Abstract

Norrby, Catrin, catrin@unimelb.edu.au, Associate Professor, School of Languages and Linguistics, The University of Melbourne, Australia; Nilsson, Jenny, Jenny.Nilsson@svenska.gu.se, Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Swedish, Göteborg University, Sweden; Nyblom, Heidi, hmny@uwasa.fi, Researcher, Dept. of Scandinavian Languages, University of Vaasa, Finland: “Attractive address? Modes of address in Finland and Sweden”. Språk och stil 17, 2007, pp. 5–29.

This article explores variation in modes of address in contemporary Swedish in Sweden-Swedish and Finland-Swedish, based on data collected in Gothenburg, Sweden, and Vaasa, Finland, respectively. It forms part of the recently completed project Address in some western European languages: A study of language and social change, funded by the Australian Research Council. The article focuses on quantitative and qualitative results from 72 social network interviews, equally distributed across the two research sites. The results suggest that T (du) is by far the most frequent form of address in both national varieties of Swedish, while V (ni) is limited to situations where the addressee is a stranger. Despite general similarities between the sites, the results also demonstrate that use of V is overall much more frequent in the Finland-Swedish data. However, the Finland-Swedes report that use of T has increased over the past 10–15 years, while a third of the Swedish informants claim that V has made a re-entry in service encounters during the same period. Such a finding suggests that the two varieties are becoming more similar in regard to address practices.

Keywords: sociolinguistics, address, Swedish, Finland-Swedish, variation.