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RESEARCH PROGRAMME 2013–2020
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Programme description from programme application

Sammanfattning på svenska

Många av världens språk är s.k. pluricentriska språk, dvs. språk som talas i fler länder än ett. Bara i Europa finns en rad exempel på sådana språk, till exempel engelska, franska, tyska och svenska. Men samtalar man på samma sätt i olika länder bara för att man talar samma språk? Eller ser de kommunikativa mönstren olika ut? Det vet vi i dagsläget nästan inget om, och det är just det som programmet Interaktion och variation i pluricentriska språk undersöker. Programmet jämför samma typer av samtal i liknande miljöer i Sverige och Finland, med fokus på domänerna service, lärande och vård där en stor del av samtal utanför den privata sfären utspelar sig. Samtal både mellan personer som känner varandra och sådana som inte gör det kommer att spelas in för att se vilka skillnader det finns i samtalsmönstren mellan sverigesvenska och finlandssvenska samtal. Dessutom upprättas en sökbar databas som också kan användas till framtida undersökningar. En viktig del inom programmet är att bidra till den internationella teoriutvecklingen inom forskningen om pluricentriska språk. Genom att använda teorier och metoder som samtalsanalys och kommunikationsetnografi kan programmet belysa och förklara pluricentriska språkfenomen som tidigare forskning inte riktigt kunnat komma åt. På så vis bidrar programmet till att utveckla den s.k. variationspragmatiken samtidigt som vi får ny kunskap om vad som är unikt för finlandssvenska respektive sverigesvenska samtal.

Summary in English

Pluricentric languages are languages spoken in more than one country. In Europe alone there are many examples: English, French, German and Swedish. But do people interact the same way in different countries simply because they speak the same language? Or do the communicative patterns vary? We know very little about this, which is exactly what the programme Interaction and Variation in Pluricentric Languages investigates.

The program compares the same type of interactions in similar environments in Sweden and Finland, focussing on the service, education and healthcare domains, where much of the interaction outside the private domain takes place. Conversations between people who know each other and ones who don't will be recorded, to chart differences in communicative patterns between Sweden Swedish and Finland Swedish conversations. Moreover, a searchable database, also available for future research, will be created.

An important part of the program is to contribute to the international theory development for the study of pluricentric languages. Using theories and methods such as conversation analysis and ethnography of communication the program will be able to describe and explain pluricentric language phenomena that previous research has not been able to identify. In this way the program contributes to the development of the field of variational pragmatics while also gaining new insights into what are unique patterns in Finland Swedish and Sweden Swedish conversations.

Programme description

1. Research problem, aim and overall design of the programme

Communication across national and linguistic borders plays an important role in today's Europe.

Language contact always involves cultural encounters since the ways we express ourselves are linked to the norms and expectations of the particular community where a language is spoken. Speakers of different first languages are often aware of the potential cross-cultural miscommunication their different linguistic backgrounds might cause, while interlocutors who speak the same language, but belong to different speech communities – broadly speaking different nations – are not as prepared for any communicative failure. In Europe there are many languages that have more than one national centre, so called pluricentric languages. For example, English, French, German, Dutch and Swedish are languages that have official language status in more than one European nation. Despite this, there has been very little research into how (national) varieties of pluricentric languages differ in terms of interactional and communicative patterns as a result of their use in different societies. Our research programme will make a significant contribution here.

We investigate communicative patterns in pluricentric languages based on Swedish data from Sweden and Finland. Swedish is particularly interesting as a research object since it highlights the two aspects that research into pluricentric languages always has to relate to: the relationship between dominant and non-dominant varieties, and between majority and minority languages. Sweden Swedish is a dominant variety and Finland Swedish a non-dominant one. In Sweden, Swedish is spoken by the vast majority while in Finland it is only spoken by 5.4 % of the population. Moreover, the majority language in Finland is Finnish, which is typologically significantly different from Swedish.

The overall aim of the research programme is to contribute to the theoretical development of the (socio)linguistic subfield called variational pragmatics and to introduce a new framework for the study of pluricentric languages. This will be achieved by adopting an interactional perspective in the analysis of communication strategies. More specifically, the programme's research task is to document and compare Swedish language use in Finland and Sweden with regard to communicative patterns.

The research programme falls into five interrelated projects. Three projects are 'domain projects' investigating communication in a particular domain of social life and language use: 1) the service domain (service project), 2) the education domain (education project) and 3) the healthcare domain (healthcare project). These domains have been chosen since they play a fundamental role in society. For each project, comparable data will be collected in Sweden and in Finland. The results of the domain projects will form the basis for 4) a theory forming project (contextual project). This project will relate micro analyses from the domain projects to a larger societal context, e.g. cultural standards and speaker attitudes to language use. The fifth project (corpus project), which is of a different type, involves the creation of a large searchable database based on the data from the domain projects. It will be the first ever combined corpus of fully compatible Finland-Swedish and Sweden-Swedish interactional data, and will be a valuable resource, not only for the proposed programme, but also for future research on spoken Swedish. The design of the research programme is described in detail in section 4 of this application.

The programme will lead to an increased knowledge and awareness of communicative variation in pluricentric languages in general, and the communicative patterns that are characteristic of Swedish spoken in Sweden and Finland in particular. The programme will also further our knowledge of interactional and pragmatic features of Swedish more generally, and it is expected that the findings will be useful in the teaching of Swedish as a second language both in Finland and Sweden as well as in the teaching of communication skills, e.g. in the private sector services. The decisions on the exact communicative patterns to be studied will be made on the basis of the project data. Relevant phenomena include, for example:

- a) How a social encounter is introduced and concluded (involving use of pragmatic phraseology such as greetings and farewells);
- b) How praise and criticism are formulated and received;
- c) How problems that occur during the interaction are treated and solved;
- d) How humour and laughter are used for various purposes.

