both shaped the local languages and been shaped by them. This development may be exemplified by the emergence of various Colonial Englishes (see, e.g., Trudgill 2004; Kerswill and Trudgill 2005) and the development of Afrikaans from a Dutch dialect (van der Wouden 2012). In the Finnic language area, one of the notable migration situations was the movement of Karelian speakers from Kexholm County (including the areas of present-day North Karelia in Finland and Border Karelia in Russia) after the county was incorporated from Russia into Sweden in the 17th century. The Karelians slowly travelled towards Inner Russia and finally settled in Tver Oblast. This migration resulted in the emergence of Karelian language islands scattered throughout Russian-speaking areas, in isolation from other varieties of Karelian. Within these exclaves, the Karelian language was maintained for centuries and evolved into a new variety. The development of Tver Karelian is described by Vesa Koivisto in this volume.

The linguistic borders between a language and a dialect as well as the administrative, cultural, and mental borders that affect the linguistic ones are considered from multiple perspectives in this volume. The articles approach mental borders between dialects, dialect continua, and areas of mixed dialect, language ideologies, language mixing, and contact-induced language change. In addition to the theme of borders or bordering, the articles have one thing in common: they all describe multilingualism, whether past or present, societal or individual. Karelian receives particular attention, as the research subject of the FINKA project, and Karelian is examined from multiple perspectives with attention to variation, maintenance, and the dialect perceptions of its speakers. Together, these articles paint a picture of multidimensional, multilingual, variable, and ever-changing linguistic reality where diverse borders, boundaries, and barriers meet, are intertwined, and cross each other. The combination of the articles also aims to cross disciplinary and methodological borders and present new perspectives on earlier studies and their interpretations.

The volume opens with Dennis R. Preston's article "What's Old and What's New in Perceptual Dialectology?", which is a review of the development of this branch of research from its early days until the present. Perceptual dialectology belongs to a larger field of folk linguistics, where research focuses on the layman's (i.e., the non-linguist's) perceptions and views on language. Language users observe their language continuously, and their beliefs always influence their language attitude and their actual language use. Early studies were aimed at determining whether the informants regarded neighbouring dialects as similar to or different from their own dialect, and, on the basis of these conceptualizations, it was possible to discern perceptual or mental dialect borders. Since the 1980s, the methodology of perceptual dialectology has developed rapidly, especially due to the work of Dennis R. Preston, and has included, for instance, ranking tasks and drawing mental dialect maps. At present, complex computer-aided techniques are utilized for the same purposes. At the same time, the scope of research has expanded, and it now involves the investigation of linguistic attitudes (e.g.,

the perception of how ‘correct’ or ‘pleasant’ the dialects are according to non-linguists). Recently, the studies of linguistic attitudes have applied discourse analysis and experimental methods (such as reaction time studies and eye tracking studies). What comes to the question of demarcating a language and a dialect, the article shows that perceptual dialectology provides significant insights not only on what laymen believe about dialect boundaries but also on the relevance of these perceptions and attitudes when explaining regional and social variation.

In the article “Language Borders and Cultural Encounters: A Linguistic View on Interdisciplinarity in the Research of Intercultural Contacts”, Johanna Laakso problematizes the common notion that languages are closed systems with clear boundaries. The writer stresses the artificialness and conventionality of borders, especially in a linguistic sense. In the spirit of national idealism, strict borders have been drawn between languages (and concurrently nation-states), although the reality behind this kind of national monolingualism might be more complicated. As the author notes, “What is traditionally called ‘the same language’ is in practice realized as ‘a bundle of varieties’”. Deep down there may also be a common human striving towards making a distinction between oneself and others, ‘us’ vs ‘them’. In linguistics, however, it should be kept in mind the universally common coexistence and use of various languages, i.e., multilingualism. The author stresses the central role of multilingualism in societies throughout the centuries and points out its gradual re-emergence in the Europe of today.

A noteworthy example of language and dialect mixing are the Border Karelian dialects that are introduced in Vesa Koivisto’s article “Border Karelian Dialects – a Diffuse Variety of Karelian”. These dialects of the Karelian language were spoken in the former Eastern Finnish territories in the vicinity of the Russian border. Contact between Karelian and Finnish in Border Karelia have taken place ever since the 17th century, since many Karelians moved to Russia and the area was settled by a Finnish-speaking population. The border line between the Karelian and Finnish languages has traversed Border Karelia, but in practice this border was realized as a continuum along which Karelian dialects showed characteristics of mixed or transitional dialects. The language border was indefinite both geographically and in terms of the use of the two languages, Karelian and Finnish, in villages. In addition to two distinct languages, there were also two dialects of Karelian that met in Border Karelia and that influenced each other: Karelian Proper (more precisely, its subdialect South Karelian) and Olonets Karelian. The border between these two also formed a continuum. Thus, a mixed dialect may consist not only of constituents of one and the same language but also – as Border Karelian does – of elements of two related languages (Karelian and Finnish). For such close linguistic relatives, grammatical integration is also possible to a certain extent. Border Karelian dialects reveal a situation in which defining a language may be elusive, as the language idiolectally represents varying proportions of two neighbouring languages or dialects. Border Karelian dialects, thus, call into question the traditional concept of a linguistic border in several respects.

