

Finnish Romani during the 20th century: Development and decay of a language

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Abstract

This paper discusses the history of Finnish Romani during the 20th century. The 20th century was a period of decreasing use of Finnish Romani and internal language erosion, resulting in the co-existence of inflecting Romani retaining its morpho-syntactic framework, and a Para-Romani-like variety. Numerous attested changes in Finnish Romani were attributed to the contact of the speakers of Romani with Finnish. This paper is based on a corpus comprising most written documents of Finnish Romani from the 20th century, comprising religious texts, textbooks, wordlists and dictionaries. This paper follows the theoretical framework as commonly used in European and Finnish Romani Linguistics during the 1990s and 2000s. Starting points for explaining language variation and change are functional-typological. The focus is on language-internal changes, innovations vs. conservative features, as well as on contact-induced changes. In addition, this paper deals with variation and linguistic attrition, which characterized Finnish Romani of the 20th century. This paper shows that tendencies of language-internal change both simplified the language structure and significantly increased the amount of linguistic variation. The paper also shows that matter replication is later and occurs more rarely in FR than pattern replication.

Keywords: Finnish Romani, history, variation, language change

1 Introduction

This paper discusses the development of Finnish Romani (FR) during the 20th century. Its focus is on language-internal changes, innovations vs. conservative features, as well as on contact-induced changes. During this period, the structure of FR has shown multiple tendencies towards simplification. As a result of many competing ongoing tendencies of language change, limited use of the language and the bilingualism of the Finnish Roma, FR has exhibited abundant variation in both nominal and verb morphology. Some of these changes seemingly coincide with Northeastern (NE) Romani (some of the Romani dialects spoken in Poland, the Baltic countries and Russia), but have probably been caused by natural linguistic processes or typological similarities between the contact languages of FR and NE Romani.

Abandoning the morpho-syntactic frame of Romani has been a gradual process, but it has accelerated since the beginning of the 20th century. Many speakers of FR imitate the syntactic framework of Finnish mostly using Indo-Aryan resources, without exhibiting large-scale borrowing of the Finnish morphological matter. FR has become tightly connected to Finnish used by the Roma for interaction outside their own group and even among themselves. The borrowing of phonological rules is common in language contact

situations. Syntax is one of the levels of the language that mostly converges with Finnish. This is not surprising since, in European Romani dialects, syntax is generally prone to contact-induced influences affecting their structure.

Idiolects show significant variation in FR. Among speakers of all ages, there are nowadays competent and semi-competent speakers as well as those with very weak proficiency in Romani. Differences in Romani competence are mostly reflected in verb morphology and the ability to produce complex numerals. Code-mixing phenomena are frequent in the speech of the Finnish Roma. In FR, code-mixing with Finnish is largely a compensation strategy, by means of which the Roma fill gaps in their Romani competence. In addition, code-mixing is connected to the efficiency of lexical retrieval, which is often faster in the dominating language, Finnish. (Granqvist 2000; Kovanen 2013; Salo 2021.) Kovanen (2013) further suggests that code-switching has social or interactional functions to mark taboos or difficult topics, to outline the discourse and to seek attention.

1.1 Previous studies on the history of FR

Granqvist (2010) divided the history of Finnish Romani linguistics in three periods: (i) a historical perspective represented by Pertti Valtonen especially in the 1960s, (ii) a Fennistic paradigm during the 1980s and 1990s, and (iii) the modern period since the beginning of the 21st century. In the modern period, new methods of linguistics began to be applied to the core study of the language focusing on the relationship between Romani and Old and Middle Indo-Aryan languages. Research shifted to focus on phonetics, phonology and morphosyntax, reflecting the interests and training of contemporary linguists. However, the connection to the traditional historical perspective of Finnish Romani linguistics was maintained. Since 2010, the historical development of Finnish Romani has been explored in numerous conference presentations and articles (Granqvist 2012b, 2013a, 2013b). A comprehensive monograph on the history of Finnish Romani has recently been published (Granqvist 2024).

1.2 Material and method

1.2.1 Material

In order to study the development of FR during the 20th century, we need to examine data from the period. Only a few documents in FR are available from the first half of the 20th century. Most of the existing materials come from Oskar Jalkio, the founder of the Mustalaislähetys (Gypsy Mission) NGO. Jalkio's data are currently archived at the Institute for the Languages of Finland and Romani Mission NGO. Jalkio mastered Romani but was not a native speaker of it. Not all his materials were translated by him; instead, they comprised language produced by different Roma in different times. In additions to Jalkio's data, articles published by the Estonian professor Paul Ariste contain Romani from the first decades of the 20th century.

The latter half of the 20th century is the first period from which materials in both spoken and written Romani are available, along with a number of scholarly writings elaborating the view of its structure and development. Spoken Romani has been tape-recorded since the 1960s, when Pertti Valtonen collected it for his academic theses (1964, 1968). Simultaneously, Matti Leiwo, professor emeritus of Finnish, and Pekka Sammallahti, professor emeritus of Saami languages, also became interested in Romani

and conducted their own data collections. These were very limited; nevertheless, they have not yet been fully utilized for research. In 1984, Yrjö Temo, a Finnish Rom who had written a Romani dictionary with his brother Jussi Peltosalmi and translated the Gospel of John into Romani (both published in 2014 (Granqvist 2014a)), was interviewed for two hours. Thereafter, about 15 hours of recordings of Romani were obtained during a Romani language seminar organized by the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland in 1995. At the beginning of the 21st century, Hellevi Hedman-Valentin, a planner at the Research Institute, recorded and transcribed a total of 45 hours of speech from 89 Roma (46 woman and 43 men between 16 and 89 years of age) from 32 localities all over the country. The size of the resulting corpus was 168,000 words. The most recent data collection was carried out in 2013–2014 as part of a University Helsinki project called “Finnish Romani and other Northern Romani dialects in the Baltic Sea area” (2013–2017, PI Kimmo Granqvist).

The written sources of FR from the period 1950–2013 are summarized in Table 1. Until the 1980s, religious texts constituted most of the written sources. Among the few exceptions were some newspaper articles in *Romano Boodos* – issued by Mustalaislähetys, later *Romano Missio* – Axel Kronqvist’s (1871–1956) vocabulary and Pertti Valtonen’s (1972) etymological dictionary. The Romani language and culture has received more attention in the national Roma political debate since the 1980s. This resulted in the publication of dictionaries and textbooks intended mainly for comprehensive schools and vocational training, later also for the university. A few children’s books have been published during the past few years.

In addition, some web pages of Finnish authorities have been translated in Romani. Radio news in Romani has been transmitted weekly since 1995 by Radio Suomi and Yleisradio 1; some of the new manuscripts have been obtained and saved into a corpus.

Table 1. Central written sources of FR 1950–1999

A. Religious texts				
	Year	Translator/author	Title	Size (pp.)
Non-Roma translators/ authors	1970	Pertti Valtonen	<i>Markusesko</i> <i>Evankeliumos:</i> <i>kaalengo tšibbaha</i>	
Roma translators/ authors	1970	Viljo Koivisto	<i>Deulikaane tšambibi</i>	96
	1971	Viljo Koivisto	<i>Johannesesko</i> <i>Evankeliumos</i>	72
	1971–	Viljo Koivisto and other authors	<i>Romano boodos</i> newspaper	–
	1980s	Jussi Peltosalmi and Yrjö Temo	<i>Evankeliumis</i> <i>pale Johanneskseste</i>	Manuscript

B. Textbooks

	Year	Author	Title	Size (pp.)
Roma authors	1982	Viljo Koivisto	<i>Drabibosko ta rannibosko byrjiba</i>	108
	1987	Viljo Koivisto	<i>Rakkavaha romanes. Kaalengo tšimbako sikjibosko liin</i>	280
	1995	Miranda Vuolasranta	<i>Romani tšimbako drom</i>	150
	1996	Henry Hedman	<i>Sar me sikjavaa romanes</i>	243

C. Vocabularies and dictionaries

	Year	Translator/author	Title	Size (pp.)
Non-Roma authors	1950s	Axel Kronqvist		Manuscript
	1972	Pertti Valtonen	<i>Romanikielen etymologinen sanakirja</i>	
	2010	Kimmo Granqvist	<i>Suomen romanikielen käänteissanakirja</i>	111
Roma authors	1980s	Jussi Peltosalmi and Yrjö Temo	Suomi–romani -sanakirja	Manuscript
	1994/2005	Viljo Koivisto	<i>Romano-finitiko-angliko laavesko liin = Romani-suomi-englanti sanakirja = Romany-Finnish-English dictionary</i>	324

1.2.2 Method

This paper follows the theoretical framework as commonly used in European and Finnish Romani Linguistics during the 1990s and 2000s. The starting points for explaining language variation and change are functional-typological (Martinet 1962; Greenberg 1966; Anttila 1972; Coseriu 1974; Givón 1985a, 1985b); the paper further discusses the relationship between form and function and language complexity.

Its focus is on language-internal changes, innovations vs. conservative features. In FR, language internal variation is mainly caused by innovations that have simplified the structure of Romani dialects. These include the loss of case agreement of adjective attributes, loss of subject clitics, changes in the inventory of verbal derivation suffixes (e.g. the loss of productivity of *-ar-*), reduction of *-v-* in verb forms (e.g., *čēr-av-a > cēr-a-a* [do-PRS.1SG-IND/FUT] ‘I do’) and syncretism phenomena in person inflections.

In addition to language-internal changes, this paper discusses contact-induced language changes. The lexicon of FR has been influenced in particular by the Germanic languages Middle Low German and Middle High German, Danish and Swedish. On the other hand, not many lexemes have been borrowed from Finnish, which is the most important current close contact language of FR, but a large number of loans are based on Finnish patterns. The transfer of Finnish phonological rules into FR has been extensive, but most Finnish rules had already been borrowed by the end of the 19th century. One focus in this paper is on morphological borrowing and related universal constraints (e.g., Moravcsik 1978; Thomason & Kaufmann 1988; Thomason 2001; Winford 2003). In this paper, I distinguish between the borrowing of morphemes, i.e. *matter replication*, and of grammatical models, i.e. *pattern replication*, of which the former is rare but the latter frequent in FR (Matras 2007; Matras & Sakel 2007; Sakel 2007). In some cases, Finnish morphosyntactic patterns even constitute an obligatory part of FR grammar. For instance, the morphosemantic functions of cases and the case government of verbs are largely borrowed from Finnish, likewise the inherited prepositions have been substituted with postpositions that trigger genitive complement similar to Finnish.

In addition, this paper deals to some extent with variation and linguistic attrition. At its present stage, FR permits a high degree of variation. Permissiveness to variation and large idiolectal differences in the amount of variation are often associated with language death (Vuorela & Borin 1998: 69, and the references therein). The attrition is so extensive, that some scholars refer to FR as an obsolescent language (Vuorela & Borin 1988: 69; Pirttisaari 2003, 2004a, 2004b: 178). Along with the attrition and the gradual loss of its own grammatical framework, FR has become increasingly symbiotic with Finnish, or Para-Romani¹-like in some respects, while the number of its non-speakers has perhaps not increased. Hancock (1992), Vuorela and Borin (1998: 68) and Granqvist (2013: 184–185) even refer to a Finnish Para-Romani called Fennoromani, analogously to Angloromani and Scandoromani.

1.3 Outline

This paper is divided into three main sections followed by a section summarizing the key findings. First, I discuss the proficiency of the Roma in FR and its domains of use. It draws on surveys carried out by academic scholars and authorities periodically since the 1950s, mostly to survey the living conditions of the Roma and secondarily only the linguistic situation of the Roma. Thereafter, I deal with language-internal changes. The focus is on morpho-syntax: the simplification of the case system and noun classes, the simplification of the verb classes and person inflections and the development of the so-called ‘new infinitive’. Finally, I discuss the changes FR has undergone during the 20th century in contact with Finnish. Here also, the emphasis is on morphological features. Most of the phonological contact-induced changes had already taken place during the 19th century or earlier. The discussion is divided into pattern replication – typological changes comprising the loss of definite articles, the change into a postposition language and the formation of new types of analytical tenses – and matter replication.

