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Bakalářská práce

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Forms of address in Finnish in the context of dynamic politeness norms

Formy oslovení ve Finštině v kontextu dynamických zdvořilostních norem

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Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně, že jsem řádně citovala všechny použité prameny a literaturu a že práce nebyla využita v rámci jiného vysokoškolského studia či k získání jiného nebo stejného titulu.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to describe the current state of select politeness phenomena in Finnish which are expressed through language structure, namely the forms of address. My main research questions were: How do Finnish native speakers use T- and V-forms? Has there been any perceived development in the use of address forms in Finnish in the past ten years? Are there any special situations, occasions, places or institutions (...) in which speakers expect particular form of address? Have they experienced any recent changes? How is the possible rise in use of the V-form connected to the use of other politeness expressions in Finnish?

The thesis begins with a general description of the most significant theoretical approaches to politeness. It, then, defines a place of forms of address within the linguistic politeness. The main theoretical basis for the thesis is linguistic pragmatics, in which politeness is seen as a dynamic interpersonal activity. Not only is politeness a linguistic phenomenon but it is also a matter of social behaviour. Therefore, it differs culturally but also situationally.

In the second chapter, I examine the Finnish forms of address as a linguistic phenomenon. First, I consider nominal and pronominal forms of address, second, I explain the grammatical base for Finnish evasiveness in addressing. A description of the Finnish forms of address – the T form and the V form – is at the end of this chapter.

The third chapter recounts in brief the history of forms of address in European languages and in Finnish. I emphasize the strong influence of Swedish on Finnish and I mention the political, social, and linguistic aspects of their relationship.

In the fourth chapter, I aim to describe use of forms of address in modern Finnish considering the results of my research and literature. I describe factors influencing the use of T- and V-form. That seems to be especially age, familiarity, and social status. I also mention connotations of address forms such as respect and keeping distance for the V-form and friendliness for the T-form. In the following subsection, I briefly address the topic of differences in speech comparing both possible forms, which are typically phonetic (lowering voice, speaking slower) or semantic (formal speech). The main part of the chapter considers the common situations when the V-form is used in Finnish – institutions, social status situations, and above all customer service. At the end of the fourth chapter, I discuss potential changes in politeness norms, specifically concerning rise of the V-form in customer service.

Key words: pragmatics, sociolinguistics, interactional sociolinguistics, politeness, linguistic politeness, politeness norms, Finnish, forms of address

ABSTRAKT

Cílem této práce je popsat současný stav vybraných zdvořilostních jevů ve finštině, které jsou vyjádřeny skrze jazykovou strukturu, konkrétně forem oslovování. Mými hlavními výzkumnými otázkami byly: Jak rodilí mluvčí finštiny užívají T- a V-formy? Byl mluvčími zaznamenán vývoj v užívání forem oslovování ve finštině v posledních deseti letech? Existují specifické situace, příležitosti, místa nebo instituce (...) kde/kdy mluvčí očekávají určitou formu oslovení? Zaznamenali mluvčí nějaké nedávné změny? Jak souvisí potenciální nárůst užívání V-formy s užíváním jiných zdvořilostních výrazů ve finštině?

Úvodní část práce je věnována obecnému popisu významných lingvistických teorií zdvořilosti. Následně je vymezeno místo formám oslovování v lingvistické zdvořilosti. Hlavní teoretické východisko této práce spadá do lingvistické pragmatiky. Zdvořilost je chápána jako dynamická interpersonální aktivita. Zdvořilost je nejen lingvistickým jevem, ale také součástí sociálního chování. Proto se mění v závislosti na kultuře ale i na situaci.

V druhé kapitole rozebírám formy oslovování ve finštině jako jazykové fenomény. Nejdříve se zabývám rozlišením na nominální a pronominální formy oslovení, následně předkládám výklad určitých aspektů finské gramatiky, které umožňují vyhnout se přímému oslovování. Na konci této kapitoly pak podávám výklad finských forem oslovování, jejich formálního tvoření a s ním spojených případných problémů pro finské mluvčí.

Třetí kapitola obsahuje krátký výklad historie forem oslovování v evropských jazycích a ve finštině. Zde zdůrazňuji především vliv Švédštiny na Finštinu a zmiňuji politické, sociální a jazykové aspekty vztahu těchto dvou jazyků.

Ve čtvrté kapitole popisuji užívání forem oslovování v současné finštině na základě vlastního výzkumu a literatury. Popisuji faktory působící na užívání T- či V-formy jako například věk, blízkost k adresátovi či status. Dále zmiňuji konotace forem oslovování, což jsou mimo jiné respekt a udržování vzdálenosti pro V-formu, nebo přátelskost pro T-formu. V následující podkapitole se krátce zabývám tématem odlišnosti v projevu mluvčího při užití té dané formy oslovení. Tyto odlišnosti v projevu jsou typicky fonetické (snížení hlasitosti či rychlosti) nebo sémantické (formální projev). Hlavní část této kapitoly se zabývá nejčastějšími situacemi, kdy dochází k užití V-formy – instituce, situace spojené se sociálním statutem a především zákaznické služby. Na konci této kapitoly pojednávám o potenciálních změnách v užívání forem oslovování, především o nárůstu užívání V-formy v zákaznických službách.

Klíčová slova: pragmatika, sociolingvistika, interakční sociolingvistika, zdvořilost, lingvistická zdvořilost, zdvořilostní normy, finština, formy oslovení

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INTRODUCTION

It is not long since politeness has been recognized as an important topic of linguistics. Until that point, seen mostly as a set of rules belonging to etiquette and dictated by society, politeness made an entrance to the field of linguistics as late as in 1970s mainly thanks to an essay by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson (1978, extended version 1987) (Válková 2004: 13). Brown and Levinson's essay was received with mixed reactions some of which were questioning the cultural universality of the concepts introduced in their work. However, the contribution to the issue of politeness is undoubted. Mirja Saari (1995, *Jo, nu kunde vi festa nog*) has also argued for the applicability of Brown and Levinson's theory on Scandinavian languages (Nyblom 2006: 19.11)

This thesis is concerned with select politeness phenomena in Finnish, specifically forms of address. Politeness is seen as dynamic interpersonal activity (Arndt, Janney 1987), which therefore differs socially, culturally, and situationally.

Finnish is considered to be a language which grammatically enables evasion of direct address. Some argue that Finnish is more extreme in its evasiveness in comparison to other languages (Yli-Vakkuri 2005: 189-202). Apart from that, Finnish recognizes three basic forms of address: second-person singular (T-form), second-person plural (V-form), and third-person singular¹, which has, however, almost completely disappeared from use.

The history of forms of address in Finnish is remarkable. Finland was under Swedish rule for almost seven centuries (1150 -1809) and it was through Swedish that Finnish adopted some of the European addressing customs (i.e. Central European, mostly German), however, usually with considerable delay. The unique situation of forms of address in modern Finnish is caused by dramatic changes throughout the 20th century. As a result, almost every generation of Finns nowadays has a different opinion on the use and connotations of forms of address. This is illustrated by the following example of an internet discussion. When asked when and what forms of address to use on one of the main Finnish news servers *Yle*², participants in the discussion debated the topic passionately having essentially different opinions on the subject matter (Leppävuori, Yle.fi February 2015). There seemed to be no aspect of the forms of address that any two participants would agree on. Some were of the opinion that

¹ In the past also third-person plural, however, even then very rare.

² Yleisradio Oy is Finnish public-broadcasting company owned by the Finnish state.

using the V-form is “*a sign of politeness and good manners*” others saw “*an unnecessary way of pointing out someone’s social status*” or “*impolitely keeping distance*”. Throughout the discussion, people who were only using T-form when addressing were described as friendly, liberal, and open-minded, but also as *yokels* lacking manners. Such passionate discussions are not considered to be one of the typical features of Finnish culture, which only proves the diversity of views on this matter.

My main research questions are: (01) How do Finnish native speakers use T- and V-forms? (02) Has there been any perceived development in the use of address forms in Finnish in the past ten years? (03) Are there any special situations, occasions, places or institutions (...) in which speakers expect particular form of address? (04) Have they experienced any recent changes? (05) How is the possible rise in use of formal address connected to the use of other politeness expressions in Finnish?

To set the scene for the description of the forms of address in Finnish, I describe some of the most important politeness theories and I place forms of address within linguistic politeness. After this general theoretical introduction, I focus on Finnish forms of address from the grammatical point of view. This is the content of the second chapter, in which I also address the topic of *Finnish evasiveness*. Third chapter is focused on the history of forms of address in Finland in comparison with other European countries. I consider this a very important topic, which may prepare us to answer the second question and help us to understand the current state of address forms in Finnish. In the fourth and main chapter of the thesis, I aim to describe the present situation of forms of address in modern Finnish. My description is based on both Finnish and international resources and also on my own research, which took place in Vantaa and Helsinki in February 2016.

Due to the diversity of society and situations and lack of widely shared politeness norms in Finnish, it is of course impossible to give a full description of the use of forms of address. For this reason I aim to cover at least all typical situations in which the V-form (i.e. the less used form of address) is used the most, this will answer the third research question. The specific place in these situations belongs to addressing in *customer service*. I also address the topic of potential changes happening in this domain.

1 THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO POLITENESS

Until 1970s, linguists had not been much interested in politeness. In fact, politeness was not considered to be a subject of linguistics but more of social sciences or etiquette. However, with the *pragmatic turn* in linguistics in 1970s the situation has changed. Linguists have realized that there is much more in the study of language than only plain description of systematic and structural features of language code and turned their attention to the use and functioning of language in diverse social communication. Since that time, politeness has established itself in newly formed disciplines of pragmatics and sociolinguistics.³

One of the fathers of pragmatics was philosopher John Langshaw Austin. In his book *How to do things with words* (1962), he laid the foundations of *speech acts* and, in doing so, also foundations of pragmatics. Austin was philosopher and his approach was purely theoretical (Auer 2014, 71), so there is no authentic utterance to be found in his work. However, his work still means a great progress in linguistics of his time. The central concept of his work is that of *performatives*. A performative utterance is defined in opposition to *constative utterance*, which simply means a statement and which can be always evaluated as true or false. A performative, on the other hand, is used by a speaker to act, and therefore it cannot have the truth value. However was Austin himself aware of limits and problems of his theory, its importance for the pragmatic turn is indisputable.

