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The Greifswald Report on Lithuania and Finland

**A Survey about Language Attitudes
towards the Official and Minorities' Languages**

– pre-publication of key findings –

Edited by

Yvonne Bindrim, Stephan Kessler, Anastasija Kostiučenko & Marko Pantermöller

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The Greifswald Report on Lithuania and Finland

A Survey about Language Attitudes towards the Official and Minorities' Languages

has been a joint project of the Departments of Baltic Studies and Finnish Studies at the University of Greifswald in Germany. The project has been funded by the German Research Council (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft) in the years 2014–6.

This paper is a sketch of key findings resulting from a first look at our large and multifaceted data-material. A detailed documentation of our data is going to be published with the publisher Peter Lang in summer 2017. Moreover, a data-based discussion of special questions will be the subject of further publications under preparation.

We are running an open access policy of survey data. If you are interested in using data for your own research purposes, feel free to contact us. In any case, most of our graphics will be made electronically accessible as downloads online.

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Impressum:

Stephan Kessler, Marko Pantermöller, Anastasija Kostiučenko und Yvonne Bindrim. Institut für Baltistik und Institut für Fennistik und Skandinavistik, Universität Greifswald. For our addresses see: www.uni-greifswald.de/greifswaldreport

1 Outline of reasoning

Official and minorities' languages have repeatedly been an area of political controversies in Finland as well as in Lithuania. Amongst other things, demands made by various political players tend to trigger heated public debates. However, this raises the question whether this fierce public discourse are analogously reflected in the attitudes of Finland's and Lithuania's populations and what people in Finland and Lithuania really think of the mixture of official and minorities' languages in their countries. In the years 2014 to 2016, the Departments of Baltic Studies and of Finnish Studies situated at the University of Greifswald undertook a sociolinguistic survey in several towns in Finland and Lithuania in order to answer these questions.

During our survey, we obtained both »covert« and »overt« data by means of the indirect matched-guise technique as well as by a direct questionnaire. Our data from about 1,200 subjects of various social groups in both countries allow for an objective evaluation of the prestige associated with the languages commonly spoken in Finland and Lithuania, as well as of the speakers' notions of these languages.

2 Brief overview of key findings

1. Despite political debate—people's covert language attitudes towards official and minorities' languages are still in a good condition.
2. »It is the (language) policy, stupid!« Overt language attitudes already reflect the heated political atmosphere of the last years.
3. *Lithuania*: Most of the subjects have professed to use only Lithuanian in the public sphere, regardless which ethnic group they identify themselves with. Thus the social re-establishment of Lithuanian was successful. However, the city of Visaginas is still an exception.
4. *Finland*: There seem to be no fundamental differences in the covert attitudes to people based solely on the language they use and hence no signs of any possible basis for language based discrimination. Nevertheless, the partially heated discussion has left its mark regarding central questions within the debate about Finland's bilingualism. Although the prestige of Swedish in Finland has been decreasing, Swedish is still considered to be useful and most Finnish-speaking pupils would choose it as a subject in school. Both language groups perceive tension of some degree between the language groups more often on a more abstract level (»in Finland«) than in their own relation to the other language group. Furthermore, Swedish-speaking Finns wish for more governmental intervention to protect Finland's bilingualism.
5. Social value of languages in Lithuania and Finland—is there anything to worry about? Considering our preliminary results, the overall picture appears to be a relatively positive one. However, the gap between positive covert attitudes and overt articulated opinions is already highly apparent.

3 Dimensions of language research: social value, status and attitudes

One of the main topics of sociolinguistic research is the value of different languages and varieties in society. The social value of a language or variety is linked to the status the inhabitants knowingly

Fig. 1: Order of audio recordings in Lithuania

The figure shows the order of audio recordings used for asking test persons to evaluate the personal qualities of all recorded speakers. Voices Nos 2, 6, 10 and Nos 3, 7, 11 are of the same speakers using different languages.

position	N ^o 1	N ^o 2	N ^o 3	N ^o 4	N ^o 5	N ^o 6	N ^o 7	N ^o 8	N ^o 9	N ^o 10	N ^o 11	N ^o 12
speaker	F f : LT	M f : PL	M m : RU	F f : PL	F m : LT	M f : RU	M m : LT	F m : PL	F f : RU	M f : LT	M m : PL	F m : RU

M – voice of guise speaker (»mask«); **F** – filler voice; **m** – male; **f** – female; **LT** – Lithuanian-speaking; **PL** – Polish-speaking; **RU** – Russian-speaking.

Fig. 2: Order of audio recordings in Finland

The figure shows the order of audio recordings used for asking test persons to evaluate the personal qualities of all recorded speakers. Voices Nos 2 & 6 and Nos 3 & 7 are of the same speakers using different languages.

position	N ^o 1	N ^o 2	N ^o 3	N ^o 4	N ^o 5	N ^o 6	N ^o 7	N ^o 8
speaker	F f : FIN	M m : SW	M f : FIN	F m : FIN	F f : SW	M m : FIN	M f : SW	F f : FIN

M – voice of guise speaker (»mask«); **F** – filler voice; **m** – male; **f** – female; **FIN** – Finnish-speaking; **SW** – Swedish-speaking.

or unknowingly attribute to the language or variety. This attribution can be observed by investigating the attitudes of social groups. Sociolinguists have operationalised the concept of attitude in different ways—obviously depending on each given research object. In our study, we share the common view that every attitude consists of three components: of an affective, a behavioural and a cognitive one. Moreover, we distinguish between overt and covert (»hidden«) attitudes; however, we focus on analysing their social impact on the everyday linguistic behaviour of social groups.

3.1 Lithuania

The necessary preparations and preliminary studies carried out in the time period until March 2016. From then on until September 2016, we conducted 58 main tests in Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Visaginas and Šalčininkai. In total, 630 persons participated in the tests. Since the subjects had been chosen according to a quota sample, the acquired data is representative of the population of the respective towns, and town values are comparable with each other.

