

From Broadcasting Research to Media Studies

A Historical Review and Analysis of Radio Research in Finland

TAISTO HUJANEN

The academic study and research of radio and television developed side by side with the institutionalization of the modern communication and mass communication research in the Finnish universities. In fact, broadcasting as a field of mass communication played towards the end of the 1960s a dominant role in the expansion of the new area of academic studies. Like in American universities, broadcasting research became linked with professional training of journalists. In Finland, such a linking was demonstrated by the new chair of mass communication research which the University of Tampere set up in 1969. By this chair broadcasting research became institutionalized as a particular field of mass communication research as well as an aspect of professional training of journalists.

When trying to trace the early development of radio research in Finland the academic institutionalization of broadcasting research is only a part of the story. The rest of the story leads to the role of the national broadcasting company YLE as the site and promoter of research. Scholars agree that in the late 1960s YLE played a key role in the introduction of mass communication research in Finland (Pietilä et

al. 1990). Naturally, with respect to broadcasting research, YLE's role was to be even more decisive. In YLE's organizational practices broadcasting research was adopted in the late 1960s as a major element of planning and policy.

In order to understand YLE's active role as the site and promoter of broadcasting research one needs to pay attention to the particular historical context of broadcasting in Finland in the late 1960s. In general, what happened then can be characterized as modernization of broadcasting. Besides a huge expansion of production and technology modernization meant a radical re-interpretation of values and norms of broadcasting. The broadcasters started questioning the traditional legitimacy of broadcasting and wanted to substitute it with a new one which fitted better to the requirements of modern society. In this way, the adoption of broadcasting research as an aspect of policy and planning became closely linked with the legitimation of broadcasting, a connection which is considered typical to the history of public service broadcasting institutions (cf. Ang 1991).

Below the introduction of broadcasting research within the national broadcasting

company YLE will be, at first, considered. Then, the parallel institutionalization of mass communication research in the universities will be reviewed and analyzed. It will be shown that the first decade of broadcasting research from 1965 to 1975 was characterised by an intensive cooperation between broadcasters and universities.

Another boom of cooperative research arose in the middle of the 1980s, in a new and different socio-cultural and political context. As to the broadcasters, the interest towards research cooperation was again motivated by legitimization needs; first of all, the legitimization crisis of public service broadcasting in the new competitive media environment. In the universities, the new boom was parallel to the growing interest towards media studies, a trend which was deeply critical to the old mass communication research tradition. Until now, television and cinema have dominated the Finnish media studies. But the new trend includes a promise of specific radio studies, qualitatively different from the former broadcasting research paradigm.

YLE – the Promoter of Broadcasting Research

The growth of empirical mass communication research and the broadcasting research as a part of it was parallel to a great expansion of broadcasting in the country from the middle of the 1960s to the early 1970s. With the launching of its second television channel in March 1965, the Finnish Broadcasting Company YLE re-adopted its role as the national monopoly of broadcasting. By the same time, on the side of radio, the new national FM network became completed and the system of two parallel programmes covered the whole country. In 1965 YLE introduced its own news transmissions and, two years later in

1967, a system of regional production centres was created. All this, along with numerous other reforms, resulted in considerable changes of the programme output and in a rapid increase of the production staff.

In the late 1960s radio was still the dominant broadcast media. However, by the end of the decade, the signal of YLE's television programme 1 covered 90 per cent of the population and, consequently, television could be considered as a national medium. In terms of culture and politics, norms and values, the broadcasting reform of the late 1960s is often characterized as a break-up with the old culture of the so called steam radio era. In a historical perspective, one can say that the new ideology of broadcasters, known as the informational programme policy, clearly acted for the modernization of the Finnish society (more on this in Hujanen 1995; on the informational programme policy see Nordenstreng 1973). A rational citizen, always ready to re-consider his/her view of the world on the basis of the new and more valid information was the vision of the audience which the reformers had in mind.

