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## 14 FINNISH

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**FINNISH**, natively *suomi* or *suomen kieli*, belongs to the Baltic-Finnic branch of the Finno-Ugric languages. [See Uralic Languages.] In 1988, it was spoken by some 4.6 million people in Finland—almost 95 percent of the population. Sizeable Finnish-speaking minorities exist in Sweden, the United States, Canada, and Australia, totaling more than 500,000. (For reference, see L. Hakulinen 1979, A. Hakulinen & Karlsson 1980, Karlsson 1983a,b, and Branch 1987.)

The basic word stock is Finno-Ugric. There are five major strata of borrowed words: Old Indo-European (in several instances, Indo-Aryan), Old Baltic, Old Germanic, Slavic (especially Russian), and Swedish. Recently, English has had some impact.

There are eight regional dialects of Finnish, as shown on Map 1. The social stratification of Finnish is not pronounced.

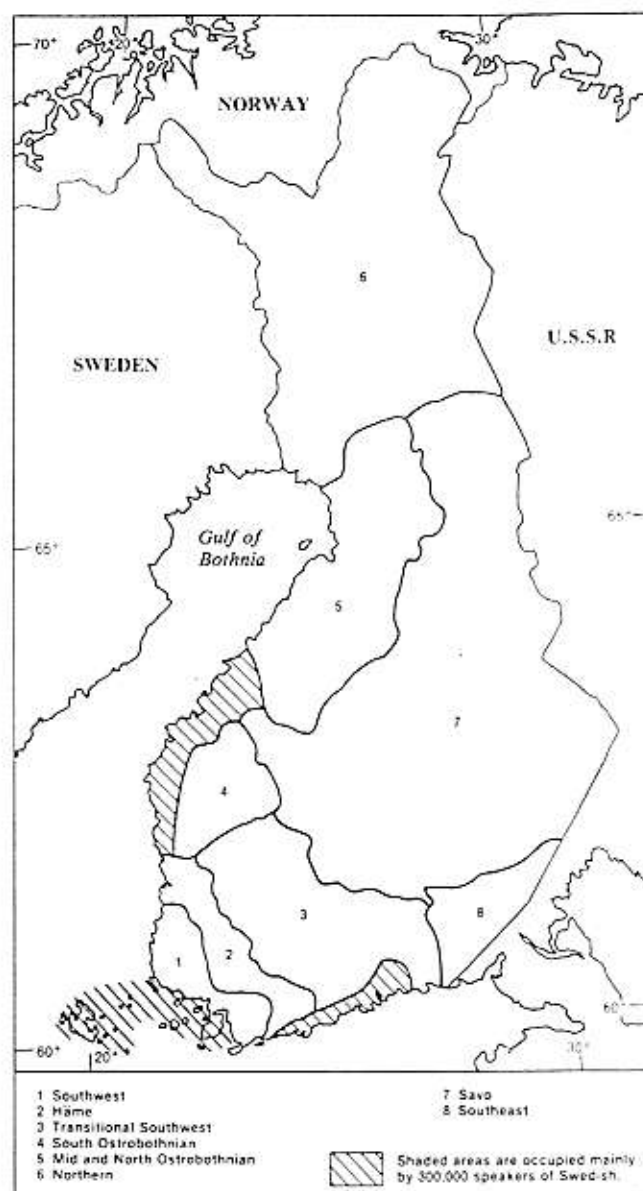
The Finnish standard language was primarily based on the southwestern dialects. Its first coherent written manifestations are the parts of the Bible translated by Mikael Agricola in the early 16th century. In the mid-19th century, Standard Finnish also absorbed major influences from the eastern dialects, especially that of Savo.

**1. Phonology.** The phonological system comprises eight vowels and thirteen consonants, as shown in Tables 1–2. Primary word stress is always fixed on the first syllable.

All vowels occur contrastively short and long (phonemically double) in both stressed and unstressed positions. There are eighteen phonologically distinct diphthongs: *eī āi öi yi ui ai oi, au ou eu iu, äy öy ey iy, ie uo yö*.

Of the consonant phonemes, *d y* mostly occur in morphophonological alternating pairs. The consonants *p t k s l r m n ŋ* occur contrastively short and long (phonemically double). The consonant *f* is fairly well accepted in borrowed words; *b d g š* are less so, and tend to be replaced by *p t k s* respectively.