The remaining two Karelian-related articles in this volume represent perceptual dialectology. In Marjatta Palander's and Helka Riionheimo's study "Imitating Karelian: How Is Karelian Recalled and Imitated by Finns with Border Karelian Roots?" an imitation task is applied to a research setting involving language contact and language memory. The informants have their roots in Border Karelia (the area described above): the oldest ones were born in Border Karelia before World War II while the younger ones are children or grandchildren of the Border Karelian evacuees who were resettled in Finland after the war. In Finland, the Border Karelians have largely experienced a language shift, and, thus, the younger generations speak mostly the local Finnish dialect and remember only sporadic Karelian elements. The purpose of the research task was to discover the kinds of recollections the informants have of the Karelian language spoken by themselves as children or which they had heard spoken by their older relatives. In other words, they were asked to cross many boundaries: the boundary between generations and the boundary between Finnish and Karelian. The task revealed that Karelian is mostly remembered lexically as single words or short fixed phrases. However, there were also informants who were able to produce spontaneous dialogue in Karelian or even use Karelian throughout the entire interview. On the basis of the results, the researchers suggest that the childhood memories of Karelian could help in reviving the language, should the informants wish to do so.

Niina Kunnas's article "Viena Karelians as Observers of Dialect Differences in Their Heritage Language" focuses on the White Sea Karelian variety and how its speakers conceptualize their own language. The research material includes interview data and a listening task. White Sea Karelian is the northern dialect of Karelian Proper and is clearly distinct from the other main Karelian dialect, Olonets Karelian. The Viena Karelians themselves seem to consider the dialect boundary between their dialect and Olonets Karelian wider than the boundary between their dialect and Finnish, even though the speakers of White Sea Karelian and Olonets Karelian live in the same geopolitical state (the Karelian Republic in the Russian Federation), and the geographical distance between these two varieties is only about 500 km. The study also confirms the earlier finding that laymen are not aware of the definitions or the names of the varieties employed by linguists. Furthermore, Niina Kunnas discovered that for the Viena Karelians, vocabulary and some phonological or phonetic features are salient when determining dialect boundaries. The comments about different sibilants used in White Sea Karelian and Olonets Karelian demonstrate that laymen are able to perceive even relatively small phonetic differences between the varieties.

Working within the framework of language ideology studies, Tamás Péter Szabó approaches the ways in which linguistic borders are interactionally constructed in two countries, Hungary and Finland, in the article "Reflections on the Schoolscape: Teachers on Linguistic Diversity in Hungary and Finland". This research material comes from metadiscourses in which a local teacher and the researcher co-explore the school building and discuss its schoolscape (i.e., the material environs of education, presented

by pictures on the walls and the like). Microanalyses of the recordings focus on the multilingual practices of these schools through the narratives, evaluations, and explanations that touch upon current educational practices, which also reflect elements of nation-wide discourses of linguistic diversity. The analyses consider accounts that draw connections between English and multilingualism. In a Hungarian example, a view emerges in which the standard language is accorded preference, and the students are portrayed as deficient speakers of English. The Finnish examples present a more pluralistic approach since they are not focused on the standard language or linguistic norms, but represent the students in a positive light as active users of all their linguistic resources. By examining the labelling of language varieties and boundary-making practices, the study illustrates how notions such as ‘mother tongue’ and ‘foreign language’ are reconstructed in interaction and how the participants construct language borders, revealing some of the language ideologies that belie the use of these borders.

In their article “The Morphological Integration of Scandinavian and Saami Verbal Borrowings in Kven and Their Impact on Contact-Induced Language Change”, Anna-Riitta Lindgren and Leena Niiranen present a contact-linguistic study that investigates the Kven language, a language variety that, in itself, lies on the fuzzy border between a language and a dialect. The Kven are a small minority in northern Norway, and their language derives from the dialect of Finnish spoken by their ancestors who moved to Norway in the 18th and 19th centuries. As the dialect has been spoken in a different country, and with little or no connections to Finland, the variety has diverged from the Finnish of Finland. In 2005, Kven was recognized as a national minority language in Norway, and, thus, it was accorded the status of an autonomous language, distinct from Finnish. The emergence of Kven, thus, reflects the influence of nation-state borders during the era of modernization in the 20th century. The article focuses on different kinds of language borders while examining linguistic borrowing from two sources: from two Scandinavian languages, Norwegian and Swedish, and from the Saami languages that are the closest cognates of the Finnic language family. The Saami languages and the Finnic languages share many structural similarities, such as rich inflectional and derivational morphology. This study addresses different forms of borrowing (the matter and pattern replication) and show that there are clear differences brought about by the borrowing source. The borrowings from typologically different Scandinavian languages are integrated into one inflectional type, and this language contact does not exhibit any kind of pattern replication (i.e., borrowing of morphological patterns instead of borrowing the sound-meaning pairs). By contrast, the impact of the Saami languages is more multifaceted and consists of integrating the Saami borrowings into many inflectional and derivational types, as well as various types of pattern replication. In this way, this article demonstrates that the linguistic border between two related languages is not as wide as that between languages that are typologically distant.

