

**Hanna Lappalainen**

## **Young Adults and the Functions of the Standard<sup>1</sup>**

The standard variety<sup>2</sup> has been traditionally connected with such variables as formality and the upper social classes. Sociolinguistic research has indicated that the higher the social class of the speaker, and the more education he or she has, the more likely it is that standard variants will be favoured. It is possible to see the same tendency in the situational variation: the more formal the situation is, the more standard variants are used. (Labov 1972: 54 - 65; 79 - 109; Chambers - Trudgill 1980: 67 - 71; Trudgill 1983: 169 - 171, 186 - 188.)<sup>3</sup> Because of these correlations the standard has been associated with such concepts as power, status, formality and social

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is based on my presentation in the SKY workshop on Variation ("New trends in variationist linguistics: from attitudes to grammar") in Hailuoto, Finland, in August 1998. I would like to thank the participants of the workshop for their comments. In addition, my warmest thanks go to Esa Lehtinen, Pirkko Nuolijärvi and two anonymous referees for their useful comments on earlier versions of this paper.

<sup>2</sup> In this presentation the standard refers to the spoken variety of Finnish which, in many respects, is similar to the written, codified form of Finnish (cf. Hudson 1980: 32 -33). The other variety discussed here is the non-standard, vernacular or colloquial variety spoken in the Helsinki region. It is clearly different from the standard. I shall illustrate differences in section 2.

<sup>3</sup> The parallel correlations also appear in Finnish sociolinguistic studies, but the differences between social groups are usually not as sharp as in e.g. American or British speech communities. One reason for this is the historical: Finland underwent urbanization relatively late and very rapidly compared with other Western European countries, and so the social stratification is not as established as in many other countries. (Mielikäinen 1982; Nuolijärvi 1994.)

distance (Milroy 1980: 194 - 198). Although the standard variety and the prestige variety are not always synonymous, the standard often has more prestige than the other varieties as a result of its use by dominant groups within society. (Ryan 1979: 145 - 147; Downes 1984: 32 - 38; J. Milroy 1992: 129.)

Unlike the standard, vernacular or non-standard usage has been connected with the speech of lower social classes, informal situations and often with young people. Many sociolinguistic studies have indicated that young people use fewer standard variants than their parents, and they favour vernacular variants and slang. This can be considered as a rebellion against their elders. Not only do young people wish to distinguish themselves from adult norms, they also want to show solidarity and conformity with peer-group norms. (Downes 1984: 190 - 193; Chambers 1995: 170 - 176; Eckert 1997: 162 - 164.)

However, the use of the standard is not only a feature of higher classes and formal situations but, as I shall indicate, it is present in various situations and in the speech of many kinds of speakers. This means that the standard has many functions - other than just the mark of social distance and formality. In order to detect these functions, variation must be studied in different situations, not only in interviews or reading tests (e.g. Labov 1972: 79 - 109), and by approaching data from many perspectives. Studying social networks by participant observation has enabled researchers to record various situations (Labov 1977; Milroy 1980; Cheshire 1982; Chambers 1995: 66 - 101), and this has already extended the picture of variation. So far, however, this approach has not often been connected with the study of situational variation, i.e. studying the speech of the same individual in several natural situations.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> However, the situational variation of individuals is as a theme e.g. in two Finnish master theses done at the University of Tampere. Both Tiina Marjamäki (1996) and Päivi Pässilä (1997) have investigated the speech of their informants by recording them in several different situations.

In this paper I shall discuss the role of the standard in the speech of young Finnish adults. The early adult years typically involve graduation, marriage and starting a career. Young adults have been less studied than adolescents, but a study by Sankoff et al., for instance, indicates that especially those whose job involves speaking tend to standardize their speech in this life-stage. However, it is probable that young adults' speech still deviates, in some respects, from the speech of the middle-aged, and so it is interesting to study what the role of the standard is in the speech of precisely this age-group. (Sankoff et al. 1989; Chambers 1995: 177 - 184.)

The aim of this paper is to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent do the informants use standard variants in different situations?
2. What kinds of similarities and dissimilarities are there between individuals?
3. What kinds of functions does the use of the standard variety have? What kinds of functions does code-switching<sup>5</sup> have?