The theory of speech acts was further developed by Austin's student John Rogers Searle in his monograph *Speech acts* published in 1969 (and based on Searle's PhD thesis from 1959) (Auer 2004: 79). Searle came up with a set of rules which has to be achieved by any speech act in order to be successful. However, such rules seemed to be at least in some contexts problematic, so they cannot be applied universally. This led to an important question: what it is that makes us interpret some utterance as a particular speech act – for example advice? The answer follows: in order to interpret a particular utterance as a particular speech act, we need to know the context, that is to say we need to analyse the whole conversation within the situation. Or as Auer puts it: "*Searle's so called preparatory conditions are relevant only*

³ Jenny Thomas (Thomas 1995: 149) notes that there has been confusion in the terminology concerning *politeness* in the literature since 1970s. According to Thomas (1995: 178-179) politeness as studied in linguistics is to be seen as pragmatic phenomenon disregarding all *moral or psychological disposition towards being nice to one's interlocutor*.

when they are *made* to be relevant by the participants of the interaction.” (Auer 2014: 88)⁴. It is important to bear in mind that an isolated speech act is an illusion and so that the context is always needed for interpretation of a conversation (Auer 2014: 88).

The theory of speech acts meant an important transformation of the understanding of language. With this change, politeness has become an inherent part of pragmatics. Not anymore seen as a matter of etiquette, politeness in pragmatics may be one of the strategies to reach one’s communicative goals.

1.1 Defining politeness

Even though we all naturally understand what is meant by the word *politeness*, it is not an easy task to define it (Watts 2003: 1). Politeness can be verbal or non-verbal and it is usually used to describe one’s behaviour. Leech (1980: 19) defines politeness as “*a strategic conflict avoidance*”. Similar definition is also given by Lakoff (1975: 64), who states that the function of politeness is “*to reduce friction in personal interaction*” and by Brown and Levinson (1978/87), who have it for “*a complex system for softening face-threatening acts*”. More positive attitude towards politeness is articulated among others by Arndt and Janney (1985: 282), who see politeness as a need for *interpersonal supportiveness*. In this work, politeness is approached in accordance to Arndt and Janney (1987) as *dynamic interpersonal activity*. Another exhaustive definition is given by Válková (2004, 38):

“Linguistic politeness is a partly routinized and partly creative language manifestation of social values, finding its way of reflection at various levels of language representation (phonic, grammatical, lexical, textual, etc.) and reflecting interactional strategies by which interactants signal their interpersonal supportiveness, i.e. their intention to consider each other and satisfy shared expectations about cultural and situational assumptions in order to avoid or at least soften face-threatening acts, to create happy conditions for interaction and to avoid losing one’s face.”

In the following subsections, I present some of the most important politeness theories to prepare the ground for finding a place for the forms of address within linguistic politeness.

⁴ “Searlovy tzv. Přípravné podmínky jsou tedy relevantní jen tehdy, když je v interakci učiní relevantními účastníci rozhovoru...” (Auer 2014: 88)

1.2 Grice's conversational maxims

Since Austin, there have been differentiated three aspects of a speech act – *locution*, *illocution*, and *perlocution* (Austin 2000: 101-122). Locutionary act is a mere performance of the utterance, illocutionary act covers speaker's intention when saying the utterance, and perlocutionary act is the actual effect. Searle was oriented towards illocutionary acts, whereas Grice focused on the perlocution (Auer 2004).

In Grice's opinion, it is only necessary to recognize what perlocution is to be achieved, that is to say what is the desired effect of the utterance. An author of an utterance therefore always needs to make sure, that his communication partner will understand his intentions. For this reason Grice comes up with so called *cooperative principle*:

“Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.”
(Grice 1975: 45)

Following its definition, Grice (1975: 45-47) develops the cooperative principle into four maxims, which, when followed by speakers, lead to the successful communication. The maxim of *quantity* advises to be brief and say only as much information as is needed for the current purposes of the communication. The maxim of *quality* orders to not say what the speaker believes is false or for what he lacks enough evidence. The maxim of *relation* could be simply articulated as ‘be relevant’, that is to say ‘speak to the topic’. And finally the maxim of *manner*, which is in Grice's words *not related to what is said but how it is said* (1975: 46), instructs to be orderly and avoid obscurity and ambiguity.

The goal of the communication for Grice is the achievement of maximally effective exchange of information (Auer 2014). According to Grice, it is only thanks to this supposition shared by all participants of the conversation, that the communication can be successful.

One may ask, how is politeness covered in Grice's maxims, and the answer would most likely be that it is not covered at all. Moreover, it may even seem that when strictly following all conversational maxims, there is no place for being polite at the same time. For when asking *“Could you pass me the salt please?”* in order to get the salt, one is breaking at least the maxim of quantity and relevance, if not all four. However, it is clear why the speaker does not say

instead: “*Give me the salt!*”. Not even Grice could likely think that the latter utterance would lead to the desired effect more likely than the former one.

To be used in politeness theories, conversational maxims needed to be extended by the maxim of politeness. This was done among others by Geoffrey Leech (Leech 1983: 131-139). His principle of politeness includes following maxims: minimize cost to other (tact maxim), minimize benefit to self (generosity maxim), minimize dispraise of other (approbation maxim), minimize praise of self (modesty maxim), minimize disagreement between self and other (agreement maxim), and minimize antipathy between self and other (sympathy maxim) (Leech 1983: 132). Leech also notes, that the maxims are not to be seen as *absolute rules* (133), and they need to be judged together taking into account the hierarchy of maxims and submaxims.

1.3 Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory

Erving Goffman is the author of the term *face*, which he defines as “*the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact.*” (Goffman 1955: 213). He introduces two types of what he calls *face-work* – *deference* and *demeanour*, which can both be expressed in negative or positive way. The negative deference covers all avoidance rituals, it means all ways of leaving the communication partner his individual space, both literally and figuratively, that is that he has the possibility to manoeuvre. Positive deference on the other hand is expressed by the presentational rituals. These are all acts through which one expresses praise or respect to his communication partner (Auer 2014: 143).

Goffman’s concept of *face* was taken by linguists Brown and Levinson, who based one of the most influential politeness theories on it. Unlike Goffman’s temporary concept, Brown and Levinson’s face is a constant attribute of each person (Brown and Levinson 1978/1987). The face of each person consists of two aspects: negative and positive. Negative face is the desire to be unimpeded in one’s actions, positive face is the desire for appreciation and approval (1987: 59). Everyone’s face is being threatened by so called *Face Threatening Acts* (FTA). The FTAs are very common parts of everyday communication – it can be for example request, advice, order, insult, complaint or criticism. When a speaker needs to use a FTA in his speech, one of the way how to save the face of a hearer is to be polite. He can choose to do the FTA *on record* or *off record*. On record could be performed either in a straightforward way,

which is consistent with Grice's maxims, or it can be softened in a negative or a positive way. Positive politeness addresses hearer's positive face, it means speaker can use for example compliments even when making a complaint. This strategy is usually used between friends and speakers who know each other. On the other hand, negative politeness strategy is used mostly by people who do not know each other. It is expressed by apologies, indirect questions, and communicative pessimism (Barešová 2008: 22, Brown and Levinson 1987: 69, Chejnová 2015: 14).

The theory was criticised for being too Anglocentric (for example Wierzbicka, 1991). Anglophonic cultures are seen as individualistic with speakers intentionally picking an ideal politeness strategy in order to achieve their goals in communication (Chejnová 2015: 14). However, as I noted in the Introduction, some Finnish linguists (Mirja Saari 1995, *Jo, nu kunde vi festa nog*) argued, that Brown and Levinson's theory is applicable also to Scandinavian languages.

1.4 Matti Larjavaara's basic politeness theory

In Larjavaara's theory, there is so called *basic politeness area* (peruskohteliaisuuden alue), that cannot be analysed either as positive or negative, or as he calls it close or distant politeness. This basic politeness is biologically and socially universal, it is found in the reaction to each person's expectations of social approval and recognition of others. The basic-politeness requirements are easy to fulfil – it suffices to smile a bit and be open-minded. The impoliteness is then born from breaking of the basic politeness rules. Four different parts of basic politeness can be distinguished: status politeness (statuskohteliaisuus), territory politeness (reviirikohteliaisuus), fellow politeness (kumppanikohteliaisuus), and maintaining politeness (pitämiskohteliaisuus). (Larjavaara, kielikello.fi, 1999)

Status politeness originates in people's basic instincts and needs. Just as there is a strict hierarchy on a chicken farm or in a pack of wolves, there is this basic status politeness between people hierarchizing the society. For Larjavaara, status politeness is the kind of distance-keeping politeness. A person with a higher status does not want to descend to the level of the one with lower status, and the person with lower status also desires to keep distance, for example, in fearing the one with higher status. It feels better for both of them to maintain the distance.

Territory politeness could be also called personal space politeness. It is a respect for a communication partner's private space. Even though it is sometimes expressed by the same means as status politeness, there is different motivation behind it. It is also a distance-keeping politeness.

Fellow politeness turns towards the general feeling of brotherhood and solidarity. It emphasizes that it is polite when we do not distant ourselves from other people and we do not take into account their status, age or any other differences. This one is defined by Larjavaara as a close-type politeness.

Finally, maintaining politeness is a natural response to each person's need to be popular, be well, feel good, or not be afraid. It can be expressed, for example, by a smile. This one is also a close-type politeness. (Larjavaara, kielikello.fi)

Larjavaara adds that there is no space for status politeness with people known to us in modern Finnish. At home, at work, or with friends, Finns tend to emphasize what unites them and avoid power relationships. On the other hand, territory politeness plays quite an important role. Close people expect tact and discretion and strangers want to keep distance.

1.5 Forms of address and politeness

One of the most observable means of expressing politeness is the use of different forms of address. Forms of address as well as their use differ language to language. In Finnish, as in Czech, second person singular (T-form) and second person plural (V-form) are the most common forms of address, even though there can be specific situations in which other forms could be used (specifically third person singular).

Considering the T-form and the V-form, it may seem that V-form is the *polite* form of address. However, as Lappalainen notes (Isosävi, Lappalainen 2015: 20), this does not make the T-form impolite. Furthermore, there are many situations when the use of V-form would be evaluated by hearer as too formal, strange or overpolite. Therefore it is preferable to not link T- and V-forms with the value of politeness, but only suitability to a particular situation (Isosävi, Lappalainen 2015: 21). As we have seen above (introduction to this chapter), only the situation and the conversation as a whole can give us the bases for analysis of the meaning of the communication.

To use the most appropriate form of address in certain situation could be a difficult task. The communities using some languages have stabilized politeness norms which lead to fewer conflicts in the used and expected forms of address (or other means of expressing politeness) between the communication partners. As I will argue in the third chapter, Finnish lacks codified or widely shared politeness norms as it underwent dramatic changes in the last century. Yet before the excursion into the history of forms of address, we must define the forms of address from the formal point of view in the second chapter.