The modern, rational ethos of the informational programme policy did not only refer to the role of broadcasting in society, but it also affected the organization and institutional practices of YLE. A logical consequence of such an approach became the close link between policy and research, i.e. the policy making within the broadcasting should be based on the scientific knowledge of the effects and functions of broadcasting as well as of the composition and behaviour of the audience. This is the point of departure from which one can understand why the national broadcasting company YLE was to play a key role in the introduction of broad-

casting research in Finland and even of the academic study and research of mass communication in general.

The active role of the national broadcasting company in the late 1960s as the promotor of the academic research is described in the following passage of a research report published by YLE in 1968:

The Finnish Broadcasting Company is generally a central actor from the point of view of Finnish communication research, because its program-policy research establishment is the only research center in the country concentrating specifically on the study of communication activity, and, further because it continues to support the university mass media research by arranging its own research field work in the university research centers. (Nordenstreng 1968, 6)

The above report was published in English, a response to the growing interest towards the Finnish broadcasting reform in other countries. The author of these lines himself, Mr. Kaarle Nordenstreng, then a research expert of YLE, marketed actively the ideas of the informational programme policy in several international gatherings of broadcasters and mass communication researchers. In the above citation, the "program-policy research establishment" refers to the section for long-range planning which was officially formed in 1967. By the end of 1969 the section consisted of a director, a programme expert, two research experts, a technical expert, an expert of economy and two experts responsible for monitoring programmes (Stormbom & Nordenstreng 1968, 16-17). A number of project researchers was also hired.

The sponsoring of the research at the universities started soon after the nomination of a new director general Mr. Eino S. Repo in 1965. For the coordination of the cooperation between the broadcasting company and the universities, an informal

expert group was set up chaired by one of the deputy directors of the YLE, Mr. Helge Miettunen, a Doctor of Philosophy in general literature and since 1964 a docent in journalism and mass communication at Tampere (see Nordenstreng 1965). He was later to be the main competitor with Mr. Kaarle Nordenstreng over the new professorship of radio and television studies, set up by the University of Tampere in 1969. Nordenstreng acted as the secretary of the expert group and the members consisted of two professors of sociology (Erik Allardt from Helsinki, Yrjö Littunen from Tampere), the then only professor of journalism and mass communication (Raino Vehmas from Tampere), and four professors of education (Väinö Heikkinen from Tampere, Annika and Martti Takala from Tampere, Jyväskylä, Johan von Wright from Turku).

As to the contents of the sponsored research, Nordenstreng (1966, 4-6) reports of the following: At Turku the research concentrated on the typification of radio listeners and television viewers. This research was based on the further analysis of the so called audience index studies which were started by the statistical office of YLE in 1964. Nordenstreng was already able to identify one the important results of the research project (op.cit., 5). The analysis showed that the contents of the programmes was secondary when selecting programmes on radio; the primary factor seemed to be the time of transmission. Nordenstreng concludes that the next step for the research is to investigate of what sort of people the audience is constituted in the various time of the day and what their programme preferences are.

At Tampere two projects were launched. The Research Institute for Social Sciences studied the mechanisms of programme selection, its cognitive, social and

psychological processes. The other project, on the side of journalism and mass communication, dealt with the evaluation of various mass media, in particular, as a channel of news. In Helsinki a sociological study of radio and television audience was launched focusing on "the conditions of reception". It analyzed the position of radio and television in families, the way the mass media affected the social interaction within the family (an early reminder of the research interest towards the family context, typical to the 1980s television studies). The professors of education at Tampere and Jyväskylä were interested in television as a teacher and as an agent of socialization.