We conducted the experiment in Lithuanian towns that can be distinguished according to their specific sociolinguistic conditions: the multilingual capital city Vilnius, the predominantly monolingual town Kaunas, Klaipėda with its predominantly Lithuanian and Russian-speaking inhabitants, Visaginas with its predominantly Russian-speaking population and Šalčininkai with its predominantly Polish-speaking inhabitants.

3.2 Finland

The data was collected between October 2015 and May 2016 from people living in five Finnish towns. The towns were chosen to represent different linguistic compositions and are located further from or closer to a Swedish-speaking area. Joensuu and Tornio represent the monolingual Finnish municipalities of the country, with Tornio being located at the border to Sweden. Helsinki and Vaasa represent the bilingual municipalities with a smaller (Helsinki) or a larger (Vaasa) Swedish-speaking minority. Furthermore, Helsinki is surrounded by the same kind of municipalities, whereas the municipalities around Vaasa are by and large officially bilingual with a Swedish-speaking majority or de facto even monolingual Swedish. Jakobstad, too, is a bilingual municipality, but with a Swedish-speaking majority.

The collected data is derived from strategically chosen subgroups of participants: for each town, it was the aim to find similar, inherently homogenous groups of employees and pupils and students, each of all educational levels. Of the bilingual towns, most subgroups of Finnish-speaking Finns can be compared to a very similar subgroup of speakers of Swedish. Thus, the subsets of data collected in the five towns can be compared with each other.

4 Methodology

So far, a great number of surveys have been conducted in Lithuania as well as in Finland. However, only direct questionnaires have been used in these surveys. This situation has caused us to look for a method which yields a higher level of objectivity. If simply asked about their attitudes, people are very likely to resort to stereotypes in their answers. These are what people are aware of, and what tends to be more prevalent in a community than actual attitudes.

In order to investigate covert attitudes towards languages, we re-activated the experimental matched-guise technique that has somewhat gone out of fashion, at least in Germany, Finland and Lithuania. However, it is still popular in other countries, for instance, in Sweden. The matched-guise technique was developed in the 1960s by the Canadian scholar Wallace Lambert. He already used audio recordings for asking informants to evaluate the personal qualities of all recorded speakers. The trick is that the listeners do not know that several speech samples (»guises«) are provided by the same disguised speaker (»mask«). See figures 1 and 2.

Therefore, the subjects judge the linguistic guises of the speaker as separate items. Since the speaker is bilingual (or in the Lithuanian case – multilingual), his (or hers) speeches cover different languages. These languages, thus, are the only differences between the speeches of the mask. That is why differences in judging the mask's speech samples can only be explained through the perceived differences evoked by the listeners' attitudes towards the languages used by the mask. All other factors – like text, style, voice, reading speed and so on – were kept constant.

The evaluations of the different guises were obtained by means of the so-called semantic differential. A semantic differential consists of semantic pairs of opposites denoting particular features called dimensions. For instance, the dimension »honesty« was tested on a seven-level scale between the opposites »honest« and »dishonest«.

In the second part of the survey, the subjects were asked to give their opinions about different personal views, social conditions, questions of language policy and their experience as language users.

Fig. 3: Lithuanians' evaluation of the relationship between Lithuanians and Lithuania's Poles