While there are well-established links between linguists working on Swedish in Sweden and Finland,

surprisingly, no collaborative investigation comparing communicative patterns in the two Swedish varieties has been carried out to date. Therefore, a key aspect of our research design is its collaborative nature with a research group that represents both countries and both varieties, and intends to solve a well-defined research task using the same methods and comparable empirical datasets. The programme is coordinated by four senior researchers, based at four research institutions: professor Catrin Norrby at Stockholm University (from where the programme is administered), professor Jan Lindström at the University of Helsinki, professor Camilla Wide at the University of Turku and Dr Jenny Nilsson, Swedish Academy researcher at the Institute for Language and Folklore in Gothenburg.

2. Relation to international research and its most important results

2.1. Research on pluricentric languages

There is currently great interest in describing different varieties of pluricentric languages; for example the first international conference on pluricentric languages was held in Braga, Portugal in 2010 (see da Silva, Torres & Gonçalves 2011). At the conference, several contributions highlighted the need to expand the research paradigm to include investigations of actual language use (e.g. Lüdi 2011) and to document non-dominant varieties in a systematic manner (Muhr in press). An international network for research on non-dominant varieties was formed at the conference and an inaugural network meeting was held in Graz, Austria in 2011.

The term ‘pluricentric language’ refers to languages which have more than one national centre, or languages with official status in two or more countries. A common division of pluricentric languages is between dominant and non-dominant national varieties. The relationship between such varieties is asymmetrical and speakers of non-dominant varieties have been found to have better knowledge of, and more positive attitudes to, the dominant variety than vice versa. At the same time, language policy, language norms and attitudes to one’s own variety tend to differ between dominant and non-dominant national varieties (see Ammon 1989, 2005, Clyne 1992a, b, Reuter 2006). Speakers of a non-dominant variety might feel that their variety is of lesser value than the dominant variety (Ammon 2005:1540). For example, this might be expressed in greater regulation of language use in dictionaries and wordlists, handbooks and texts on language cultivation (Laureys 2001), or in different attitudes to outside pressure from foreign languages such as English (Clyne 1992b:5). On the other hand, it has been found that speakers of dominant varieties display poor knowledge of the characteristics of non-dominant varieties (see e.g. Clyne 1992a, Clyne, Norrby & Warren 2009, Clyne & Norrby 2011).

International research on the use of pluricentric languages has mainly concerned variation in formal aspects of language – pronunciation, vocabulary, morphology and syntax – between different national varieties of one and the same language (see e.g. Clyne 1992a, da Silva, Torres & Gonçalves 2011, Muhr in press). It has aimed at documenting the partially different explicit norms that have developed, in particular in spelling, the lexicon and inflectional morphology. Much of the work undertaken therefore falls within the area of language policy and planning where codification of national varieties and the development of language regulating instruments, such as grammars and dictionaries, have played a prominent role (cf. Ammon 2005:1541, Clyne 1989:363f., Muhr in press). The description of Swedish as a pluricentric language does not differ in any significant way from the description above, except for the fact that the non-dominant variety, Finland Swedish, is particularly well documented in terms of phonological, morphological and lexical features (see e.g. Reuter 1992) as well as syntactic features compared to many other non-dominant varieties of pluricentric languages (see e.g. Wide & Lyngfelt 2009).

In contrast, the pragmatic and interactional aspects of language use in pluricentric languages, and the more implicit norms that may emerge through actual use, have not attracted much research interest to date. There are, however, a few notable exceptions. In a large-scale research project funded by the Australian Research Council (2003–2005) the research team investigated styles of address in contemporary English, French, German and Swedish (see in particular Clyne, Norrby & Warren 2009). The project explored

reported address practices in the following domains: family, school, university, workplace and service encounters, and in different mediums (spoken, written, computer mediated) based on rich data from focus groups, questionnaires, interviews, internet forums and participant observation in ten European cities (Clyne, Norrby & Warren 2009: 9–12). Importantly, the project also focused on national variation in address, primarily based on data from the German- and Swedish-speaking sites. The results showed clear national differences in reported use of and attitudes to address in Austria compared to Germany, and in Finland vis-à-vis Sweden. For example, there is a stronger tendency to mark social distance and respect through the use of formal address in Finland compared to more informal address practices in Sweden. (See *ibid*: 127–153, Clyne & Norrby 2011, Norrby 2006, Norrby, Nilsson & Nyblom 2007). Another important exception to the system-bias in research on pluricentric languages are the contributions in Schneider & Barron (2008a) which cast light on the pragmatic variation in different varieties of English, Dutch, German, French and Spanish, e.g. features of politeness, small-talk and the use of response particles. While these investigations take variation in language use into account they, however, stop short of investigating actual talk-in-interaction. In our programme we will extend the theoretical and methodological framework of variational pragmatics by applying an interactional perspective and by using naturalistic, non-experimental data.

2.1 Research on communicative patterns in Swedish

Research on communicative patterns has been very lively both in Sweden and Finland during the past decades, which is explained by the strong position of interactional research paradigms in both countries. There is a large body of research available for each variety, as well as for Finnish, which facilitates our own investigation of communicative patterns from a pluricentric perspective.