After these initial projects a number of more permanent interest areas developed in the research cooperation between the universities and the national broadcasting company. In a joint paper by Stormbom and Nordenstreng (1968) the authors identified the main theme groups of the research in the years 1965-1968. These are listed below:

- the ways of listening to radio and viewing television; index studies
- the audience reactions to the programmes; feed-back studies and the comprehension of programmes
- complementary studies on special audiences (old and young people, Swedish speaking audience)
- effects studies (for example, concerning the introduction of television in the Eastern Lapland)
- world-view studies; focusing on the life-world of the audience, interest areas, knowledge of the world, attitudes
- programme studies; balance in the news, language style on radio

- research of YLE as an institution and its programme producers

In the development of the audience research in the form of the index studies the year 1968 formed an important milestone. The Research Institute for Social Sciences at the University of Tampere developed for YLE a new research instrument of seasonal panels. The sample was now formed on the basis of the total population; the collection of data was based on programme diaries, and that was complemented "qualitatively" by a number of selected interviews. The objective was, as two researchers involved in the development said, "to present a clearer picture of the world, level of knowledge, interests and basic attitudes of various audience groups for program policy planning" (Suhonen & Varis 1968, 2).

In general, the University of Tampere played a central role in the cooperation between YLE and universities. A prime example of this close link is the so called Merano university which offered the programme producers of YLE an opportunity to complete the basic studies in journalism and mass communication at YLE's facilities in Helsinki. In 1968, still working within YLE, Nordenstreng described the contribution of the University of Tampere in the development of communication research in Finland as follows:

Outside the areas of the Finnish Broadcasting Co. the most active communication research is being conducted at Tampere University, where there is at the present time the only university institute of journalism and mass communication in the country – and in all of Scandinavia – with a professorship. Communication Science has recently been introduced into the curriculum of the Helsinki University Department of Social Science, which means livelier mass communication research than there has formerly been

also in *Helsinki University*. (Nordenstreng 1968, 6)

The Academic Institutionalization of Broadcasting Research

As the above consideration of cooperation between YLE and universities hinted, the introduction of broadcasting research as an academic field of study and research took place side by side with the institutionalization of mass communication research in the Finnish universities. The initiator and the main site of the new field was University of Tampere which is located in the city of Tampere some two hundred kilometers north from Helsinki. Since 1965, the second national television channel of YLE operates in Tampere.

The history of the University of Tampere can be traced back to 1925 as the new College of Social Sciences was founded in Helsinki. The degree in journalism was among the three original degrees offered by the new college. The first professorship in journalism was founded in 1947, but it lasted until 1956 before the first professor in the field, Mr. Eino Suova, was nominated. As to his research orientation, Mr. Suova represented the German tradition of the press research, 'Zeitungswissenschaft', theory and aesthetics of newspapers and history of the press.

The College of Social Sciences was transferred to the city of Tampere in 1960, in the wake of the regionalization of higher education. In the same year, Mr. Suova died, and a gradual turn towards what Himanen (1975) calls the American media sociology started. Suova's follower, a sociologist from the University of Turku, Mr. Raino Vehmas took over in March 1963 and, with him, the name of the field was changed to journalism and mass com-

munication. The added aspect of mass communication in the definition of the chair demonstrated the beginning of a new era in the academic training of journalists and in the research on journalism and mass communication media in Finland.

In the journalism training offered by the University of Tampere, a gradual shift towards the specialization between the press and electronic media started in the early 1960s. Since the academic year 1965-66, the training in radio and television journalism formed a separate option and, as a logical consequence of this, a new chair in mass communication research was founded in 1969, specializing to radio and television. With the new chair, the broadcasting research became institutionalized as a field of mass communication research in the new University of Tampere, a status which the former College of Social Sciences adopted in 1966. Below, the key aspects of this process of institutionalization will be identified.

The notion of broadcasting research as such was never adopted as an identification of a particular field of mass communication research in Finland (on the development of the broadcasting research in the American universities, see Delia 1987). In the definition of the new chair in the University of Tampere, the particular field was referred to as *radio- ja tv-oppi* which could be translated into English as radio and television studies. However, from the present-day point of view, the notion of studies as the description of the new field is a problematic one, because it easily links the definition with the later fragmentation of the field towards media studies. In the context of the latter half of the 1960s, the notion of radio and television studies referred to the fragmentation of the mass communication research tradition, similar to the development in the American schools of

journalism under the heading of broadcasting research.