These questions will be approached, on the one hand, quantitatively from the perspective of traditional variation analysis (Labov 1972; Chambers 1995) and the other hand, qualitatively from the perspective of interaction (Goffman 1981; Gumperz 1982; Auer 1984; 1998). I shall indicate, that the quantitative analysis reveals some interesting tendencies and functions of the standard, but this approach is alone insufficient to show all the relevant variation. The differences between individuals compel us to study the use of standard also qualitatively – to consider the distribution and the functions of the standard variants as a part of the interaction.

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<sup>5</sup> By code-switching I mean the alternating use of the standard and non-standard within conversation.

## 1. Informants and data

The data for the study are based on the recordings of four Finnish-speaking young adults. These informants live in a suburb near Helsinki, and they are all members of the same social network. All of the 15 members of this network are active members of a local Pentecostal church<sup>6</sup>; their participation includes giving speeches at different kinds of occasions. They also have some other common interests, which means that they spend a lot of time together. On this basis the network can be characterized as close. (For more about social networks, see e.g. Chambers 1995: 66 - 84.)

The informants studied in this paper are:

- Marko, 28, an advertising assistant in a Christian publishing house (male);
- Petri, 26, an electrician (male);
- Ilkka, 22, a receptionist in a trade centre (male); and
- Virpi, 20, a hairdresser (female).

To discover the functions of the standard my aim has been to obtain speech in different situations. I have recorded speech only in naturally occurring situations, which means that the compared

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<sup>6</sup> The Finnish Pentecostal Church comprises almost 50 000 members, and it is the third largest religious group in Finland. The prerequisite for the membership is a personal conviction and a baptism after that. Pentecostalism is known for e.g. activity of laymen, missionary work and charismatic phenomena. (Ahonen 1984: 36 – 44; 1994; Antturi et. al. 1986; Heino 1991: 17, 19, 24.)

The local church which the informants belong to consists of 350 members. Most of my informants have participated in the action of the church from their childhood, because their parents are also Pentecostals.

The language use of the Finnish Pentecostals has not been investigated except some brief master theses. On the basis of my own observations, it has many common features with the language use of other Finnish religious groups, but it differs from them e.g. in the use of some greetings, collocates and phrases (cf. Moberg 1998).

situations are not unproblematic, because the context variables are dissimilar. The data was collected by using participant observation, or the informants recorded their own speech or that of their friends. The participant observation was easy to organize because of my own membership in the network<sup>7</sup>. This also enabled me to gather information about both the close and the loose networks of the informants. (Cf. Milroy 1987: 35 - 38; 60 - 67.)

The database of this paper consists of the following tape recordings:

- A. Everyday conversations around the coffee table. All the participants are members of this social network.
- B. Interactions in workplaces: Ilkka's and Virpi's discourse with their customers; Marko's and Petri's talk with their workmates
- C. Speeches in religious meetings which have been oriented to young people
- D. Speeches in religious occasions which have been oriented to all age-groups. The setting is usually more formal than in youth meetings, which means that, for example, the audience is bigger, and the speaker must often use a microphone.

In addition, in section 3, I shall discuss an example which has been taken from a telephone conversation.

## **2. The use of standard Finnish in four different situations**

First, I shall present an analysis which describes diatypic variation in the language of the informants. The aim of this quantitative analysis is to show to what extent the informants use standard variants in different situations. I have chosen 13, mostly phonological and morphological variables which are quite easy to

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<sup>7</sup> I have grown up in a Pentecostal family and participated in church activity all my life, although I joined this local church later than my informants, only some years before starting the recordings.

quantify and have different variants in the Helsinki area vernacular and in standard Finnish.<sup>8</sup>

**standard variant****vernacular variant**

Assimilation in vowel cluster *ea, eä* and *oa, öä* in noninitial syllables

*lukea**lukee*

‘to read’

Assimilation in vowel cluster *ia, iä* and *ua, yä* in noninitial syllables

*ihania kukkia**ihanii kukkii*

‘beautiful flowers’

Apocope in local case forms ending *a* or *ä*

*tässä talossa**täs talos*

‘in this house’

Apocope in certain verb forms and some nouns ending *si*

*viisi**viis*

‘five’

