Romani Language and culture has been a minor subject (60 cr.) at the Department of Finnish, Finno-Ugrian and Scandinavian Studies since August 2012. The subject employs two permanent teachers, while six PhD students and one post-doctoral researcher from Finland, Romania, Slovakia, Bulgaria and the USA work fulltime on the three currently ongoing projects.

Romani Language and Culture is an international and multidisciplinary subject. The students learn about the structure of languages, multilingualism and the cultures, history and present status of different Roma communities. The students can focus on Finnish Romani or other European Romani dialects. Language courses are taught e.g. in Finnish Romani, East Slovak Romani, Hungarian Vend Romani and Lovari. Special courses deal with the mobility of the Roma in European Union and other societal issues.

Romani Language and Culture suits particularly well as a minor subject for students in General Linguistics, different languages, Cultural and Social Anthropology, Sociology, Psychology, Comparative Religion, Political Sciences, Pedagogy and Medical Science. The students become experts in a variety of tasks that require knowledge of Romani language and culture: e.g. researchers, producers of teaching materials, teachers, minorities’ issues experts, policy makers and interpreters.

The University of Helsinki is currently one of the world’s leading sites of research in Romani dialectology, history and grammar, but in addition a growing bulk of research addresses the issues of migration, trans-nationality, identity, belonging, representation and manifestations of religion and gender relations among different European Roma communities. The subject has rapidly evolved into an internationally highly significant, attractive and well-networked multidisciplinary cluster of academic research activities in Romani language and culture.

Other on-going Romani language and culture projects at the UH >>>


Romani Language and Culture
Department of Finnish, Finno-Ugrian and Scandinavian Studies
Fabianinkatu 28
P.O. Box 53, 00014 University of Helsinki
Finland
Tel. 00358 2941 40018
E-mail kimmo.granqvist@helsinki.fi

http://www.helsinki.fi/sup/romani/
The project director is Kimmo Granqvist (PhD, Stockholm University 1997, Docent in Modern Greek language and General Linguistics). He currently works as a University Lecturer and Department Head of Finnish, Finno-Ugrian and Scandinavian Studies. He is simultaneously also a research leader in Romani Studies at Södertörn University, Sweden. He has led a number of projects and research groups on the Romani language and published several monographs and about 60 scientific and popular articles on the subject.

Anton Tenser (PhD, University of Manchester in 2008), has studied the Romani dialects of the north-east group (Poland, the Baltic countries and the North Russian Romani dialects). He specializes in the north-eastern dialects, as well as those of Ukraine and Moldova, Romani dialect collection, modelling and analysis. He is the author of the first descriptive grammar of Lithuanian Romani (Tenser 2005).

PhD students working on the project include Mgr. Erika Adamová, Mgr. Zuzana Bodnárová and MA Mirkka Salo.

In addition to the principal team members, the project team includes research assistants from Finland, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

**Project goals**

“Finnish Romani and other Northern dialects of Romani in the Baltic Sea area” is a four-year (Jan 1, 2013–Dec 31, 2016) project led by university lecturer, docent Kimmo Granqvist and co-funded by the University of Helsinki and the Kone Foundation Language Program. The main overall goal of the project is to document Finnish Romani and other Romani dialects in the Baltic Sea area.

The goal is to document the Northern Romani dialects in the Baltic Sea region through the collection, examination and analysis of language samples, to reveal dialectal patterns in phonetics, phonology, morphology, and grammatical categories, the lexicon and the lexical phonology, and to aid further scientific investigation in these domains. Another goal is to expand significantly the language resources of the Northern dialects that are freely available to researchers.

**Data collection >>></p>**

The RMS questionnaire was used for elicitation. The questionnaire has a total of 1,060 items, focusing on Romani dialectological variation in all areas of mophosyntax, and includes a list of words that can be used to describe the historical phonology and the most prominent lexical variation. Permission for its use has been granted by the RMS project coordinator, Professor Yaron Matras (Manchester).

The total number of samples collected is 102 (Table 1). Combined with the 21 samples from the RMS database, this yields 123 data points available for mapping and analysis.

In all countries except for Finland the collected data represent more than one dialect. In Lithuania one Lotfiška sample was collected in addition to the Litovska Roma samples. Latvia is represented by 13 Lotfiška samples and 5 Xaladytka samples. The data from Estonia includes 5 Lotfiška and 4 Xaladytka samples. Poland is represented by one Sinti sample and 29 Polska Roma samples.

**Table 1. Data collected.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Samples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Dialectological atlas of Finnish Romani >>></p>**

The 400-page in-depth descriptive grammar (published in 2016) will focus on the morphosyntax of Finnish Romani, but it will also describe the phonetics as well as descriptive and historical phonology.

**Romani language history >>></p>**

The Romani language history book grammar (published in 2015) discusses the early pre-European development of Romani, its early balkanization and the formation of Romani dialects (500 BC–1500 AD). However, most of the book deals with phonological, lexical and morphosyntactic developments in the Romani language in Finland based on linguistic documents since the end of the 1700s to the present day.

**PhD theses >>></p>**

Erika Adamová: A grammar of Polish Bergitka Roma.

Zuzana Bodnárová: A grammar of Hungarian Vend Romani.

Mirkka Salo: Language mixing phenomena in the speech of the Finnish Roma.

**Co-operation >>></p>**

Through its duration so far, the project has secured cooperation of several Roma organizations and NGOs in the relevant territories: Euroopa Romade Fororum Eestis (ERFE, Estonia), Alternativas (Latvia), Department of Society Integration at Ministry of Culture (Latvia), Finnish Roma Association (Finland), Stowarzyszenie Romov w Polsce (Poland). Much of the fieldwork was carried out with the support of these organizations, who shared their expertise and the knowledge of community networks, and provided valuable contacts in the search for both the perspective interviewees and the research assistants.