In the Finnish name of the field, the part 'oppi' corresponds in fact to the German word 'Kunde' which was used in such combinations like 'Rundfunk/Radiokunde' or 'Fernsehkunde'. These two areas, referring to the respective distinction between radio and television studies, represented the fragmentation of the German 'Zeitungswissenschaft' tradition. Similar to the distinction in German between 'Kunde' and 'Forschung' the Finnish word 'oppi' referred more to theory than empirical research.

As the above consideration of the etymology of the notion *radio- ja tv-oppi* demonstrates, the name of the new field of academic research was a curious combination of old and new. Himanen concludes in his study on the introduction of mass communication research in Finland (1975, 86) that the person responsible for the definition of the field was Mr. Helge Miettunen, a deputy director at YLE and the chair of the expert group which coordinated the research cooperation between the broadcasting company and the universities (see the discussion on that above). As a docent of the university, he coordinated the new specialized training in radio and television journalism launched in 1965-66. In the definition of the new professorship Miettunen followed the basic ideas of his book from 1966 entitled in *Finnish Radio- ja tv-opin perusteet* (in English, *Basics of Radio and Television Studies*). In line with his book Miettunen divided the substance area of the new chair into three fields which were media studies (välineoppi), programme theory (ohjelmateoria) and communication studies (viestintäoppi). These were specified as follows:

... **media studies** is based on the technical apparatus of radio, television and cinema and will study the possibilities of expression grounded on such an apparatus. **Programme theory** deals with the functions of broadcasting and, with respect to them, studies the forms of programmes and their combinations as well as the essence of programme policies. **Communication studies** considers the institutional forms of broadcasting and, as a part of general communication research, consists of the research on the potential and customary uses of the electronic media and on their effects. (ibid.; translated by TH)

Among the three substance areas, media studies and programme theory were based on the German tradition; communication studies linked the definition with the American mass communication research. As to the notion of media studies, one should again emphasize the importance of the particular historical context. When translating the Finnish word 'välineoppi' into English as media studies, no reference is made to the present notion of media studies. In this context, media studies refers to the theory and aesthetics of the electronic media based on the technical features of those media. Such an approach was a part of the German traditions of 'Rundfunk/Radiokunde' and 'Fernsehkunde'; in German the notion of 'Apparaturtheorie' is also used (for a recent example of this, see Hickethier 1991).

An interesting detail in the above definition is the incorporation of cinema as a part of the new radio and television studies. This hints to the personal academic background of Mr. Miettunen who wrote his PhD on cinema and was known as an expert of theory and aesthetics of cinema. His background in aesthetics, arts and literature affected strongly the way he defined

his approach to radio and television studies in his main work from 1966. As to communication studies, the interesting point in Miettunen's definition is the way he links radio and television with the general communication research. In this connection he selects the term "electronic media" to represent the contribution of radio and television studies to general communication studies.

Miettunen acted as a professor in the new position during the nomination process until summer 1971. Besides him, two other applicants appeared, Kaarle Nordenstreng and Osmo A. Wiio. After a dramatic process, Nordenstreng received the nomination and started as a professor in August 1971. Nordenstreng had a PhD in psychology from the University of Helsinki and like Miettunen he was a man of YLE. Different from Miettunen, both of his competitors over the chair represented the knowledge of the American style empirical mass communication and communication research. In his position as a research expert of YLE's long-range planning and, later on, the head of research at YLE, Nordenstreng acted for the introduction of broadcasting research as a central aspect of policy-planning. But by the time of his nomination to the new chair, he was already known as a representative of the specifically Finnish style of broadcasting research, the normative approach. The point of departure of the Finnish approach is described by Nordenstreng himself as follows:

The Finnish broadcasting researchers have come to the conclusion that empirical behavioural research is able to serve the development of broadcasting activity only on a limited scale. The most important branch of research in this connection appears to be, more and more, a "radio-TV philosophical" and concep-

tual-analytical deliberation of goals. (Nordenstreng 1971, 257)

The prime example of such a deliberation of goals was the working group considering YLE's future news policy. The group discussed the research data on the comprehension of the news, considered the formulation of news criteria and searched for new solutions in the organization of production and distribution. The experiences from this deliberation were mediated to the international research community by Nordenstreng in a research paper which was published in McQuail's book on sociology of mass communications (Nordenstreng 1972a).