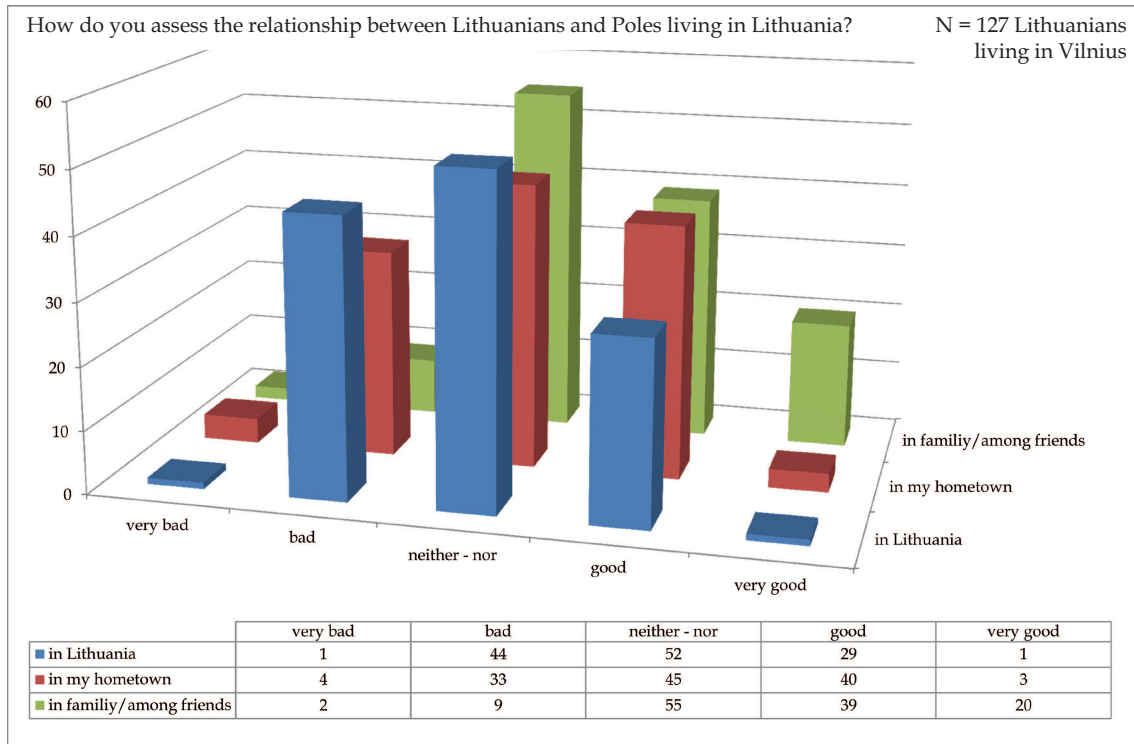
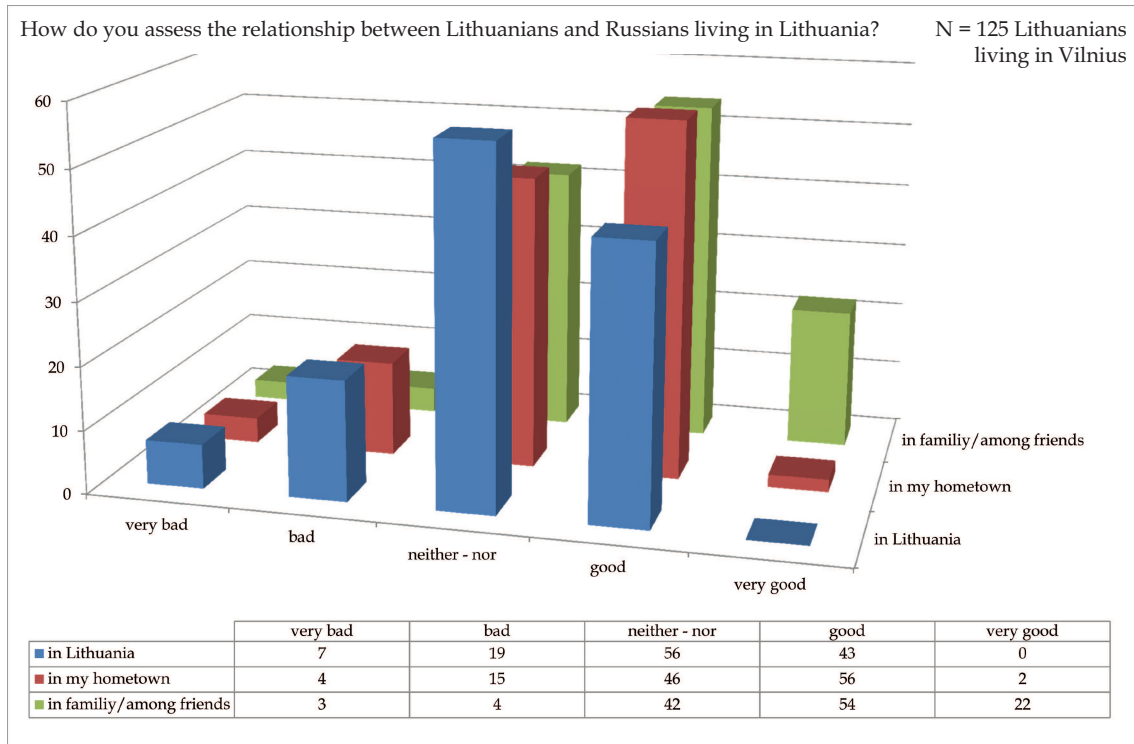


Fig. 4: Lithuanians' evaluation of the relationship between Lithuanians and Lithuania's Russians



5 Sketch of empirical findings: first profiles of selected towns

5.1 Vilnius (Lithuania)

A total of 151 participants was surveyed. 56 % of the subjects were female, 38 % were male.¹ Their age varied between 19 and 86 years. Most of the subjects surveyed in Vilnius identified themselves as Lithuanians (this was stated by 93 % of the 151 subjects). The following preliminary evaluation of the data concerning Vilnius is therefore based on the Lithuanian group.

A concept-specific semantic differential with nine dimensions was used. To define the influence of the three different languages on the evaluations of the two masks in the nine dimensions, we carried out a two-factor analysis of variance with repeated measures. Additionally, we tested the data for influence of the subjects' gender on the evaluation and for interaction between the two factors.

5.1.1 Evaluations of the female guise speaker

Three dimensions of the semantic differential – i.e. »affinity« (»pleasant« vs. »unpleasant«), »beauty« (»beautiful« vs. »ugly«) and »honesty« (»honest« vs. »dishonest«) – were significant, strikingly, in the language pair »Lithuanian vs. Polish«. This means that the Vilnius group of Lithuanians perceives linguistic status differences along these three dimensions only. In other words, the subjects made no difference between languages and their speakers in most of the provided dimensions.

Moreover, the gender of the subjects was significant for the evaluation of the female mask in two dimensions, namely »beauty« and »diligence« (»hard-working« vs. »lazy«). For instance, the male subjects of the Vilnius group rated the Lithuanian-speaking female mask better than the female subjects. When the female masked voice spoke in Polish or Russian, she was rated better by female subjects in comparison to the male subjects. It seems therefore that the Lithuanian language has a higher status for men inasmuch as they perceive Lithuanian-speaking women as more attractive. Women find female Polish or Russian speakers more attractive than the Lithuanian speakers. We suspect that this finding correlates with a prevalent stereotype in Lithuania.

Moreover, the subjects were asked to choose the occupation of the guise from a list of fictitious possibilities: »The variable »social status« (prestige) can be represented by the fictitious occupation that is assigned to the respective voice recording.«² No significant differences could be established in the assignment of the occupation of the disguised speaker.