2 FORMS OF ADDRESS IN FINNISH AS A LINGUISTIC PHENOMENON

2.1 Nominal and pronominal forms of address

2.1.1 Pronominal forms of address

The most common form of address in Finnish is the T-form followed by the V-form. It has not always been this way and we shall see the development of the Finnish address forms throughout history in detail in the following chapter. As to the question what address forms could be used to refer to the addressee, we may say that all of the available ones (Yli-Vakkuri 2005: 190).

In Finnish, following personal suffixes are added to verbs:

	sg	pl
1 st	-n	-mme
2 nd	-t	-tte
3 rd	V ⁻ / Ø	-vat/-vät

Yli-Vakkuri adds that Finnish also recognizes an impersonal person (fourth person) meaning *human, undefined and plural* (Yli-Vakkuri 2005: 190). The verbal suffix of this person is in form: -(t)V⁻n.

Thanks to the personal suffixes of the verbs, personal pronouns do not need to be expressed. This is usually the case with the first and the second person, third person requires addition of a personal pronoun (Yli-Vakkuri 2005: 191). Lappalainen points out a possibility of a different meaning in sentences with and without the personal pronoun (Isosävi, Lappalainen 2015: 12), Yli-Vakkuri thinks that the personal pronoun is present only in emphatic expressions (2005: 191).

According to Yli-Vakkuri, 1.sg can be used to refer to a child or an animal, therefore it is used only in very specific contexts with a special meaning, e.g. *Voi kun mä olen sulonen!* (Oh, how sweet I am!). The 1.pl is used similarly in a language of nursery schools, sometimes also replaced by the verb in 4.pl with the 1.pl personal pronoun: *Nyt (me) syömmе/syödään*

puuroa. (Now (we) eat porridge.). 3.pl is an archaic form rarely still used in certain Finnish dialects. Three remaining persons are used the most to address someone: 2.sg is the most common of all address forms, in most situations it is considered an unmarked form, 2.pl is the correct politeness form in standard Finnish, finally 3.sg is used with titles, apart from some dialects or specific familiar contexts it is considered to be archaic.

T-form: Mitä etsit? (What are you(sg) looking for?)

V-form: Mitä etsitte? (What are you(pl) looking for?)

3.sg: Haluaako **rouva** muuta? (Does madam want anything else?)⁵

2.2.2 Nominal forms of address

Speakers of Finnish tend to avoid the use of terms of address (Isosävi, Lappalainen 2015: 12, Larjavaara 1999, Yli-Vakkuri 2004: 194). Yli-Vakkuri (2004: 194) states that address terms used with meaning of *'taking one into consideration in a polite manner'* are nowadays used only in ceremonious situations or intimate affectionate speech.

*Pyydän teitä, **herra presidentti**, ...* (May I ask you, Mr. President,...)

*Rakastan sinua, **kultaseni!*** (I love you, my sweetheart!)

*Moi **pikku-potilas**, onpas typerää, että olet sairastunut.* (Hello little-patient, it is stupid that you are ill.)⁶

General terms of address such as *herra* (Sir), *rouva* (Madame), or *neiti* (Miss) are not used in Finnish very often and they can even sometimes have negative connotations. However, they are sometimes used when addressing customers in customer service.

*Ottaako **rouva** lisää kahvia?* (Does Madame want more coffee?)

Because of the lack of general neutral terms of address, Finnish speakers sometimes use terms referencing the relationship between the communication partners.

⁵ All examples in this subsection are taken from Yli-Vakkuri 2005 (192).

⁶ Example taken from the personal e-mail correspondence.

Päivää, naapuri! ([Good] day, neighbour!)

To use temporary address terms or to avoid addressing altogether are the only two options Finnish speakers have when communicating with someone they do not know (Yli-Vakkuri 2004: 196).

2.2 Finnish evasiveness

If a speaker does not want to use one of the forms of address, Finnish, like many other languages, permits him or her to avoid the straight reference to the hearer. However, it has been argued that in comparison to speakers of other languages, Finns tend to be extremely evasive (Nyblom 2006: 19.2, Larjavaara 1999, Yli-Vakkuri 2004: 191).

“Exceptions (towards other Pan-European languages – ed.) are due to the fact that Finnish politeness is withdrawing and evasive and, carried to an extreme, reference to the addressee is avoided at all costs.” (Yli-Vakkuri 2004: 191)

Speakers of Finnish are enabled to be evasive by the grammar. The verb in the third and fourth person can be used without the personal pronoun or a noun, and the suffix of the verb does not refer to a particular person (in 3.sg and 4.sg). As a result, speakers of Finnish can use this neutral way of avoiding straight reference and without noticing of their communication partners. Larjavaara (1999) notes, that such avoidance is always possible, however it can be sometimes difficult, especially in longer conversations. Following examples demonstrates the smooth evasiveness in Finnish everyday phrases:

(01) *Ollaanko **sitä** minne menossa?* = *Minne **sinä** olet menossa?* (Where are you going?)

(02) *Palaako **siellä**?* = *Poltatko **sinä** tupakkaa?* (Do you smoke?)

(03) *Tänne ei ole lupa tulla!* = ***Älä** tule tänne!* (Do not come here!)

(04) *Ja **sinne**?* = *Ja **teille**?* (And for you?)

(05) *Onko tämä kynä **sieltä**?* = *Onko tämä kynä **teidän**?* (Is this pen yours?)

(06) *Unohtuiko **jotain**?* = *Unohtuiko **teiltä** **jotain**?* = *Unohtitteko **jotain**?* (Did you forget anything?)⁷

⁷ Examples are from Larjavaara, kielikello.fi 1999, and Yli-Vakkuri 2004, p. 191.

The examples also show a very common phenomenon of replacing the personal pronoun with a reference to addressee's location. Question from the example (02) could be literally translated as “*Is it burning/smoking there?*” where “*there*” refers to the hearer. The same strategy is also used in examples (04) and (05). Example (04) shows a question often used by shop assistants when asking customers. A shop assistant does not need to ask by T-form “*Ja sinulle?*” or by V-form “*Ja teille?*”, but can use the neutral location adverb reference to a customer by asking “*Ja sinne?*” (*And (to) there?*). Similarly, in example (05) is a speaker asking, whether the pen is *from there (sieltä)*, instead of using the straight reference (*sinun/teidän*). Example (01) uses the fourth person in combination with a pronoun *sitä (it)*. Example (04) uses a passive voice to avoid the reference, the original sentence could be translated as “*It is forbidden to come here!*” in contrast to the second sentence, which openly expressed negative imperative in singular, i.e. T-form. Finally, the verb in example (06) is used in 3.sg and without any personal pronoun. The first sentence could be translated passively as “*Was there something forgotten?*”, in which *teiltä (from you)* is unsaid, however all Finnish speakers would naturally understand the question. This expression replaces the straightforward “*Did you forget anything?*” in which it is obligatory to use either T-form (*Unohditko jotain?*) or V-form (*Unohditteko jotain?*).

However evasive Finnish can be, there are still many situations in which basic forms of address are needed. Although due to the difficult situation with politeness norms and ongoing changes in the addressing system (Nojonen 1999, Nyblom 2006, Kielikello 1999), avoiding a straight reference to the communication partner is still one of the most popular possibilities of solving problematic addressing situations.

2.3 V-form grammar

As it was already described above, Finnish uses so-called T-form and V-form as basic address forms. The terms T- and V-form are derived from French personal pronouns *tu* (2.sg) and *vous* (2.pl) and Finnish similarly uses terms *sinuttelu* derived from 2.sg personal pronoun *sinä* and *teittely* from 2.pl personal pronoun *te*.

Finnish V-form is the use of 2.pl personal pronoun when speaking to a single person. The predicate verb is also in plural, when it is in present or imperfectum:

Taidatte olla vieras täällä. (I think you(sg) have a guest here. = V-form)

Luitteko (te) jo lehden? (Did you(sg) read the newspapers? = V-form)⁸

However, when using V-form in perfectum or plusquamperfectum, the auxiliary verb (olla = to be) is in plural, but the participium is in singular (Kolehmainen, kielikello.fi 2011):

Oletteko lukennut tämän kirjan? (Have you(sg) read this book? = V-form)⁹

When speaking to more than a single person, the participium stays naturally in plural form:

Oletteko lukeneet tämän kirjan? (Have you(pl) read this book?)

For comparison, the same sentence in singular:

Oletko lukennut tämän kirjan? (Have you(sg) read this book? = T-form)

This rule is simple, however many Finns make mistakes and tend to use the plural form of participium when using V-form (Kolehmainen 2011). Why is this the case? Kolehmainen states that this rule is nothing new. The oldest mention about this rule dates back to 1882 when on the seminary organized for the 50-year anniversary of the foundation of the Finnish Literature Society (Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura) someone sent the question about grammar of the V-form. SKS member Hahnsson clearly answered the question by explaining the rule stated above (Kolehmainen 2011).

The reason so many Finnish speakers make mistakes when using V-form in perfectum or plusquamperfectum is more likely the lack of practice. As I will argue later in this thesis, not only is V-form quite rare in modern Finnish, but many people also start to use it as late as in their adult life. This makes its use in speech quite unnatural for many and sometimes even leads to the avoidance of it (Hytinen, mtv.fi 2013). The above mentioned internet discussion (Introduction¹⁰) also contained a few bitter notes stating that “*the worst is when someone is using the V-form incorrectly in the plural*” and “*people using sentences like ‘oletteko jo tehneet’ are silly*”. One participant of the discussion also stated that he or she would rather prefer to be addressed by “*correct T-form*” than be made to listen to the “*awful incorrect V-form*”.

⁸ This means that both sentences would be the same when used for more than one person.

⁹ The example is from Kolehmainen, Kielikello 2011

¹⁰ Leppävuori, yle.fi 2015

All in all, it can be said that the use of address forms in Finnish is rather complicated. It can be difficult for many to even formally create a V-form and keep using it during an entire communicative situation. The main obstruction, however, is caused by the differing expectations of the speakers and hence the low degree to which politeness norms are shared. I aim to explain the reason for this situation in the next chapter.

3 HISTORY OF FORMS OF ADDRESS IN FINNISH

3.1 History of forms of address in Europe

As far as we know, history of address forms dates back to Ancient Rome. It is known that Roman emperors used to address themselves in 1.pl, which originally also covered an emperor's court or company. Later, when two emperors of the West and East Rome met, they began to address each other in 2.pl. It sufficed that V-form was used by other people to address someone "in the way the emperors themselves do" and the V-form soon established itself as an address form meaning respect. As the use of the address form spread and became expected by the aristocracy, its meaning changed to the simple expression of politeness. The V-form soon spread to other layers of society and different aspects of social life, such as, doing business (Larjavaara 1999).