Despite the strengthening critical and normative undertone in YLE's research and policy, one can conclude that the nomination of Nordenstreng as professor of radio and television studies marked a choice towards empirical mass communication research and, as a part of it, towards broadcasting research. Such an emphasis is clearly expressed in the research-policy outline which Nordenstreng wrote (1970) as a demonstration of competence for the new chair. His categorization of the basic approaches of radio and television studies was structured according to the general mass communication theory. Accordingly, his listing of approaches included the research of channel, sender, message and receiver. These were complemented by three joint approaches named as research of the medium, research of the social process of information and research on the social functions of mass communication.

In Nordenstreng's categorization, only a minor role was reserved for the aesthetic approach of Miettunen's radio and television studies. That could be included in the research of messages and of the medium.

An illuminating conclusion with respect to Nordenstreng's later career as a professor is the critique which he directs against what he calls "empirist-positivist behavioural science" and "humanistic-aesthetic research" (op. cit., 14-15). According to Nordenstreng these approaches dealt with micro-level phenomenon and, opposite to that, he stressed the importance of the macro-level expressed by his joint approaches (cf. Nordenstreng 1968, 1972b and 1973). As a topical field of research he mentioned the research on the goals of broadcasting, adopted within the YLE as a combination of research and policy (op.cit., 10-11).

In Nordenstreng's research-policy outline the new academic field of studies, radio and television studies, was linked with the rising critique of positivism in the general mass communication and communication research. Such a linking was to be the dominant one in Nordenstreng's later career as a professor (on this, see Hujanen 1995). Otherwise, his research-policy outline was based on ideas which were formulated and tested within YLE as aspects of its long-range planning ideology. In this sense Nordenstreng's outline marked more an end of an era than the future direction. As a professor Nordenstreng personally orientated towards mass communication theory and research of international communication.

However, Nordenstreng's experience as a broadcasting researcher within YLE offered an opportunity to continue cooperation between the academic researchers and the national broadcasting company. Through this link, the empirically oriented broadcasting research became the central point of departure in the institutionalization of the new field of radio and television studies at the University of Tampere. The importance of the link is demonstra-

ted by a number of PhD and Licentiate dissertations published in the early 1970s, and all of them having a connection with YLE's long-range planning projects (V. Pietilä 1972, K. Pietilä 1973, Varis 1971).

In the preface of a book published in 1975 (Littunen & Sinkko 1975), Nordenstreng acknowledges the central impact of YLE's "research philosophy" in the institutionalization of the mass communication research at the University of Tampere. This book presents the main results of the research cooperation between YLE and the universities in the first half of the 1970s. The book was entitled *Yhteiskunnallinen tieto ja tiedotustutkimus* which in English means "socio-political knowledge and mass communication research". As the title demonstrates, the book focused on the socio-political process of information, one of the joint approaches in Nordenstreng's research-policy outline from 1970 (see above).

From the present-day perspective, one can conclude that the above book by Littunen & Sinkko from 1975 remained the last major work in the research cooperation between YLE and the universities which was introduced ten years earlier in 1965. Broadcasting research lost its position as a bridge between theory and practice. An important consequence of this break-up was that, in a sense, both the academic researchers and the broadcasters narrowed their perspectives. The academic researchers turned more to theory, even to the theory of theory, as the discussion on the status and position of mass communication research in the Nordic conference at Orivesi in 1977 demonstrates (the conference is reported in Hemanus & Hujanen 1977). On their side, the broadcasters showed hardly any interest towards theory and the research was seen as a pure social technology.