The disappearance of the final element of unstressed diphthongs ending *i* (in certain cases)

*pumainen**punanen*

‘red’

0 as an equivalent of standard *d*

*yhdessä**yhessä*

‘together’

*tt* and *t* as variants of standard *ts*

*seitsemän**seittemän*

‘seven’

Drop of final *t* in past participle active

*ollut**ollu*

‘been’

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<sup>8</sup> Most of these variables have been studied in many Finnish sociolinguistic studies, and these studies indicate that these features vary according to social and situational variables (see e.g. Mielikäinen 1982; Juusela 1994: 19 – 39; Nuolijärvi 1994; Paunonen 1995; 1994: 239 - 245).

Abbreviated forms of 1st and 2nd person pronouns and demonstrative pronouns *tämä* and *tuo*

<i>minä, tämä</i>	<i>mä, tää</i>	‘I’, ‘this’
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Abbreviated forms of certain verbs

<i>tulen, menen</i>	<i>tuun, meen</i>	‘I come’, ‘I go’
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Abbreviated forms of 3<sup>rd</sup> infinitive illative

<i>Mika menee</i>	<i>Mika menee</i>	‘Mika goes off
<i>pelaamaan.</i>	<i>pelaa(n).</i>	to play.’

Lack of concord: use of the impersonal passive form instead of standard 1<sup>st</sup> person pl. verb form and use of 3<sup>rd</sup> person sg. verb form instead of standard 3<sup>rd</sup> person pl. verb form

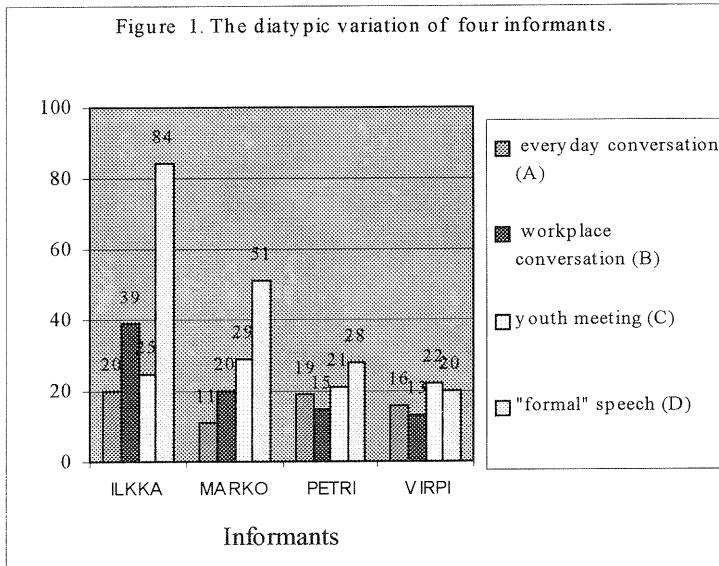
<i>Me menemme.</i>	<i>Me mennään.</i>	‘We go.’
<i>Pojat menevät.</i>	<i>Pojat menee.</i>	‘The boys go.’

Use of pronoun subject with 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person finite verb (vs. using only finite verb)

<i>Luen.</i>	<i>Mä luen.</i>	‘I read.’
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Figure 1 describes the variation of the informants in four different situations. The higher the column, the bigger the proportion of standard variants is. Percentages are the mean values of 13 variables.

Figure 1 indicates that there are great differences between young adult informants: Petri and Virpi favour vernacular variants in all the situations, whereas there are great differences in Ilkka’s and Marko’s speech depending on the situation type. How can we account for these results? In sociolinguistics, linguistic variation has been explained by correlating it with social variables (Labov 1972; Chambers 1995). However, it has been apparent for a long time that this explanation is problematic: the extralinguistic variables do not account for the differences between individuals (Hudson 1980: 163 - 167; Milroy 1980: 191 - 194; 1987: 136 - 137; Auer 1984: 98;



Figuroa 1994: 171, 182; Marjamäki 1996: 114 - 115). This can also be noticed in my data by comparing Ilkka's and Virpi's linguistic profiles. It is predictable that Ilkka has a lot of diatypic variation, because he must pay attention to his language use at work as a receptionist. But how can we explain the lack of situational variation in Virpi's speech, who also pursues a language-sensitive occupation as a hairdresser? This result indicates that such traditional social variables as age and occupation are insufficient in accounting for variation. Although Ilkka and Virpi have many common social variables, they are quite dissimilar in many respects: Ilkka has more ties to different kinds of social networks, he has more experience of appearing and speaking in public than Virpi, and his attitude to formality and solemnity seems to be dissimilar. The repertoire and the linguistic identity of the individual can never be explained by using only one variable; they are a part of his or her general habitus (Bourdieu 1984: 173 - 174; Nuolijärvi 1994).