Early contributions are Allwood 1982 on Swedish communicative patterns and Östman's work on pragmatic markers in a Finland-Swedish and Nordic perspective (see e.g. 1986, 1996). A number of more recent interactional studies have also advanced our knowledge of the use of Swedish in different domains, for example in: doctor-patient consultations (e.g. Melander-Marttala 1995, Lindholm 2003), the home help services (e.g. A. Lindström 2005, A. Lindström & Heinemann 2009), higher education (e.g. Gunnarsson 2000, Nyroos 2010) and in service encounters (Tykesson-Bergman 2006). These investigations provide valuable insights into characteristic communicative patterns in each Swedish variety, which our programme will benefit from, but they do not include any cross-cultural comparisons between the national varieties.

The project 'Grammar in Conversation: a Study of Swedish', funded by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond (RJ) in 2000–2005 was essential for the interactional turn in research of spoken Swedish. This project gathered researchers from both Sweden and Finland, including Jan Lindström, Jenny Nilsson and Catrin Norrby in our programme. The project opened a window to the study and understanding of structures of language in real-time communication, including discourse markers, epistemic expressions, responsive utterances, and the expression of solidarity, blame and conflict (see Anward & Nordberg 2005, Engdahl & Londen 2007). One major outcome of the project was a monograph of an interactional grammar of Swedish written by Jan Lindström (2008) that laid the foundation for a structural account of discourse markers and utterance patterns of spoken Swedish. Also in an international perspective, this study belongs to the pioneering works within interactional linguistics. However, none of the studies in the project contrasted the national varieties of Swedish.

A more expressed comparative approach was taken in a fairly recent project on the syntax of Finland Swedish: 'Syntactic features in a comparative perspective', funded by the Society for Swedish Literature (SLS) in Finland in 2003–2006 and led by Camilla Wide. While the project did not focus solely on spoken language, it nonetheless developed the research agenda of interactional linguistics towards construction grammar and variational pragmatics. The project explored characteristics of utterance formation in dialectal and regional varieties of Finland Swedish, including phenomena like clausal presentational constructions, responsive utterances, and the discursive use of demonstrative pronouns and articles (see Wide & Lyngfelt 2009). Several studies in the project showed that the explanations of syntactic

differences between Finland Swedish and Sweden Swedish often have to be sought in pragmatic and interactional practices, which may differ from Sweden Swedish patterns, but show similarities with Finland Finnish patterns. However, the project lacked a research team from Sweden, which biased the comparative perspective towards phenomena specific to Finland Swedish.

A few small-scale studies have included a comparative perspective. Hakulinen & Saari (1995) investigate the use of discourse particles in Finnish and Finland Swedish, and also comment briefly on the relationship between Finland Swedish and Sweden Swedish. Their study demonstrates striking similarities between Finland Swedish and Finnish, while there are distinct differences between Finland Swedish and Sweden Swedish particle use. Saari (1995, 1997) discusses differences in politeness strategies between the two national varieties and suggests that Finland Swedish is characterised by more indirect speech patterns and negative politeness strategies (see Brown & Levinson 1987). The difference may be a result of contact with Finnish, and Finnish communicative patterns (see e.g. Yli-Vakkuri 2005). Studies with a comparative aim are also Lindström (2000) who investigates address and greetings in service encounters in Finland compared to Sweden, and Fremer who documents personal reference in Finland-Swedish and Sweden-Swedish service encounters (1997) as well as patterns of address in service encounters (1998).

As outlined above, there is extensive research on communicative patterns in Swedish, but earlier studies are either based on limited data or lack a comparative focus. In contrast, our proposed programme is a comprehensive, comparative, bi-nationally coordinated investigation of communicative patterns in Swedish as a pluricentric language.

3. Theoretical and methodological framework

In order to investigate language variation in communicative patterns our points of departure are: variational pragmatics, conversational analysis (CA), interactional linguistics and ethnography of communication. By a combination of preselected categories (typical of research paradigms such as variational pragmatics) and an unprejudiced search for any interactional devices that may form recurrent patterns (typical of highly inductive and data-driven methods such as CA, interactional linguistics and ethnography), the programme will contribute to the methodological development for the analysis of pluricentric languages in general, as well as to our understanding of what are typical, and perhaps even unique, features of the respective varieties of Swedish.

In recent decades, the research field of pragmatics has branched out substantially: researchers have proposed various sub-disciplines such as interactional pragmatics (Hickey & Stewart 2005) and intercultural pragmatics (Schneider & Barron 2008a, Barron & Schneider 2009). Variational pragmatics is considered a sub-discipline of the latter and has established itself as a research paradigm in its own right in the past few years. It can be described as a combination of the fields of pragmatics and sociolinguistics with influences from dialectology and ethnology (Schneider & Barron 2008a). Like any sociolinguistic endeavour, variational pragmatics concerns language variation, but does so by focusing on phenomena at the pragmatic level of language, such as greetings, thanking, compliments, promises, responses and farewells (Schlieben-Lange & Weydt 1978:261f., Wolfram & Schilling-Estes 1998/2006, Schneider & Barron 2008b:8ff.).