At the University of Tampere, the year 1975 marked a principal change in the fragmentation and specialization of the training in journalism and of the research field. In the definition of the substance areas of the two professors the reference to specific media was abolished and a joint notion of mass communication research (in Finnish, tiedotusoppi) was adopted. In a similar way, in the practical courses of journalism more emphasis was put on the general journalistic skills and less on the specific features of the particular media. Such an integration of the substance area completed the development which Nordenstreng, in fact, opened up already in his official inaugural speech in 1971. As his view of the future development he pointed out the following:

The research should not be divided on the basis of the medium into press research and radio and television studies. Instead of that, one should pay attention, independent of the medium, to those social forces which regulate the production, contents and consumption of mass communication. (Nordenstreng 1972b)

When looking back at the decade of broadcasting research in the years 1965-1975 one can conclude that no specific research tradition in relation to radio developed. The common and dominant nominator of the research was the notion of broadcasting, meaning radio and television together. In fact, the list of the early YLE sponsored research projects from 1965-68 shows that television already then dominated over radio as an object of research (on the list, see Stormbom & Nordenstreng 1968, 247-260). However, one should remember that the media studies aspect in the original formulation of radio and television studies at the University of Tampere offered a logical possibility of the specific radio studies.

The Finnish Radio Research since 1975

The next ten years period following the separation of YLE and the academic research is marked by silence with respect to radio research. The print outs from the Nordicom's data bank of mass communication research show that in the years 1975-1985 altogether 105 research reports and papers on radio were published. However, the division of publishers shows that 85 of them (81 per cent) are published by YLE. Among YLE's publications the dominant group is constituted by the reports of seasonal audience measurements.

In the academic research on broadcasting in the late 1970s and the early 1980s television dominated almost exclusively the research agenda. In this period, four doctoral dissertations were published and, all of them, dealt with television (Sisättö 1977, Steinbock 1983, Wiiio 1984, Kasari 1985). Among these four, Steinbock represented the new trend towards television studies; the others' approach was more of the kind typical to broadcasting research.

In the Nordicom's print outs from 1975-1985 there are only a few hints of a new kind of research interest towards radio. One of them is a couple of writings which discuss music in radio from a musical or sociological perspective (Gronow 1983, Lipponen 1983). Saraneva's (1982) research report on the construction of the radio audience in the period 1920-1960 is also an interesting example of the growing sociological interest towards media studies. He used as a research data a collection of writings from radio listeners dealing with their early experiences of radio. His approach represented the sociological study of the way of life, a popular approach among the Finnish sociologists in the early 1980s.

The sociological study of the way of life and the interest towards television studies formed towards the mid 1980s a renewed link between the universities and YLE. A milestone of this new linking is the book which YLE published in 1986 as a celebration of its 60th anniversary (Heikkinen 1986). An illuminating aspect of this book is that the academic mass communication research is only scarcely represented among the authors. The only one from the University of Tampere is a sociologist (Pertti Alasuutari) interested in media studies, and not a mass communication researcher.

YLE's interest towards intensified cooperation with universities can be understood in the context of the new competitive situation of broadcasting, demonstrated by the introduction of cable and satellite television and the privatization and commercialization of radio. The routinized measures of broadcasting research were not enough for the understanding of YLE's new position. New kind of qualitative insights were needed both in YLE's relationship with the audience and with the society and culture

in general. This is the context in which also a renewed interest towards radio as an object of research arised.

Research on the New Competitive Environment of Radio

Table 1 below demonstrates the link between the new competitive environment of radio broadcasting and the renewed interest towards radio research.

The table 1 is based on the analysis of the references to radio broadcasting in the Finnish bibliography of mass communication research in the years 1985-1990. With respect to this time period, one should remember that the Finnish government granted the first franchises for commercial local radio stations in 1985, and that marks the end of 50 years' public radio monopoly in Finland. Based on references only, the figures of table 1 do not as such describe the number of research reports and papers in relation to radio (the total number of publications is 127, less than a half of the references). However, the figu-

Table 1. The References to Radio in the Bibliography of the Finnish Mass Communication Research by Nordicom in the Years 1985-1990¹

| Word of reference | Amount of references | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|------------|
| | Total | Percentage |
| Radio (in general) | 18 | 6 |
| Language and expression | 11 | 4 |
| Radio journalism | 3 | 1 |
| Radio advertising | 8 | 3 |
| Radio programmes | 76 | 26 |
| Programme producers | 6 | 2 |
| Radio news | 5 | 1 |
| Local radio | 158 | 55 |
| Media policy (radio) | 2 | 1 |
| In total | 287 | 100 |

(Cf. references to television in total 430)

¹ The search of references was carried out by Ms. Eija Poteri, the Finnish Nordicom at Tampere.

res convince that local radio was the dominant theme of the Finnish radio research in the latter half of the 1980s.