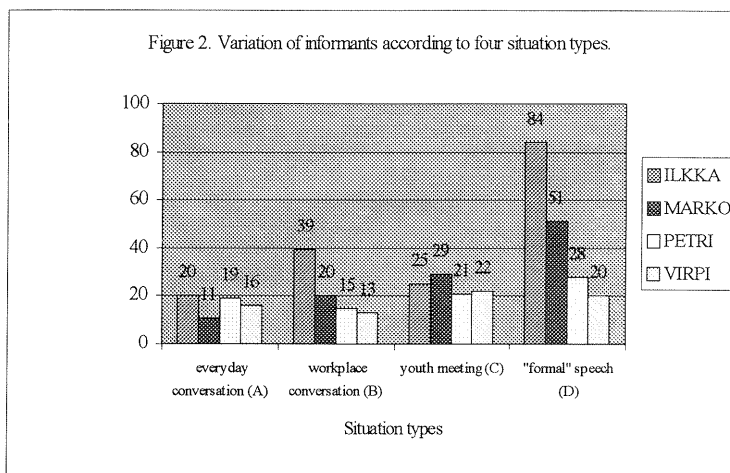


Figure 2 includes the same information as Figure 1, but in Figure 2 information has been arranged according to situation types.

Figure 2 illustrates clearly that except for speeches in situation type D, the differences between various situation types seem to be very slight.<sup>9</sup> Vernacular variants are favoured in most of the situations. It is possible to see this favouring of non-standard variants as a part of the larger conversationalization of public discourse (Fairclough 1994), which is rapidly taking place in Finnish society (for Finnish radio language, see Paananen 1996; for newspaper language, Makkonen-Craig 1999). As a result of this process the domain of the vernacular is extending at the cost of the standard and has become acceptable in many sectors. Earlier, the prestige of the standard Finnish was obvious. This prestige was based on the history of the standard as the variety of the upper-class: at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as a result of nationalism, some

<sup>9</sup> This tendency is clear, but there is one exception in situation type B: Ilkka's workplace conversation consists of quite a large number of standard variants (39 %).

formerly Swedish-speaking educated individuals changed their language and started to use the written form of Finnish, which was developed by strict purists. (Paunonen 1994: 234 - 237.) The standard maintained its status for many decades e.g. as the only accepted form in formal situations, and as the variety used in the media. (Nordberg 1994: 7; Makkonen-Craig 1999)

However, the small amount of apparent variation hides certain differences: the more accurate analysis of discourse reveals variation, especially at the level of lexicon and syntax. Such variables as collocates and phrases, which are not easy to study quantitatively, seem to distinguish situations and informants better than traditional phonological and morphological variables. Although Petri and Virpi have no significant situational variation on the basis of the quantitative analysis, their religious speeches can be identified from the other situation types on the basis of collocates typical of the language of the Bible and Pentecostals; they favour these collocates even more than Ilkka and Marko. This result indicates that the analysis of phonological and morphological features does not reveal all the relevant situational variation and that the choice of the variables has an influence on the results (see e.g. Biber 1994: 35).

Figure 2 reveals that in situation type D the differences between informants are greatest. This can be interpreted in at least three ways. First, the differences can reflect the dissimilarities of context variables. It means that the differences are not primarily those between individuals but between occasions. It is true that the occasion in which Ilkka has been studied is more formal<sup>10</sup> than the other D situations and in addition to that, Ilkka's role is different: he is the speaker at the meeting. Virpi's and Marko's speeches, for

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<sup>10</sup> Formality is a very problematic concept, and it has received many different interpretations (Atkinson & Biber 1994: 362 - 363). In this analysis my hypothesis is that such things as the number of participants, the physical distance between a speaker and listeners, and age differences may have an influence on the formality of the situation.

instance, consist mainly of their own spiritual experiences<sup>11</sup>. However, I would argue that the choice of the individual is a more significant factor than the given role. It is very probable that Virpi and Petri would not use standard variants as much as Ilkka, even in the role of speaker.

