

Experimental approaches to the study of language ideologies in Swedish-language Finland

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Project overview

- project funded by the Academy of Finland (postdoctoral researcher)
- funding period: 01.09.2013—31.08.2016

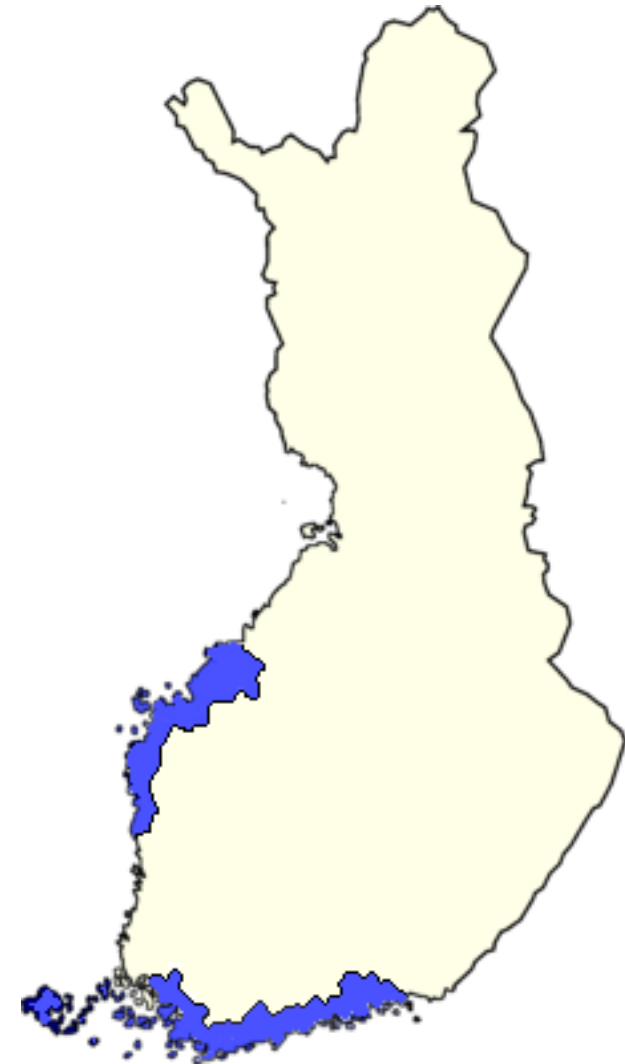
Overview of the talk

- Swedish-language Finland
- Aims
- A pilot study
- Experiment 1: speaker evaluation task + label ranking
- Experiment 2: shadowing + implicit association test



Swedish-language Finland

- Swedish is one of two official languages in Finland
- 290 000 (5.4 %) of the population in Finland are registered as Swedish-speaking
- three main regions:
 - mainland west coast (Österbotten)
 - mainland south coast (Nyland + Åboland)
 - Åland Islands



Finland-Swedish standard language?

- pluricentric languages: it is common in non-dominant varieties that the “proper national norm is heavily practised but officially depreciated – the official norm is rarely practised but officially highly appreciated” (Muhr 2012)
- linguists and language planners argue that Finland Swedish should be considered a regional variety of Swedish and not a separate language with a separate standard language
- *“finlandssvenskt standarduttal”* (‘Finland-Swedish standard pronunciation’)
- Swedish spoken by educated speakers in Helsinki and Turku has traditionally been regarded as the standard variety of Finland Swedish
- recent change in which variety is considered “the best language” by Finland-Swedes (Ivars 2003, Östman & Mattfolk 2011, Stenberg-Sirén & Östman 2012)

Aims

1. Does a common standard language ideology exist in the Finland Swedish speech community?
2. Which varieties are positively/negatively evaluated by Finland Swedes on scales of superiority and dynamism?
3. What are the explicit and implicit attitudes of Finland Swedes towards the two majority languages? Are there geographic and/or social variation associated with these attitudes within the Finland Swedish speech community?
4. What are the effects of explicit and implicit attitudes on sociolinguistic variation?