Muhr (2008) proposes a useful division between macro pragmatics and micro pragmatics. The former relates to socio-historical developments within and between nations, languages and cultures, which results in different linguistic identities, ideologies and norms at the societal level. The latter concerns language use and interaction in concrete situations by individual members within a speech community. The projects in our programme primarily concern features at the micro pragmatic level, but there is a dialectical relationship between the micro and macro levels. On the one hand, the macro pragmatic dimension forms a basis for hypotheses about the kinds of specific communicative differences there might be between language use in Finland and Sweden. On the other hand, knowledge of micro level communication can help us explain pragmatic conditions at the macro level. In other words, it is important to relate observations about speakers' actual language use (talk-in-interaction) to the macro pragmatic level and to

examine if, and how, actions at the individual level correspond to variation at the societal level. For example, a significant historical and socio-political macro pragmatic factor is the national and linguistic continuity, which existed up until 1809 when Finland ceased to be a part of Sweden, and the discontinuity following the separation of the countries. Another important factor is the development of Finnish as a dominant national language in Finland, leading to increased language contact between Swedish and Finnish at different levels of society in Finland. Hypotheses as well as explanations of variation in actual language use (micro level) should therefore be related to the historical and socio-political circumstances (macro level) in the respective nations.

For example, Clyne, Norrby and Warren (2009) argue for a model that takes both the local (micro) and the global (macro) level into account in their study of address practices. Their model might prove useful for our inquiry into pragmatic routines in actual talk-in-interaction. As their study shows, interlocutors' shared beliefs and expectations about appropriate behaviour in a certain situation are linked to their partly shared histories and cultural experiences as members of a particular speech community. Their model takes into account the address rules of a language (or national variety of a language), the address preferences of the community and individuals, together with factors such as domain, institution and medium (2009:154).

Micro pragmatic aspects predominantly concern the pragmalinguistic rules, i.e. the established conventions for the realisation of communicative actions – e.g. direct or indirect, with or without lexical or syntactic downgraders (Schneider & Barron 2008b:14). Sociopragmatics refer to the socio-cultural rules in a speech community about what topics can, or should, be talked about in a given context. Praising the food at a dinner party is an example of a sociopragmatic convention in Swedish, i.e. guests are expected to perform such a speech action in the dinner party context. It is likely that the national varieties of Swedish share general sociopragmatic conventions to a large extent, while there might be considerable differences in how communicative actions, like praise in our dinner party example, are packaged linguistically, i.e. the pragmalinguistic conditions may differ (see Saari 1995:34f.).

In our micro pragmatic research we consider three aspects of language use: the formal level, the interpersonal level, and the interactional level, based on analyses of naturally occurring Finland Swedish and Sweden Swedish data. At the formal level we compare the use of linguistic markers associated with specific pragmatic tasks; an example from prior research is response tokens which have been studied in Finland Swedish (Green-Vänttinen 2001). At the interpersonal level we investigate, for example, how formally or informally, directly or indirectly speakers tend to express themselves; an example is the formulation of criticism and praise in the context of education. At the interactional level we study the organisation of the dialogical communication between interlocutors. Examples include routines for self-identification over the phone and for presenting the reason for the call or visit. Our results from a pilot study on routines for introductions over the phone indicate that there are systematic differences between Finland Swedish and Sweden Swedish in this respect (Norrby, Wide, Lindström & Nilsson in press).

Our methodological approach differs from the methods used in variational pragmatics so far. The traditional approach in the study of pragmatic variation, e.g. in cross-cultural pragmatics, has primarily been based on the introspective research tradition typical of the philosophy of language, e.g. speech act theory (see e.g. Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper 1989 for early examples). Investigations based on empirical data have typically been characterised by experimental methods, and the elicitation of certain structures, e.g. through discourse completion tasks (see e.g. Barron 2008, Schneider 2008), rather than collecting naturally occurring data for a more open-ended investigation. However, some exceptions can be found in Hickey & Stewart 2005 (e.g. contributions by Keevallik and Kerbrat-Orecchioni). Also, some researchers in Sweden and Finland, notably including members of our team, have recently begun to investigate language variation from a conversation analytic (CA) perspective (see Lindström 2011, Nilsson 2010, 2011, Wide 2008a, 2008b, 2011, and other contributions in Bockgård & Nilsson 2011).

We will contribute to the field of variational pragmatics by using the methods of CA and ethnography of communication. In the ethnographic tradition, language is a resource, which only has relevance in actual language use (Hymes 1962, 1974). From this follows that language always is contextualised and situated: social meaning is created, negotiated and maintained in interaction. The challenge for the researcher is to

identify what processes are relevant to the participants in a certain activity. In turn, this means that the ethnographic method always involves extensive fieldwork where the researcher spends considerable time in the field (the research environment) and documents everything that goes on, both objectively and subjectively from the researcher's own perspective (Blommaert & Jie 2010:85). The method is inductive and generalisations are made from detailed observations of single relevant cases that represent routines for social actions. Ethnography shares such a perspective with conversation analysis (CA), a research paradigm which was influenced strongly by ethnomethodology (Garfinkel 1967) and developed by sociologists in the 1960s (for early seminal work see e.g. *Lectures on Conversation* by Sacks, published in 1992, Schegloff 1968 and Schegloff & Sacks 1973). Within CA, interactions are studied through a detailed micro level analysis where everything is of potential interest (see e.g. Heritage 1984:233ff.). By collecting and analysing a large number of occurrences of an action, CA researchers hope to find recurring and regular patterns (see e.g. Heritage 1984, Norrby 1996:31, Schegloff 2007, Sidnell 2010). How turns are allocated between speakers in a sequential organization of talk-in-interaction is of central interest and the researcher therefore adopts a participant oriented perspective in order to analyse this sequentiality. Even if CA has developed in a more linguistic direction during the past decade, giving rise to what is now referred to as interactional linguistics (e.g. Selting & Couper-Kuhlen 2001), the social activity is still the fundamental principle for the study of interaction rather than the linguistic structures through which the interaction is realised (Lindström 2008:33).