¹ The term Para-Romani, often coined with Cortiade (1991), refers to varieties with (some) Romani-based lexicon incorporated in the morphosyntactic frame of another language, e.g. Spanish (in case of Caló), Portuguese (Calão), Basque (Errumantxela), English (Angloromani), Norwegian or Swedish (Scandoromani). On Para-Romani varieties, see also Bakker (2020).

2. Surveys on proficiency in Romani and its domains of use

2.1 Language proficiency in Romani

The competence of the Roma in the Romani language has been surveyed several times, beginning in the 1950s, by means of self-assessment. In 1953, the Finnish government established a work group to investigate Roma issues, chaired by Social Counselor Paavo Mustala. Mustala's committee tasked the Social Investigations Bureau to study the Roma and their living conditions. The data for this study were collected in 1954 through Social Boards, so that all persons older than 16 years of age with a Roma background (and even younger orphan Roma children) from all municipalities were included. A total of 2,074 questionnaires were returned by June 1954; eventually the data covered information on 3,596 Roma and persons living with them. The Roma were fairly equally distributed throughout the country, though up to 25% of the people interviewed lived in Vaasa county. The survey covered their belonging to the church, age, level of education, reading and writing skills, confirmation, school attendance, marital status, family size and housing conditions, but also competence in Romani.

The empirical part of Raino Vehmas's PhD thesis (1961), dealing with the group character and cultural acculturation of the Roma, was based on interviews with 89 Roma living in rural areas and 88 Roma living in cities. The rural areas were represented by the Saarijärvi-Viitasaari region and the city areas by Helsinki. The interviews were carried out by social secretaries in the countryside and by social workers in Helsinki. The questionnaire contained 67 questions, two of which dealt with usage of and competence in the Romani language. Its focus was on the group behaviour, experiences, social participation, cognitive activity and attitudes of the Roma. The data that Vehmas (1961) published were based on the earlier survey carried out by the Social Bureau of Research in 1954 (Granqvist 2010).

In 1978–1980, the Helsinki Welfare Office investigated the social and educational conditions of the Roma by interviewing the heads of Roma households. The goal was to gather information to follow and develop the living conditions of the Roma. The survey covered the education, livelihood and other social conditions of the Roma, as well as canvassing the wishes of the Roma as to what could be done to improve their living conditions. Between May 1, 1978 through October 10, 1979, 185 interviews were accomplished; the total number of Roma households was 286 on July 15, 1978. 550 persons belonged to these households. Most interviews were carried out in Welfare Offices or at the interviewees' homes. The interviewees were mostly heads of the households, but in the case of mixed marriages, they were the Roma spouses.

Henry Hedman's (2009) study on Finnish Romani, its status in its speech community, usage and language attitudes of the Roma is currently the most extensive survey of the competence into Romani and its domains of use. For it, 306 Roma (164 women and 142 men) were interviewed throughout Finland and in Sweden.

Obviously, these surveys are not commensurable, due to differences in sample sizes and their quality and in self-assessment criteria. The 1954 survey studied speaking and listening comprehension skills in Romani. Vehmas (1961) used a four-grade scale, starting at "masters perfectly" and ending at "does not understand Romani". The Helsinki Welfare Office made use of a three-grade scale based on communicative competence ("gets along with elderly Roma" – "gets along in everyday conversations" – "knows only a few

words”). Hedman (2009) used a five-grade scale (“excellent” – “good” – “satisfactory” – “weak” – “not at all”). Hedman (2009: 24) defined satisfactory competence as ability to partly understand Romani and to be able to at least partly reply in Romani. Weak language skills meant that the person could not get along in Romani (Hedman 2009: 24).

In 1954, the elderly generation in particular tended to have mastered Romani; 85% of the Roma over 65 years of age spoke Romani. Of adult Roma, 81% at least understood Romani. According to the statistics published by Vehmas (1961: 188), 60% of adult Roma mastered Romani perfectly or well according to their own self-assessment, and 89% of the interviewees could get along in Romani. Vehmas did not observe significant differences in Romani competence between countryside and city. According to the survey by the Helsinki Welfare office (1979) more than half of the household heads had mastered Romani well enough that they could at least get along in everyday conversations and 37% so well that considered themselves able to get along with elderly Roma. However, up to 88% of Roma household heads, whose spouse was also of Roma background, was able to get along in everyday conversations. According to Hedman (2009), on the other hand, no more than 28% of the interviewed Roma claimed that he/she had mastered Romani excellently or well. But 62% of them had at least satisfactory competence.

Figures 1–3 compare the surveys. A central observation is that only excellent or good competence in Romani seems to have clearly decreased. The proportion of satisfactory competence has not changed significantly, and the amount of Roma not knowing Romani is nowadays rather lower than it used to be. However, Hedman’s (2009: 24) survey indicates that almost one-third of the Roma have weak competence in Romani.

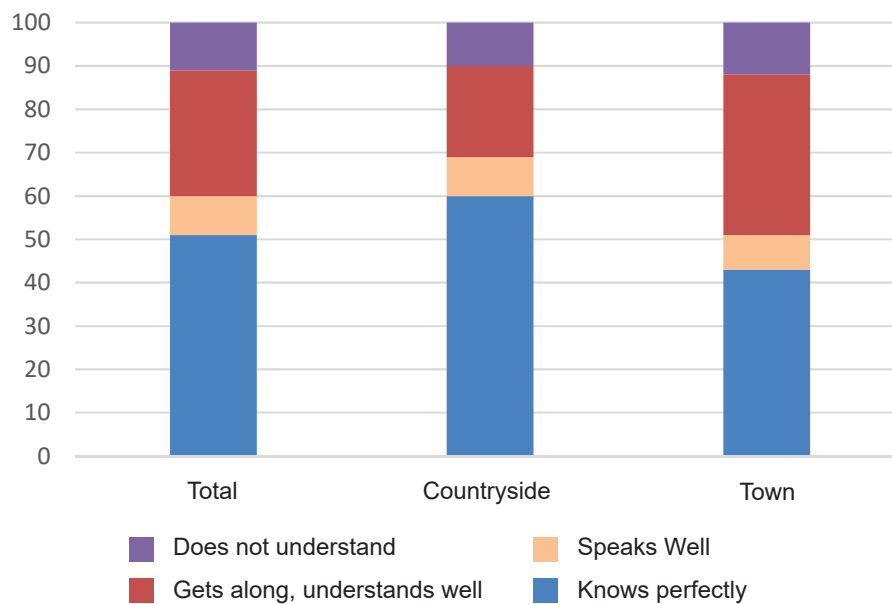


Figure 1. Competence in FR according to Vehmas (1961)

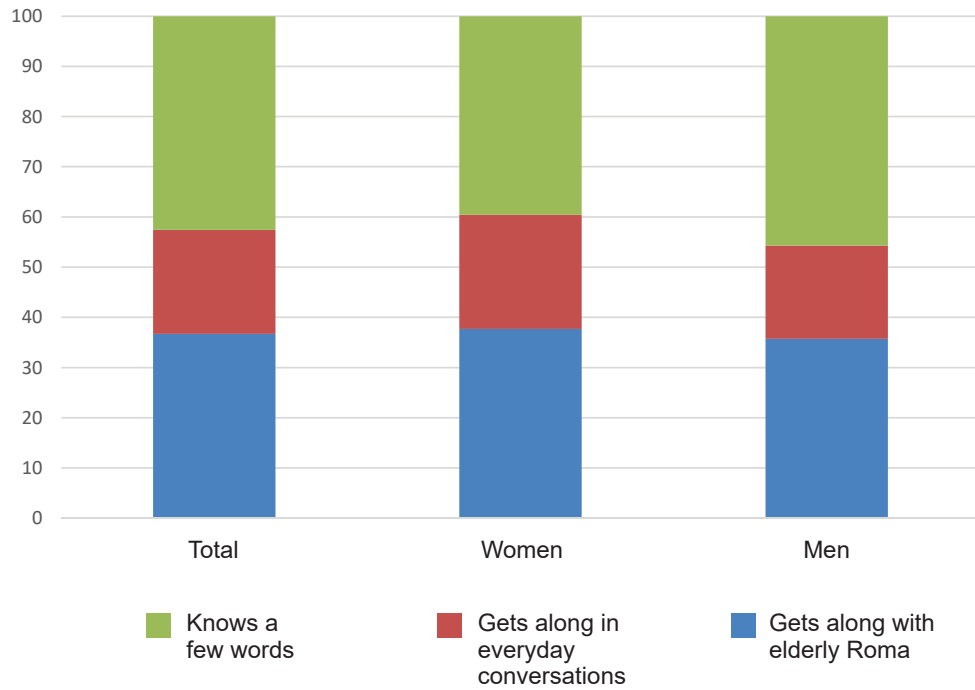


Figure 2. Competence in FR according to Helsinki welfare office survey (1979)

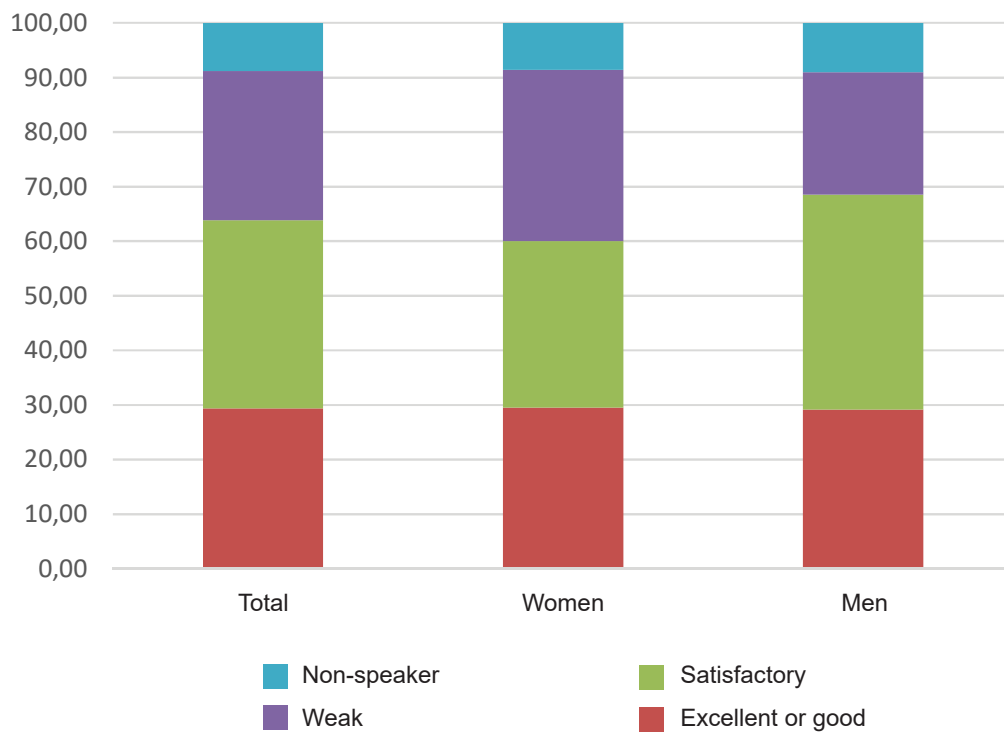


Figure 3. Competence in FR according to Hedman (2009)

Three surveys present quantitative results on the Romani competence by age-groups; the results are summarized in Figures 4–6. The survey carried out by the Social Investigation of Office in 1954 compared the oral skills of three age groups in Romani. Both the Helsinki Welfare Office and Hedman (2009) divided the informants into five age groups but used different age categories. The differences between age groups have increased over time, in particular when it comes to good competence in Romani. All three surveys repeat the view that the older Roma have better Romani competence than the younger. The big differences between age groups are related to the late acquisition of Romani along with growing up to adulthood and socialization in the Roma community (Borin & Vuorela 1998: 60; Borin 2000: 75). The differences between age groups might also reflect the gerontocratic hierarchy of the Roma community. The young Roma must pay respect to the older and aim at preserving the face of the older Roma; they must show that the older Roma are wiser than they (Granqvist 2009). Because of this, it is difficult for the young Roma to characterize their competence in Romani very strongly, to avoid the risk of exalting themselves above the older Roma. Self-assessments are, in addition, biased by the pursuit of ideal Romaniness; some Roma consider mastering of Romani important in this. Granqvist (2013a) has suggested that variation in Romani competence manifests itself more aptly through comparison of language-internal variables than using interview techniques based on self-assessment. Comparison of results based on language-internal variables and self-assessments also reveals variation in the notion of good Romani competence over time and person.