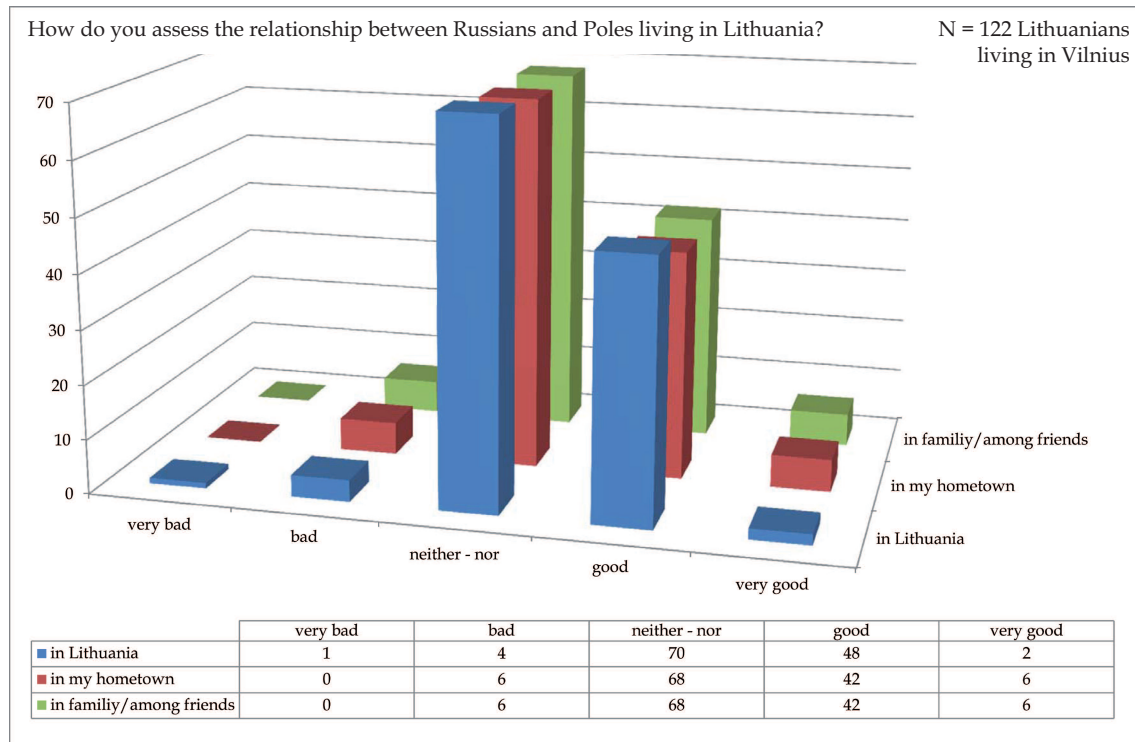
5.1.2 Evaluations of the male guise speaker

In the second step of the study, we conducted an equivalent analysis of the male mask. Only one dimension – »beauty« – was significant, once again for the language pair »Lithuanian vs. Polish«. The influence of the gender on the evaluation of the male mask seems to be smaller, since it only played a role in the dimension »affinity«. In contrast to male subjects, the female subjects rated the male Lithuanian- and Russian-speaking mask as more likeable. No significant differences could be established with regard to the supposed occupation of the mask.

1 If the total percentage doesn't amount to 100 %, the subjects didn't submit an answer or submitted a different answer. This holds true for the whole report.

2 Anastasija Kostiučenko: *Sprachen und ihre Sprecher in Litauen. Eine soziolinguistische Untersuchung zum sozialen Status des Litauischen, Polnischen und Russischen*. Berlin 2016, p. 115.

Fig. 5: Lithuanians' evaluation of the relationship between Lithuania's Russians and Poles



5.1.3 Language use in the media and in public

During the survey, the subjects were also asked to specify what languages they normally choose for the use of certain media. A striking result of descriptive statistics was the finding that in all age groups, English has replaced Russian in media use. Regarding the language usage in the area of print media, 14 % of the subjects read in Russian, whereas English is used by 30 % of the subjects. A similar picture arises with regard to the use of radio. The prevalence of English is even more obvious in terms of the languages used for browsing online: 39 % of the subjects access websites in English, whereas only 9 % access internet content in Russian. The choice between Russian and English is only balanced with regard to television.

5.1.4 How do Lithuanians living in Vilnius consciously evaluate the relationship between the ethnic groups ?

The results are shown in the charts 3–5 on page 6 and on this page. They are based on data being collected using the direct questionnaire in the second part of the survey.

5.2 Visaginas (Lithuania)

A total of 126 subjects was surveyed in Visaginas. 75 % were female, 20 % were male. The age of the subjects varied between 16 and 74 years. 51 subjects declared that they are Lithuanian, 47

subjects categorised themselves as Russian. The rest defined themselves as members of other ethnic groups.

5.2.1 The evaluation of the female guise speaker by Lithuanians

A significant difference in the evaluation of the female mask was established for the dimension »diligence«. Regarding the language pair »Lithuanian vs. Russian«, the mask was rated as significantly more hard-working if she spoke Lithuanian. Moreover, there was a significant interaction between the factor »Evaluation of the diligence« and gender (the probability that the gender of the subject plays a role in evaluating the mask along this dimension amounts to 85 %). Women rated the Polish and the Russian masks better than men. The gender of the subjects also played an important role in evaluating the female mask along two further dimensions: »cleverness« and »modesty«. As had been the case with Vilnius, we could not identify any pre-eminent language-based social divisions.

5.2.2 The evaluation of the female guise speaker by Russians

Only one out of nine dimensions showed significance in the evaluation of the female mask, namely »beauty«. This means that the person behind the mask was assumed to be more beautiful when she spoke Russian as opposed to Polish. No significant values were obtained with regard to the supposed occupation.

5.2.3 The evaluation of the male guise speaker by Lithuanians

There was no significance in rating differences for the male mask in any of the dimensions of the semantic differential. However, the interaction between the gender of the subjects and two dimensions, namely »cleverness« and »honesty«, was significant: male subjects, in contrast to females, rated the Russian-speaking mask smarter and deemed it less honest if the mask spoke Lithuanian.

5.2.4 The evaluation of the male guise speaker by Russians. And an interim conclusion

Regarding the evaluation of the mask by Russians, no significance of evaluation differences or correlations could be observed. Drawing into account the findings reported far, it can be concluded that the subjects did not recognise any status differences between speakers that could be attributed to sociolinguistic variables. However, it seems that discriminating the status of speakers when they use a particular language—if there is any discrimination at all—is motivated by notions of femininity and masculinity that are recurrent in specific groups.