Pilot Study

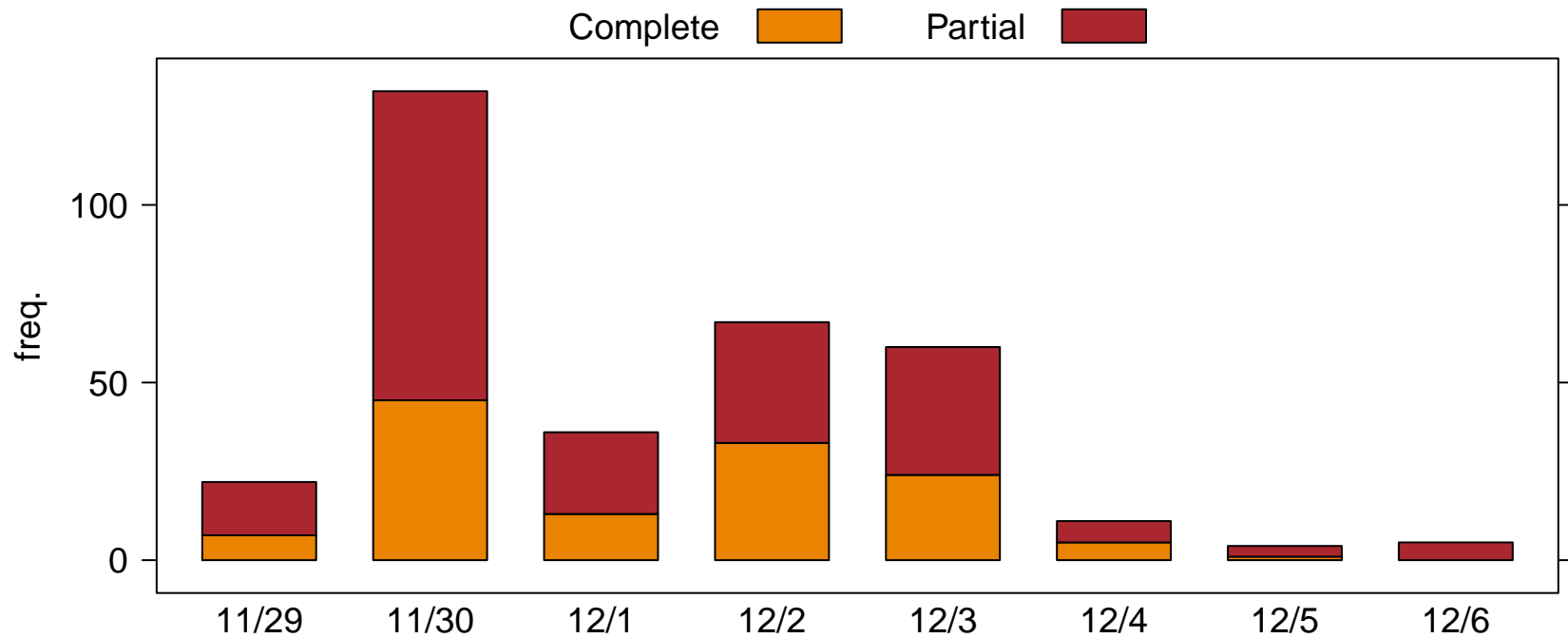
Aims:

- which labels are Finland-Swedes using for varieties of Finland Swedish?
- which levels of language use are (folk-linguistically) relevant in the Finland Swedish context (local dialect – regional dialect – regiolect – standard?)
- collect adjectives for the speaker evaluation task
- test language aesthetic evaluation in the Finland Swedish context
- test the usefulness of social media for language surveys