Our approach is primarily qualitative, which necessitates closeness to both data and participants, and with generalisations based on the empirical data. The ethnographic approach aims at discovering relevant practises for participants. It utilises (participant) observations and audio and video recordings of a range of communicative activities that take place in a non-manipulated activity context. Given that an ethnographic research method is labour intensive, the research locations must be limited to a manageable number of institutions that exist in both countries or have direct counterparts in the other nation. CA is also a time consuming method, not least with regard to the detailed transcription of recorded interactional data. However, CA is a suitable method for the analysis of micro-level social actions observable in the dialogical interchange between speakers, and has proven to be a robust tool also for linguistic analysis. Through its systematic and detailed step-by-step analysis of talk-in-interaction, limited to what is observably there in the immediate interactional context, and without speculating about any external factors such as speaker intention or their background, CA offers a methodology which is comparable to the analytical rigour of those research paradigms which emphasise measurability and large-scale quantitative studies.

In particular, the analytical framework of CA helps us detect regularities in the organisation of speaker contributions into initiatives and responses (Linell & Gustavsson 1987) and to observe the constant interdependence between them (Linell 1998:68ff.). Also the interdependence between actions and the activity type they occur within is of great importance for the type of data we plan to collect; certain activity contexts will bring about actions of a particular type, e.g. in a supervision session evaluations will be expected. Accordingly, our analysis will draw on the discussion of activity types (Levinson 1979), and communicative activities and communicative genres (Linell 1998). Both the production and interpretation of actions depend on the socio-culturally defined activity type/communicative genre they occur within, at the same time as the concrete actions establish and re-establish the activity type/genre (Linell 1998:235ff). In other words, there is a dynamic relationship between them.

The detailed analysis of communicative actions in the programme data (i.e. in service encounters, education and healthcare) will result in a cumulative body of observations that will be analysed further from a comparative perspective: comparing the two nations and the research locations, institutions and activity types/communicative genres. This will allow for a more generalizable picture of the variation in language use in pluricentric languages in general, and in Finland Swedish and Sweden Swedish in particular. The highest level of abstraction will be reached when we relate these results to macro pragmatic factors in the respective nations.

4. Programme design and description of the projects within the programme

The programme is designed to be carried out over a period of eight years, starting in January 2013. It will consist of three domain projects (service, health care, education), a contextual project and a corpus project. A group of four senior researchers will be chief investigators (Norrby, Lindström, Nilsson and Wide), with Norrby at Stockholm University as overall programme leader. In addition, four postdocs (PDs), each with three years of full time research (employed 75 per cent over four years), will be employed through an open application process. Each of the PDs will be responsible for a sub-project within the education or healthcare domain projects, in which they are expected to conduct their own original research in accordance with the main objectives of the programme. Research assistants will also be hired to collect and transcribe data for the three domain projects (service, healthcare and education). An administrative part-time position for overall programme coordination will also be needed. The terms of the programme organization are described in more detail under Budget (section 9).

The chief investigators (CIs) will conduct the service project. In each of the other two domain projects they will be conducting a sub-project, as well as working in close collaboration with the PDs. We consider it a great advantage that the PDs can work closely with the chief investigators, who will also mentor the PDs throughout their sub-projects.

The three domain projects will focus on interactions in institutional contexts. These domains have been chosen for good reason – a great deal of day-to-day communication outside the private domain takes place in these domains. On the one hand, such communication consists of spontaneous conversations (e.g. between colleagues), and on the other hand of conversations between interlocutors who might not necessarily have chosen to interact with one another, but do so because they need to, in order to achieve certain goals (e.g. to purchase goods or services, get professional advice in an education situation, or a prescription for medication in a healthcare consultation). Participants in such interactions are assigned pre-defined roles, e.g. as sales clerk – customer, teacher – student or doctor/nurse – patient), in contrast to a conversation between friends (see e.g. Drew & Heritage 1992).

The fourth project, the contextual project, will be carried out during the latter part of the programme by the chief investigators. This project will draw on the findings from the domain projects and contextualise them within a larger theoretical framework.

The fifth project, the corpus project, will be devoted to creating a corpus based on the data collected for the domain projects. The overall aim is to create a large searchable database for each domain, i.e. a service corpus, an education corpus and a healthcare corpus. For the completion of the corpus project, we will purchase consultancy services from the Swedish Language Bank (Språkdata) in Gothenburg. In future, the database will also be available online for other researchers, and could form a basis for further research on interaction and national and regional variation after the programme has ended.

The chief investigators will work as a research team, but will divide the overall organizational responsibility of the research activities in the programme as follows:

Project 1 (service):

C. Norrby (Sweden), C. Wide (Finland)

Project 2 (education):

C. Norrby (Sweden), C. Wide (Finland); post docs

Project 3 (health-care):

J. Nilsson (Sweden), J. Lindström (Finland); post docs

Project 4 (contextual):

C. Norrby

Project 5 (corpus):

J. Nilsson (Sweden), J. Lindström (Finland); The Swedish Language Bank

Each project will have one co-ordinator from Sweden and one from Finland (except the overarching contextual project). In projects 2 and 3 the named investigators will coordinate the collaboration with

postdocs and in project 5 with the Swedish Language Bank.