5.2.5 Language preferences: using media as well as in the public sphere

The Russian language is used more often in Visaginas than in Vilnius. This is not surprising given the composition of the ethnic groups in Visaginas. To be precise, the Lithuanians in Visaginas use Russian almost as often as the Russians in Visaginas use Lithuanian in the domain of print media and television. The public sphere in Visaginas is also more influenced by the Russian language: Lithuanian and Russian are used more or less equally frequently within both groups in Visaginas.

5.3 The control test. And a résumé about the Lithuanian towns

In Visaginas we conducted a control test with one particular group of subjects. For this test we changed the order of both parts of the questionnaire. Instead of first conducting the indirect part containing the matched-guise technique to evaluate covert data, we began the test sequences with the direct part to find out the conscious data. The indirect part followed thereafter. We have established that the results of the reversed sequences are noticeably different: we have observed more significant dimensions. This means that the control group differentiated the three guises of both speakers more than other groups.

In general it can be summed up that the status differences caused by the use of particular language are perceived more often only if a language- or language-policy-related topic is activated in the subjects. Ultimately, if we apply this finding to the society of Lithuania as a whole, this means that the public and political discussions fixated on language problems are the cause of perceived differences of social status of speakers.

5.4 Finland: Joensuu and Tornio vs. Helsinki and Vaasa

5.4.1 Joensuu and Tornio

Of the 222 participants in the officially monolingual Finnish towns Joensuu and Tornio, 96,40 % reported to be Finnish-speaking, only 1,35 % Swedish-speaking and 0,9 % to speak both Finnish and Swedish as their mother tongue. The majority stated to come from a monolingual municipality, by far most of them from the same region as the given studied town or from the neighbouring region (together >80 %). Male participants are underrepresented with only 29 %.

5.4.1.1 *Evaluations of the male guises*

Regarding the male speaker, the participants of Joensuu and Tornio did not make a statistically significant and in everyday life supposedly meaningful, language-based distinction on any of the twelve scales. The average difference of the mean score for the male speaker reading in Finnish and in Swedish is very small (0,159–0,275 points on a 6-point-scale).

5.4.1.2 *Evaluations of the female guises*

Regarding the female speaker, the situation is very different: statistically significant distinctions, which also could be considered meaningful in everyday life situations, were made on the scales »friendliness« (0,682 points), »honesty« (0,467 points), »reliability« (0,495 points), »intelligence« (0,453 points) and »ambitiousness« (0,401 points). The speaker received higher scores on each of the scales when she read in Swedish. See figures 6 and 7.

5.4.2 Helsinki and Vaasa

In the bilingual city of Helsinki and the town of Vaasa, altogether 294 people participated in the survey. 57,82 % of them said to be Finnish-speaking, 27,89 % Swedish-speaking and 12,59 % to be bilingual (Finnish and Swedish). The majority reported to be from a bilingual municipality with a Finnish majority (70,75 %), 19,05 % from a monolingual Finnish municipality and 7,82 % from a bilingual municipality with a Swedish majority. Also here, more than 80 % come from the same

Fig. 6: Joensuu and Tornio: the male guises

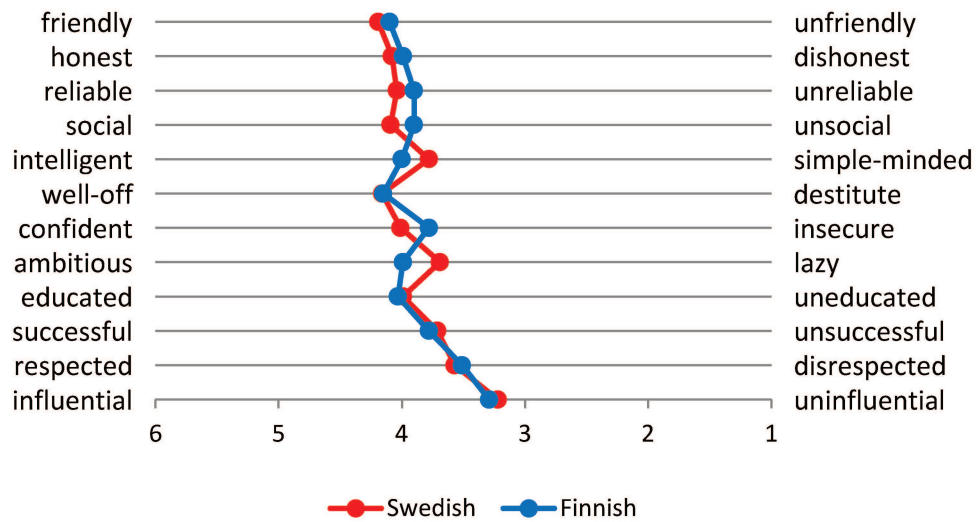
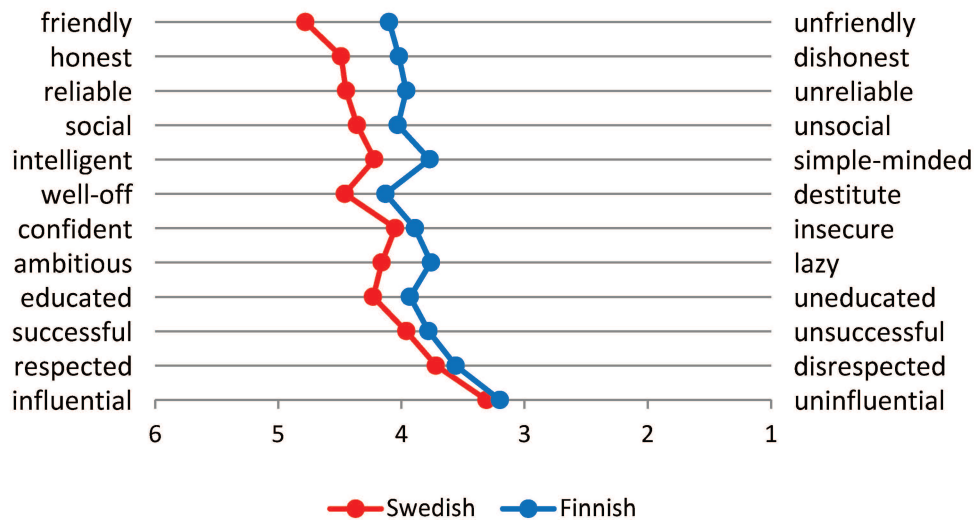


Fig. 7: Joensuu and Tornio: the female guises



region as the given studied town or from the neighbouring region. Male participants are here, too, underrepresented with a proportion of 41 %.