The relationship between phonological and graphemic structure is almost one-to-one in full-form, careful pronunciations, though *ŋk* is written as *(nk)*, and *ŋŋ* as *(ng)*. It is often claimed that the Finnish writing system adheres to the principle 'One phoneme, one grapheme';



MAP 1. *Finnish Dialect Areas*

however, colloquial discourse typically contains many types of reductions (especially vowel loss) which detract from this ideal.

Vowel harmony is the main phonotactic feature. In native, non-compound words, the back vowels *u o a* never co-occur with the front vowels *y ö ä*. The vowels *i e* are neutral, and co-occur with both harmonizing vowel sets; thus there are stems like *lumī* 'snow', *talo* 'house', *pöytä* 'table', *lusikka* 'spoon', *värttinä* 'spindle', *veto* 'draft', *vety* 'hydrogen', *vika* 'fault', *ikä* 'age'. Suffixes which contain harmonizing vowels are subject to the same restriction. These endings have two alter-

TABLE 1. *Finnish Vowel Phonemes*

	Front		Back	
	Unrounded	Rounded	Unrounded	Rounded
High	i	y		u
Mid	e	ø [ø]		o
Low	ä [æ]		a	

TABLE 2. *Finnish Consonant Phonemes*; Consonants in parentheses are limited to loan words.

	Labial	Apical	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Occlusives					
Voiceless	p	t		k	
Voiced	(b)	d		(g)	
Fricatives					
Voiceless	(f)	s	(ʃ)		h
Voiced	v				
Nasals	m	n		ŋ	
Vibrant		r			
Lateral		l			
Semivowel			j		

nants, depending on the vowel structure of the stem; e.g. *kadu-lla* 'in the street', *pöydä-llä* 'on the table'. After a neutral stem, the front-vowel alternant is used, e.g. *Helsinki-ssä* 'in Helsinki'.

Native Finnish words contain no word-initial or word-final consonant clusters; their syllables never begin with more than one consonant, or end with more than two.

The most conspicuous morphophonological feature is consonant gradation: typically, the stops *p t k* are 'weakened' in certain morphological environments, i.e. when suffixes of certain types are added to stems. Both nouns and verbs are subject to gradation. The double stops *pp tt kk* alternate with single *p t k*—e.g. *kauppa* 'shop', pl. *kaupa-t* (see also Table 3). The single stops *p t k* alternate in ways which depend on the phonological nature of the preceding segment; e.g., they are assimilated to a homorganic nasal or liquid in *kampa* 'comb', *kamma-ssa* 'in the comb'; *ranta* 'beach', *ranna-lla* 'on the beach'; *kulta* 'gold', *kulla-lla* 'with the gold'; *parta* 'beard', *parra-ssa* 'in the beard'. After a vowel, *p* alternates with *v*, *t* with *d*, and *k* with zero or *j*.

Vowel mutation applies to stem-final vowels before certain endings with initial *i*, e.g. plural *-i* and past *-i*, and includes the following processes:

- (a) Double vowels are shortened; *maa* 'country', *ma-i-ssa* 'in the countries'.

- (b) The vowel *i* is lost at the end of a diphthong; *hai* 'shark', *ha-i-ssa* 'in the sharks'.
- (c) Diphthongs ending in mid vowels lose their first vowel; *tie* 'road', *te-i-llä* 'on the roads'.
- (d) *e* (and often *ä*) is dropped; *kieli* 'language' (*kiele-*), *kiel-i-ssä* 'in the languages'.
- (e) The vowel *a* alternates with *o*, if the first stem vowel is *i e a*; otherwise, *a* is dropped; *virka* 'job', *viro-i-ssa* (with consonant gradation); *muna* 'egg', *mun-i-ssa* 'in the eggs'.

**2. Morphology.** Finnish is a suffixing, relatively agglutinative language. However, since there are several dozen morphophonological alternations like gradation and vowel mutation, Finnish is by no means typically agglutinative.

Nouns and adjectives are inflected in the same way; the inflectional categories are number (singular or plural) and case (a typical case/number paradigm is shown in Table 3). The thirteen cases shown are productive for all nouns and adjectives. Note the consonant gradation *pp/p*, and the mutation *a/o* before plural *-i*.

Only personal pronouns have distinct accusative forms, in *-t*. An additional case, the instructive in *-n*, is non-productive for most nouns.

Possessive inflections marking person and number may follow any case form; they are obligatory with the comitative. For the elative singular form *kaupasta*, the possessive forms are *kaupa-sta-ni* 'from my shop', *kaupa-sta-mme* 'our', *kaupa-sta-si* 'your sg.', *kaupa-sta-nne* 'your pl.', *kaupa-sta-an* or *kaupa-sta-nsa* 'her/his/their'.