Since the programme will be conducted over a long period of time and will consist of several projects, all projects will not commence simultaneously, but will be introduced at different strategic points in time. The programme design allows for a dynamic way of working where insights from one project will be useful for setting up the next. Therefore we do not want to lock the programme into a too detailed timetable, but will let the emerging results guide the continued research process. However, the first four years of the programme have been conceived of in greater detail, which we outline in 4.6.

All projects within the programme are based on naturally occurring language use. Accordingly, the data consist of audio and video recordings in non-arranged real-life contexts where the participants engage in activities that are important and consequential to them. In the following sections we give an overview of the proposed data collection, analytical categories and a few examples of pragmatic and interactional phenomena that could prove relevant to analyse within each of the three domain studies. The examples we introduce in the following are pilot studies that we have carried out for the purpose of this programme application, and they demonstrate some of the differences in communicative patterns that we expect to find in the data to be collected within the programme.

4.1 The service domain project

The aim of the service study is to compare recurring pragmatic and interactional variation in Finland-Swedish and Sweden-Swedish service encounters. The service domain will be investigated by the chief investigators. With the help of research assistants we will record a number of short service encounters in eight municipalities in Finland and Sweden (four in each country). Characteristic of service encounters is that they typically consist of short interactions dealing with a specific topic (e.g. purchase of goods, delivery of services). The service project will, among other things, focus on how interlocutors introduce and finish such brief service encounters. Opening and closing sequences in talk-in-interaction are particularly interesting since they are likely to include a great deal of pragmatic routines and negotiations between interlocutors, e.g. actions such as greetings, initiating and finishing the business, and actions of leave-taking. Openings and closings also belong to the areas which have been mentioned as interesting in earlier studies of cross-cultural pragmatics (c.f. Schneider & Barron 2008b:8ff.). We expect to find national variation both in terms of type and frequency of pragmatic routines, and in terms of how much interactional work/negotiation that takes place before the business has been dealt with and finalised. At the macro pragmatic level such differences might be associated with differences in the type of interpersonal communicative strategies that dominate in the respective speech communities.

In our pilot study of Finland-Swedish and Sweden-Swedish institutional telephone calls (Norrby, Wide, Lindström & Nilsson in press) several systematic differences in the opening sequences of the conversations were found, in particular with regard to patterns of self-introductions. The Sweden-Swedish introductions typically follow the format: response particle greeting “mitt namn e” (‘my name is’) or “ja heter” (‘I am called’) caller’s name (I=institutional representative, C=caller):

I: giftinformatio:n, jourhavande apotekare:;
C: ja hej mitt namn e Maja Ralfsson

I: poison information centre, on-call pharmacist
C: yes hi my name is Maja Ralfsson

However, the predominant format of Finland-Swedish introductions is: particle “de e” (‘it is’) caller’s name locative adverb: “här” (‘here’) greeting:

I: Luckan, Maj Ringmar
C: nå de e Siv Alberg här hej

I: Ticket office, Maj Ringmar
C: well it is Siv Alberg here hi

The most striking difference is that in the Finland-Swedish introductions the greeting is placed in final position and that a deictic locative adverb often occurs after the caller's name. In the macro pragmatic context of language and culture contact it is noteworthy that the Finland-Swedish introduction format is similar to the Finnish format for self introductions on the phone, i.e. particle caller's name locative adverb greeting (see Hakulinen 1993):

C: no Mikko tässä hei

C: well Mikko here hi

Naturally, there is a certain degree of internal variation in the Sweden-Swedish, Finland-Swedish and Finnish formats for self-introductions as well. For example, the introduction may consist of only the name of the caller and a greeting, but the more expanded the syntax, the more the Finland-Swedish pattern diverges from Sweden-Swedish, while it increasingly converges with Finnish patterns.

The starting point for our collection of service data is the Finland-Swedish cultural phenomenon known as "Luckan" – an information and cultural centre present in ten locations in Finland (www.luckan.fi). A central part of its business is ticket sales for plays, concerts and various events in the Swedish language. Both telephone and face-to-face service encounter data will be collected by audio and video recordings. Initial contacts have been made with staff at Luckan and we have received permission to collect data. In Sweden recordings will be made in comparable contexts, i.e. box offices, central booking services and similar services to ensure a high level of comparability.

Considerable variation also tends to occur within national varieties (Schlieben-Lange & Weydt 1978, Wolfram & Estes-Schilles 2006, Schneider & Barron 2008b). For that reason we have first selected four Luckan offices with different profiles. After that we have selected four municipalities in Sweden that resemble the Finnish ones with regard to demographics, business and education opportunities, and its regional and national importance. The size of the population, however, has not been a direct factor for choosing the respective locations as Swedish urban areas generally have more inhabitants. It is our aim to obtain a geographically diffused sample for both countries so that the major dialect regions of both countries are covered. By basing the study on a large and varied sample of locations we will be in a better position to document national as well as any regional variation in language use. The selected locations are the following (grouped in pairs based on their comparability, with the Finnish locations to the left):

The capital city:
Helsinki (Swe. Helsingfors) – Stockholm

The second city:
Turku (Swe. Åbo) – Gothenburg (Swe. Göteborg)

Regional centre (in the north):
Kokkola (Swe. Karleby) – Luleå

Small towns surrounded by countryside (in the south):
Kimito (Fi. Kemiö) – Osby

The selection of these locations will facilitate the collection of a socially and regionally varied sample. The capital cities form the political and economic centre of power with a different socioeconomic profile and far more international contacts compared to the second cities Turku and Gothenburg. Kokkola and Luleå are mid-sized cities (46,500 and 74,000 inhabitants) and both are regional centres of the northern region of each country. Kimito and Osby are small towns in the south, with a population of 7,000 and 12,000 inhabitants respectively, predominantly living in the countryside surrounding the urban area.