5.4.2.1 Evaluations of the male guises

Regarding the male speaker, the participants of Helsinki and Vaasa did not make a statistically significant and in everyday life situations meaningful, language-based distinction on any of the scales (0,221–0,279 points).

Fig. 8: Helsinki and Vaasa: the male guises

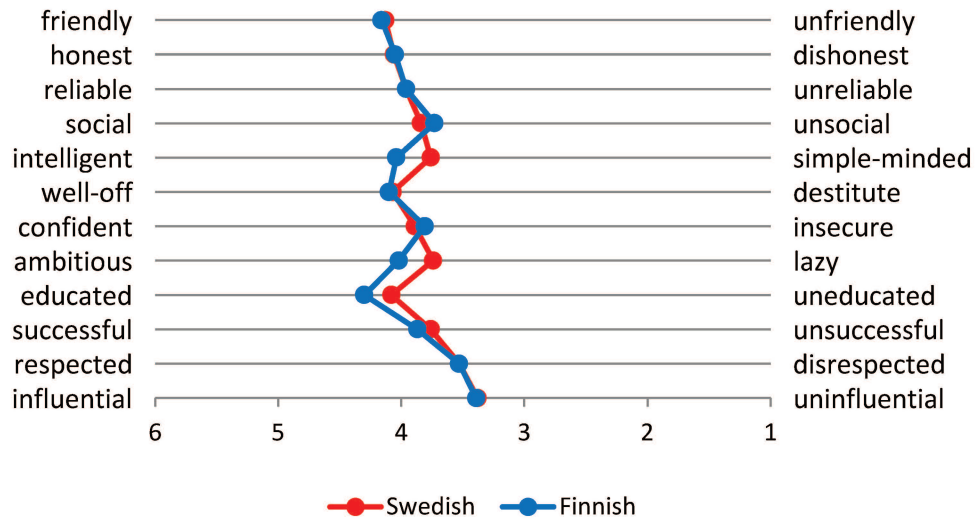
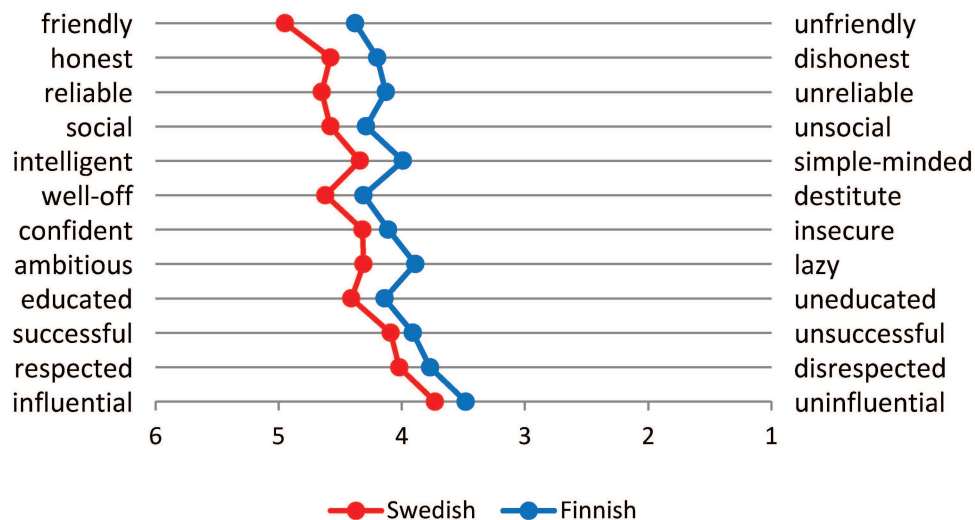


Fig. 9: Helsinki and Vaasa: the female guises



5.4.2.2 Evaluations of the female guises

Regarding the female speaker, we see a very similar pattern of evaluation in Helsinki/Vaasa as earlier in Joensuu/Tornio: also in the bilingual locations, the speaker received higher scores on the scales »friendliness« (0,569 points), »reliability« (0,529 points) and »ambitiousness« (0,415 points), when she read in Swedish. For the scales »honesty« and »intelligence«, too, a tendency towards a distinction is visible: however, the average mean score differences are smaller compared to Joensuu/Tornio (0,379 resp. 0,348 points). The differences are still greater on these than on the rest of the scales (0,179–0,315 points). See figures 8 and 9.

5.4.3 Joensuu/Tornio and Helsinki/Vaasa in comparison

5.4.2.1 *The matched guise-test*

Comparing the evaluation of the two speakers in the two paired research places, we find no significant difference that could be regarded as meaningful in specific situations for the male speaker. The female speaker received higher scores regardless of language from participants in Helsinki/Vaasa than Joensuu/Tornio. Again, although the differences are statistically significant, they are probably too small to have an impact in everyday life situations, with one exception: the female speaker was perceived as more influential when reading in Swedish by participants in Helsinki/Vaasa (0,401 points). See figures 10–13 on the next double page.