Second, the differences between individuals may describe their different views on how to speak at religious occasions. Perhaps some of them want to emphasize the holiness and solemnity of spiritual things by using a more careful way of speaking than in other situations, whereas the others prefer genuineness and naturalness.

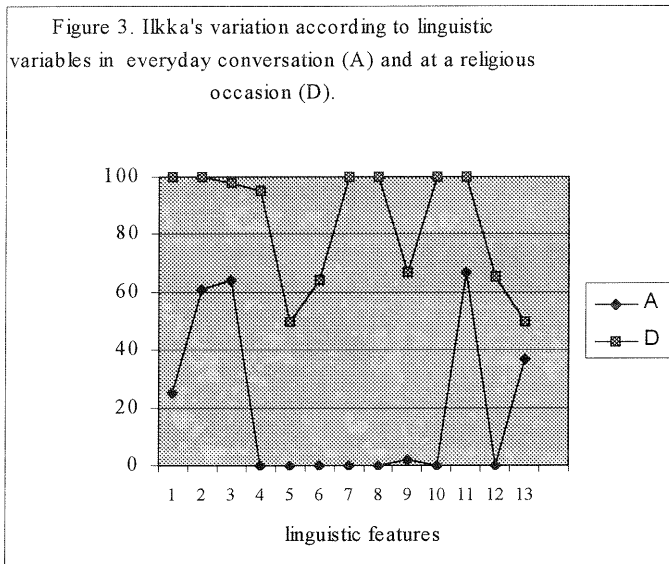
Third, the differences may mean that the standard has various kinds of associations and meanings to informants. Probably, in the mind of Ilkka, the standard has positive associations: for him it is a way of showing respect for the occasion and its participants. On the other hand, in Petri's and Virpi's usage, the standard may be the mark of pretence and formality.

The references to the attitudes and the choices of the informants demand some explanation. These conclusions are based, on the one hand, on the knowledge which I have gained as a member of this social network and, on the other hand, by collecting data about the linguistic activity of its members by diaries and interviews. After doing the main part of the recordings I asked the informants to keep a diary of their communication situations for a period of one week (cf. Malmberg & Nordberg 1994). As a part of that study I also collected information of their own views about their language use. This study indicated that all four informants studied here believed that their way of speaking varies, to some extent, according to the situation and other participants, but only Ilkka emphasized that this variation is often conscious. One explanation for that difference could be Ilkka's earlier experiences as a shop assistant in a southwestern Finnish town. There he learnt to observe both his own speech and that of his customers, because many of them spoke a local dialect very different from the variety spoken in the Helsinki

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<sup>11</sup> In Pentecostal churches these speeches are called testimonies.

region. Furthermore, in Ilkka's case it is relevant to pay attention to such things which reflect his general habitus: it is clearly different from that of other informants. This is possible to see e.g. in dressing and some habits (Bourdieu 1984: 172 - 174): whereas the others use jeans and t-shirts in almost all situations, Ilkka's dressing style is often solemn, if the frames of the situation are formal. His exceptionally polite behaviour is also untypical for Finnish young men of his age. However, such things as values, motives and politeness are easier to observe intuitively than to define, measure and compare objectively, and so it is difficult to prove these explanations for variation.



### **3. Variation inside situations**

As the analysis of Figures 1 and 2 in section 2 indicated, some aspects of standard use can be explained by context variables. Such extralinguistic variables as the age and the number of the participants, the goal of communication and the setting are relevant to some extent, as Ilkkas's and Marko's variation shows. Figure 3 illustrates feature by feature, how sharply the situations A and D deviate from each other in Ilkka's case.