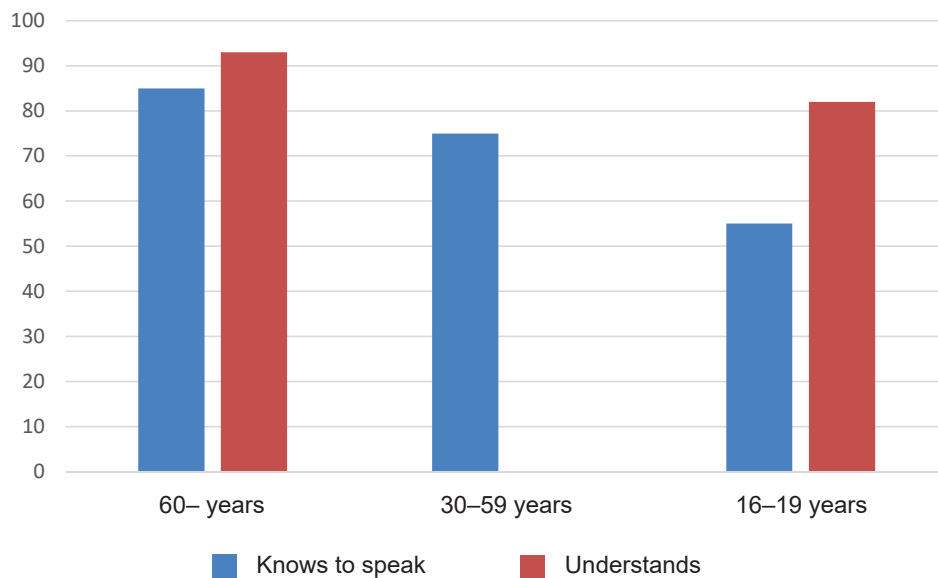


Figure 4. Competence in FR by age group according to Social Yearbook (1954). Statistics on understanding FR are missing for the age group 30–59 years.

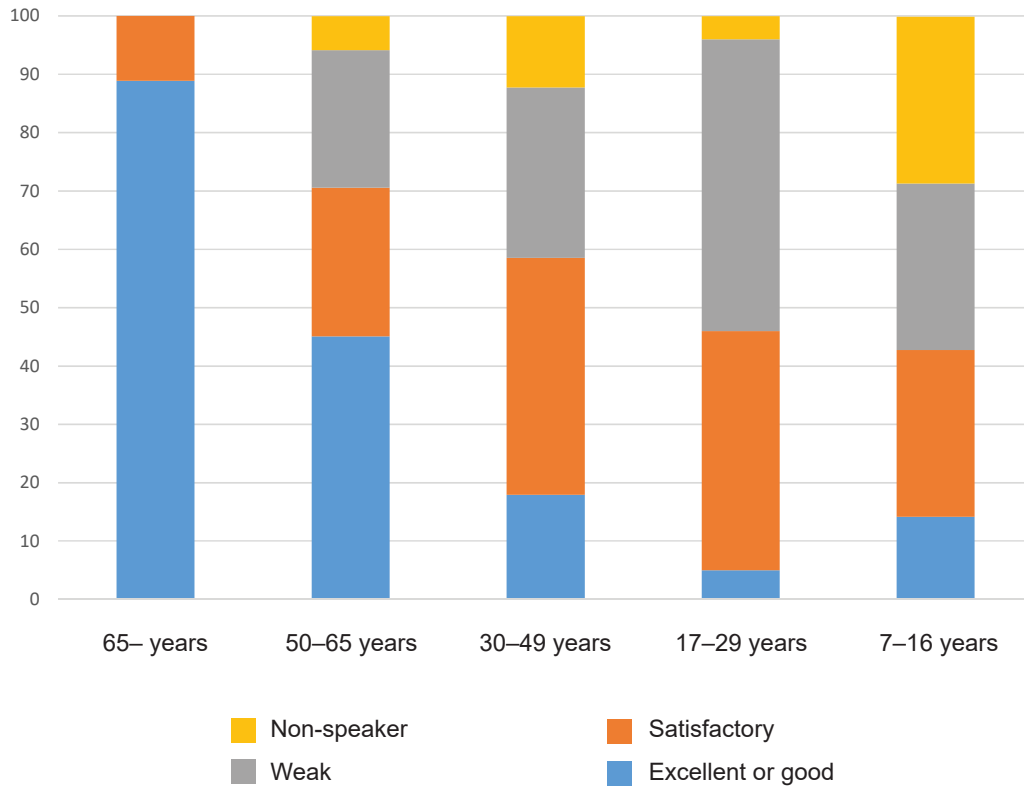


Figure 5. Competence in FR by age group according to Helsinki welfare office survey (1979)

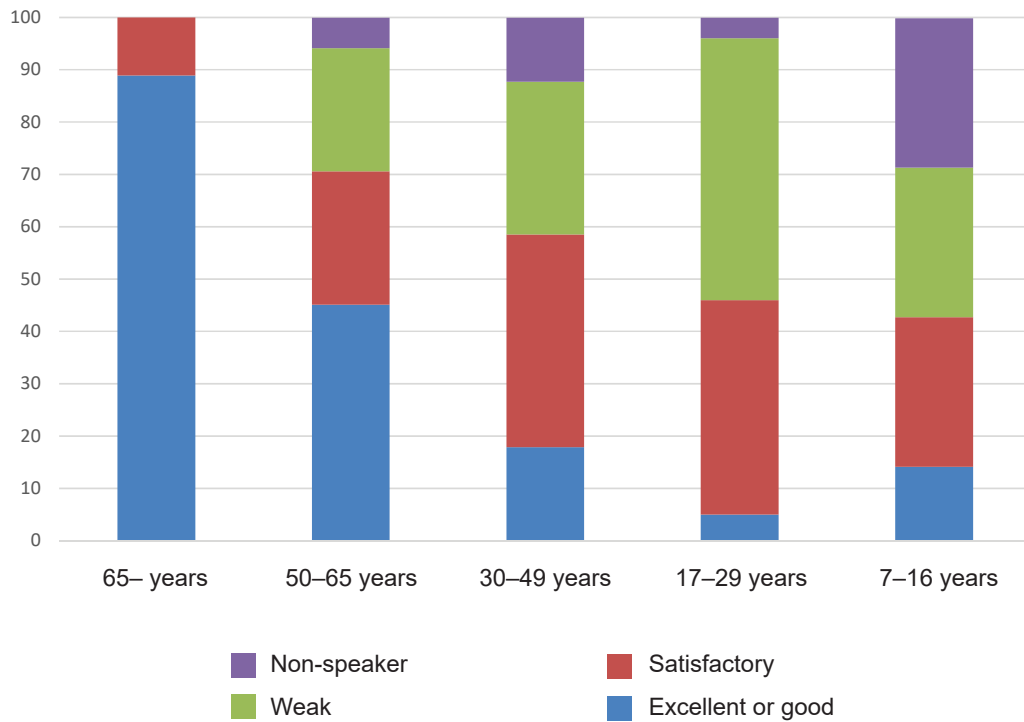


Figure 6. Competence in FR by age group according to Hedman (2009)

2.2 Domains of use

By the beginning of the 20th century, FR was no longer the primary language of everyday conversations of Roma families (Thesleff 1899). In the 1950s, 81% of the interviewed Roma used Finnish mostly or exclusively within the family; the use of Romani was slightly more widespread in the countryside than in cities. At the beginning of the 2000s, Finnish (occasionally parallel to Swedish) was the only home language of approximately 60% of the interviewees. About 40% of the interviewees declared the use of Romani in parallel to at least some extent. (Hedman 2009: 31–32.) As for other private domains of use, Hedman (2009: 32–33) mentions that the Roma also use Romani outside the home when they meet other Roma, do car and horse business, at marketplaces and shops, and at spiritual meetings. Figures 7–9 compare domains of use.

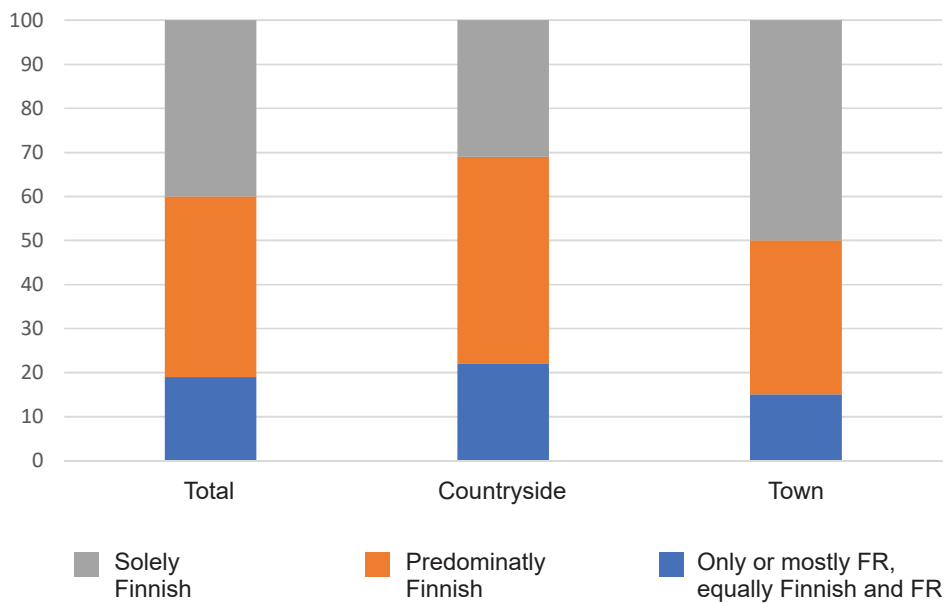


Figure 7. FR as language of conversations (Vehmas 1961)

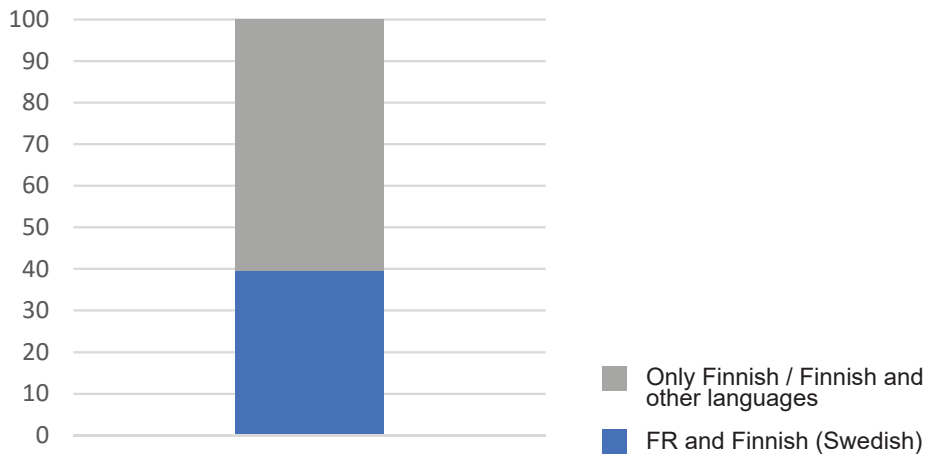


Figure 8. Home languages of the Roma (Hedman 2009)