The V-form wave soon hit European courts. In fact, the word *politeness* is in many languages derived from the word *court*, in German it is *Höflichkeit* (Hof = court) and similarly it is in North Germanic languages, also the Czech word *zdvořilost* has the same root (dvůr). In Germany, V-form was common already in the 9th century. Through Sweden, V-form finally got to Finland, where it began to be used by the common people in the 18th century.

In the 17th century, V-form became so wide-spread in the Central Europe that it lost its original meaning as respectful address form and it was replaced by the 3.pl. Some languages like German, Norwegian or Danish have preserved the 3.pl address form until today. (Yli-Vakkuri 2004: 190)

3.2 History of forms of address in Swedish and Finnish

If we want to understand the historical development of Finnish we always have to take Sweden and Swedish into consideration. Finland has always been very close to Swedish culture and politics, although most of the time involuntarily. Finland spent seven long centuries under Swedish rule from 1150 to the Finnish war in 1808-9. So although Finnish, as a Finno-Ugric language, almost cannot be more distant in origin from Swedish, thanks to the many years of cultural contact, those two languages have much in common. This is also well demonstrated on the forms of address, which share a very similar fate in the two languages. In comparison, address forms in Estonian (related to Finnish) have followed the development in Central Europe

for a long time, and the V-form is, still, used much more in Estonian than it is in modern Finnish or Swedish nowadays (Keevallik 2004: 203-215).

The close relationship of Finnish and Swedish is also given by Swedish being the official language of Finland for four hundred years. It was exclusively used in administration and higher education until 1863 when Finnish also became a second official language. Even though the majority of Finns are speakers of Finnish nowadays, Swedish still has status of second official language today and there is still prevailing minority of Finns who speak so-called Finland-Swedish as their mother tongue (5.6%) (Nyblom 2006). The area with the most Finland-Swedes is the region of Ostrobothnia (Pohjanmaa) on the west coast with 52.1%.

The V-form reached Finland through Swedish-Finnish educated circles already in the Middle Ages, however it begun to be widely used in the 18th century, when common people from the rural areas started to address priests or public servants by the V-form. V-form was especially popular in Western Finland, where it was also used by children to address their parents or grandparents and by wives addressing their husbands (Isosävi, Lappalainen 2015: 73). On the other hand, in the Eastern parts of Finland such as Karelia, the use of V-form has never been so strong (Larjavaara 1999).

After the 2.pl address form became widespread in Swedish, it underwent similar development as in German. As early as in the 16th or the 17th century, the V-form was replaced by the 3.sg. Finnish also underwent the same development using 3.sg and sometimes even 3.pl (or in Yli-Vakkuri's terminology 4.pl with the 3.pl personal pronoun). The V-form was weakened, but it did not disappear entirely, and so both *polite* address forms have been coexisting until the 19th century (Kolehmainen 2011, Lappalainen 2015, Larjavaara 1999).

Saako rouvalle olla kahvia? (lit. Does Madame allow to have coffee? = Does Madame want coffee?) – 3.sg + title

Ollaanko he ylioppilas? (lit. Are they a student? = Are you a student?) – 4.pl + 3.pl personal pronoun “he”¹¹

¹¹ Examples are from Isosävi, Lappalainen 2015

Voiko kaupaneuvos tulla? (lit. *Can a shop assistant come? = Can you come?*) – 3.sg + temporary title¹²

However, some resources (for example Yli-Vakkuri 2004: 190) state that the semantic development of the 2.pl has gone so far that it has even become impolite or offensive. According to Yli-Vakkuri, for this short time, 3.sg became a standard in most of the situations with exception of the young educated elite, who kept using 2.pl.

The second half of the 19th century brought, alongside the Finnish national revival, many discussions about the language including the forms of address. After a short time, the 3.pl was dropped and the V-form came into use again. This was supported by the *Institute for the Languages of Finland* (Kotimaisten kielten keskus, shortly Kotus) which published statements in favour of the V-form first in 1885 and again in 1892 (Kolehmainen 2011). Yli-Vakkuri states that this change back to V-form both in Sweden and Finland conflicted customs of both common and educated people and caused the lack of generally accepted address code, which in her opinion explains the rapid changes in the 20th century (Yli-Vakkuri 2004: 190).

Until the 20th century, the use of forms of address was as asymmetrical as the society was. Lappalainen states that it was the emergency conditions of the Second World War which broke the lines dividing the society (Lappalainen 2015).

The breaking point in the use of forms of address happened in Sweden at the end of the 1960s with the so-called *du-reformen* when the Swedes rapidly changed almost completely to 2.sg. It is interesting that the reform was not planned by the state, but came from the people themselves. There were several different reasons for this change. To begin with, the parts of Europe and the world experienced liberal movements and democracy and the need for social equality was spreading in western societies. Sweden was also influenced by the American anti-authoritative young culture (Larjavaara 1999). Also, the Swedish V-form (ni) has never gotten rid of negative connotations from the times when its use was mostly asymmetrical. And so the V-form did not feel right anymore in the egalitarian Swedish society. (Fremer 2015: 34-41)

Du-reformen came to Finland in 1970s, but it has not had as strong impact as in Sweden. There have never been such negative connotations of the V-form in Finnish or Finland-Swedish

¹² The example is from Kolehmainen 2011.

as there were in Swedish, so the need for change has not been so strong and urgent. As a result, Finnish underwent the same development as Swedish, but kept the use of the V-form in specific situations and communities and mostly also with much older and respected people. Heidi Nyblom's research (Nyblom 2006) also shows that Finland-Swedish speakers are somewhat less formal than speakers of Finnish, however, Finnish still plays a more important role than Swedish in influencing the use of address forms in Finland-Swedish.

This recent historical development is the cause for the lack of address code in modern Finnish (Paunonen 2010: 325). At the beginning of the 20th century, children in Ostrobothnia still addressed their parents using the V-form, the post-war generations were raised using V-form when talking to their teachers, strangers and older people, generations of people born in 1960s were born in the times of liberal movements, considering the V-form to be a bad relict of old times of inequality, and the young generations of today are left with different expectations of different generations.

All in all, the situation is not as dramatic as it may seem at this point. Du-reformen has had a great impact on Finnish and so the T-form is nowadays used in a vast majority of everyday situations. The youngest generation is not usually very concerned about the V-form, young people usually get to use it for the first time at summer job or in the mandatory military service. However, the different expectations and dramatically different opinions throughout the generations of Finns still prevail. This unsettled situation may be the cause for ongoing changes in Finnish address forms (Paunonen 2010: 325). Some studies show the ongoing increase of the T-form by young generations (Nojonen 1999), while others reveal a tendency toward the increased use of the V-form in specific contexts possibly under the influence of German and French (Lappalainen 2015, Kielikello 1999). In the next chapter, I aim to give a description of the use of address forms in modern Finnish. This is done together with the interpretation of data from my qualitative research.

4 FORMS OF ADDRESS IN MODERN FINNISH

To describe the present state of address forms in Finnish is not an easy task. Nor is it simple in other languages like French, German or Czech, no matter how specific the politeness norms are and how strictly they are followed in these languages. Keeping in mind the definition of politeness as a *dynamic interpersonal activity*, no rule can be distinct enough to cover it as a whole.

This issue is followed by another question: how can the use of address forms actually be researched? Ideally, a researcher would focus on spontaneous speech. However, capturing authentic spontaneity using audio- or video-recordings may come into conflict with ethical issues such as informed consent. The problem with the lack of spontaneity prevails also when a research is based on data from television and radio programs, or the written word. (Lappalainen 2015: 14)

Another possibility is to base the research on speakers' views on the use. Such answers will necessarily be different in character, for speakers may not clearly remember their own use or even consciously adjust their responses for variety of reasons. However, it can be expected that the answers will give us rough idea about their actual (or in their opinion at least ideal) use of address forms. Questionnaires are good for quantitative researches due to their easy evaluation, semi-structured interviews are on the other hand better used for qualitative research. The obvious advantage of quantitative research is the amount of data and therefore the potential to display the representativeness of this data using statistical analysis, the disadvantage could be oversimplification of the complexity of the studied issue. It is then quite the opposite for the qualitative research.

In the following paragraphs, I will introduce several studies on the forms of address in Finnish. One of the largest took place in 1976, that is shortly after the du-reformen came to Finland. It was in the form of questionnaire, made by Eero Kiviniemi and Heikki Paunonen and carried out by the Society for the Study of Finnish (Kotikielen Seura) with the help of a bank (Postipankki), which published the questionnaire in its magazine. The researchers received 30 845 responses and picked 11 614 of them for the research. All in all, the research showed the impact of the du-reformen on Finnish among its speakers. The T-form rise was clear in all situations in which communication partners knew each other – within the family, but also at work. The V-form prevailed in communication with much older people. Altogether, age and

familiarity played very important role as factors, on the other hand, the importance of social status as a factor had weakened. There were no noticeable differences between different areas of Finland, nor was there a significant difference between men and women. (Lappalainen 2015, Paunonen 2010)

Another study was carried out in 1998 by Anna-Leena Noponen (Lappalainen 2015, Noponen 1999, Paunonen 2010). It replicated the research from 1986. Altogether, 114 student respondents partook part in the questionnaire-based research. Noponen found a noticeable rise of the T-form in comparison to the 1985/6 research, sometimes even by tens of percentages. In 1986, over half of the respondents declared they would use V-form to address someone noticeably older than them (older than thirty), in 1997 it was only 40%. Officials who are under thirty would be addressed using the T-form by 42% of the respondents in 1986 and 77% of respondents in 1997. However, officials over thirty would be addressed by T-form only by 1% in 1986 and by 27% in 1997. The percentage growth in the declared anticipated use of the T-form was remarkable. Nevertheless, the research also showed that even the young people still claimed they would use the V-form in some situations, especially at work, in professional talk or with much older people, as they believe it is expected of them. (Noponen 1999, Paunonen 2010)

Noponen conducted another study at Institute of the Languages of Finland (Kotus) and the coffee company Gustav Paulig Oy in 1997. There were 161 respondents, 85 from Paulig and 76 from Kotus. Most of the respondents were between 41-45 years old, all working adults. All in all, the results showed that the V-form was still declared to be used by speakers in a variety of situations. Age showed to be the most important factor, and within age groups, the social role made the difference. (Noponen 1999, Paunonen 2010)

Based on her research, Noponen established four types of speakers according to their use of address forms:

- V-form users who understand the V-form as the natural and polite way of addressing strangers. They use the V-form quite often and almost always when meeting people whom they do not know. They also expect to be addressed with the V-form in particular situations.
- Speakers who equally use the V-form and the T-form to address different people. They usually adapt to the situation and their communication partner's approach. For them, both the T-form and the V-form are appropriate address forms. They often struggle to select

the *correct* address form and they believe other speakers have the same problem. Therefore they never get offended when someone is addressing them.