However, in most cases the explanation for variation is more complex; Petri and Virpi are good examples of that. Context variables do not automatically cause variation, but the context is itself is dynamic. It is not the sum of the extralinguistic variables, instead the participants create it all the time by their action. The choice of variants is one way to define the nature and formality of the situation. (Gumperz 1982: 130-131; Auer 1984: 17-18; Heritage 1984: 103-120; 280-290.) Because of this it is necessary to look not only at variation between situations but also variation inside a particular situation. I shall give two examples which show how the use of standard variants vary during one situation.

#### **3.1. Situational variables**

The analysis of Ilkka's interaction in his workplace shows that his way of speaking varies according to the addressee: the age and familiarity of the customer have an influence on his standard use (cf. Bell 1984; Rickford & McNair-Knox 1994). Internal variation can also be seen in Petri's speech in situation C, when he speaks to young people. The episodes of Bible teaching include more standard variants than the episodes in which he tells his own spiritual experiences or other stories in order to illustrate the Bible teaching. When Petri speaks about the Bible, the language of the Bible is present. The religious phrases and collocates of the Holy Book invite standard variants, as slang words and phrases in Petri's personal stories invite vernacular variants. Above all, these examples show

that the use of standard variants may vary inside the situation according to such variables as the topic and other participants. (Cf. Labov 1972: 209 - 210; Bell 1984; Milroy 1987: 40 - 41; Rickford & McNair-Knox 1994.)

### 3.2. Code-switching

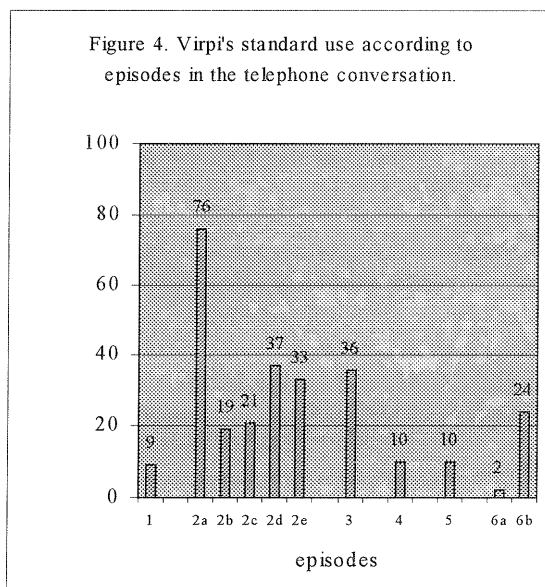
In my data variation in the use of standard and non-standard within a situation sometimes appears as sharp transitions from the non-standard to the standard variety; this change can be seen in the use of almost all linguistic features. I refer to these transitions as code-switching. Code-switching is usually connected with alternating use of two or more different languages within a conversation, but the domain of code-switching can also be extended to refer to switching between dialects (Gumperz 1982: 59; L. Milroy 1987: 171; Myers-Scotton 1997: 218; Alfonzetti 1998). The varieties studied here deviate so clearly from each other (see examples in the section 2) that it is possible to consider them as separate codes (cf. Alfonzetti 1998: 181 - 182), and, in addition to these structural differences, the use of the standard is often marked by paralinguistic cues (Auer 1984: 18). Above all, the interpretation of two different codes is supported by many examples which indicate that these codes are used in a meaningful way in discourse (Auer 1998: 13 - 15). Because the proportion of the standard is so small in most situations (see Figures 1 and 2), the standard use can have other functions; it has not been reserved only for marking formality differences. In fact, these discourse functions seem to be more significant than its correlations with external variables.

As with many previous studies, my data indicate that code-switching often redefines the situation: it builds up a contrast between what has been said before, and something that is going to be said. This contrast can indicate different kinds of changes in discourse. (Auer 1984: 17 - 19; 93 - 99; Gumperz 1982; Alfonzetti 1998: 186 - 208.) However, switching from the non-standard to the standard does not necessarily mean an increase in formality, as we

can infer on the basis of previous research. Typical examples of its functions are imitating one's own or somebody else's speech, demonstrating the transition from one activity type to another, or the change of topic and a new orientation to other participants (cf. Gumperz 1982: 75 - 84; Auer 1984; 1998: 5 - 13; Alfonzetti 1998).