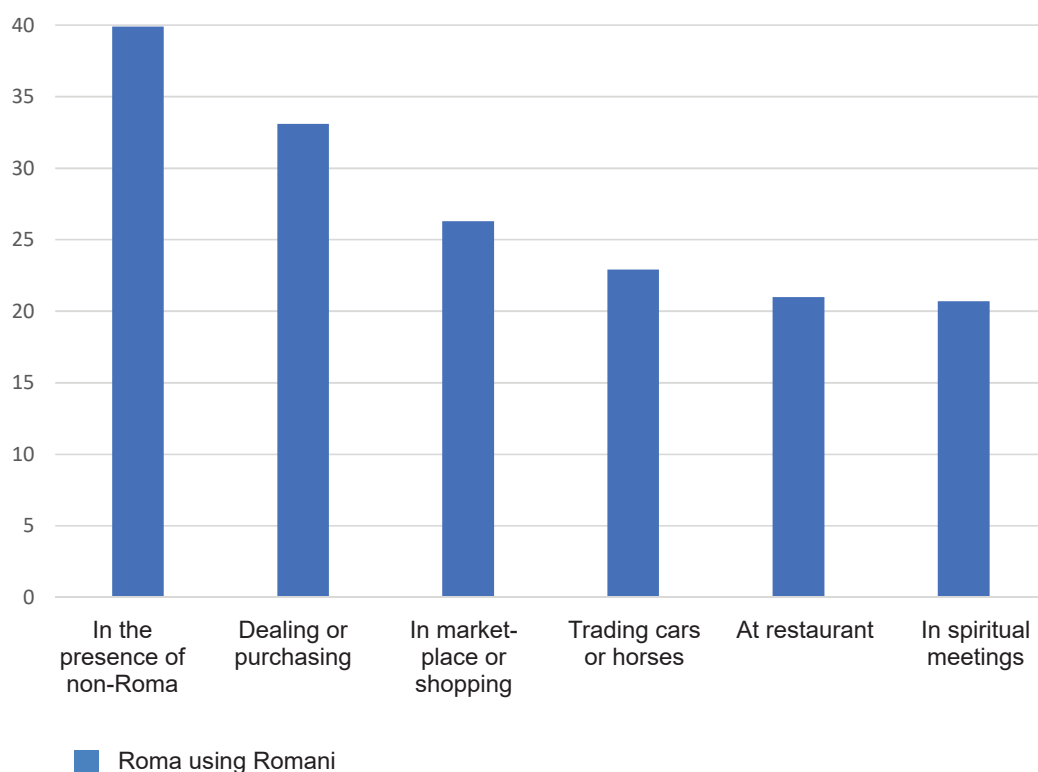


Figure 9. Other private domains of FR (Hedman 2009)

FR started to be used in public domains during the latter half of the 20th century, in school teaching, textbooks and dictionaries, religious circles and, more limitedly, as a language of administration. The attitudes of Roma towards the public use of Romani have been divided, though many Roma welcomed Romani language newspaper and journal articles and books, according to both Helsinki Welfare Office's (1979) and Hedman's (2009: 57–58) surveys. Generally, the attitudes of the Roma have also been positive towards Romani language teaching. In 1979, up to 73.5% of the interviewed Roma supported it, and at the beginning of the 2000s, approximately 80% of the Roma were positively inclined. Negative attitudes were reported among the elderly and the least educated Roma. The elderly Roma who had themselves mastered Romani fluently were not yet in 1979 concerned about the future of the language and believed that Romani was transferred to the next generations naturally without formal school teaching. Some Roma thought that Romani language would be taught by non-Roma at schools and were therefore negatively inclined.

3. Language-internal changes during the 20th century

3.1 Simplification of the case system

Many present-day Romani dialects have a three-layer case system comprising the fusional primary cases nominative and oblique as *layer I*; the agglutinative secondary cases dative, locative, ablative, instrumental and genitive as *layer II*; and the open class of analytical adpositions as *layer III*; outside these layers, many Romani dialects have vocative (Masica 1993; Matras 2002). FR belongs to those Romani dialects that preserve the conservative case inflection, including both primary cases, most of the secondary cases and analytical

adpositions. However, the last traces of the vocative are probably in Oskari Jalkio’s religious texts dating back to the beginning of the 20th century. FR distinguishes between short and long genitive, of which only the short ones show possessions, while the long ones are rather derived nouns and adjectives. The markers of the secondary cases are summarized in Table 2; they have undergone only minor phonological changes in FR, mostly during the 18th–19th centuries, including the elision of final /r/ in the ablative marker *-tar* > *-ta* and the assimilation of the postnasal voiced stop into the preceding nasal (e.g., *mandar* > *manna* [I.OBL.ABL] ‘from me’) and the generalization of *-ha* in instrumental singular as a result of /s/ > /h/ sound change, which is an Early Romani option selection, i.e. an in-situ selection of modern Romani dialects from Early Romani variation.

Table 2. Oblique forms and secondary case markers in FR

	Singular				Plural	
	Masculine		Feminine		Masc./fem.	
	Obl.	Sec. case	Obl.	Sec. case	Obl.	Sec. case
Dative	<i>-es-</i>	<i>-ke</i>	<i>-(j)a-</i>	<i>-ke</i>	<i>-(j)jen-</i>	<i>-ge</i>
Ablative	<i>-es-</i>	<i>-ta</i>	<i>-(j)a-</i>	<i>-ta</i>	<i>-(j)en-</i>	<i>-na</i>
Locative	<i>-es-</i>	<i>-te</i>	<i>-(j)a-</i>	<i>-te</i>	<i>-(j)en-</i>	<i>-ne</i>
Instrumental	<i>-e-</i> , <i>-es-</i>	<i>-ha</i> <i>-sa</i>	<i>-(j)a-</i>	<i>-ha</i>	<i>-(j)en-</i>	<i>-sa</i>
“short” genitive /	<i>-es-</i>	<i>-k-o, -i, -e /</i>	<i>-(j)a-</i>	<i>-k-o, -i, -e /</i>	<i>-(j)e-n-</i>	<i>-g-o, -i, -e /</i>
“long” genitive		<i>-ker-o, -i, -e</i>		<i>-ker-o, -i, -e</i>		<i>-ger-o, -i, -e</i>

Two very important morpho-syntactic developments should be noted. The loss of the locative is still on-going, while the Suffixaufnahme (case stacking) of genitives has been lost. Both are innovations that simplify the language. The locative started to be rare in spoken Romani throughout the 20th century (on locative, see Baló 2021). Valtonen (1968: 166) perceives the loss of the locative as a process that took place between the 19th century and the 1960s and involved idiolectal variation. According to Valtonen (1968: 166), the locative was still in use in the “upper style” as the case of prepositional complements, but in “lower style” independently as prepositions were already being omitted in Jalkio’s times. By the 1960s, the nominative had started to replace the locative in the “lower style”. But the loss of the locative is still not complete; examples can be found of its use, both triggered by prepositions (1a) and independently (1b), in plural sometimes merged with the dative (1c) and genitive (1d). Compare *komu-jen-ne* [people-OBL.PL-DAT] ‘to people’ and *gräij-en-ne* [horse-OBL.PL-GEN] ‘of horses’.

- (1) a. *Maxkar* *men-ne*
among we.OBL-LOC
'Among us'
- b. *Nās* *līn-en-ne* *sēni*
NEG book-OBL.PL-LOC nowhere
'Was not registered anywhere'
- c. *me* *hin* *phen-j-ommas* *tern-e* *komu-jen-ne*
I be.PRS.3SG say-PRET-1PL young-PL people-OBL.PL-DAT
'I have said to young people'
- d. *čer-d-e* *grāij-en-ne* *čyöp-i*
do-PRET-PL horse-OBL.PL-GEN trade-NOM.PL
'(they) did horse trade'

The Romani genitive is a boundary case between derivation and inflection. Similar to Indic languages, it is connected with interpretational dilemmas caused by its adjectival agreement with the head nouns, which distinguishes it from the rest of the case paradigm. In (2a) *kent-os*, is a masculine, so that the modifying genitive *sikjibosko* ends in *-o* like adjectives in masculine, but in (2b) *stranna* is a feminine, so that the genitive *xyönoski* governed by it ends in *-i*. The rest of the examples represent masculine NOM.PL (2c), feminine NOM.PL (2d), OBL.SG (2e) and OBL.PL (2f).

- (2) a. *sikjib-os-k-o* *kent-os*
teaching-OBL.SG-GEN-M.NOM.SG child-NOM.SG
'disciple'
- b. *xyön-os-k-i* *strann-a*
sea-OBL.SG-GEN-F.NOM.SG beach-NOM.SG
'seaside'
- c. *sikjib-os-k-e* *kent-i*
teaching-OBL.SG-GEN-PL child-NOM.PL
'disciples'
- d. *patri-en-g-e* *sāl-a-k-e* *fest-i*
blade-OBL.PL-GEN-NOM.PL hall-OBL.SG-GEN-PL feast-NOM.PL
'Feasts of Tabernacles'
- e. *sikjib-os-k-e* *kent-os-ke*
teaching-OBL.SG-GEN-M.OBL.SG child-OBL.SG-DAT
'to the disciple'
- f. *sikjib-os-k-e* *kent-en-ge*
teaching-OBL.SG-GEN-PL child-OBL.PL-DAT
'to the disciples'

The status of the Romani genitive has been controversial because of its adjectival agreement. Pott (1844–1845) speaks about the “so-called genitive” (*sogenannter Genitiv*). Likewise, Sampson (1926: 85) points out that, in line with many modern Indic languages, Romani lacks a true genitive, but instead has adjectives that agree with their head nouns in gender, number and primary cases (nominative or oblique). The genitives could be thus regarded as mixed categories (Haspelmath 1996). Some scholars see the genitive as a secondary case and interpret the adjectival agreement as a result of Suffixaufnahme. Moravcsik (1995: 452) defines Suffixaufnahme as: “a pattern, where an attributive nominal carries two distinct case markers: one appropriate to its own function as an attributive, and the other appropriate to the function of the NP that includes both the attributive and the head” (see also Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2000).

The Suffixaufnahme was regular until the mid-1900s but has de facto disappeared from modern FR. Valtonen (1968: 163) pointed out as early as the 1960s that the genitives used to generally agree with their head nouns in gender and number, but at that time usually in number only. During the latter half of the 20th century, differences between idiolects were significant, and this was also reflected in written Romani. Whereas the genitives showed almost regular gender, number and case agreement with their head nouns in the manuscripts by Peltosalmi and Temo (in the 1970s), no more than one-fourth of the genitives showed gender agreement in Koivisto’s (1994) dictionary, and number agreement was completely lost. Figure (10) compares the endings of the Genitives that modify feminine singular nouns in written sources from different eras. The data include Kemell’s and Reinholm’s lemmas in Thesleff’s (1901) dictionary; Thesleff’s (1901) own lemmas; Jalkio’s journal articles and religious songs; the lemmas extracted from vocabularies by Kronqvist, and Peltosalmi and Temo; and Koivisto’s (1994) lemmas. Figure (11) compares the endings of genitives that modify the plural forms of nouns in the same sources except Kronqvist.² *-e* and *-i* vary as feminine singular endings, while plural forms of genitives also end in *-e* and *-i*.

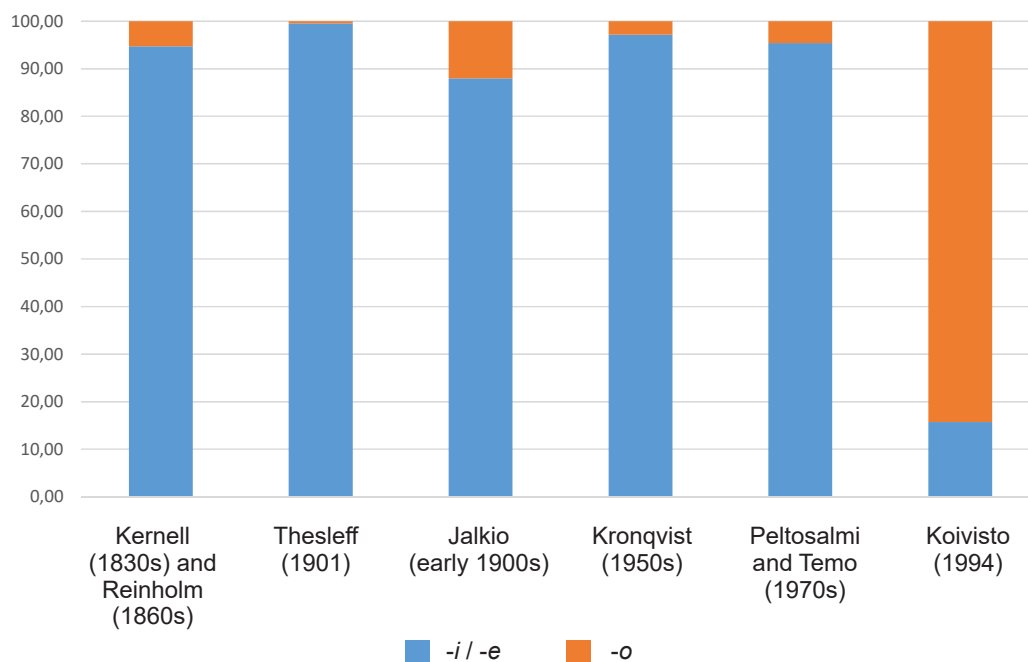


Figure 10. Suffixaufnahme in written Romani 1860s–1994, genitives modifying feminine nouns

² Kronqvist’s data contain no relevant examples.