5.4.2.2 *The questionnaire*

Analysing the answers to questions regarding Finland's language policy separately for the two pairs of towns, a clear pattern seems to emerge: there are less tensions between the language groups in the bilingual than in the monolingual towns, and Swedish enjoys a higher prestige.

Splitting up the data and analysing each town on its own, the pattern changes: regarding Joensuu and Tornio, the short distance of the latter to a Swedish-speaking area (Sweden) clearly has an effect on pupils' expectations of benefitting from learning Swedish. On the other hand – and at first glance counter-intuitively –, in no other of the five studied towns, is there a higher proportion of participants who would not grant Swedish in Finland the status of a national language!

Also among the bilingual towns, we discovered somewhat unexpected results: compared to Helsinki, in the town with the higher proportion of Swedish-speakers, almost 10 % fewer speakers of Finnish would grant Swedish the status of a national language.

The influencing factors on attitudes and opinions are manifold and not limited to one's mother tongue or home town or region of Finland. They are not even necessarily speaker-immanent.

The participants characterise the **relationship** between speakers of Finnish and speakers of Swedish more often as very or fairly tense on a more abstract level (in Finland or in their own municipality) than on an individual/local level with regard to the respective other linguistic group. However, participants whose mother tongue is Swedish describe the relationship as very tense most often in Finland and least often regarding themselves, whereas for speakers of Finnish, the opposite holds true. Overall, Swedish-speaking Finns characterise the relationship between the two language groups on a state and local level to a much bigger extent as very or fairly tense. For their individual relationship, this is the case only for Finnish-speaking Finns (see figure 14 on page 16). Also more than one in four Swedish-speaking Finn has had the impression that they were being bullied or discriminated against based on their mother tongue (see figure 15 on page 16).