In conclusion, I shall demonstrate a concrete example of how code-switching functions in a conversation. The sequence presented below comes from a telephone conversation between Virpi and her mother. As the other situation types, I first analysed the call quantitatively. My intuitive impression about this conversation after the first listening was that Virpi would use more standard variants than in everyday conversation with her friends, but the quantitative analysis indicates, that these conversations do not differ from each other on the basis of phonological and morphological features: the proportion of standard variants is 16 % in the conversation between Virpi and her friends, and 18 % when she talks with her mother. This approach does not reveal any significant variation.

Figure 4. Virpi's standard use according to episodes in the telephone conversation.



Because the result of the quantitative analysis did not match my impression of the conversation, I analysed the conversation in greater detail: I divided it into six episodes and some of them into sub-episodes according to topics<sup>12</sup> (see Figure 4) and counted the proportion of the standard inside each episode.

This analysis reveals that standard variants are not distributed evenly throughout all episodes, for there are distinct differences between them. The impression of the frequent use of the standard comes from episodes 2a, 2d, 2e and 3 in which Virpi uses these variants more than elsewhere. But what is going on in episode 2a, in which the proportion of the standard is greatest? The beginning of this episode is given below. The standard code has been marked in bold letters (see other transcription marks in the appendix).

Example. Virpi's telephone conversation with her mother

- 1 Virpi: **Joo** mutta (.) nyt siinä mieles mä oon hyväl tuulel et  
Yes but in a way I am happy that
- 2 mä sain tehtyy sen kampauksen sillee että (.)  
I managed to do the hairstyling so that
- 3 jäi semmone hyvä fiilis siitä,  
I was left with such a good feeling
- 4 Mother: Nii.  
Yes
- 5 Virpi: Et ekaa kertaa pääs niinku varsinaisesti harjottelemaa  
So that this was the first time that I got to practise
- 6 et [se om mennyt tähä astiv vähän sen tukai  
so that until now I have spent most of my time

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<sup>12</sup> The topic has been defined intuitively on the basis of the changes in the point of view. These transitions are usually easy to identify, because the participants themselves mark the changes by their activity in the interaction.



- 7 Mother: [Joo.  
[Yes
- 8 Virpi: laittamisessa se pääaika.  
doing hair
- 9 Mother: Joo.  
Yes
- 10 Virpi: Nii sillai. @**Kiitoksia vielä** <↑**viimeisestä** (.)  
So in that way. Thank you once more for last night
- 11 **oli e[rittäin m- erittäin mukava li:lta**>  
it was a most pleasant evening
- 12 Mother: [Kiitos <↑kiitos>  
Thank you thank you
- 13 Mother: **No niinhän se ↑oli**  
Well it really was
- 14 Virpi: **Onko löytynyt mitään vielä sillä rahalla?**  
Have you found anything for the money?
- 15 Mother: Ei nyt mä en sitte sehän mähän meinasin\_ostaas sillä  
No I didn't I was thinking I'd buy
- 16 tuulipuvum mutta  
a jogging outfit but
- 17 Virpi: Joo-o?  
Yes
- 18 Mother: ((nielaisu)) mä en sitten en (. ) o- ↑**löytän**yt  
((swallow)) I didn't I have not found
- 19 Virpi: Joo-o?  
Yes
- 20 Mother: **parempaa kun vanha? (. ) niin minä jätin**  
anything better than the old one so I did not

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**se - (.) jäi tin ostamatta.**  
buy anything

22

Virpi: **Ai ivan.**  
I see

23

Mother: **Ja säästin.**  
And I saved the money.

24

Virpi: Just.  
Right.

25

Mother: **Ja odotan nyt seuraavaa tilai[suutta.**  
and now I am waiting for the next opportunity

26

Virpi: [Mutta voin kertoa että  
[But I can tell you that

27

**niitä kyllä tulee. (.) niitä mukavia juttuja.**  
there will be nice things coming up

28

Mother: **Niitä tulee.**  
So there will

29

Virpi: **Syksym muāti ov varsin mukavaa tällä hetkel(lä) (.)**  
The fashion this fall is quite nice at the moment  
  
m[um mielestä.  
I think

30

Mother: [Nii (.) nii.  
Oh yes

31

Virpi: Et aika paljon kaikkee kivaa,  
So that there will be all kinds of nice things

32

(1.0)