In each location, 4–5 hours of service encounter interactions will be documented by video and audio recordings. The recordings will be preceded by some ethnographic observations, and field notes, for several days. In total, the service data will consist of 30–40 hours of recorded interactional data.

4.2 The education domain project

The second area that the programme focuses on is higher education. This domain will be investigated primarily through two postdoctoral research projects, one undertaken in Finland and one in Sweden. Data collection for these projects will take place in corresponding university environments in each country. The Department of Social Work (Institutionen för socialt arbete – Socialhögskolan) at Stockholm University and the Swedish School of Social Science (Svenska social- och kommunalhögskolan) at the University of Helsinki have been identified as suitable research sites. Considering the regional differences that exist between Finland-Swedish varieties in southern Finland (e.g. the Nyland region) on the one hand, and Ostrobothnia on the other hand, some comparative data will be collected at the Åbo Akademi University unit in Vaasa in Ostrobothnia. The postdoctoral projects will also use interactional methods drawn from CA and interactional linguistics, but compared to the service project the ethnographic perspective will be more pronounced in these projects. This has to do with the fact that a learning environment, e.g. within a university department, can be expected to be a community of practice while service encounters tend to be brief contacts between customer and service staff.

Doing ethnography involves spending considerable time on location, documenting everything of potential interest in order to detect what activities are significant to community members themselves, and how they construct and maintain these activities through talk-in-interaction. Exactly what social and professional activities, and communicative actions within them, that will be the central focus of the postdoctoral projects will therefore primarily evolve during the initial period of ethnographic data collection, and in close collaboration with the programme chief investigators (CIs). For the point of illustration, professional activities in a university environment include e.g. supervision meetings, research seminars, tutorials and staff meetings; social activities include conversations during lunch and coffee breaks, small talk in the corridor, but can also be interspersed throughout otherwise professional activities (c.f. Nelson 2010). It is anticipated that the postdocs will devote recurrent periods of 1–2 weeks for fieldwork during year 1 of the project. Several methods for data collection will be used: extended observations, photo documentation, interviews and focus groups, video recordings of communicative activities and the interaction within these activities.

However, in order to ensure direct and systematic comparisons of communicative behaviour between the Sweden-Swedish and Finland-Swedish research sites, some pre-established types of comparable data – from supervision meetings and research seminars – will be included in the research design of the education project. These professional activities belong to the core activities in a university department, and it is of interest to investigate the pragmatic and interactional variation between sites nationally and for Finland Swedish also regionally. The chief investigators will be responsible for this sub-project within the education project. We expect that the findings could be of direct practical use, not least for teaching the considerable number of inter-Nordic exchange students.

In a pilot study (for the CIs' sub-project) of a Sweden-Swedish and a Finland-Swedish supervision meeting, several aspects, worth investigating further, emerged (Wide, Lindström, Nilsson & Norrby in progress). For example, the Sweden-Swedish supervisor tends to treat criticism as something problematic and hedges instructions on how to change passages in the student essays by the use of discourse particles, adverbs, jokes and laughter. It is also worth noting that the supervisor generally uses generic forms of address (such as 'one') when delivering criticism and more direct forms when giving praise (e.g. 'hur ni skriver ser väldigt bra ut', Eng. 'how you write looks very good'). The Finland-Swedish supervisor, on the other hand, does not seem to treat criticism as something problematic. She uses more direct address in passages of criticism and does not hedge in the same way as the Sweden-Swedish supervisor (e.g. 'på någo sätt blir de så otrolit abstrakt å lösryckt från de konkreta när du talar hela tiden- när du liksom lämnar

bort de, subjekte', Eng. 'it gets so incredibly abstract and detached from the concrete when you talk all the time- when you like leave out the subject').

Based on these preliminary observations, it is relevant to study how actions such as giving and receiving criticism and praise are phrased, how interlocutors give instructions and solve problems, and how they use jokes and laughter. Based on the actual empirical data, other communicative actions are also likely to emerge as interesting for analysis within the sub- project conducted by the CIs.

A total of about 40 hours of interactional data will be recorded for the education project, equally distributed between Sweden and Finland. These data will be used for the postdoctoral sub-projects as well as for the CIs sub-project.

4.3 The healthcare domain project

The third domain that we focus on is healthcare. The healthcare project will, as a first step, draw on existing corpora – primarily Camilla Lindholm's corpus of Finland Swedish doctor-patient interactions (the INK corpus, from 1997–2000) and Ulla Melander Marttala's corpus of Sweden Swedish doctor-patient interactions (the LOP corpus, from 1988–1992). These corpora are comparable: they represent the same activity type (medical consultation) dealing with the same kind of patient problems (fibromyalgia and rheumatic pain respectively). The CIs of the programme will conduct this initial comparative study (CIs sub-project) with the aim of identifying national variation in healthcare interactions. Such comparisons were not made in the original studies based on the INK and LOP corpora. Our preliminary observations suggest, for example, that the doctors in the Finland-Swedish consultations address their patients in a more formal way than in the data from Sweden, which confirms the general address patterns established in previous studies (Clyne, Norrby & Warren 2009). To give another example, the doctors' strategies in marking agenda progression differ: the adverb *ännu* 'still, yet, more' is used for topic or action transitions in the Finland-Swedish data (e.g. *Får jag ännu fråga om de här lederna?* 'May I still ask about these joints?'), whereas the adverb is not used like this in the consultations from Sweden. The CIs' sub-project will pay special attention to how doctors formulate directives and how patients express requests during the consultations, as well as to the ways of expressing complaints and responses to these.

