

From comparison to understanding, learning and evaluating

The linguistic journal *Lähivõrdlusi. Lähivertailuja* ('Close Comparisons') is now both looking back to a history of 30 years and, inspired by the VIRSU symposium held at the 12th International Congress for Finno-Ugrian Studies in 2015, facing a future with an even wider range of languages and topics. In this 26th volume of *LV*, the target languages in addition to the traditional Estonian, Finnish, Russian, and Swedish also include Hungarian and Karelian, and among the source languages, Japanese is also represented. Comparisons between languages are made both on contrastive basis and from the point of view of language learning. The evaluation of language skills adds a new dimension to our topics.

Comparisons between Estonian and Finnish continue the long traditions of *LV*. In their article, Auli Hakulinen and Leelo Keevallik apply the methods of interactional linguistics to the use of Finnish *kyllä* and Estonian *kiüll* 'yes; well enough, true' in negated sentences. The study shows that the common uses of these cognate discourse particles are fairly few and almost completely restricted to concessive constructions. Petra Hebedová compares the constructions consisting of an adjective and a non-finite in *ma* (known as the MA-infinitive in Finnish, the "supine" in Estonian grammar writing) in Finnish and Estonian. She uses corpora to find out which adjectives are really used in these constructions.

Two articles deal with comparisons between Estonian and Russian. Jelena Velman-Omelina and Valentina Štšadneva investigate politeness in Estonian and Russian official texts, while Sirje Kupp-Sazonov compares the expressions of repeated and continuous activity in Estonian and Russian. Kais Allkivi in her contrastive study targets written

Standard Estonian and learner Estonian on the proficiency level C1. Iliia Moshnikov's contribution deals with the use of different varieties of Karelian on Karelian-language websites, from the point of view of linguistic landscape research and multilingualism. Karelian web interfaces often apply more than one Karelian variety, as there is thus far no one single Karelian standard. Jaana Kolu contrasts the code-switching of young Finnish-Swedish bilinguals in Haparanda, Stockholm and Helsinki, especially as concerns inflectional morphology.

The learning of Finnish, Estonian, or Hungarian is the topic of many articles with different viewpoints, contexts, and native languages. Mikko Kajander analyses the variation of word order in written learner Finnish, while Tuija Määttä continues her investigations into the Swedish-speaking students' learning of Finnish, now on the basis of inflection strategies as reflected upon by the students. Two articles focus on the evaluation of language skills. Sari Ahola and Henna Tossavainen survey Finnish language experts' ideas of Estonian speakers' knowledge of Finnish and how it is evaluated, while Marja Seilonen and Minna Suni investigate the professional language use of nurses trained abroad but working in Finland, especially how linguistic resources are used in tasks which involve giving instructions or recording data.

Three articles deal with the learning of Estonian. Kristina Koppel and Jelena Kallas reflect on how and for what purpose corpus sentences can be used in learning Estonian and present methods for automatic selection of learner-friendly corpus sentences. Olga Pastuhhova compares the corrections in written learner Estonian by levels of language proficiency. Pirkko Muikku-Werner continues her studies on Finnish-Estonian comprehension, now describing the factors which affect Finnish speakers' ability to understand Estonian, with a special focus on association based on affiliation to semantic fields and on context. Finally, two articles focus on the teaching of Hungarian. Édua Rostás and Judit Kecskés present the *StepTogether* programme which was developed to support immigrant children's learning of Hungarian; the ultimate goal is to prevent early school leaving and facilitate the transition from primary

to secondary education. Mari Okamoto describes the unique position of the teaching of Hungarian in Japan, with special reference to factors which affect students' motivation.

We thank the authors for their rich and diverse contributions and the reviewers for their valuable comments, which the authors have carefully considered. Our gratitude also goes to the Finno-Ugric Cultural Foundation (*Suomalais-ugrilaisen kulttuurirahaston säätiö*) in Helsinki and to the national programme "Estonian Language and Cultural Memory II" of the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research for supporting this publication. Finally, the fact that *Lähivõrdlusi. Lähivertailuja* can continue appearing under the aegis of the Estonian Association for Applied Linguistics deserves a specific mention and our warmest thanks.

Tallinn, Vienna, and Turku

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