Finite verbs are inflected for voice (active or passive).

TABLE 3. *Finnish Noun Cases*

	Singular	Plural	Gloss for Case
Nominative	<i>kauppa</i> 'shop'	<i>kaupot</i>	definite (quantity)
Genitive	<i>kaupa-n</i>	<i>kauppo-j-en</i>	pertaining to
Partitive	<i>kauppa-a</i>	<i>kauppo-j-a</i>	indefinite (quantity)
Inessive	<i>kaupa-ssa</i>	<i>kaupo-i-ssa</i>	in
Elicative	<i>kaupa-sta</i>	<i>kaupo-i-sta</i>	from (inside)
Illative	<i>kauppa-an</i>	<i>kauppo-i-hin</i>	into
Adessive	<i>kaupa-lla</i>	<i>kaupo-i-lla</i>	at, with, on
Ablative	<i>kaupa-lta</i>	<i>kaupo-i-lta</i>	from
Allative	<i>kaupa-lle</i>	<i>kaupo-i-lle</i>	to (local)
Essive	<i>kauppa-na</i>	<i>kauppo-i-na</i>	as
Translative	<i>kaupa-ksi</i>	<i>kaupo-i-ksi</i>	(transformed) into
Comitative	<i>kauppo-ine-</i>	<i>kauppo-ine-</i>	accompanied by
Abessive	<i>kaupa-tta</i>	<i>kaupo-i-tta</i>	without

TABLE 4. Finnish Verb Paradigms

	Present		Conditional		Past	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
1	<i>anna-n</i>	<i>anna-mme</i>	<i>anta-isi-n</i>	<i>anta-isi-mme</i>	<i>anno-i-n</i>	<i>anno-i-mme</i>
2	<i>anna-t</i>	<i>anna-tte</i>	<i>anta-isi-t</i>	<i>anta-isi-tte</i>	<i>anno-i-t</i>	<i>anno-i-tte</i>
3	<i>anta-a</i>	<i>anta-vat</i>	<i>anta-isi</i>	<i>anta-isi-vat</i>	<i>anto-i</i>	<i>anto-i-vat</i>
4		<i>anne-ta-an</i>	<i>anne-tta-isi-in</i>		<i>anne-tt-i-in</i>	

tense/mood, and person of subject. There are two simple tenses (non-past and past); four moods (indicative, conditional, potential, and imperative); and three persons in both singular and plural. The passive category expresses an indefinite 4th person, signaled discontinuously by one morph of voice and one of person. Typical finite forms for the verb *anta-* 'give' appear in Table 4 (note the consonant gradation).

The non-finite verb forms comprise six participles and three infinitives. Most participles have dual uses: as nominal modifiers, and as parts of complex tense forms. As modifiers, the participles are productively inflected like adjectives. Nominative singular forms of the participles for *anta-* 'give' are shown in Table 5.

The infinitives, with limited case inflection, are most often used as adverbial modifiers; examples are shown in Table 6. They lack number.

Finnish has hundreds of postpositions, most of which govern the genitive case (e.g. *talo-n takana* 'behind the house'). It has only a handful of prepositions.

**3. Syntax.** The basic word order patterns are S[subject] V[erb] O[bject] A[dverbial], S + V + Predicate Complement—and, in existential clauses, (A)VS. However, clause-level word order is relatively free. Any constituent may be topicalized to initial position for discourse reasons; and adverbials may be inserted anywhere at clause level (e.g. ASVO, SAVO, SVAO). All permutations within SVO clauses are grammatical, given the proper context. Within basic phrases like NPs and APs, word order is fixed.

TABLE 5. Finnish Participles

Name	Form	Gloss
1st Active	<i>anta-va</i>	'giving'
1st Passive	<i>anne-tta-va</i>	'which could/should be given'
2nd Active	<i>anta-nut</i>	'given (by someone)'
2nd Passive	<i>anne-ttu</i>	'given (passive)'
Negative	<i>anta-ma-ton</i>	'which would not give or be given'
Agentive	<i>anta-ma</i>	'given (by someone)'

A basic case-marking opposition for NPs is partitive vs. non-partitive. The former (Denison 1957) expresses an indefinite quantity or amount of a mass entity, including plurals of count nouns:

## (1) Nominative Subject

- (1a) *Kadu-lla on auto.*  
street-AD.ESS.SG is car(NOM.SG)  
'There is a car in the street.' (Note definite quantity.)
- (1b) *Auto on kadu-lla.*  
car(NOM.SG) is street-AD.ESS.SG  
'The car is in the street.'
- (1c) *Auto-t ovat kadu-lla.*  
car(NOM.PL) are street-AD.ESS.SG  
'The cars are in the street.'
- (1d) *Hillo on purki-ssa.*  
jelly(NOM.SG) is jar-IN.ESS.SG  
'The jelly is in the jar.'