The publications dealing with the local radio reform are too many to be listed here in detail. After the reform, a discussion arose on the notion of 'local' as an aspect of local radio stations (Heiskanen 1988, Moring 1988; cf. Tamminen 1992). Pöntinen (1989) applied Bourdieu's sociological theory on culture to the analysis of Radio City in Helsinki and demonstrated how the new radio stations challenged the old radio culture. From the point of YLE's tradition, the new radio culture was analyzed and discussed in Alm & Salminen (1992). Their book is one of the major works in relation to the new radio; the title of the book *Toosa soi* (in English, *The Box Is Sounding*) refers to one of the key aspects of the new radio culture, music. Among the contributors of the book was an American researcher G. Ferrel Lowe who wrote a PhD dissertation for the University of Texas at Austin on value transformation in the Finnish public service broadcasting (Lowe 1992). In his later work, Alm (1993) turned to a more comprehensive analysis of the production culture of radio in the context of the new competitive situation (cf. Ala-Fossi 1995).

On the side of the YLE, there was also a keen interest to follow the impact of commercial local radio stations on the behaviour of the listening audience. In this field, the most active researcher is Erja Ruohomaa who analyzed the changing patterns of radio listening in the 1980s (Ruohomaa 1991 and 1992). The competition between YLE and the commercial stations resulted in a considerable increase of radio listening; from two hours a day to more than three hours a day. Parallel to that, qualitative changes in the patterns of radio listening took place.

The break-up of the radio monopoly stressed, in a new way, the role of the regulatory state authority in the field of communication, the Ministry of Transport and Communication. The sponsoring of radio research, especially as a part of the follow-up of the radio reform, was a part of its new role (see Paikallisradiotutkimus I & II).

Towards Radio Studies

The above consideration of the renewed interest towards radio research emphasizes the important role of the institutional and political context of broadcasting as an explanation of research policy. On the other side, one should emphasize that also in the academic research important changes occurred in the course of the 1980s which created ground for a new kind of radio research. Within the mass communication research the new methodological approach is identified as a qualitative turn (see, for example, Jensen & Jankowski 1991). In the wake of such transformation new cross-road areas of research have been developed like cultural studies, and the traditional contradiction between social sciences and humanistic studies is decreasing.

In Finland television studies and, later on, media studies have been the central fields where mass communication researchers have learnt to communicate with arts and literature. Audio-visual media/communication and audio-visual culture have been the common nominators of the new joint interest area. As a result, new forms of the academic institutionalization of study and research have been developed. The former cinema studies in Turku is now called cinema and television studies; a similar programme of studies is available on a minor scale in University of Oulu. In the far north at Rovaniemi, University of

Lapland offers media studies in the faculty of arts since 1992. A new chair of semiotic information studies was introduced in Vaasa, the Western coastal area of Finland, in 1994.

In the main academic centre for journalism training, University of Tampere, the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication offers a joint special programme of studies with arts and literature under the heading 'audio-visual culture'. Parallel to that, the department set up a new chair of associate professor in electronic media which can be seen as a re-formulation of the earlier tradition of broadcasting research.

Six per cent of Finns speak Swedish as their native language. The Swedish language education of journalists is attached to University of Helsinki which operates also a major department of communication. In 1987, an additional academic site

for journalism training was grounded in University of Jyväskylä in Mid-Finland. Journalism is there a part of the Department of Communication where the major research tradition is the American style speech communication. In fact, the only doctoral dissertation on radio until now in Finland was completed in speech communication at Jyväskylä by Valo (1994) who analyzed the acoustic features of speech on radio. Another example of the interest towards radio in speech communication is Gerlander's (1991) study on unsuitable language in YLE's national programmes.