First, Virpi begins by telling her own news about preparing for a hairdressing competition, but on line 10 she changes the topic and

orients to her mother. In this sequence she thanks her mother for arranging a graduation party, and she asks whether her mother has found any use for the gift token which Virpi and Virpi's sister have given to her. It is interesting to notice that there is no pause between the topics, but the contrast has been marked only by code-switching (cf. Alfonzetti 1998: 197 - 198)<sup>13</sup>. The difference is obvious, because the standard code deviates so strongly from Virpi's usual way of speaking<sup>14</sup> and the standard use has been marked by animated speech. In addition to indicating the topic change and Virpi's orientation to her mother, the code-switching can be given other interpretations, too. It is possible to see it as signalling a change of footing (Goffman 1981: 126 - 128). In this sequence the roles of the daughter and the mother are the unusual ones. It is more typical that the mother gives and the daughter receives, but here the roles are reversed: Virpi has given her mother the present, and her mother is a receiving party. Virpi shows her new footing by alternating the code (cf. Auer 1984: 17 - 19, 93).

The standard code is possible to see as a mark of distance – reflecting untypical roles, but, on the basis of the context, the use of the standard can also have other meanings. Instead of formality and distance, it can be interpreted as a way of showing solidarity and closeness. This interpretation arises especially from accommodation: Virpi's mother also begins to use more standard variants and so their registers approach each other (see Giles & Smith 1979; Thakerar et

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<sup>13</sup> However, *Nii sillai* (*So in that way*) can be interpreted as a mark of completing the previous topic.

<sup>14</sup> Some examples:

**Virpi: standard**

*kiitoksia vielä viimeisestä  
erittäin mukava  
onko löytynyt*

**non-standard**

*kiitos vielä viimeisestä  
e.g. tosi kiva  
onks löytyny*

al. 1982).<sup>15</sup> The accommodation can be seen even in the intonation: In lines 10-14 they both use rising intonation, although a falling intonation might be more expected in this context. This is very significant in the speech of Virpi's mother, because she uses an especially strongly falling intonation in other parts of conversation. Virpi's standard variants are so striking and even exaggerated, that it is possible to consider the standard use partly humorous. I interpret the accommodation as a mark of creating an intimate atmosphere.

#### 4. Summary

Previous sociolinguistic studies have revealed correlations, on the one hand, between the standard use and social groups, and, on the other hand, between the standard use and the formality of the situation type. These tendencies can be found by studying the averages of the groups, but not necessarily at the level of individuals. In this paper I have discussed the use and functions of standard Finnish by studying variation in the speech of four young adults. As the results in Figures 1 and 2 show, the social variables are insufficient to account for differences between these individuals in the use of the standard. They also reveal that the situation is not always a relevant variable either. The extralinguistic variables are too rough – they do not determine the choices of the individuals, but the linguistic repertoire should be seen as a part of person's general habitus. The situations can often be divided into different parts (see Figure 4), which should be studied separately, because the standard variants do not always distribute evenly among them.

My aim has been to indicate that in order to understand variation and the functions of varieties it is necessary to approach these questions from several perspectives. The quantitative analysis of traditional phonological and morphological variables reveals one side of variation, but it hides a great deal of relevant variation at the

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<sup>15</sup> On average, Virpi's mother's variety is closer to the standard than Virpi's, but the change in this sequence is still remarkable.

other linguistic levels: in prosody, lexicon and in the use of collocations, which are difficult to quantify. Many functions of the standard can only be found by studying variation within the situation, as part of the interaction. It is impossible to define only one constant meaning for the standard - it is not always a sign of formality or the pursuit of prestige, but as the analysis of the code-switching sequence indicates, the standard can provide information on many kinds of changes in context. And it does not only reflect changes, it also creates contrasts itself.

## APPENDIX

### Transcription conventions

- . falling intonation
- ? rising intonation
- ↑ rise in pitch
- kiitos      Emphasis is indicated by underlining.
- : lengthening of the sound
- < > talk inside the bracket is at a slower pace than the surrounding talk
- @ animated voice
- (1.5) pause with an accuracy of half a second
- (.) micro-pause (less than half a second)
- [ onset of overlapping talk
- (( )) comment by the transcriber

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