- Speakers who mostly use the T-form. They consider T-form to be friendly and positively straightforward attitude to other people. They are able to use the V-form if needed, especially with much older people or people with much higher social status.
- T-form users. They use T-form at all times, no matter what the situation may be. They view it as the basic and universally suitable form of address. (Noponen 1999)

In 1999, Noponen wrote her prediction of the future development of the address forms. She believed the first group would disappear, however, the V-form would not. Her research demonstrated there was still a place for the V-form in Finnish even thirty years after the du-reformen. She also formulated the belief that at the beginning of 21st century, the situation would settle down and Finnish would establish some widely shared politeness norms which would solve the variety of unclear situations which lead to the avoidance of direct address. (Noponen 1999)

A specific study was done by Heidi Nyblom at the University of Vaasa in 2006. She researched T- and V-form use on Finnish and Finland-Swedish university students. The data came from a questionnaire on address usage, which was distributed to 316 university students. The results showed Finnish students to be using the V-form somewhat more than Finland-Swedish students as it had been expected. The figures were surprisingly high. For example, more than 90% of Finnish and 50% of Finland-Swedish students declared they would use the V-form when approaching an unknown considerably older person. The research confirmed that V-form is nowhere near extinction. (Nyblom 2006)

Finally, one of the most recent studies was carried out by Hanna Lappalainen in the form of questionnaires in 2013. They received around 1 500 responses. The V-form has again confirmed its position and one of the most interesting and important roles was played by customer service. (Lappalainen 2015). I will add more information and commentary on the recent researches later in this chapter.

4.1 Research in February 2016

Preparations for my research began in February 2015 when after I had done some reading, I visited Finland and briefly discussed the topic of politeness with my friends

and neighbours in Vantaa. I also recorded short conversations. After the visit I sorted the subject and the type of my research.

I decided to do a qualitative study in the form of semi-structured interviews. I had the right conditions to carry out a qualitative study, for I used to live in the area and I know people of all ages willing to take part in my study there. Being a non-native speaker of Finnish, I decided to avoid any kind of research based on the interpretation of spontaneous speech. Therefore I aimed for the semi-structured interview.

The research took place in Vantaa (a part of the Finnish Capital Region) and Helsinki in February and March 2016. All interviews were done by me in Finnish. Altogether, I interviewed twenty respondents. I aimed to cover all age groups to see the differing opinions of different age groups. This was important for I supposed significant diversity in responses of the different age groups. Considering the development of the address forms in the last century, leaving out any of the age groups would mean not being any close to a representative sample of the Finnish population.

The youngest respondent was twenty-one and the oldest over eighty years old. The respondents are divided into four age groups. There are ten respondents in the 20-30 age group. They represent the youngest group, which was not influenced by the reform in 1970s. There are two respondents in the 30-45 age group. Those are respondents who were born when the reform was taking place in Finland. The third age group 50-60 is represented by four respondents. These respondents were born and raised before the reform, however they lived most of their lives after it. The oldest group, aged 60-80, is also represented by four respondents. They have lived most of their lives before the reform.

I also aimed to interview both men and women to see potential differences in their responses (as claimed for example by Nojonen, 1999). Altogether, there were thirteen women and seven men. I have not noticed any significant differences. All respondents reached the secondary education (either high-school – *ammattikoulu* or grammar school – *lukio*), most also the higher vocational education (*ammattikorkeakoulu*), and two a university degree. I included the university students to interview them about the use of address forms in

the academic sphere. Six respondents were interviewed on their own, the rest in pairs. All interviews were audio-recorded.¹³

Due to the fact that I had known all my respondents well before the interviews, I do not suspect any remarkable differences in their answers when talking to me as a foreigner. In fact, in some questions, my foreigner status could even be a certain advantage. For example, when trying to search for the rules of polite behaviour, interviewees may try to state clear rules, that could be understood by an outsider. They may also speak more openly about certain issues, for they may suppose that, as an outsider, I do not have an evaluative opinion on the use of address forms in Finnish. All in all, I am of that opinion that all the interviews were natural and all respondents answered to the best of their knowledge.

Overall, there were ten questions. Given the answers, some questions were sometimes skipped. The list of all interview questions with their English translation is available in the appendices at the end of this thesis (appendix 1). The following subsections deal with selected questions and the analysis of the responses to them.

4.2 Lack of widely shared politeness norms

Unlike for instance French, Finns do not use complex system of politeness phrases only to buy bread (Kerbrat-Orechioni 2006). Finns keep their speech simple and straightforward, and it is just polite this way. Lappalainen's research, which dealt with more than eight hundred recordings from kiosks from different parts of Finland, confirmed that Finns usually aim to make their shopping as efficient as possible. A simple neutral greeting is followed by an exact request "*one stamp*". Still, there is no impoliteness in it. (Jämsen, yle.fi 2016)

The changes in the last century made it quite difficult to find a universal code for addressing people in Finnish. Dropping the V-form caused changes in what was considered polite and what was not. Some consider the T-form to be impolite, others can even get offended when addressed by V-form (Nojonen 1999). A single general rule common to all speakers of Finnish does not exist.

¹³ Respondents were informed about the recording and signed the consent form.

In the next subsection, I will consider factors that may have an impact on the use of address forms.

4.3 Factors influencing the use of forms of address

To say that certain non-linguistic factors may have an impact on how speakers use the address forms is a statement which belongs to sociolinguistics. Identifying factors that influence the use of forms of address means moving one step closer to understanding the bases for the address code.

A number of social and contextual variables may serve as such factors. Dell Hymes has identified sixteen such components in eight divisions covered in the acronym SPEAKING – *setting the scene* refers to the physical circumstances (time and place), P is for *participants* of the communication, E stands for *ends* and it generally means the communicative goals and outcomes, A as in *act sequence* means the form and the order, K stand for *key* covering tone, manner, and spirit of the communication, I is for *instrumentalities*, that is to say forms and styles of speech, N for *norms*, which are simply social rules, and finally G as in *genre* of the speech act (Hymes 1974: 53-62). Paunonen (2010: 325) mentions some factors, which seem to be relevant to the Finnish speakers. It is the age of both the speaker and the hearer, their social status, familiarity between the communication partners, the speaker's mood, the hearer's appearance, the character of the situation, and subject of the talk.

The results of the study from 1976 (Lappalainen 2015) determined that the *age* and *familiarity* of the communication partners were the two most important factors that influenced the speakers' selection of the T- or V-form. The research showed the context to be the third most important factor. Respondents pointed to customer service in particular as a context where the V-form is most likely used. Situation appeared to be of more importance than hearer's appearance.

Matti Larjavaara also points out the importance of familiarity between two people as a factor. In his terms, as status-politeness is not as important as it used to be, familiarity naturally takes over as a critical factor. (Larjavaara 1999)

Noponen found four different factors in the data of her Kotus-Paulig research from 1998. There are: the formality of the situation, social status of the addressee, addresser and addressee's gender, and addresser and addressee's age. Out of all four, age was revealed to be

the most significant factor. Higher age correlated with a higher percentage of use of the V-form. When confronted with a speaker from the same age group, the choice of the respondents' address forms was mostly influenced by the social role and status of the addressee. A stranger on the street would be addressed using the T-form by 50-55% of all respondents, a doctor only by 25-30%. (Noponen 1999)

The respondents in Noponen's research between students confirmed age as the critical factor. Otherwise, the V-form was used by the students when in some *professional role*, which usually meant that respondents were not speaking for themselves, but for the whole company or institution for which they worked. Other factors seemed to be appearance of the addressee, dialect, gender, mood of the addresser, and subject of the talk. (Noponen 1999)

Nyblom's research at the University of Vaasa in 2006 showed that more than 50% of the Finnish-speaking respondents would use V-form in situations such as addressing an unknown person in writing, an unknown older person, friends of their grandparents, public authorities, and customers when working in customer service. (Nyblom 2006: 19.9)

The responses to the very first question in my interviews may also give us a hint about these factors. The first question aimed directly at the politeness norms:

01 As a foreigner learning Finnish, could you explain to me when to use V-form and when T-form in the communication?

Most of the respondents did not answer by describing a certain rule, but mostly by stating when they use T- and V-forms themselves. All respondents stated that the V-form should be used when talking to *an older person*. Some considered this to apply to anyone older or noticeably older than themselves, some only to very old people. Some respondents stated the factor of familiarity in combination to age, claiming that even people who are old, but known to us, are addressed using the T-form. One of the young respondents mentioned that she would even use the V-form to address a distant relative such as her great-grandmother. Social status was also mentioned as a factor throughout all age groups, but usually in combination with the factor of age. Some respondents specifically mentioned that they would use the V-form to address the president, an ambassador, a minister, a high-ranked officer, a professor or an older artist.

All respondents working in the services also mentioned using the V-form at work when talking to customers, especially with those older than them. Three respondents from

the youngest group stated they use the V-form even when addressing customers of their own age, one also with children. Several respondents not working in services mentioned customer service as a typical situation when one can be addressed using the V-form. Two respondents stated that they would address someone using the V-form on public transportation, for example when asking about a seat. Another two young respondents mentioned a job-interview as a situation when they would use the V-form.

The most surprising were the responses of all four respondents from the oldest group. In the answer to the first question, they all stated that they would advise using the T-form in all situations. *“We use the T-form in Finland. There can be some exceptions to this rule. There is not any strict rule. It is not forbidden to use the V-form, but nobody should feel offended if addressed using the T-form.”* and *“I would advise using the T-form. Even if you spoke to the Finnish president nowadays, you would not need to learn the V-form.”* One respondent from the oldest group mentioned the factor of familiarity, another the factor of age. However, none of them were as specific as some respondents from the younger groups.

The responses are surprising, for the respondents from this group are those who have lived most of their lives before the Finnish du-reformen, so they may be expected to feel the need for keeping the V-form. The second of the two respondents seemed to be disappointed about the situation in modern Finnish and I interpret his statement as *giving up*. However, the first respondent seemed to be satisfied with the current use of address forms.

In the 50-60 age group, one person mentioned appearance, another formality of the situation and context as factors. One respondent stated, that *“Finland is a democratic country and we have this deal in the society that there is no need to use the V-form. There is no social rule that would tell us to use the V-form to address people of higher social status or post.”* A respondent from the 30-45 age group commented in the same manner, as well as some of the respondents from the oldest group. On the other hand, no one from the youngest group have made any comments of this kind.