In addition to language borders dividing geographical areas, there are also more “tacit” linguistic borders, e.g., within a more restricted area, as within a single city. This kind of linguistic border can be described as

demographic rather than geographic. An example of this is the Old Helsinki Slang (OHS), a variety of urban Finnish spoken by the “lower classes” that is discussed by Vesa Jarva and Jenni Mikkonen in their article “Lexical Mixing in a Conversation between Old Helsinki Slang Speakers”. In the article, OHS is represented by a unique audio recording from the 1960s. OHS is a nonstandard (spoken) variety that shows considerable linguistic variation (both diachronically and synchronically). It is a mixture of dialectal and borrowed lexical material that combine features of Swedish (both lexical and structural) with a Finnish (multi-dialectal) basis originating in the dialects of the rural population that moved to Helsinki in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The quantity of (mostly Swedish) loan words in OHS is well over the universal average, thus, allowing it to be classified in the high borrowers category. The lexical material of OHS has been adapted to Finnish phonology, but it also displays phonological features foreign to the rest of Finnish. Due to its multifaceted origin, OHS has a medial status between a mixed speech form and a variant of Finnish.

Now that this article compilation nears completion, we wish to express our gratitude to all of the persons or institutions that have contributed or lent support to the book. First and foremost, the participants of the symposium “On the Border of Language and Dialect” are thanked for their fascinating perspectives on our central theme of demarcating languages and dialects. Most of the present articles are based on the papers presented during this symposium. Also, the writers of the articles are thanked for their patience and cooperation during the several phases of editing this volume. Furthermore, the reference group of the research project FINKA are gratefully acknowledged: Professors Riho Grünthal, Dennis R. Preston, and Anneli Sarhimaa, and Docent Maria Vilkkuna, who have supported the project from its initial stage. The project was funded by the Academy of Finland during 2011–2014 (Project 137479), and the symposium received additional funding from the Federation of Finnish Learned Societies, the Joensuu University Foundation, the University of Eastern Finland, and the City of Joensuu. Thanks are in order, as well, to the publisher, the Finnish Literature Society, that has included this book in their esteemed series *Studia Fennica Linguistica*. Two anonymous referees provided valuable advice for finalizing the articles. The editors of this series, as well as the publishing editor of the Finnish Literature Society, have managed the editing process with competence and expertise. All in all, we are grateful to have had the opportunity to work with such a variety of scholars and experts.

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What's Old and What's New in Perceptual Dialectology?

Abstract

The systematic study of perceptual (or folk) dialectology dates back to at least the 19th century but was seriously developed in the mid 20th century, especially in The Netherlands and Japan. A late 20th century revival has now established this mode of enquiry as one commonly attached to general studies of varieties or carried out independently. In this article, the various goals, methods, and findings are summarized and evaluated with special regard to the following questions:

- 1) Where do people believe speech differs?
- 2) To what extent and where do the folk boundaries determined in 1) differ from those discovered by professionals?
- 3) In what way do people believe speech differs – linguistically (i.e., with reference to details) and/or incrementally (e.g., by degree).
- 4) Which linguistic signals do (and can) people use to identify varieties?
- 5) Which variant linguistic facts influence comprehension?
- 6) What sorts of factors (e.g., social stereotypes, caricatures) accompany and influence any of the answers sought in 1) through 5) above.

The methodological approaches taken to answer each question are examined, ranging from the map-oriented work of the early approaches to more recent experimentally grounded procedures, using resynthesized material and increasingly sophisticated experimental protocols (e.g., implicit evaluation tasks). The sorts of results obtained with each method are outlined and comparisons provided among them, as well as evaluations of their contributions to dialectology, contact (between languages and dialects), and, in some cases, sociolinguistics, and even general linguistics. This article concludes with an encouraging call for developing and future research that includes a variety of approaches.

This volume considers the linguistic borders between a language and a dialect as well as the administrative, cultural, and mental borders that affect the linguistic ones. The articles approach mental borders between dialects, dialect continua, and areas of mixed dialect, language ideologies, language mixing, and contact-induced language change. Karelian receives particular attention, being examined from multiple perspectives with attention to variation, maintenance, and the dialect perceptions of its speakers. Together, the articles compose a multidimensional, multilingual, variable, and ever-changing linguistic reality where diverse borders, boundaries, and barriers meet, intertwine, and cross each other. The combination of the articles also aims to cross disciplinary and methodological borders and present new perspectives on earlier studies.

The editors of the volume are experts of dialectology and contact linguistics at the University of Eastern Finland. Marjatta Palander, PhD, and Helka Riionheimo, PhD, are professors in Finnish language. Vesa Koivisto, PhD, holds the professorship of Karelian language and culture.



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