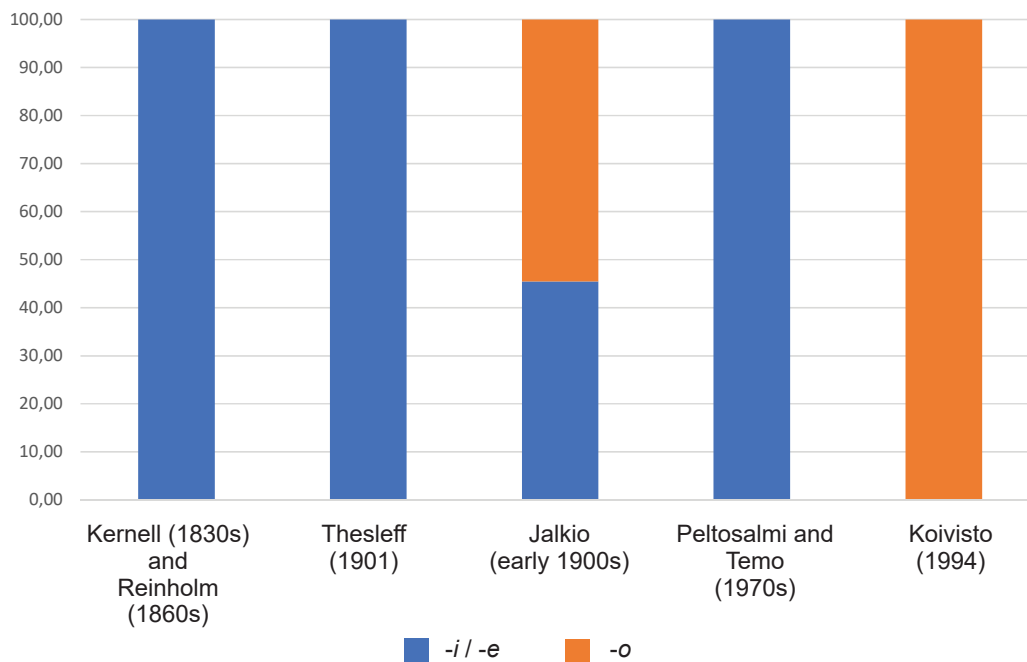


Figure 11. Suffixaufnahme in written Romani 1860s–1994, genitives modifying plural nouns

The loss of Suffixaufnahme in FR has resulted in an important typological change, causing the genitive to become a “true” case, encoded by the fossilized monomorphemic suffix *-ko*, cf. *daij-es-ko phāl* [mother-OBL.SG-GEN brother(.M)] ‘mother’s brother’, *lesko phēn* [he.GEN sister(.F)] ‘his brother’, *bib-ja-ko čāv-e* [aunt-OBL.SG-GEN son-NOM.PL] ‘aunt’s son’, in which the suffix showing adjectival agreement has become decategorialized and reanalyzed as part of the genitive marker. Thus, the genitive became morphologically analogical to the rest of the secondary cases.

3.2 Simplification of the noun classes

Signs of analogical levelling of nominal classes have been visible since the latter half of the 19th century, when the most prominent tendencies of intraparadigmatic levelling were formed: the collapse of athematic morphology and the expansion of the thematic *-o*-masculine paradigm. Similar tendencies have been attested in German Sinti and Welsh Romani (Elšik 2000: 23–24; Matras 2002: 84). In FR, the earliest examples of these tendencies are in Reinholm’s (1860) extensive notes on Finnish Romani dating back to the 1860s: *kouv-a-tar* > *kouv-es-ta* [quarrel-OBL.SG-ABL] ‘from the quarrel’ and *čibb-a* > *čibb-e* [language-NOM.PL] ‘languages’ and *dju-ja* > *dju-je* [woman-NOM.PL] ‘women’. In Jalkio’s data from the beginning of the 20th century, the analogical levelling of nominal classes was extensive and manifested itself primarily as the expansion of thematic formants into athematic nouns, e.g., in OBL.SG *-os*, *-is* > *-es*: *lyön-os-tar* > *lyön-es-tä* [salary-OBL.SG-ABL] ‘from the salary’, *onn-os-k-o* > *onn-es-k-o* [spirit-OBL.SG-GEN-M.SG] ‘of the spirit’, *komun-is* > *komun-es* [human_being-OBL.SG] ‘person’; in NOM.PL *-i* > *-e*: *gong-i* > *gong-e* [time-NOM.PL] ‘times’, *kent-i* > *kent-e* [child-NOM.PL] ‘children’, *ōsn-i* > *oosn-e* [donkey-NOM.PL] ‘donkeys’, *valgōs-i* > *valgoos-e* [shepherd-NOM.PL] ‘shepherds’. In NOM.PL, the suffixes *-e* substituted also the suffixes *-a* of thematic nouns, e.g., *māl-a* > *maal-e* [friend-NOM.PL] ‘friends’, *thān-a* > *thaan-e* [place-NOM.PL]

‘places’ (but *dabb-a* [wound-NOM.PL] ‘wounds’, *vast-a* [hand-NOM.PL] ‘hands’). FR still retained distinct OBL.SG forms for both genders, but there were some exceptions such as *hārni-ja-k-o* > *häärn-es-k-o* [star-NOM.SG-GEN-M.SG] ‘of the star’, *rigg-a-tar* > *rigg-es-ta* [side-OBL.SG-ABL] ‘from the side’.

The analogical levelling of nominal classes became more widespread and diversified during the second half of the 20th century. All tendencies that had begun during the 19th century continued and intensified; new tendencies emerged. Figure 12 illustrates some tendencies of analogical levelling of nominal classes based on religious texts. As a new tendency, the suffix *-a-* of OBL.SG of athematic feminine nouns also began to substitute for *-os-* in abstract nouns, e.g. *bolib-os-* > *bolib-a-* [world-OBL.SG] (cf. *skool-a-* [school-NOM/OBL.SG]). Thus, *-os-* replacing the suppletive suffix *-mas-* became itself an intermediate stage of the historical development of abstract noun inflection.

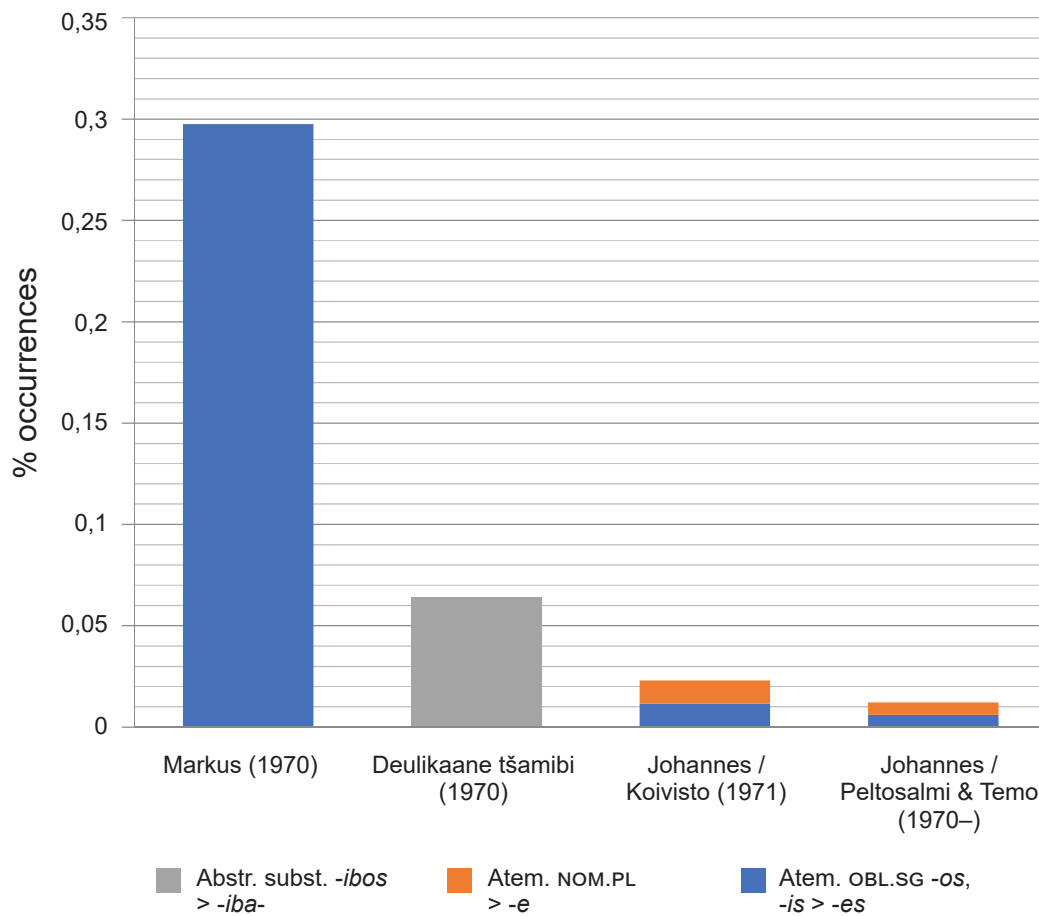


Figure 12. Tendencies of analogical levelling of nominal classes in religious texts (Granqvist 2012)

In modern spoken FR, the spread of certain nominal suffixes and the disappearance of others has resulted in a large number of new paradigms. Granqvist (2007: 369–371) documents 31 new nominal paradigms. Most of the changes affecting the nominal classes can be perceived as a result of four tendencies of change and their combined effects; all these tendencies involve the relations between oblique and nominative plural markers with the highest frequencies of use (Figure 13).