To sum up, it seems that age and familiarity (sometimes also in combination) play important roles as factors influencing the use of address forms in Finnish. Social status could be considered a third factor. There are specific contexts that evoke the use of the V-form. They are all usually short communication situations with unknown people such as requests in public transportation, asking a stranger for directions, and above all customer service

situations. Other aspect which arouses the use of the V-form use could be the formal character of the situation. Such situation could be, for example, a job-interview.

4.4 Connotations

Although speakers of Finnish use the T-form in most communication situations, there is still variety of situations in which most of them would consciously choose to use the V-form. There always has to be a reason for this choice. This reason is that the speaker wants to communicate something by using the particular address form. In this subsection, I focus on what meaning speakers attach to the address forms.

It seems that the T-form is generally a neutral unmarked form of address in Finnish. In my opinion, it gains its meaning only when placed in opposition to the V-form. If the T-form is used in situations, when the V-form is usually expected, then it can carry a specific meaning. However, because the V-form use is rare and the T-form is used in most of the everyday even essentially different situations, I view the T-form as the unmarked address form in Finnish.

Journalist Tiina Rajamäki who has been living in Germany wrote an article for Finnish newspaper Helsingin Sanomat about the problems she has with using German address forms. She states that she misses the Finnish addressing system, because:

“We are sinä. It is one of the most beautiful things in Finnish. The T-form means that a teacher and a student, a shop assistant and a customer, a professor and a student, a congressman and a citizen, a boss and an employee are not in fact, despite being on different positions, different from each other.” (Rajamäki, Helsingin Sanomat, 28.12.2015)

Rajamäki understands the T-form as an expression of equality among different members of society, as a symbol of democracy. And Rajamäki is not alone. As we have seen in the last chapter, especially those who have been born around the sixties have the same connotations connected to the T-form.

As Fremer (Lappalainen 2015: 34) and Nyblom (2006: 19.2) note, in Swedish, the V-form has had negative connotations for a long time due to the complicated use of titles and address forms during 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. In Swedish, it can even be considered impolite to address someone using the V-form. Finland-Swedish, Nyblom claims, does not have this negative connotation, thanks to the influence of Finnish. However,

as was just mentioned, even Finns can feel that the V-form is somehow dividing the society and that there is no place for the V-form in a democratic country such as Finland.

Students, who took part in Noponen's research from 1998 has also mentioned that they were afraid of the V-form's negative connotations. *"The V-form can be used for keeping distance, but not only out of respect, but also in situations such as distancing oneself from someone out of disgust or contempt – for example a drunk individual."* (Noponen 1999) Noponen thinks that it is for this reason that the V-form is used less and less outside of formal situations. Some people may get offended by its unfriendliness.

Not all people have such negative connotations associated with the V-form. Helsingin Sanomat has published three letters in response to Rajamäki's article (HS 3.1. 2016). One, written by a woman working in Sweden, was in support of Rajamäki's opinion, two others were against it. One of them, reader Heikki Peltola, wrote that he does not understand what Rajamäki means by her definition mentioned above, and that the mutual use of the V-form between strangers stands for respect. Second, professor Jussi Niemi mentioned that the T-form does not suit every situation and it is out of respect that we let the communication partner to pick the code.¹⁴

In order to search for possible connotations, I have asked my respondents the following question:

02 What does T-form and V-form mean? What does it express?

In response, most of the respondents explained what meaning they connect with the V-form, rather than describing the T-form. The youngest group of respondents (20-30) connected the V-form especially with *respect* and *politeness*. Two also mentioned *keeping distance*, both understood it as a positive way how to show respect. For some, the V-form also means that the status of the communication partner is being recognized and that the situation is formal. The two following examples are taken from the youngest group of respondents:

"I think that the V-form means politeness and respect. It also means keeping distance. The intention is not to get to know some people, the intention is to transfer some message,

¹⁴ This means that the speaker should begin by addressing using the V-form and waiting for the addressee to either continue in the same manner or express a wish to switch the code by saying, for example: "There is no need for the V-form."

communicate something. And the V-form is the diplomatic mean of doing so with respect to the communication partner.” (male, 23)

“The V-form generally is respectful. It means you treat your communication partner with respect. In Finnish, there is huge difference in the meaning. It is like if you say Rakastan sinua! in Finnish or I love you! in English. In Finnish it is a big deal, but in English it is normal to say that almost to everyone. And it is the same with the V-form. In Finnish, you really mean that you respect the person, that you keep a high opinion of him.” (female, 23)

The above mentioned possibility to pick the code of communication was mentioned by one respondent from the 30-45 age group. Respondents from the 50-60 age group also viewed the V-form as polite and respectful, however their responses were not as unified as those of the younger respondents. One respondent mentioned the V-form as appreciative of the other’s status or age, another as taking someone into account. Only one respondent mentioned keeping distance, and one expressed that the V-form can sometimes feel too ceremonial and unnatural. On the other hand, the same respondent also said that the T-form can also be impolite and rude in some situations. One respondent said:

“You use the V-form when you want to show respect. I would also expect the V-form in customer service situations and then especially when the subject of the talk is serious. Once, I received a call by mistake and the person was calling to rent a grave. I used the V-form because of the matter of the situation. And then, when there is a person of a difficult kind, I would also use the V-form to keep distance. So altogether it expresses respect to older people, but also distance, distance meaning – ‘you are not my friend’.” (female, 50)

Respect and politeness were also mentioned in the 60-80 age group. One respondent said that the T-form may be very impolite and too straightforward, but that she had gotten used to hearing it. Other respondents evaluated the T-form as friendly and as an expression of equality. The following two examples are from the same interview:

“I think the T-form is very friendly. That is the first thing to come to my mind. The T-form means that it is a familiar person, a friend. The V-form means it is an unknown person.” (female, 80)

“For me, the T-form means equality nowadays in Finland. But I use the V-form to address people that I respect, especially when it is an older person, who has probably been more used

to the use of the V-form in his/her life. So in my opinion, you always have to examine the situation.” (male, 80)

All in all, the V-form is perceived as showing respect and being polite throughout all age groups. Some also understand it as a means of keeping distance, both in the positive way closely connected to respect, but also in the negative way of not being interested in communicating with the addressee. Social status and age are being taken into account with the V-form. The V-form signifies formality, it can feel ceremonial and sometimes even stiff. It can be used when communicating difficult and sad subjects. For some, the T-form is a symbol of liberal society, the V-form is then perceived negatively as hierarchically dividing society. When addressed using the V-form, some addressees can sometimes also get offended for feeling too old. For others, the V-form does not have any negative connotations and it is a respectful way of allowing the addressee to pick the preferable code for the communication situation.

If we consider again Brown and Levinson’s theory, we may see the use of the V-form in Finnish as a negative politeness strategy. In the same manner, along with Larjavaara’s theory, I interpret keeping distance and showing respect as examples of status- or territory-politeness, and thus of distant-politeness, which corresponds to the negative politeness.

4.4.1 Symmetry

As we are concerned with meaning, we must mention another important fact – the symmetry of the address forms. The use of address forms can be either symmetrical or asymmetrical. It was Brown and Gilman who first came up with those terms in their essay called *Pronouns of Power and Solidarity* (Brown, Gilman 1960: 252-281). Put briefly, the asymmetrical use of address forms is when one person addresses another using the V-form but is addressed by that other person using the T-form. This, according to Brown and Gilman, is a case of *power semantics*. That is because there is an asymmetrical power relationship between the two and the asymmetry is the cause for the specific meaning of both of the address forms, in which this power relationship is expressed. On the other hand, the symmetrical use of address forms is simply when both speakers use the same address forms, either the T-form or the V-form, to address each other. This is the case of equality. If the two wish to express solidarity, they use the T-form, if not, they use the V-form. (Brown, Gilman 1960)

Larjavaara also in his own terms addresses this topic in relation to Finnish. He notes that the use of address forms was previously asymmetrical in Finnish as a case of status-

politeness (Larjavaara 1999). Later on, address forms became symmetrical and the use of the V-form spread until it was used to address all unknown people. The symmetrical use is a sign of fellow-politeness, Larjavaara claims. This happens when a person in a superior position is addressed using the V-form and answers in the same manner to establish a fellow-type situation. At its time, this change gave the T-form a negative connotation when used asymmetrically. According to Larjavaara, the V-form had two different meanings: expressing higher status with a request for respect, and expressing unfamiliarity. On the other hand, the T-form had three different meanings: expressing closeness (between adults), expressing impoliteness (between adults), or expressing higher status when asymmetrical (for example towards children).

Larjavaara also states that the V-form is still used nowadays to express status and territory-politeness, or unwelcoming distance-keeping. He claims there is a contrast between the old hierarchical society and today's order-less, pluralistic, non-hierarchical, and global world, in which we see the disappearance of the lines dividing friends and strangers, and where only few social statuses and titles are universal. Politeness is still alive, however it is no more distance-politeness, but rather close-politeness, which is able to keep up with the modern society.

Finns use address forms mostly symmetrically. If a customer addresses a shop assistant, it can be expected that the shop assistant will answer in the same manner. Both pupils and students at schools mostly address their teachers using the T-form and receive it back. And even in such a traditionally hierarchical institution as the armed forces, soldiers address their superiors using the V-form and at least according to the written rules they are also obliged to answer them in the same manner.¹⁵ In certain situations, address forms can be asymmetrical, usually when the age difference between the two speakers is more than few generations. However, this is not a case of real power semantics. The asymmetrical T-form expressing higher status is not used in modern Finnish, and if it is, then only very rarely.

4.5 Semantic and phonetic differences in speech

When using a particular address form, a speaker communicates some meaning. However, it is not only the address form that makes the difference, as the use of the address

¹⁵ I explain this in detail in 4.6.4.

form is usually also accompanied by other changes in speech. This subsection briefly discusses such changes.

The third question in the semi-structured interviews was:

03 *When you use the V-form, does anything change in your speech (from when you use the T-form)?*

The answer lead us to three observations. First of all, it is the overall formality of the speech which changes. In Finnish, we recognize formal and informal variety and it is of course the formal one that would be more likely used with the V-form. Altogether, slang expressions do not easily combine with the V-form. However, as the V-form is mostly used in short conversations, formal or informal speech does not usually have much opportunity to be expressed. Some respondents mentioned that when addressing using the V-form and speaking formally, they also speak slower, and some even lower their voice. One respondent mentioned this may also be the reason why the V-form is not used so much today, for it just does not fit the pace and manner of modern communication.