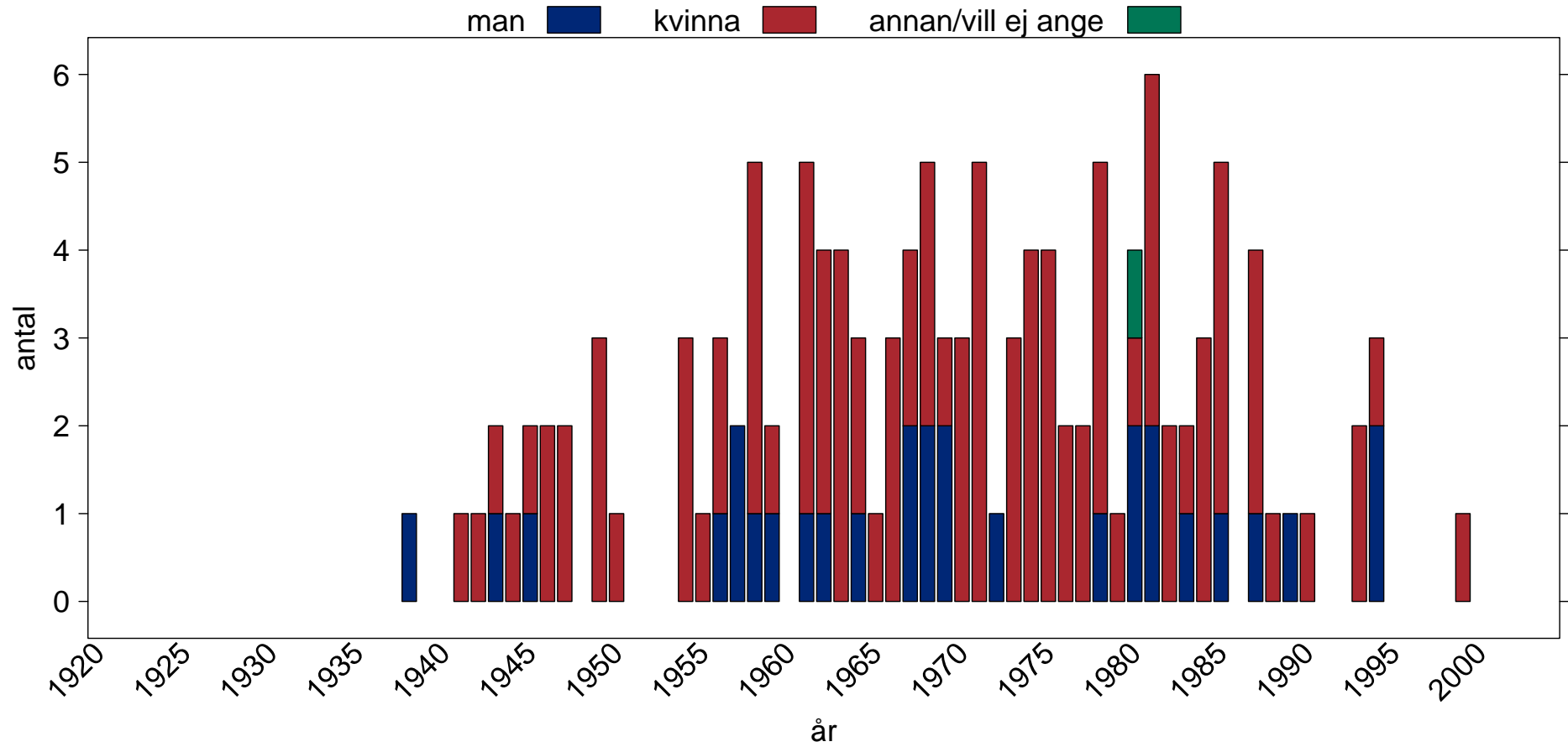


Pilot Study: participants

- 129 participants completed the survey



Pilot Study: participants



Pilot Study: labels

- rural local varieties: *-dialekt, -ska* (ex. *solfdialekt, kimitsko*)
- urban varieties: *-dialekt, -ska, -svenska, -slang* (*jakobstadsdialekt, kariska, åbosvenska, hesaslang*)
- regional varieties:
 - **west coast**: labels for regional varieties are not used for speaker's own variety (bidialectality: local dialect~standard language)
 - **south coast**: regional labels are common (*östnyländska, västnyländska, åboländska*)
 - broad generalization are made of “other's” languages (*österbottniska, nyländska, åländska*)
- super-regional varieties: *finlandssvenska, högsvenska, standardsvenska*