<p>1) Expansion of the suffix <i>-es-</i> (OBL.SG, thematic masculines):</p> <p>Abstr. nouns. <i>phūrib-os-</i> ‘old.age-OBL.SG’</p> <p>Them. fem. -<i>ø</i>, -<i>i</i> → <i>čimb-a</i> ‘language-OBL.SG’ <i>phen-ja</i> ‘sister-OBL.SG’ <i>džū-ja</i> ‘woman-OBL.SG’</p> <p>Athem. masc. -<i>os</i>, -<i>is</i> → <i>fōr-os</i> ‘town-OBL.SG’ <i>komun-is</i> ‘person-OBL.SG’</p> <p>Athem. fem. -<i>a</i> → <i>fasun-a</i> ‘train-OBL.SG’</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-left: 150px;"> <p>-es</p> <p><i>phūrib-es-</i> <i>čimb-es</i> <i>phēn-es</i> <i>džū-jes</i> <i>fōr-es</i> <i>komun-es</i> <i>fasun-es</i></p> </div>	<p>2) Expansion of the suffix <i>-e-</i> (NOM.PL, thematic masculines):</p> <p>Them. masc. -<i>ø</i> → <i>romm-a</i> ‘Rom-NOM.PL’ <i>kaxt-ø</i> ‘tree-NOM.PL’</p> <p>Them. fem. -<i>ø</i>, -<i>i</i> → <i>čimb-a</i> ‘language-NOM.PL’ <i>džū-ja</i> ‘woman-NOM.PL’ <i>da-ija</i> ‘mother-NOM.PL’ <i>ča-ija</i> ‘girl-NOM.PL’</p> <p>Athem. masc. -<i>os</i>, -<i>is</i> → <i>fōr-i</i> ‘town-NOM.PL’ <i>komu-ja</i> ‘people-NOM.PL’</p> <p>Athem. fem. -<i>a</i> → <i>čoxx-i</i> ‘skirt-NOM.PL’</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-left: 150px;"> <p>-e</p> <p><i>romm-e</i> <i>kaxt-e</i> <i>čimb-e</i> <i>džū-je</i> <i>da-ije</i> <i>ča-ije</i> <i>fōr-e</i> <i>komuj-e</i> <i>čoxx-e</i></p> </div>
<p>3) Expansion of the suffix <i>-en-</i> (OBL.PL):</p> <p>Them. masc. -<i>ø</i> → <i>vūdar-jen</i> ‘door-OBL.PL’</p> <p>Abstr. nouns → <i>džambib-on-</i> ‘song-OBL.PL’</p> <p>Them. fem. -<i>ø</i>, -<i>i</i> → <i>phen-jen</i> ‘sister-OBL.PL’ <i>khangar-jen</i> ‘church-OBL.PL’</p> <p>Athem. masc. -<i>is</i> → <i>komu-jen</i> ‘people-OBL.PL’</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-left: 150px;"> <p>-en</p> <p><i>vūdar-en</i> <i>džambib-en-</i> <i>phēn-en</i> <i>khangar-en</i> <i>komun-en</i></p> </div>	<p>4) Expansion of the suffix <i>-a-</i> (NOM.SG / OBL.SG, athe-matic feminines):</p> <p>Abstr. nouns → <i>bolib-os-</i> ‘world-OBL.SG’</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-left: 150px;"> <p>-a-</p> <p><i>bolib-a</i></p> </div>

Figure 13. Primary tendencies of analogical leveling of nominal paradigms

3.3 Simplification of verb derivation

Derived verbs constitute two main groups in FR: transitives and intransitives. It is common to FR and Sinti that the derivative morpheme modifies valence and adapts loan verbs. Unlike Northeastern Romani dialects, there are no separate loan verb markers such as *-in-*, e.g. *dum-in-* ‘think’. The derivational morphology of verbs in FR has undergone different tendencies of change, resulting in a decreased number of verb classes (Pirttisaari 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005). At the 20th century, only three verb classes remained productive: the primary verbs (1/10 of Koivisto’s verb lemmas), transitives derived in *-av-* (2/3 of verb lemmas) and intransitives in *-uv-* (1/4 of verb lemmas) (Valtonen 1968: 127–129; manuscript.; Granqvist 2002, 2005, 2007: 285; Pirttisaari 2003).

a) Changes in primary verbs

Primary verbs constitute a volatile class. Already in Sinti, a significant part of inherited primary verbs had moved to the classes of derived transitives: *bikin-* ‘sell’ > *bikin-*, *bikr-*, *bikerv-*; *inger-* ‘carry’ > *ligêrv-*, *ligêr-*; *inker* ‘hold’ > *rikêrv-*, *riker-*, *rik-*; *xaç-* ‘burn’ >

xačêr-, *xačêrv-*; *vraker-* ‘speak’ > *rakêr-*, *rakêrv-* (Sinti forms Romlex), and they are FR formed in *-av-*: *biknav-*, *(r)igav-*, *(r)ikkav-*, *xačav-* and *rakkav-*. More primary verbs have moved to transitives as a result of developments in FR. In modern FR, for instance *phord-* ‘blow’ ~ *phordav-*, *stāv-* ‘walk’ ~ *stāvav-*, *sterd-* ‘pull’ ~ *sterdav-* vary (Pirttisaari 2002: 511).

b) Changes in transitives

Many derivative suffixes that form transitives have lost their productivity in favor of *-av-*. In FR, the set of historical derivative suffixes forming transitives comprised *-av-*, *-ev-*, *-iv-*, *-arv-*, *-erv-* and *-alv-*. The suffix *-av-/ev-*³ cognate with Western Sinti (Barbara Schrammel-Leber, p.c. August 29, 2015) remained productive in FR as *-av-* (and *-äv-* as a result of suffix harmony); only a few traces of *-ev-* are found in language documents, and *-iv-* occurs sporadically. *-av-* is found in all FR documents since Ganander (1780), e.g., *drabaw-a* [read-PRS.1SG] ‘I read’ (Ganander, *drabav-es* [read-PRS.2SG] ‘you read’. *anjav-* ‘bathe’, *garav-* ‘hide’, *rakkav-* ‘speak’, *praatav-* ‘babble’, *undrav-* ‘wonder’.

The suffixes *-ar-/arv-/er-/erv* cognate to Eastern Sinti (Barbara Schrammel-Leber, p.c. August 29, 2015) began to pass by early. Ganander (1780) had the syncopated form *aker-av-a* > *akr-aw-ān* [speak-PRS.1SG-FUT/1SG] ‘I speak’, from which initial *r-* was then elided as a result of an FR own innovation. Reinholm (1860s) had *akker-av-a* [speak-PRS.1SG-FUT] ‘I speak’. Thesleff (1901) and Jalkio still retained *čingarv-* ‘hurt’, *čungarv-* ~ *čungerv-* ‘spit’, *igerv-* ‘carry’ and *phagarv-* ~ *phagerv-* ‘break’; Kronqvist (1950s) only had *čingarv-* ‘hurt’; Peltosalmi and Temo (1970s) no longer contained forms in *-arv-* and *-erv-*; *čingrav-*, *čungrav-*, *(r)igav-* and *phagav-* were used instead. The suffix *-alv-* is limited to verbs derived from nouns and secondary adjectives, e.g., *džōr* ‘strength’ > *džorjalv-* ‘strengthen’, *bar* ‘mark’ > *barvalo* ‘rich’ > *barvalv-* ‘enrich’.

c) Changes in intransitives

FR has retained the class of derived intransitives, unlike Sinti. Mainly denominal and deadjectival verbs are derived using the suffixes *-uv-/ov-*. Unlike in many other Romani dialects, there is no synthetic passive (Sampson 1926: 214). In addition, FR lacks productive means to form deverbal intransitives, while there are some verb pairs such as *naxx-* ‘lose’ – *naxuv-* ‘escape’, *stār-* ‘fish’ – *starjuv-* ‘hook’, *traxx-* ‘fear’ – *traxuv-* ‘scare’, *xunn-* ‘hear’ – *xunjuv-* ‘be heard’. Historically, intransitives have been formed in FR by means of three suffixes *-uv-* (*-ov-*, also *-yv-*, *-öv-* as a result of vowel harmony), *-urv-* and *-ulv-*. Currently only *-uv-* is productive⁴; *-urv-* and *-ulv-* are analogical with *-arv-* and *-alv-* and have mostly been replaced by *-uv-*. As a new tendency, intransitives and transitives have begun to merge, e.g., *byrjuv-* ~ *byrjav-* ‘begin’, *orkuv-* ~ *orkav-* ‘endure’, *vandruv-* ~ *vandrav-* ‘wander’.

3.4 Syncretism in person inflections

The person inflections of verbs have manifested tendencies of analogical leveling both as language-internal and contact-induced change. In the indicative and conditional, present tense singular 1st and 2nd persons tend to be syncretic, (3a), e.g. *me rakkavā* ‘I speak’,

³ Holzinger (1993: 108) only mentions this causative marker.

⁴ The vowels of the intransitive marker show variation *-o- ~ -u-*, due to vowel harmony also *-o- ~ -ö-*, *-u- ~ -y-*, e.g., *hajov-* ~ *hajuv-* ‘understand’, *yltov-* ~ *yltöv-* ‘reach’ (Thesleff 1901), *byrjuv-* ~ *byrjyv-* ‘begin’. *-o-*-forms occur frequently in the speech of the Ostrobothnian Roma (Henry Hedman, p.c. March 14, 2003).

vs. *tu rakkavā* ‘you speak’. The earlier evidence of this only dates back to the latter half of the 20th century. Due to contact with Finnish, the 3rd person plural is often syncretic with the 3rd person singular (3b), e.g. *jou čērela* ‘he does’ vs. *jōn čērela* ‘they do’; this is an old tendency in FR. More arbitrarily, inflectional homonymy is attested on the 2nd person singular and the 1st person plural (3c), *tu rakkaveha* ‘you speak’ vs. *ame rakkaveha* ‘we speak’.

(3)	a.	SG	PL	b.	SG	PL	c.	SG	PL
	1		<i>-ah-</i>	1	<i>-a-</i>	<i>-ah-</i>	1	<i>-a</i>	<i>-eh-</i>
	2	<i>-a-</i>	<i>-en-</i>	2	<i>-eh-</i>	<i>-en-</i>	2	<i>-eh-</i>	
	3	<i>-el-</i>		3		<i>-el-</i>	3	<i>-el-</i>	<i>-en-</i>

3.5 New infinitive

In modern FR, the indicative and subjunctive are primarily distinguished from each other by the presence of the future marker *-a* in the indicative, e.g. *rakkav-el-a* [speak-PRS.3SG-FUT/IND] ‘he/she speaks’ and its absence in the subjunctive *rakkav-el* [speak-PRS.3SG] ‘he/she speaks’. In addition, the person inflections of indicative and subjunctive started differentiating from each other during the latter half of the 20th century. The first step of the simplification of person inflection was the loss of the separate first-person plural marker *-as* in the subjunctive even from the most conservative idiolects by the 1970s–1980s, but from a majority of idiolects much earlier. As a result, the suffixes *-en/-n* were extended to the entire plural. See example (4a). The paradigm of the subjunctive was further simplified during the latter half of the 20th century. In many idiolects, the third person singular suffix *-el/-l-* was generalized to the entire singular (occasionally though, the second person singular suffix *-es/-s*) (4b). The last example (4c) represents the so-called “new infinitive” (Elšík & Matras 2006: 127–130), in which person inflection of modal finite verb complements have been reduced to the point that the third person singular suffix has been generalized into the entire paradigm (cf. Brandt-Taskinen 2001: 56–57). However, the new infinitive does not occur in any written sources of FR, but first in spoken FR data recorded at the end of the 20th century, and rarely even then. The new infinitive has been documented in some other European Romani dialects as well (Boretzky 1996; Matras 2002: 161). Also in these, the third person singular functions as infinitive, sometimes second or third person plural (Boretzky 1996; Matras 2002: 161).⁵

(4)	a.	SG	PL	b.	SG	PL	c.	SG	PL
	1	<i>-a</i>		1			1		
	2	<i>-es/-s</i>	<i>-en/</i>	2	<i>-el/-l</i>	<i>-en/</i>	2		<i>-el/</i>
	3	<i>-el/-l</i>	<i>-n</i>	3		<i>-n</i>	3		<i>-l</i>

Another set of phenomena distinguishing indicative and subjunctive are contractions limited to indicative only⁶ and new kinds of systematic homonymy that emerged in indicative inflections. In Jalkio’s data in particular, the plural suffixes *-ēn-a/-en-a-*

⁵ Cech & Heinschink (2001) mention in Slovenian and Istrian Dolenjski Roma another type of infinitives in *-i*, e.g., *vakeri* ‘speak’.

⁶ Jalkio has one contracted subjunctive form: *kamm-en-a te būro-n* [want-PRS.3P-IND COMPL live-PRS.3PL] ‘want to live’.

were extended to the third person singular, e.g., *do-uva na hyöv-en-a* [it-NOM.SG NEG need-PRS.3P-IND] ‘it is not needed’, *v-en-a rōligib-a* [come-PRS.3P-IND peace-NOM.SG] ‘peace will come’.

The complementizer *te* used to be obligatory until the beginning of the 1900s (e.g., *Me chamm-a tej cha-w* [I want-PRS.1SG COMPL eat-PRS.1SG] ‘I want to eat’ (Ganander), *fedde hin te d-el sar te l-en* [better is COMPL give-PRS.3SG than COMPL get-3SG] ‘it’s better to give than to get’ (Reinholm), but became optional or was lost by the mid-1950s, e.g., *v-ēl-a fārdav-el* [come-PRS.3SG-IND travel-PRS.3SG] ‘will travel’ (Valtonen), *ame l-ah-as d-en svaariba* [we get-PRS.1PL-COND give-PL answer] ‘we would be allowed to give an answer’ (Koivisto).