## (2) Partitive Subject

- (2a) *Kadu-lla on auto-j-a.*  
street-AD.ESS.SG is car-PART.PL  
'There are cars in the street.'
- (2b) *Purki-ssa on hillo-a.*  
jar-IN.ESS.SG is jelly-PART.SG  
'There is jelly in the jar.'

The partitive case distinction is also related to polarity and aspect: objects in the scope of negation are normally in the partitive, as are objects of a verb with irresultative aspect.

Finnish is not a subject-prominent language. There are several types of zero-place verbs, especially meteorological and causative ones: *Sata-a* 'It rains', *Janotta-a* 'I feel thirsty.' Independent 1st/2nd person pronominal subjects are normally omitted, cf. *(me) tule-mme* 'we come'. Generic sentences are normally subjectless.

The finite verb agrees in person and number with the nominative subject. In noun phrases, inflectable deter-

TABLE 6. *Finnish Infinitives*

Name	Case	Form	Gloss
1st Inf.	Nominative	<i>anta-a</i>	'(to) give'
	Translative	<i>anta-a-kse-</i>	'(in order to) give' (+ poss. suff.)
2nd Inf.	Inessive	<i>anta-e-ssa-</i>	'(when X is) giving' (+ poss. suff.)
		<i>anne-tta-e-ssa</i>	'(when) giving'
3rd Inf.	Instructive	<i>anta-e-n</i>	'giving'
	Inessive	<i>anta-ma-ssa</i>	'giving (progressive)'
	Elicative	<i>anta-ma-sta</i>	'from giving (directional)'
	Illative	<i>anta-ma-an</i>	'to give (directional)'
	Adessive	<i>anta-ma-lla</i>	'by giving (instrumental)'
	Abessive	<i>anta-ma-tta</i>	'without giving (caritive)'

miners and adjectives agree in case and number with the head noun:

- (3) *tuo iso auto* 'that big car' (nom. sg.)  
*tuo-n iso-n auto-n* 'of that big car' (gen. sg.)  
*no-i-ssa iso-i-ssa auto-i-ssa* 'in those big cars' (iness. pl.)

Clause negation is manifested as a special finite verb *e-*, agreeing in person and number with the grammatical subject: e.g., *Minä osta-n auto-n huomenna* 'I shall buy a car tomorrow', but negative *Minä e-n osta auto-a huomenna* (the negative triggers partitive object).

NPs may contain relative clauses, 'that' clauses, and indirect questions as postmodifiers to the head noun. Relative clauses may also be preposed, with the dependents of the verb in inverted order; the verb then takes one of the participial forms listed above.

On the clause level, 'that' clauses (as object complements of transitive verbs) and 'when' clauses may also be rendered by non-finite constructions based on participles and infinitives. For 'that' clauses, the corresponding participle construction is based on the genitive singular of the 1st active participle; for 'when' clauses, it is based on the inessive case of the 2nd infinitive, or on the partitive case of the 2nd passive participle (depending on tense relations). In these non-finite constructions, the subject of the corresponding 'that' or 'when' clause is rendered either by the genitive case, or by a possessive ending.

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**FORMAL GRAMMAR.** Since at least Wilhelm von Humboldt [*q.v.*], human language has been viewed as a system which makes infinite use of finite means. All languages incorporate RECURSIVE devices which permit sentences to be of indefinite length—coordination, complementation, and relativization. Hence, most characterizations of human language, i.e. grammars, have been algebraic, using formal rules that assign STRUCTURAL DESCRIPTIONS to an infinite number of utterances. Adopting a standard mathematical definition, a FUNCTION is said to generate when values are given for VARIABLES. A GENERATIVE GRAMMAR, then, is a formal system which provides explicitly the finite mechanisms available to the brain for infinite use, in such a way that empirical consequences can be derived and tested for accuracy as in the natural sciences. Different forms of generative grammars have been proposed.