Pilot Study: positive adjectives

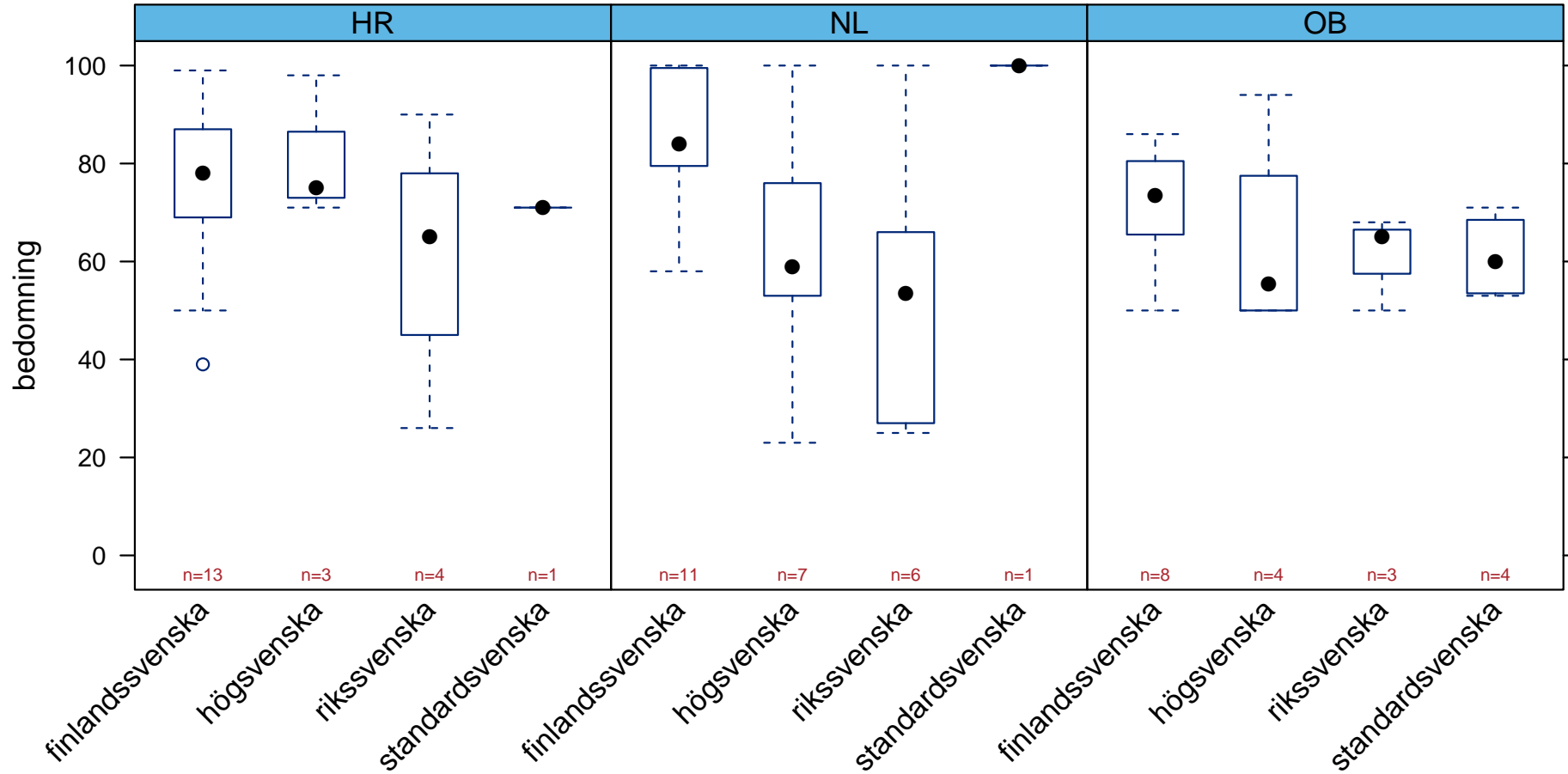


Pilot Study: negative adjectives

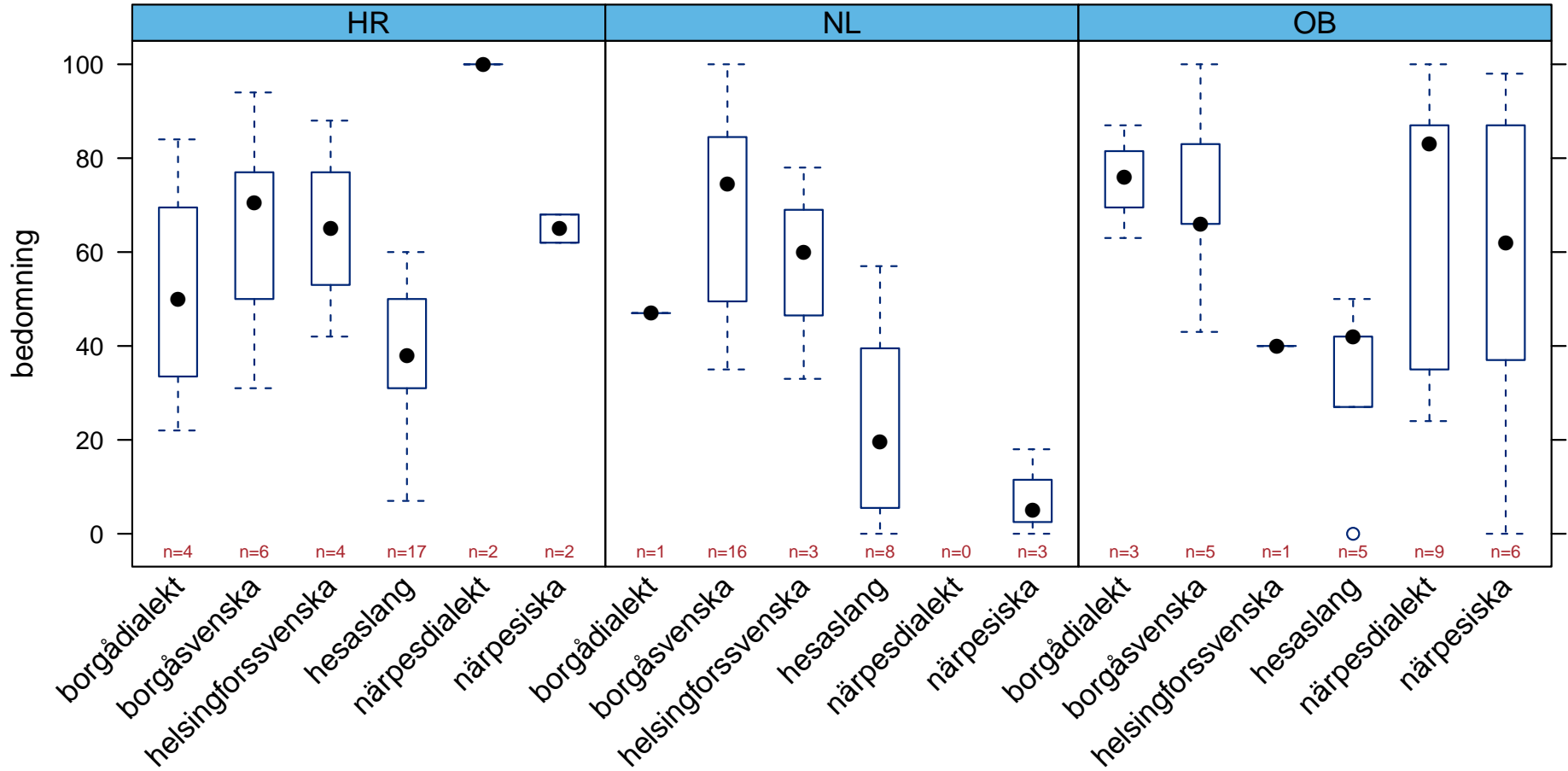
självcentrerade
egocentriska långsamma
arrogantalågutbildade
högdragna överlägsna gnälliga
neutrala enkla ytliga skvallriga
tröga lantliga snobbiga osäkra
ignoranta envisa inskränkta svenska
svårförståbara
dryga högfärdiga bondiga
dumma exkluderande opersonliga
snorkiga knutpatriotiska stolta
snåla högljudda omedvetna
blyga religiösa tråkiga slarviga
tystlåtna obildade inåtvända
fördomsfulla skamsna