The scheme in Figure 1 demonstrates generally the methodological shift towards media studies. The scheme presents a comparison between the traditional approach of broadcasting research (emerging from the general mass communication research) and the new media studies. The comparison is structured according to the follow-

Figure 1. The Methodological Shift from Broadcasting Research to Media Studies

| <i>Research tradition</i> | Context | Communication Theory | Object of research | Method |
|----------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| Broadcasting Research | Society: - politics - economy - democracy - power - public sphere | Knowledge Information | - audience, effects, contents - norms, values, - attitudes - world-view - objectivity - informativeness - comprehension - manipulation, indoctrination | General (quantitative) |
| Media studies (Radio studies) | Culture: - as a meaningful cosmos - social and interpretative action | Language Meaning Text | - myths & rituals - codes, conventions - discourse - ideology, hegemony - gender - genre, format - reception - media culture - way of life, pleasure and taste - sub-cultures | Specific (qualitative) |

ing four categories: 1) context of research, 2) communication theory, 3) objects of research, and 4) method. Through media studies, the scheme demonstrates the logical possibility of media-specific radio studies, an option of development which could be compared with the institutionalization of television studies in the academic world (see Hujanen 1993).

A question remains how much the new joint interest expressed by the media studies has resulted in a new kind of research on radio. The answer is – something but not much, until now. An example is Alasuutari's (1993) sociological study of the radio in the everyday life of the Finnish people, following the model of the ethnographic studies of reception. Ruohomaa is preparing a doctoral dissertation for the University of Sussex in which her intention is to develop media theory for radio from the users' point of view (see Ruohomaa's paper in this book). In their musicological analyses of radio, Alm's and Salminen's contributions (1992) can also be linked with the trend towards media studies on radio. Their work is complemented by a recent doctoral dissertation of Gronow (1996) which considers the development of the Finnish record industry from a musicological perspective.

Alitalo (1988) is an example of that some interest towards textual analysis of radio is also visible. Alitalo discusses the textuality of radio from the point of view of cinema studies but makes also references to the old German theory of radio (see also, Alitalo 1991 and Huhtamäki 1988). A recent example of growing interest towards textual analysis of radio is given by the journal *Läbikava* (Close-Up) which is published by the Society of Cinema Studies. In a special issue on radio (*Läbikava* 1/1996) the contributors discuss the history of individual radio programmes and

analyze the historical trends of radio programming.

As to the textuality of radio, a couple of other publications could be mentioned; these are Salomaa's (1989) book on documentarism in radio and a report by Nukari and Ruohomaa (1992), analyzing the historical development of programming at YLE. With respect to the new competitive situation, the latter authors demonstrate that programming is a strategic area which needs to be taken more seriously by the public service broadcasting institutions. In their recent work (Nukari and Ruohomaa 1995) they argue for a even more comprehensive view of programming including evaluation of quality.

The history of radio broadcasting is one of the growing areas of research interests. Oinonen's (1994) study on the cultural history of radio entertainment is an example of such an interest. A similar approach is represented by Nieminen (1994) who studied religious programmes on radio. The institutional history of the Finnish Broadcasting Company YLE was recently complemented by a series of volumes which celebrate the 70th anniversary of YLE in 1996 (Lyytinen 1996, Salokangas 1996, Ilmonen 1996; for an abridged version in English, see Enden 1996). The earlier compilations of broadcasting history were published in 1976 (Tulppo 1976) and 1951 (Suomi 1951).

History of broadcasting was already incorporated as an aspect of the earlier broadcasting research tradition. But as the above examples demonstrate, there is also evidence of a shift towards more specifically oriented radio studies. From the point of view of the new competitive situation of broadcasting, it seems somewhat surprising how central YLE's role remains in initiating, implementing and sponsoring research on radio. The national

public service broadcasting company continues sailing as the flagship of the Finnish radio research. In the academic world, tele-

vision and lately multimedia are the clear priorities, and radio remains a marginal phenomenon.

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