Secondly, not all greetings may be used with both forms of address. However, respondents' answers to this question also differed noticeably. Clearly, greetings used in slang or borrowed from dialects are understood as not to be used with the V-form. Such greetings are, for example, *Moro* or *Terve*. On the other hand, the formal greetings *Hyvää päivää/huomenta/iltaa!* (Good day/morning/evening!) do combine only with the V-form. The somewhat informal greeting *Moi* was considered as not fitting the V-form by all but one respondent. The problem begins with semi-formal greetings: four respondents said that the greetings *Päivää/Iltaa/Huomenta* combine with the V-form, one respondent said the V-form requires the full form, and even more interestingly, seven respondents would greet someone with the semi-formal greeting *Hei* while using the V-form, while three openly declared that this combination was not possible.

Finally, I have asked respondents whether they could imagine using first names in combination with the V-form. Ten respondents answered that such combination is not possible, four that it is not likely and five (mostly from the younger groups) that they could imagine such combination occurring. One respondent from the 50-60 age group said:

“I can imagine it for example in some situation when it is not clear what role you have in the communication – who the other person is and what he or she expects. So they agreed on using the T-form, but one still continues with using the V-form. And then there can be this situation as a middle ground.”

To sum up, when using the V-form, speakers claim they tend to be more formal, avoid slang expressions and speak slower. Not all greetings are viewed as combinable with the V-form, speakers declare that they avoid informal and slang greetings, some use semi-formal greetings, some perceive them as inappropriate and claim to only use full forms of formal greetings. Some respondents are able to imagine the combination of a first name and the V-form and sometimes even claim to use it themselves, some consider the fact of knowing someone’s first name to be a sign of closeness and therefore of T-form use.

4.6 Typical situations for T- and V-form use

It is a fact that the T-form is used in most communication situations in Finnish. It does not only mean closeness and friendship, it is also neutral and can be heard in communication with strangers, people of higher status, in customer service and even somewhat formal situations. However, the V-form is also used in these situations, and sometimes even expected. The V-form specifically fits short conversations with strangers – when asking if a seat is free in a bus, buying a chocolate bar in the kiosk, showing directions to an old lady at the train station, but it can be also used in longer conversations – when showing respect to an older unfamiliar person, or to a person of a higher status, sometimes it fits the formality and seriousness of a particular profession.

Based on the data from the interviews, the following subsections describe and analyse a selection of the typical or most interesting situations for the use of address forms in Finnish.

4.6.1 Education

Both the primary school pupils and high school students use the T-form to address their teachers. Children and teenagers in general do not use the V-form, their first experience with it may be at a summer job in customer service or in the military. A teacher is not perceived as someone of a higher position, his or her authority comes naturally and is not forced by the establishment of the hierarchy.

Neither students of universities (yliopisto) nor higher professional schools (ammattikorkeakoulu) use the V-form much. No one would use the V-form to address a young lecturer of a small department. The bigger the department and the older the lecturer is, the V-form use rises. It is again familiarity, age and status that play a role. Many students would use the V-form to address a professor or a person with other high academic title, especially if they did not know him and were contacting him on phone or in writing.

Education is therefore one of the areas where equality wins over hierarchy. The T-form is used in most of the situations.

4.6.2 Institutions

In the research, respondents were asked to pick a form of address to write a letter or an e-mail to an institution. All but one responded that they would use the V-form. The exception was a female respondent from the 30-45 age group. She said:

“I can begin a letter/e-mail by writing Hyvä first name last name and then to avoid V-form, because it signifies something very serious, uselessly celebration manner when it is written. But on the other hand, I cannot straightforwardly T-form a person that I do not know in writing.”

Other respondents mostly stated that communication with institutions is serious and formal and also that the V-form can play the role of plural as in addressing the institution as a whole. An important role is played by the fact that the question asked for a written form of communication, which is of a different kind than when approaching a single person face-to-face. One respondent working as a security guard in such institutions responded:

“At work, I am always using a V-form when writing an e-mail. It is so much easier to use the V-form in writing than in speech. And if I am typing an e-mail or message to someone whom I do not know, I also use the V-form. Especially when it is in customer service. When I am not there as myself, when it is not my personal message, but I represent the company, then I always use the V-form. I always use it when I do not know who is on the other side to answer – it can be an institution, organization or a company.” (male, 23)

To sum up, communication with institutions is usually perceived as formal and serious. For many, writing to unknown person is an occasion for using the V-form. Some Finns also

perceive the V-form as a plural form, because they are addressing the institution as a whole, not the addressee on the personal level.

4.6.3 High social status positions

For Finns, social hierarchy has been replaced by social equality in the 20th century. Although the V-form can be preserved in communications with people of high social status, no one is obliged or expected to follow the rule, and as one respondent said: “*No one can get offended when not addressed using the V-form.*”

Speakers of Finnish use the V-form to address respected people in high social positions to show respect to them and to their post. Such positions can be political, religious, academic, military, or artistic.

Out of all political positions, Finns always mention they would use the V-form to address the president. The president, then, would be expected to use the V-form to address them in return or to offer them to switch the code, or *Make the T-form deal (Tehdä sinun kauppoja.)* as Finns would put it. The relation is therefore again symmetrical and as such it does not imply any power-relationship. It is the formality of the situation evoked by the respected post of president that requires the use of V-form, not the social hierarchy itself. In the same way, some would also address other politicians such as ministers, ambassadors, some even mayors. The code always depends on the occasion.

Social hierarchy does not play an important role in Finnish anymore. The oldest generations may still feel the need to differentiate between people. One respondent mentioned that her old mother would not want to call a doctor, because she thought it would be impolite to bother him, and on the contrary, the respondent herself views doctors as service employees, not as people to be respected for their social positions.

4.6.4 Armed forces

The armed forces are naturally a closed community with their own social and hierarchical rules. The relevance of mentioning them in this thesis is that in my opinion, the military may have greater or lesser influence on maintaining the V-form culture in Finnish.

The reason for this may be the military service which lasts around half a year or a whole year and is mandatory for all men who have reached the age of eighteen. The conscripts are then

obliged to use the V-form to address their superiors. However, their superiors are expected to use the V-form in return. One respondent said:

“It was obligatory to use the V-form to address your superior, it suited the culture. But it was really strange at the beginning. Because we were all young there, like nineteen years old. So it felt very strange to address people of your age using the V-form. But then I got used to it and I noticed myself when someone did not address me using the V-form and I corrected him – I am no sä to you, I use the V-form with you so you will use the V-form with me in return. It just suits the situation.” (male, 23)

When asked whether this always works both ways, the same respondent answered:

“Yes. Especially the lower rank has to use the V-form with the higher rank, but the higher rank should answer in the same manner. The higher-ranks are also taught to use the V-form with the lower ranks. But it sometimes happened that some officer used the T-form with me, but of course I had no authority to correct him. (...) It would feel much better if I also received the V-form back, because when I did not I felt a bit humiliated. (...) At the beginning you get a guide with written rules and it is written there, that a soldier uses the V-form with another soldier. It is written, that it is soldier-like.”

Two interesting things are to be noticed here. Firstly, it is the reciprocity of the V-form prescribed to all soldiers. Of course, the soldier of a higher rank has the choice and the power, for he or she cannot be corrected when not using the V-form. However, according to the official rules, the relationship is supposed to be symmetrical. Secondly, and most importantly, the majority of Finnish men (and some women) learn to use V-form, at least formally, in the army. This erases the issue of not using it due to the inability to form it or to maintain it during the longer conversation. However, the military may also influence the young men's connotations linked to the V-form and thus their future use of it. A teacher from Ostrobothnia once mentioned to me that she received correspondence from her students, where most of the young men but no woman addressed her using the V-form.

All in all, it is more than possible that the mandatory military service plays some role in maintaining the V-form culture in Finnish. It is, however, not easy to say how much impact it really has.

4.7 Customer service

I have already mentioned customer service as an area with interesting addressing culture. As I will argue in this subsection, it is also an area of possible changes in this domain.

A prototypical example of customer service situation is a communication between a customer and a shop assistant in a shop. In such situation, we may say that all variations on the use of address forms are possible. The two can reciprocally use the T-form or the V-form, the shop assistant may use the V-form to address a customer and receive the T-form in return and the opposite situation may also be possible, though not common. The customer service calls for V-form use, however it is not automatic. The age of the customer usually impacts the code, sometimes also age of the shop assistant, and the type of a store or place is of importance.

Shop assistants, cashiers, and waitresses are often young. Such people generally learn to use the V-form at work. Some of the respondents working in a café, airport security checkpoints, and luxury department stores have mentioned that the rules given by the employers specified V-form use as suitable for customer service in all situations with all customers. However, the rules also differ. Some customer service workers use the V-form to address all customers including children, some excluding children, some also exclude people younger than themselves, some use it only with those noticeably older. The rules differ from place to place and it would require more extensive research to find a system within it. It may be possible that the more luxurious the place and the older the customer is, there is growing tendency for V-form use.

Even when some address rules are set, it is not easy to guess the reaction of a customer. Some customers expect to be approached formally, others may get even offended of being addressed using the V-form for they may feel *too old*.

There is a department store with somewhat expensive goods called Stockmann in the centre of Helsinki. This is a place with quite clear address rules. As Stockmann's HR manager Santeri Rommi mentioned in an interview:

"In Stockmann, we use the V-form to address all customers older than us, except when it does not feel right in the situation. We give our employees directives to answer in the same manner

as they are asked by customers. Employees should always use what feels right, they should use common sense.” (Hyttinen, mtv.fi 19.6.2013)

In the same interview, Rommi also mentioned that Stockmann regularly receives feedback on the address forms from their customers. It is almost equally positive and negative.

A very special place in the customer service is reserved for telemarketing. Many respondents quite passionately told me that they hate the following tactics of telemarketing callers. The caller opens the communication with the full name of a customer, and in the friendliest manner possible, keeps using the T-form in the conversation. A customer may sometimes think it is his forgotten friend. Most respondents, and even those who could be described as always promoting the use of the T-form, said that this kind of communication would be much better in the V-form. It is a customer service situation and what is more, communication on the phone with an unknown person. For many, it is not a situation to make friends. The youngest respondents were not as passionate about this as the older ones, however some also expressed that it would be more appropriate situation for formality if not for the V-form.

Interestingly, some respondents consider doctors and policemen to be customer service employees and therefore expect them to follow the same rules as any shop assistants and hairdressers. In the interview, respondents were given a few situations and asked to decide whether the use of the V-form would fit them. When asking about a communication with a doctor, it was interesting to see the respondents' choice – some supposed the question was whether they would use the V-form when speaking to a doctor, others whether the doctor would use the V-form to address them, the rest of the respondents directly asked, which of the two possibilities it is. The answers then naturally varied. Most of the respondents of all ages would use the T-form to address a doctor and they would also expect it in return. However, especially when communicating about a serious subject, talking to an older expert for the first time, communicating on the phone or asking for the medical condition of a friend or a relative, some respondents would use the V-form. Some respondents would also expect doctors to address patients using the V-form, especially very old ones.