Fig. 10: The Swedish guises of the male speaker

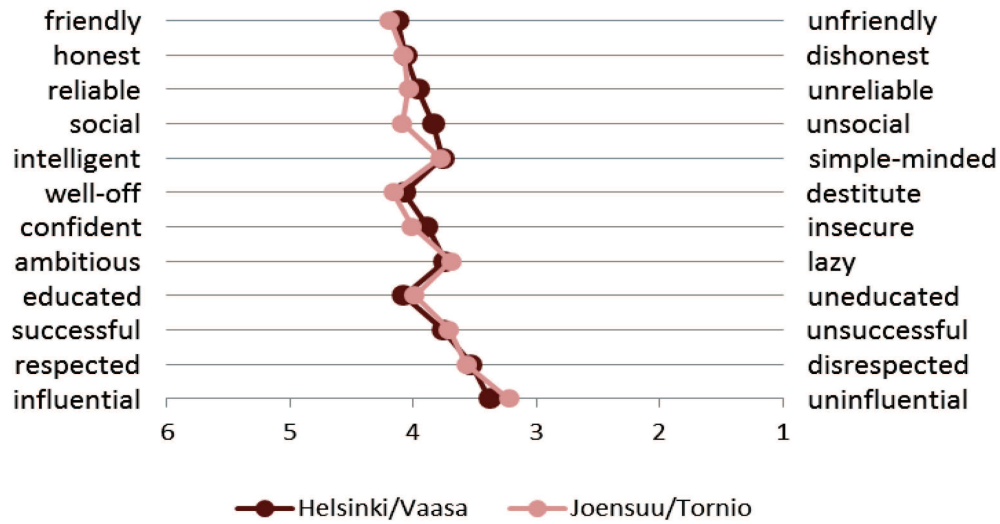


Fig. 11: The Swedish guises of the female speaker

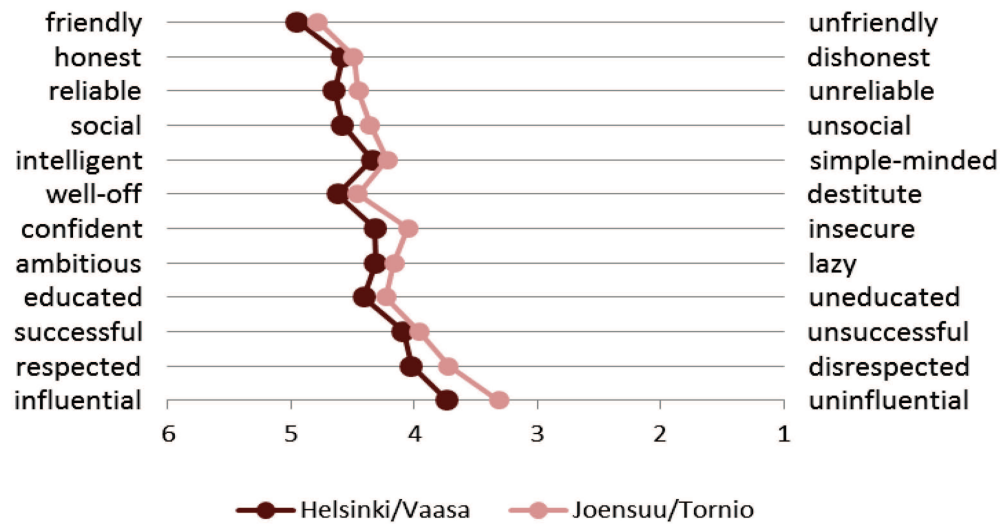


Fig. 12: The Finnish guises of the male speaker

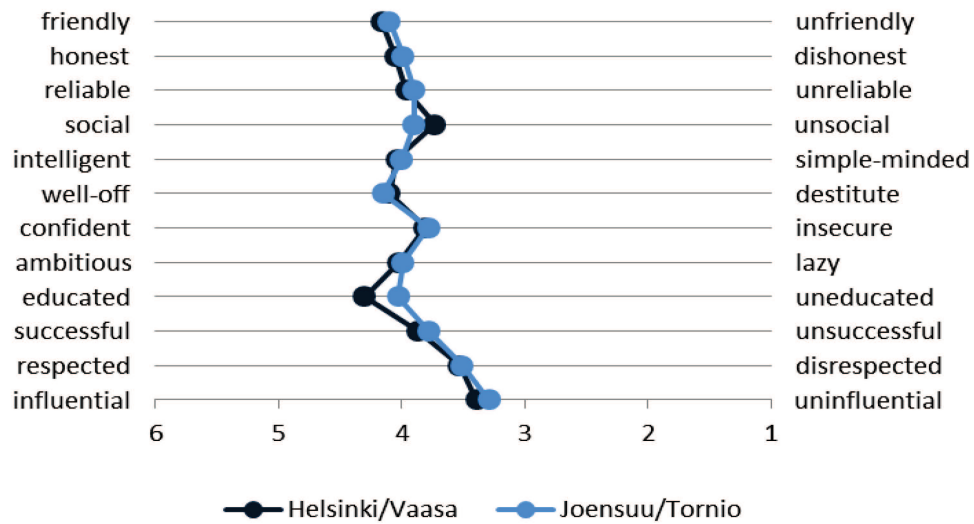


Fig. 13: The Finnish guises of the female speaker

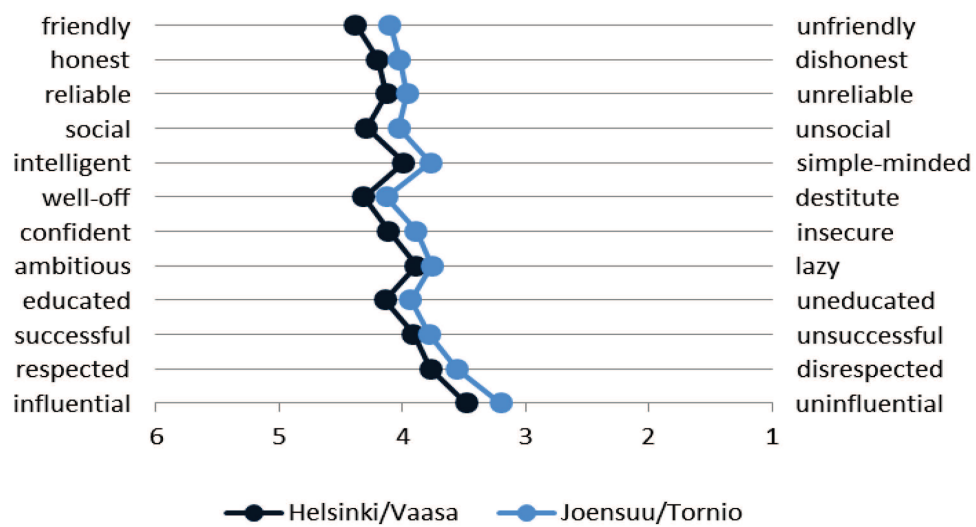


Fig. 14: The relationship between the speakers of Finnish and of the Swedish ones

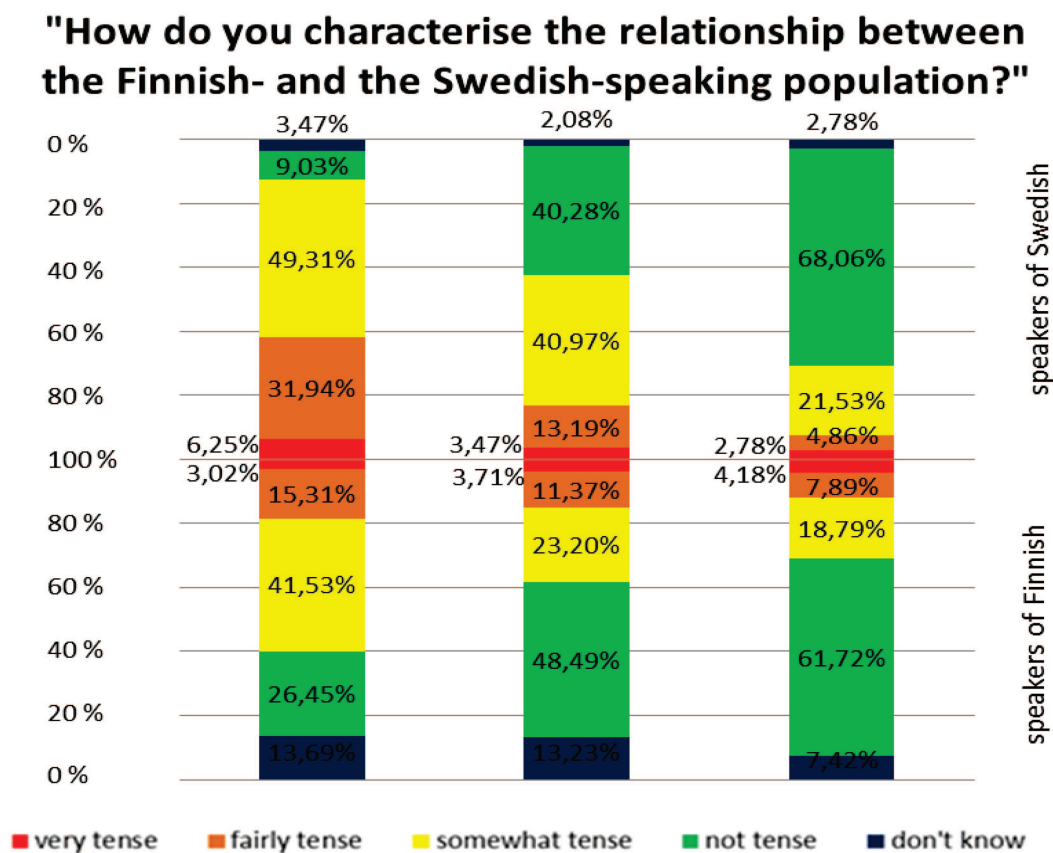


Fig. 15: Self-assessment of discrimination against language