In a second step of the healthcare project, two postdocs will each conduct a sub-project and collect data from the domain of preventive healthcare (Sw. *friskvård*) in Finland (Helsinki) and Sweden respectively (Gothenburg). Preventive healthcare focuses on life habits and lifestyles, and aims at promoting the individual's physical well-being through exercise, fitness and health information. The research sites for this study are chosen for practical reasons: Helsinki and Gothenburg are cities of considerable size, thus providing a variety of resources within preventive healthcare, and we have established preliminary contacts with the relevant organizations in Helsinki (Folkhälsan, lit. 'People's health'). It is worth pointing out that preventive healthcare is a new domain for research on communication in the healthcare sector; previous studies have concentrated on data where problems caused by decreased physical or cognitive condition are addressed.

The postdoctoral healthcare projects will have a pronounced ethnographic approach. Data will be collected through observations, interviews and video recorded activities of different types that are arranged by organizations supplying preventive healthcare. Here, as in the education project, the aim is to give both an overview of the communicative activities within the overall activity type, and to focus on specific communicative actions that might emerge as central in talk-in-interaction, e.g. how a healthcare consultation is introduced and closed, how advice, directives and evaluations are designed, how problems are dealt with and how consultation hours are booked and advice given on the telephone health services. The ethnographic data collected within the preventive healthcare domain will further inform us about the more comprehensive social values associated with the institutions supplying these services and how the individuals involved, clients as well as staff, orient towards them in their interactions. We thus expect that communication at a micro level will give us a basis for an understanding of macro pragmatic aspects of language use and the societal contexts behind it.

To summarize, the healthcare project will be based both on existing corpora (for the CIs sub- project), and on 20 hours of additional interactional data, collected for the postdoctoral projects, equally distributed between Sweden and Finland.

Both the education and healthcare postdoctoral projects will be designed as equivalent sister projects where the postdoctoral fellows in each location will work closely with one another.

4.4 The contextual project

The CIs will be in charge of the contextual project. It will mainly be conducted during the final years of the programme as it draws on the micro-level findings of the three domain projects. By comparing results from the studies of interactional encounters in the service, education and healthcare domains we will learn more about similarities and differences in these kinds of activity types (see Linell 1998), the different conditions of participation in the activities, and how they may be visible in the participants' linguistic and social conduct in the activities. Thus, the project will contribute to theory development in activity type analysis.

The findings will also be linked to the societal macro-level and the differences in the historical and socio-political development in the respective nations. Such an investigation raises questions about language and dialect contact. By focusing on language use and interaction, the contextual project will explore the relation between actual language use and language norms, where it is possible that different language ideologies operate at the grass-root level and the societal level. We might achieve further understanding of this by using focus-group data.

4.5 The corpus project

The fifth project will focus on creating a corpus of spoken Swedish, which will be available online at the Swedish Language Bank (Swe. Språkbanken) in Gothenburg. Although several corpora of conversations in Swedish have been collected in Finland and Sweden earlier, most of them are not available online or even accessible to researchers outside of the projects within which the data were collected. In addition to this, most of the data collected within these projects have not been tagged or annotated in any way, which makes searches for particular language structures difficult and time-consuming. A notable exception is the Gothenburg Spoken Language Corpus (GSLC), available online at the University of Gothenburg (but not in the Swedish Language Bank, which makes comparisons with other corpora difficult). However, only transcriptions are accessible in GSLC. Furthermore, the corpus only consists of data from Sweden-Swedish conversations.

Three sub-corpora will be created within the corpus project: one for the service domain data, one for the education domain data and one for healthcare domain data. Collaboration with the Swedish Language Bank has been established to create these searchable spoken data corpora. The Swedish Language Bank will be in charge of designing the transcription conventions, annotations and the maintenance of the corpora. The data to be included in the database will be transcribed by research assistants. Interactional data totalling approx. 20 hours in the service domain, 20 hours in the education domain and 10 hours in the healthcare domain will be included in the database. The three corpora will be launched in a step-by-step fashion, starting with the service corpus and ending with the healthcare corpus. This reflects the overall design of the programme where the projects will commence at different points in time.

Via the Swedish Language Bank the three corpora will be available also for other researchers than those working in the programme. It will be useful for further research into variation in and between national and regional varieties of Swedish and studies of Swedish-language conversational structure more generally. It could also be used for specific training purposes, e.g. for teaching in the service, education and healthcare sectors.

The level of accessibility will be determined by the nature of the collected data within the three domains.

It is likely that the healthcare data will be of a more sensitive nature than the service data and this will be reflected in the availability of the corpus. No data that is of sensitive nature will be included in the database. For ethical reasons, access to the corpora will also be restricted in various ways, e.g. through a password requirement, and there will also be different levels of permission to access the three corpora. The service corpus will consist of interactions that concern non-controversial encounters which take place in a public space and would not be restricted in the same sense as for example the healthcare data. Also, some of the data will only be available in written form. The database will be the first combined corpus of fully compatible Finland-Swedish and Sweden-Swedish interactional data.

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