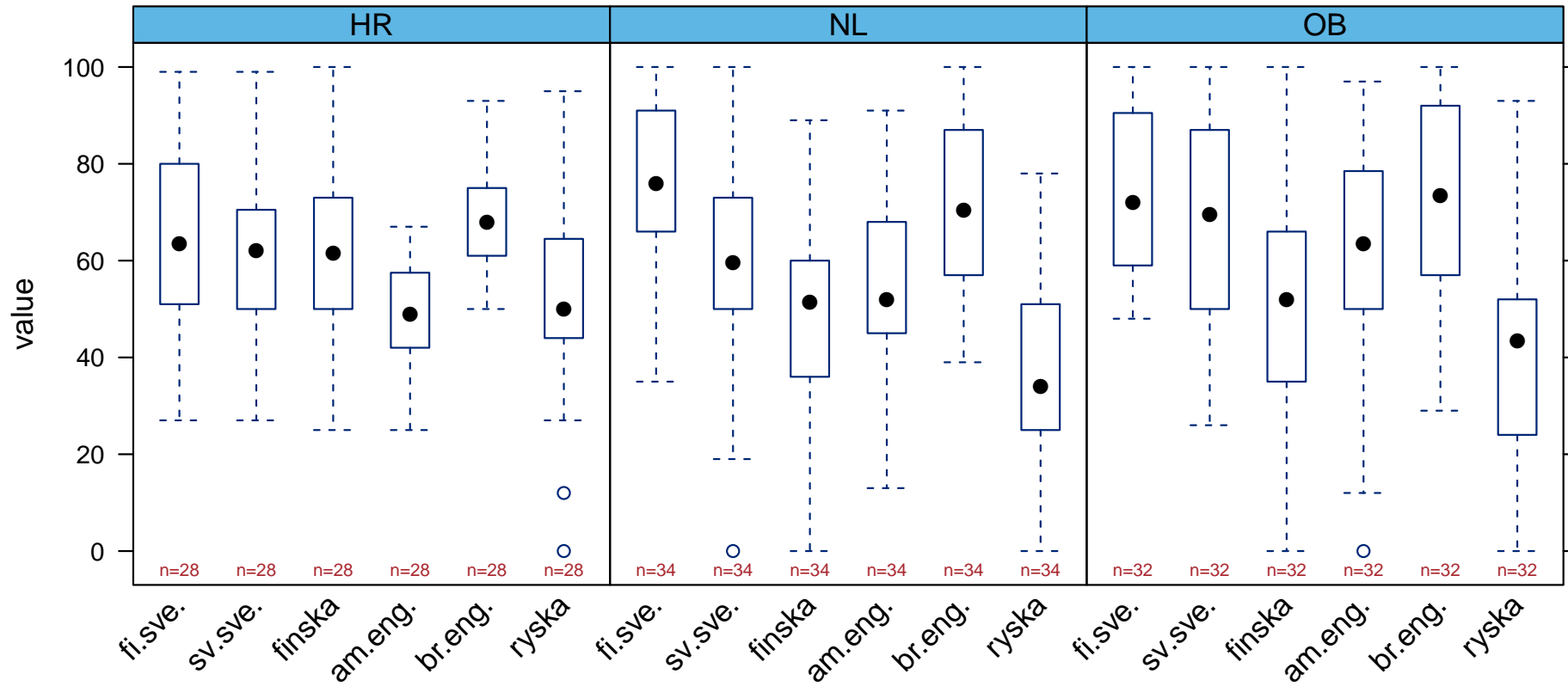
Pilot Study: aesthetic evaluations



Pilot Study: aesthetic evaluations



Pilot Study: aesthetic evaluations



Speaker evaluation task + label ranking

- SLICE-like design
- participants: Helsinki, Turku and Vaasa (Sw. *Helsingfors, Åbo, Vasa*)
- hypotheses: ?
- voices: ?
 - men and/or women?
 - from each site: one vernacular and one close-to-standard variety
 - “neutral” variety (Turku?, radio-Swedish)
 - how many voices in total?
- adjective scales: how many?
- standardness rating: what word to use?
- label ranking task: how to choose appropriate labels?



Shadowing + IAT

Babel (2010):

- shadowing task (Goldinger 1998): Australian speaker, participants from New Zealand
 - Implicit Association Test (IAT, Greenwald et al. 1998): measured Australia/New Zealand biases of the participants
 - participants with a pro-Australia bias were more likely to accommodate to the Australian speaker
- ⇒ automatic social biases predict the extent of speech accommodation

Shadowing + IAT

- **aim:** correlate implicit and explicit language attitudes with production data
- **focus on one specific feature:** duration of phonemically short intervocalic voiceless obstruents (Reuter 1982; Leinonen 2013)
- **subjects:** university students from Österbotten ($n = 24$) and the Helsinki region ($n = 24$)
- **design:**
 1. shadowing (**production**)
 2. IAT 1: association strength/salience of the variable, two female and two male speakers
 3. IAT 2: valence test, one pair of speakers + positive/negative stimuli (**implicit attitudes**)
 4. direct questioning (**explicit attitudes**)



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