4. Contact-induced changes

The earlier contact influences of German, Danish, and Swedish are visible in FR, predominantly in lexical domains and to a limited extent in phonology (the vowels /ü, ø, æ/ borrowed with Germanic loanwords, the ties of stress and quantity; Prokosch’s law (Venneman 1988)). However, by the end of the 19th century, the Roma had already forgotten their active knowledge of Swedish (Thesleff 1899) and even earlier, their knowledge of German. Their contact with Swedish was re-established as a result of subsequent migration of many Roma to Sweden since the 1960s; however, this has triggered no visible late influences on FR. The sole close contact language of FR thus remained Finnish.

Finnish lexical items have been borrowed since early times. Ganander’s essay (1780) contained a few Finnish loan words, and a more significant number of Finnish borrowings are in Reinholm’s notes and other 19th-century sources. Despite its early onset, there has only been limited lexical transfer from Finnish. This might be attributed to the secret language functions of FR, or to the linguistic dominance of Finnish among the Roma since the 19th century and subsequent preference for codeswitching over loan adaptation as a strategy to fill lexical gaps. Written sources of FR from the late 18th and 19th century suggest that most of the transfer of Finnish phonological principles and rules had already taken place or were productive by the end of the 19th century: this includes the polarization of voiced stops into voiceless, long vowel diphthongization, vowel harmony and svarabhakti vowels (Granqvist 2013b). The simplification of initial consonant clusters is probably the only phonological change triggered by contact with Finnish that is first documented after the 1950s, e.g. /stranna/ > [ran:a] ‘strand’, /drann-/ > [ran:-] ‘bite’; for a comprehensive treatment of the phenomenon, see Granqvist (2007: 194). Finnish has had a profound influence on the syntax of FR, as word order and many morpho-syntactic patterns tend to be copied from Finnish (Granqvist 2014b). In this article, the discussion on contact-induced changes will concentrate on morphological borrowing in FR (Granqvist 2014b).

4.1 Pattern Replication

I have divided the discussion on morphological borrowing in two main sections following the sub-division by Matras & Sakel (2007) into *pattern replication* and *matter replication*; the subdivision is illustrated in Figure 14. Pattern replication refers to the borrowing of morpho-syntactic patterns and replicating using Romani’s own resources,

e.g., morphemes that are inherited from Indo-Aryan or belong to later layers of historical contact languages, such as Byzantine Greek, Slavonic languages, Hungarian, Middle Low German, Middle High German, Danish, Late Old Swedish or Swedish. Heath (1984: 367) speaks about “pattern transfer”. Pattern replication is extremely frequent in FR: it has resulted in morpho-syntactic patterns that constitute obligatory parts of the structure of FR. Early 19th century (documented in 1817–1830s) tendencies of pattern replication involved the development of case-licensing principles in FR and Finnish-like passive constructions after the collapse of the conservative analytical passive found in most European Romani dialects. Matter replication refers to borrowing of Finnish morphological markers into Romani. It is predominantly late and rare. Interestingly, and against the universal constraints of morphological borrowing, inflectional morphemes in FR are more prone to borrowing from Finnish than derivational ones; this will be discussed in Section 4.2.

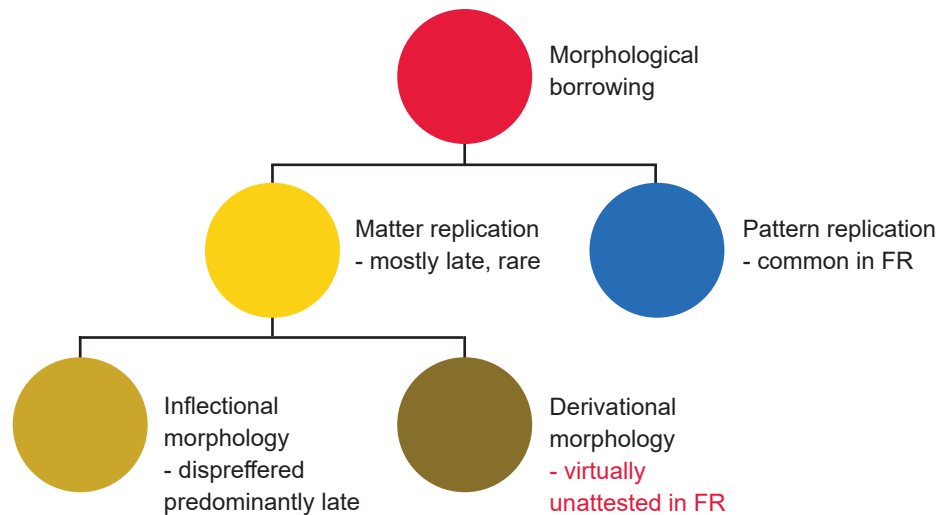


Figure 14. Typology of morphological borrowing in FR (cf. Matras 2007)

As examples of pattern replication, I will briefly discuss in the following sections 1) the loss of definite articles, 2) the typological change of FR into a postposition language and the development of ambipositions similar to those in Finnish, and 3) the development of the analytical past tenses perfect and pluperfect and the analytical future. The first signs of all three phenomena discussed here date back to the 19th century, but most of the significant developments took place during the 20th century.

4.1.1 Loss of definite articles

FR had a category of prenominal definite articles that resembled the articles in Sinti as well as the reconstructed articles of Northeastern Romani (Table 3). The masculine nominative singular form was *o*; in feminine nominative singular, two forms competed: *e* similar to Northeastern Romani and *i* similar to Sinti, e.g., *e vae* ‘the girl’, *e touverissa* ‘the ax’ (Reinh. = Henrik August Reinholm’s notes), *ibibi* ‘the aunt’, *ijak* ‘the eye’ (Gan.). In nominative plural, *o* and *i* similar to Northeastern Romani and Sinti were in free variation, e.g. *o gaje* ‘the non-Roma’, *i buttia* ‘the jobs’ (Reinh.), *e* was used in all forms of oblique, e.g. *e gresta* ‘from the horse’, *e vaejinge* ‘to girls’ (Reinh.).

Table 3. Forms of definite article

		Finnish Romani (Reinholm)		Sinti (Holzinger 1993: 46)		NE dialects (reconstruction Boretzky 2000; ref. Tenser 2009: 110)	
		Nominative	Oblique	Nominative	Oblique	Nominative	Oblique
Sg.	Masc.	<i>o</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>O</i>	<i>e</i>
	Fem.	<i>e ~ i</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>e</i>
Pl.		<i>o ~ i</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>O</i>	<i>e</i>

While the first signs of the decay of the definite articles were visible in the written sources from the latter half of the 19th century, definite articles were already virtually lost by the first half of the 20th century, except for prepositions.⁷ In Jalkio's materials (early 1900s), remnants of articles occurred with prepositions, e.g., (masc. *o*): *ar-o onnos* [in-ART.M.SG spirit-NOM.SG] 'in the spirit', *ar-o deul-en-ne* [in-ART.M.PL heaven-OBL.PL.LOC] 'in the heavens'; (fem. *i*): *ap-i himl-a* [on-ART.F.SG sky-NOM.SG] 'in the heaven'; (plural *e*): *kaj-e pes-k-e sikjiboskekent-en* [near-ART.PL REFL.OBL.SG-GEN-PL disciple-OBL.PL] 'near his disciples', *naal-e komu-ja* [in.front.of-ART.PL people-NOM.PL] 'in front of the people'. Ariste's slightly later materials (ca. 1940s) were characterized by a masculine takeover: the feminine and plural forms of articles were lost even with prepositions: e.g. *aro butt-i* [in-ART.M.SG work-NOM.SG] 'at work', *ar-o xlitt-a* [in-ART.M.SG sleigh-NOM.SG(F)] 'in the sleigh', *ar-o tšheer-en-ne* [in-ART.M.SG house-OBL.PL.LOC] 'in the houses', *ap-o phuu-ja* [on-ART.M.SG countryside-NOM.PL] 'in the country-side'.

A similar kind of decay and loss of definite articles has also taken place in North Russian, Baltic and Polish Northeastern Romani dialects, triggered by contact with the articleless Slavonic languages Polish and Russian. (Matras 1999: 9–10; Boretzky 2000: 34; Wentzel 1964; Tenser 2005; see also Baló & Bodnárová 2023 on masculine takeover and the weakening of gender opposition on Romani in Hungary). According to Tenser (2008: 110), definite articles have been completely lost in Latvian Fandari and Pškov Xaladytka, both belonging to the so-called Belarus sub-group of Northeastern Romani dialects, and in Lotfitka and Estonian Romani, both belonging to the so-called Latvian sub-group of Northeastern Romani dialects. Of the Northeastern dialects, only Russian and Polish Xaladytka and Ukrainian Ghympeny retain definite articles (Tenser 2008: 112). In some of the Northeastern Romani dialects, bound remnants of articles are retained with prepositions as in FR during the first half of the 20th century, e.g. *and-o kher* [in-ART.M.SG house(M)] 'in the house', *and-e fabryk-a* [in-ART.F.SG factory-NOM.SG] 'in the factory', *pal-e man* [near-OBL.I.OBL] 'near me' (Tenser 2008: 110). A simultaneous development with the decay of definite articles was, in FR, the weakening of the gender opposition in nouns.

⁷ The sole exception in Jalkio's data: *tserav-el i khangar-i sonak-es-ta* [do-PRS.3SG ART church-NOM.SG gold-OBL.SG-DAT] 'to make a church out of gold'. Actually, the idiolects show a significant amount of variation. Even at the end of the 1980s, definite articles were in use to a limited extent by some Roma.

4.1.2 Change into a postposition language and development of ambipositions

Finnish Romani has undergone an important typological change from a preposition language into a (mainly) postposition / ambiposition language. The old spatial / temporal prepositions remained in use in FR until the beginning of the 20th century and sporadically in conservative idiolects, at least until the 1970s, e.g., *angla mange* ‘in front of me’, *naāli puorta* ‘in front of the gate’, *pach taffla* ‘at the table’, *prāli kuorma* ‘on the carriage’ (Reinh.); *pālo pāluno* ‘afternoon’, *teli falda* ‘dependent, subordinate’ (Thesl.); *maḥkar penne* ‘among them’, *naalo maan* ‘in front of me’, *paali čyöpibosko taffla* ‘behind the sales desk’, *praalo phuu* ‘on Earth’, *trystalo boliba* ‘around the world’, etc. (Jalk.). Valtonen (1968: 167) lists the prepositions *anglo* ‘in front of, before’, *nālo* ‘in front of, before’, *paxo* ‘near’ and *prālo* ‘on(to)’. Even in the translation of John’s Gospel to Romani by Peltosalmi and Temo, examples such as *angla leste* ‘in front of him’ are attested, but in free variation with postposition phrases.

The first documents of postpositions assigning genitive, replicating the Finnish pattern, are in Reinholm’s notes; in *uaki ēstā* ‘for the girl’, the Finnish postposition *ēstā* (< Finnish *edestä* ‘from the front’) is preceded by the genitive *u-a-k-i* [girl.OBL.SG-GEN-F.NOM.SG] ‘for the girl’s sake’. The use of postpositions was generalized by Ariste’s times (1930s–1940s): there are plenty of examples of pattern replication, such as: *komu-jen-go maxkar* [people-OBL.PL-GEN among] ‘among people’, *tukko nālal* [you.GEN in.front.of] ‘in front of you’, *kuti tī-a-ko pālal* [little time-OBL.SG-GEN after] ‘after a little time’, *lesko trystal* [he.GEN around] ‘around him’, *vondr-os-ko tēlal* [bed-OBL.SG-GEN under] ‘under the bed’.

Furthermore replicating the Finnish pattern, the apdositions *džinom* ~ *ḍženom* ‘through’, *maxkar* ‘among’, *nāl* ‘in front of; before’, *nēr* ‘near’, *perdal* ‘by’, *prāl* ‘on(to)’ and *trystal(o)* ‘around’ have been developed into ambipositions having their complements in the genitive as postpositions and in the nominative or oblique as preposition, e.g., *bolib-os-ko trystal* [world-OBL.SG-GEN around] ‘(in a circle) around the world’ and *trystalo bolib-a* [around world-NOM.SG] ‘around the world’; thus the different cases of complements give the PPs different meanings: in *bolib-os-ko trystal* ‘around’ has to be understood very literally as a circle with the world as its centre, while in *trystalo bolib-a* ‘around’ is a vague region. The distinction in boundedness is similar to Finnish (Hakulinen et al. 2004: § 1498).