Recently, there has been an article published about the new requirements of police academy for its students on one of the news servers (Ziemann, yle.fi 5.3.2016). It says one of the most important skills of a future policeman is to be able to articulate a problem both in writing and in speech in the proper manner. Policemen are considered to be service

employees. One of the respondents also mentioned the police should know how to communicate about serious matters. In such situations, the V-form could also be appropriate.

4.7.1 Potential changes in customer service

One of the aims of my thesis was to research the changes that might have happened in the use of Finnish address forms over the last ten years. There has been some speculation about the V-form use increasing in the domain of customer service (Kielikello 1999, Lappalainen 2015: 99, Nyblom 2006: 19.2), later also noticed by some media (mtv.fi 2.6.2013, yle.fi 10.2.2015). When considering the general tendency of increasing T-form use in all domains, it is interesting that the use of V-form in customer service has gone in the opposite direction. This may mean that there is still some perceived need for the V-form in Finnish after all, and that the increase in the T-form will probably not make the V-form disappear.

Whether the change is still happening or not is a question my research leaves unanswered. The research has shown that none of the respondents has noticed such a change, on the other hand some have perceived an ongoing T-form exchange in comparison to 1990s. It is indisputable that many employers in the domain of customer service give their employees directions in order to establish unified address rules in their company. A possible explanation for stating clear rules may be that young employees often come to work in customer service without any knowledge of the addressing culture. This is quite a new phenomenon, for today's young generation is one of the first which was born long after the Finnish du-reformen, and thus which grew up without noticing there are any different ways of addressing someone.

I agree with Noponen that out of her four groups of speakers, the first will soon disappear (Noponen 1999). However, I also predict that the V-form will survive in Finnish to mark specific situations, and one of these will be customer service. Whether the change is initiated by intercultural experience with customer service in other countries and contact with other languages or simply by the feeling of Finns that the V-form suits such kind of situations, it is clear that V-form is nowhere close to disappearance from this domain. If there has been any change, it has not been yet perceived by common users of the language. Therefore, it will be necessary to wait to see what will happen in this domain in the future.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The main goal of this thesis was to describe and analyse the declared use of address forms in modern Finnish. As a Czech native speaker with knowledge of Finnish, I found this topic interesting, because even though Czech and Finnish address forms are formally the same, their use significantly differs in these languages.

The address forms from the point of view of Finnish grammar were explained in the second chapter. In this chapter, we have seen that Finnish does not use much of the nominal forms of address anymore, on the other hand, it still uses two pronominal forms of address – 2.sg and 2.pl, or the so-called T-form and V-form. The use of 3.sg has almost disappeared from modern Finnish and it is mentioned only briefly.

Finnish grammar also allows its speakers to avoid direct references to other speakers and this tactic is widely used. This may have an impact on the use of address forms themselves and support the lack of widely shared politeness norms. In the last part of the second chapter, I mentioned the grammatical differences between 2.pl when used in reference to a single person or in reference to more people. It has been also mentioned that this difference may cause problems for some native speakers of Finnish to use the V-form correctly and it sometimes leads to further evasiveness. Altogether, it may be said that Finnish allows its speakers great range of manoeuvring when it comes to addressing and referencing. For many Finns, it is safe to avoid the direct reference to the hearer and it is also the most polite way.

The motive for the differences in the use of the address forms in different languages is mostly cultural. The historical development of the structures of the society brings along different connotations of the address forms. In order to explain the development of the address forms in Finnish, I briefly introduced addressing and its history in Swedish. Swedish-Finnish relations have been close for many centuries and these two languages share many culturally influenced matters. The explanation of changes first in Swedish and then in Finnish helps us understand the somewhat chaotic unsettled situation in address norms in modern Finnish. Out of all recent historical changes, it was the so-called *du-reformen* coming to Finnish from Swedish during the 1960s and 70s of the 20th century which changed T-form from a close form of address used with friends and family to the widespread neutral form of address to be used in most situations. This and other earlier changes in the Finnish address system in the 20th

century have resulted in the current situation, in which almost each generation has different use, expectations, and connotations of address forms.

The fourth and the main chapter of the thesis introduced my qualitative research in form of semi-structured interviews which took place in Finland in February 2016. My aim in this chapter was to examine different aspects of address forms in Finnish and finally describe their use. In addition to my own research, studies carried out in Finland were integrated into the analysis to help or to offer the comparison with my data. After briefly introducing the methodology of both my study and others, I addressed the topic of politeness norms. Based on the historical development, Finnish lacks a clearly codified address code. This problem is possibly solved by many Finnish speakers by the above mentioned evasive tactics. Also, as the T-form is the basic address form to be used in the most communication situations, many Finns would not even realize there is such a problem. The situations in which the expectations and use of both communication partners collide are not so rare, but usually too short for the speakers to pay extra attention to them.

The final part of the thesis focused on a variety of situations which are specific from the point of view of the address forms in Finnish. In its subsections, I discussed education, institutions, the armed forces, and above all customer service.

The research has confirmed that the connotations and the use of the address forms do not only differ culturally, but also situationally and individually. Trying to apply a universal politeness theory to this phenomenon therefore seems to be impossible. Throughout this thesis, I argued that Finnish lacks widely shared politeness norms. However, we can still see at least general tendencies of the use of the address forms in Finnish. The V-form may also have negative connotations, but in general it stays a means of being polite, expressing respect, keeping distance, and acting formally in serious situations. Such meanings correspond to what is called *negative* or *distant* politeness in the politeness theories. Altogether, politeness theories may give us a useful starting point for the analysing the research data, however, they are still not able to fully cover all individual speakers' strategies in all communicative situations.

The diversity in the use of the address forms in Finnish is also a reason for possible shortcomings of my research. Considering the Finnish situation, a quantitative research may be a better way of studying the tendencies of the use of the forms of address in modern Finnish. I must also point out that almost all of the respondents of my study were members of the same community and many of them knew each other. This might have pointed out some tendencies

of the use only shared within this community. I am also aware that the *declared* use may significantly differ from the *actual* use of the address forms, however, the study of the first may at least point out the direction for studying the second.

Altogether, I aimed to make an insight into the issue of the Finnish address forms and their problematic use at the beginning of the 21st century. The Finnish address forms are a rich and interesting topic. Many Finns, not only those from the younger generations, would nowadays say that the T-form is the only address form used in modern Finnish. However, after further discussion, they would also give many examples of situations when the use of the V-form is expected, or when the use is not clear at all. The T-form is definitely a neutral form of address used in everyday communications with friends, family, but also with teachers, bosses, and strangers. However, the V-form is not dead. And as it seems, it is not any closer to disappearance from the language.

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APPENDIX 1 – Interview questions with English translation

01 As a foreigner learning a Finnish, could you explain to me when to use V-form and when T-form in communication?

Voisitko mulle selittää, siitä ulkomaalaiselle, koska suomen kielessä käytetään teitittelyä ja koska sinuttelua?

02 What does T-form and V-form mean? What does it express? In which situation would you use them? In which situation would you expect someone else to use them?

Mitä teitittely/sinuttelu merkitsee? (Koska olisit itse käyttänyt sinuttelua/teitittelyä ja koska olisit odottanut että joku sinuttelee/teitittelee sinua?)

03 When using the V-form, does anything else differ/change in your speech to when using the T-form? (Formal language, greetings, first names – can you use first names with the V-form?)

Kun teitittelet, muutuuko vielä jotain muuta sun puheessa? (kirjakieli, tervehdykset, etunimet)

04 Are there any particular situations when it is always clear what to use – T- or V-form? + Any situations when would you definitely expect to be addressed by using the V-form/T-form?

Onko joku erityiset tilanteet, kun on sata prosentti selvä, että pitää käyttää sinuttelua/teitittelyä? + olisit odottanut...

05 Are there any situations when you are not sure about which form of address to use?

Onko joku tilanteet, kun et ole yhtään varma jos sun pitää sinuttella tai teitittellä?

06 Has it ever happened to you that you were unsure about which of the forms of address you should use. Have you ever felt uncomfortable using one of the forms? Describe the situation.

Onko se koskaan tapahtunut sinulle, ettet tiennyt jos pitää teitittellä/sinuttella ja sitten se tuntui epä mukavalta että sun piti välitä? Voisitko kuvata koko tilanne? (tarina)

07 Have you ever noticed someone using an unexpected form of address when talking to you? Which form was it? Describe the situation.

Onko se koskaan tapahtunut sinulle, että huomasit että joku sinua teitittelee/sinuttelee ja olisit yllättynyt? Koska ehkä olisit odottanut se toinen puhuttelumuoto? Voisitko kertoa koko tarina?

(Questions 05, 06, and 07 were usually covered by one question only)

08 Have you personally noticed any changes in the use of the forms of address during your life? Recently?

Oletko huomannut että teitittely/sinuttelu käytö on muuttunut sun elämän aikana? Tai joskus äskettäin?

09 Consider the following situations. When would you use T-/V-form? When would you expect to be addressed by T-/V-form? In a food store, in Stockmann, at the university when speaking to a professor / to a student, in the army, when speaking to the president / ambassador / mayor, at work, in the written communication with an institution, when speaking to your doctor, in the telemarketing

Harkita seuraavia tilanteita ja kerro jos olisi käyttänyt teitittelyä/sinuttelua ja jos olisit odottanut että joku teitittelee/sinuttelee sinua:

1, ruoka kaupaa (k-kauppa, kasalla)

2, Stockmanilla

3, yliopistossa kun puhut professorin kanssa

4, yliopistossa kun puhut opiskelijan kanssa

5, armeijassa

6, kun puhut presidentin kanssa

7, suurlähetylän kanssa

8, kaupunginjohtajan kanssa

9, työpaikalla

10, kun kirjoittat instituutioon (ja kun ne vastaa sinulle)

11, puhelinyynnissä

12, lääkärillä

10 Has it ever happened to you that you did not want to make the decision which form of address to us and you tend to avoid direct addressing? How? (3rd person)

Onko koskaan sulle tapahtunut, ettet halunut päättää jos pitää teitittellä/sinutella eli siksi kiertit suoria kysymyksiä? (mitenkäs täällä voidaan?)

Tell the respondents about the changes in the use of the forms of address at certain places and in certain situations →

11 In your opinion, why does this change happen in the language? Where does it come from?

Mistä tulee, että teitittelyn/sinuttelun käytö näin muuttuu kielessä?