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**Referential devices in Uralic languages**

Guest editors

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## ***Humaniora: linguistica estonica et fenno-ugrica***

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## **PREFACE TO THE SPECIAL ISSUE ON REFERENTIAL DEVICES IN URALIC LANGUAGES**

This Special Issue of the *Journal of Estonian and Finno-Ugric Linguistics* originates from the workshop on “Referential devices in Uralic and adjacent languages” held in Tartu in June 2013 as part of the conference “Context and Grammar IV: New approaches to the Uralic Languages”. The workshop brought together scholars interested in demonstratives, personal pronouns, determiners and other linguistic means of reference, and among its topics were referential devices in conversation, experimental approaches to demonstrative and personal pronouns, reference tracking in narratives, as well as the acquisition (first and second language) of referential devices. One of the important objectives of the workshop and this Special Issue is to demonstrate different methods of approaching referential devices. Thus, conversation analysis, cognitive linguistics, centering theory, discourse functional grammar, interactional sociolinguistics and other approaches co-exist in this issue. Very different types of data are used for research, starting with everyday conversations and psycholinguistic experiments and ending with philological data from remote Uralic languages. The present issue also includes three articles that do not originate from presentations at the 2013 workshop.

An important motivation for the 2013 workshop and the present issue is the international project “Cognitive Linguistic Perspectives on Finno-Ugric Languages” which unites Finnish, Hungarian, and Estonian linguists from the universities of Helsinki, Turku, Budapest (ELTE), and Tartu. The main objective of this project is the investigation of several different aspects of Uralic languages – focus on Finnish, Hungarian and Estonian – from a usage-based perspective. Within this consortium, it is the Deixis group which is mainly connected to the subject of the workshop and the present issue.

The Special Issue consists of eleven articles that deal with different aspects of usage of minimal referential devices – mostly with demonstratives, 3rd person pronouns and possessive suffixes but also with gestures, and other types of linguistic and non-linguistic means of reference. The European and Siberian Uralic languages addressed to in the present issue are Estonian, South Estonian, Finnish, Hungarian, Northern

Mansi, Nganasan, and Kamas. Two articles present comparative studies between Finnish and an Indo-European language: Elsi KAISER investigates the Finnish equivalents of English reference to generic and non-specific group referents by the pronouns *you* and *they*. Her observations are based on a corpus consisting of the novel “Hunger Games” by Suzanne Collins and its Finnish translation. Chiara MONZONI and Ritva LAURY study multimodal communication, and they show how reference is construed without mentioning the referent by any linguistic form. Their data come from Finnish and Italian conversations, and it reveals the same kind of conversational practices in both languages. These two papers stand at the beginning of the section “Referential encoding and construal from a broader perspective”. They are followed by an article by Virve VIHMAN, who investigates the expressions of core verbal arguments in Estonian child-directed speech in comparison with those in speech between adults. Her results confirm that child directed speech avoids ellipsis and prefers lexical over pronominal reference. In the last article in this section, Krisztina LACZKÓ and Szilárd TÁTRAI present the results of their study of Hungarian computer-mediated narratives, concentrating on linguistic elements that direct the addressee’s attention.

In the following section, “Demonstratives and 3rd person pronouns”, two articles deal with Estonian, and two articles with South Estonian 3rd person pronouns and demonstratives. Helen HINT presents a Centering Theory account of the variation of 3rd person pronoun and zero-pronoun in Estonian narratives based on the Pear film. In order to investigate the exophoric use of Estonian demonstratives, Maria REILE has conducted an experiment in which participants built a house from Lego blocks. The articles on South Estonian present data on the disappearing Võru three-pole demonstrative system. Renate PAJUSALU’s study is based on newspaper texts and TV-series in the Võru language, whereas Liina TAMMEKÄND studies personal narratives of Estonian-Võru bilinguals. Finally, Gerson KLUMPP presents an account of the demonstrative system of Kamas (Southern Samoyed) as it can be established from the grammatical, lexical and text records. The article focuses on referential hierarchies as a criterion for parsing ambiguous adnominal and pronominal uses in the Kamas text corpus.

Referential devices typical for Uralic languages are possessive suffixes, especially in their so-called “non-possessive” functions. Two articles investigate this phenomenon. Gwen Eva JANDA’S article deals with the discourse structuring role of possessive suffixes in the

Northern Dialects of Mansi (Ob-Ugric), and Réka ZAYZON gives a systematic overview of the non-possessive usages of possessive suffixes in Nganasan (Samoyed).

For financial support we are indebted to the Estonian Research Council grant PUT701 (Referential devices in Estonian and adjacent languages: experimental approach) and to the Center of Excellence in Research on Intersubjectivity in Interaction, funded by the Academy of Finland. Further we want to express our gratitude to the participants in the aforementioned workshop, as well as to the audience in the workshop and to the anonymous referees for the articles in this special issue for their comments and suggestions.

Gerson Klumpp, Ritva Laury, Renate Pajusalu



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