The only words that function solely as prepositions are *aro* ‘in(to)’, *apo* ‘on(to)’ and *kajo* ‘towards’, which are historically but not synchronically bimorphemic, consisting of the preposition itself and a remnant of a definite article (e.g. *ap o*, *ap i*, *ar e* etc.).

4.1.3 Analytical tenses

Due to the great restructuring of the verb morphology in FR (18th–19th centuries, e.g. Granqvist 2012, 2013a, 2013b), involving the collapse of the morphological aspect and the merger of the preterit and the pluperfect, FR was left with a single past tense, which morphosemantically covered the functions of the imperfect, preterit and pluperfect and also corresponded to the Finnish perfect. This is illustrated by Examples (5a–c), taken from Reinholm’s materials and translated based on Reinholm’s glosses in Swedish.

(5) a. preterit/imperfect:

me *dján-id-om(-)as*
 I know-RET-1SG(-REM)
 ‘I knew’

b. perfect:

Me *presa-d-omm(-)as* *bút.*
 I pay-RET-1SG(-REM) a_lot
 ‘I have paid a lot’

c. pluperfect:

P-ies *p-es-k-i* *vett-a.*
 drink-3SG REEL-OBL.SG-GEN-F.NOM.SG sanity-NOM.SG
 ‘He drank away his sanity.’

The past tense system was complemented with an analytical Perfect and Pluperfect by the end of the 19th century. The pattern was replicated from Finnish forms consisting of olla ‘to be’ and a participle (*ole-n puhu-nut* [be-PRS.1SG speak-PTCP] ‘I have spoken’, *ol-i-tte puhu-neet* [be-PST-2PL speak-PTCP] ‘you had spoken’). Thesleff’s song texts (approx. the 1890s) were the first data containing the new phrasal verbs, which consisted of the auxiliary *s-/h-* ‘to be’ and an athematic participle of the matrix verbs, as in (6). However, such analytic tenses first became frequently used in the materials dating back to the beginning of the 20th century.

(6) *Voj* *s-am* *han-ime* *ta* *lis-ime.*
 oh be-PRS.1PL miss-ATHEM.PTCP and suffer-ATHEM.PTCP
 ‘Oh, we have missed and suffered.’

In Jalkio’s materials, two types of constructions competed, one with an athematic and one with a thematic participle of the matrix verb, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Types of analytical past tenses in Oskari Jalkio’s materials

	<i>s-/h-</i> + ATEM.PTCP		<i>s-/h-</i> + TEM.PTCP	
PERFECT	<i>s-om</i> be-PRS.1SG	<i>āh-imen</i> be-ATHEM.PTCP	(no examples)	
	‘I have been’			
	<i>hin</i> be.PRS.3SG	<i>par-imen</i> change-ATHEM.PTCP		
	‘has been changed’			
PLUPERFECT	<i>s-omm-as</i> be-1SG-REM	<i>tryst-imen</i> go.around-ATHEM.PTCP	<i>s-as</i> be-RET.3SG	<i>au-l-o</i> come-RET-M.SG
	‘I had travelled around’		‘(he) had come’	
	<i>s-as</i> be-RET.3SG	<i>rakk-imen</i> speak-ATHEM.PTCP	<i>s-as</i> be-RET.3PL	<i>trād-id-e</i> drive-RET.-PL
	‘I had spoken’		‘(they) had driven’	

The opposition of diathesis was neutralized in Jalkio's perfect and pluperfect, because Romani participles can be both active and passive. Examples (7a–b) are in active and (7c) in passive. The passive was distinguished from the active form by the lack of an explicit subject, as in Finnish passive constructions (on Finnish, see Hakulinen et al. 2004: 1254–1255). However in Finnish, the implicit subject is plural, e.g., *Ennen oltiin vähään tyytyväisiä* [before be.PASS.IMPF little.ILL satisfied.PART.PL] 'Before we used to be satisfied with little' but in FR, the implicit subject was singular, as indicated by the participle *phello* (Hakulinen et al. 2004: 1256).

- (7) a. *s-om* *drab-imen*
 be-PRS.1SG read-ATHEM.PTCP
 'i have read'
- b. *Dād* *s-as* *d-īl-o.*
 father be-PRET.3SG give-PRET-M.SG
 'the father had given.'
- c. *so* *s-as* *phel-l-o* *len-ge* *kent-os-ta*
 what be-PRET.3SG say-PRET-M.SG they.OBL-DAT child-OBL.SG-ABL
 'what was told them about the child'

The modern analytical tenses perfect and pluperfect had become stable by the second half of the 20th century. The auxiliary was *s-/h-* 'to be' as in the previous period, but the preterit replaced athematic participles in the matrix verbs. The new forms are thus no longer direct replications of the Finnish pattern, but FR's own innovations. In perfect the auxiliary is in present tense and in past tense in pluperfect.

Two types of constructions compete in the analytical tenses: in the more complex one, both the auxiliary and the matrix verb inflect in persons (8a), and in the simpler one, the auxiliary is generic (3SG always), but the matrix verb is person-inflected (8b).

- (8) a. SG PL b. SG PL
 1 *som* *rakkadom* *sam* *rakkadam* 1 *rakkadom* *rakkadam*
 2 *sal* *rakkadal* *san* *rakkade* 2 *hin* *rakkadal* *hin* *rakkade*
 3 *hin* *rakkadas* *hin* *rakkade* 3 *rakkadas* *rakkade*

In addition to the analytical past tenses, a periphrastic future *v-* 'come' + subjunctive had emerged by the beginning of the 20th century, replicating the Finnish verbal phrase consisting of *tulla* 'to come' as an auxiliary and infinitive III of the matrix verb, e.g. *tulen tekemään* [come.PRS.1SG do.3INF] 'I will do' as in Examples (9a–b).

- (9) a. *Messias* *v-el-a* *te* *staav-el* *teele.*
 Messias come-PRS.3SG-IND COMP step-PRS.3SG down
 'Messias will step down.' (Jalk.)

- b. *Oosn-e* *v-el-a* *panna* *te* *stakrav-el* *teele*
 donkey-NOM.PL come-PRS.3SG-IND still COMP step-PRS.3SG down
- t-i* *rajiskiduitu,* *Bi* *ap-i* *da* *grubb-os* *v-el-a*
 your-F.SG Court But on-F.SG this crib-NOM.SG come-PRS.3SG-IND
- te* *čerav-el* *i* *khangar-i* *sonak-es-ta...*
 COMP do-PRS.3SG ART.F.NOM.SG church-NOM.SG gold-OBL.SG-ABL
- ‘Donkeys will trample palace, but upon this crib, a church will be built.’

4.2 Matter replication

Universal constraints on morphological borrowing have been proposed in a number of typological studies (e.g. Moravcsik 1978; Thomason & Kaufmann 1988; Thomason 2001; Winford 2003). The generalizations are: frequency-based hierarchies (a majority, e.g., Haugen 1950; Heath 1984; Thomason & Kaufmann 1988; van Hout & Muysken 1994 etc.); implicational hierarchies (e.g. Moravcsik 1978; Matras 1998, 2002; Field 2002; Elšík & Matras 2006); or based on both frequency-based and implicational observations (Stolz & Stolz 1996; Ross 2001). The existence of these constraints has been rejected by some other scholars, such as Campbell (1993). Some relevant generalizations about the borrowability of morphology are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. *Generalization on morphological borrowing vs. FR.*

Generalizations (Moravcsik 1978; Field 2002)	In FR
Unbound > Bound morphemes	Unbound > Bound morphemes (except clitics)
Derivational morphology > Inflectional morphology	Inflection > Derivation

Borrowing of Finnish inflectional morphology or replication of Finnish morphological matter is chronologically far later and rarer than pattern replication. Granqvist (2014) suggests that borrowing of Finnish inflectional morphology follows the timeline illustrated in Figure (15).

	Borrowed markers	Earliest source
Frequent ↑ ↓ Rare	Bound morphemes	Clitics Noun inflection/ local cases (Ex. 1) Noun inflection/ grammatical cases (Ex. 2a-b) Verb inflection/ persons endings (Ex. 3b-c) Noun inflection/ modus markers (Ex. 4a-c)
		Ganander (1779) Reinholm (1860)
		[2 nd half of the 20 th century]
Frequent ⇕ Rare	Unbound morphemes	Negation particle Negation verb Modals and auxiliaries
		Ariste (1940)
		[2 nd half of the 20 th century]

Figure 15. Borrowing of Finnish inflectional morphology (Granqvist 2014)

One of the central findings of Granqvist (2014) is that contrary to the universal constraints on morphological borrowing, borrowing of derivational morphology is in FR far more infrequent than that of inflectional morphology. Code-switching is instead used as a compensation strategy to fill gaps (Granqvist 2000). Sporadic examples of comparatives formed with the Finnish morpheme *-mpi* have been attested since Reinholm's notes (1860, e.g., *terne-mpi* [young-COMP] 'younger'). A few exceptions fill lexical gaps: FR lacks its own means to derive frequentative verbs, but *minhu-il-v-* 'tease' is formed in resemblance of the Finnish frequentative *vittu-ill-a* 'bully'. Double causatives are avoided in FR. Some Finnish verbs are borrowed with Finnish derivative morphology and adapted into Romani: *kasvatt|av-* 'educate, grow, bring up' < FI *kasvattaa*, *kulett|av-* 'transport' < FI *kuljettaa*. A small number of Finnish loanwords borrowed with Finnish morphology to the structure of FR are documented but no longer in use: *kukkasa* (Reinh. 1860) 'with flowers' < FI *kukka* (+ Suff. *-sa*), *nahgist* (Gan. 1780) 'diligently' < FI *nahkiasti*. Compounding is rare in FR; however, there are items with a compound modifier borrowed from Finnish: *ābislīn* Th. 'abc-book' < FI *aapis-* + *līn* 'book', *aikadžēno* 'grown-up man' < FI *aika-* and *džēno* 'man' and with a head borrowed from Finnish: *auripäi* 'outward' < *auri* 'out' + FI *päin* 'toward'.

5. Conclusion

In section 2, I compared surveys of competence in FR. I concluded that the surveys repeat the view that older Roma master Romani better than younger individuals. The differences between age groups are related to the late acquisition of Romani along with growing up to adulthood and socialization in the Roma community (Borin & Vuorela 1998: 60; Borin 2000: 75), but possibly also reflect the gerontocratic hierarchy of the Roma community. The surveys indicate a decrease of excellent and good competence in Romani over time, but virtually no change in the proportion of non-speakers. Apparently, the notion of good Romani competence varies over time and from person to person.

Section 3 dealt with language-internal changes. Five phenomena were discussed: the simplification of the case system and noun classes, the simplification of the verb classes and person inflections, and finally, the development of the so-called 'new infinitive'. While all these tendencies discussed aim at simplifying the language structure, they yield a significant amount of variation at the current intermediary stage of the language; this manifests itself clearly e.g. in the large number of noun classes attested in modern FR. Some of the changes result in added morphotactic transparency but increase phonological complexity by resulting in heavier forms.

Section 4, discussing contact-induced changes, showed that matter replication is later and occurs more rarely in FR than pattern replication, which is in some cases even obligatory. Matter replication in FR predominantly follows universal tendencies: free morphemes are more prone to be borrowed than bound morphemes (Moravcsik 1978; Field 2002); however, against the universal tendencies, Finnish inflectional markers are more easily borrowed to FR than derivational suffixes.

Abbreviations

1	1st person
2	2nd person
3	3rd person
ABL	ablative
ART	article
ATHEM	athematic
DAT	dative
F	feminine
FUT	future
GEN	genitive
ILL	illative
IMPF	imperfect
INF	infinitive
IND	indicative
INSTR	instrumental
LOC	locative
M	masculine
NOM	nominative
OBL	oblique
PART	partitive
PASS	passive
PL	plural
PRET	preterite
PRS	present tense
PTCP	participle
REEL	reflexive
SG	singular

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