

Traditional and contemporary issues in the use and learning of Finno-Ugric languages

This 28th issue of *Lähivõrdlusi. Lähivertailuja* is partly based on papers presented at the 20th anniversary conference of the VIRSU network in Tallinn on October 5th and 6th, 2017. The languages under study in most of the articles are Estonian and Finnish, but two further Finno-Ugric languages, namely Karelian and Hungarian, are also dealt with in some contributions. A central theme present in many contributions is the history of linguistics and language teaching and the impact of traditions on today's linguistics.

Mati Hint deals with issues of quantity in Estonian phonology, starting with the Estonian grammars of Eduard Ahrens (1843, 2nd edition 1853), which established the current Estonian orthography and, in general, initiated the so-called Finnish turn in Estonian linguistics. Hint compares the sound systems and morphophonology in Estonian and Finnish and presents a detailed treatment of the impact of Ahrens on subsequent descriptions of the Estonian quantity system. In particular, he analyses and criticizes the theory of three phonemic quantity grades, first presented by Mihkel Veske, and its more recent adaptations.

Päivi Laine and Eve Mikone write about the terminology of geography in Estonia and Finland, focusing on the historical role of the Finnish geographer J. G. Granö. During his academic career, Granö worked both in Finland and in Estonia and contributed to the development of terminology in both Finnish and Estonian. His achievements illustrate the long traditions and mutual influences in the scientific cooperation between Finland and Estonia, in particular, between the universities of Tartu and Turku.

Marjut Vehkanen's article is a continuation to her contribution in LV 27, again, comparing two practical Finnish textbooks from the first half of the 20th century: the Estonian-language *Praktilik Soome keele õpetus* by Johannes Aavik from 1902, and the Hungarian-language *Gyakorlati finn nyelvkönyv* by Béla Györffy from 1939. Her previous article focused mainly on the description of grammar and its pedagogical aspects. Now she analyses how these coursebooks reflect their epoch and their cultural contexts as well as the attitudes of their authors and their close contacts with Finland. The contents of both coursebooks are also conditioned by their target audiences: Aavik's book, based on comparisons between Finnish and Estonian, was meant for Estonian university students, whereas Györffy wrote his Finnish textbook for Hungarian students of Lutheran theology, to serve the cooperation between the Lutheran churches of Finland and Hungary.

The contribution of Maria Kok, similarly to the previously mentioned ones, has an historical dimension, and its themes also connect to the articles by Laine and Mikonen (terminology) and Vehkanen (Finnish as the second language). Kok writes about the metalanguage of grammar in the names of cases and, in particular, about the suitability of this terminology for teaching Finnish as the first or the second language. Alongside the history of these terms and their connections, Kok reflects on the usefulness of terminology and terminological knowledge in today's language teaching and gives practical recommendations.

Mikko Kuronen and Maria Kautonen have investigated the results of teaching Finnish as a second language from the point of view of pronunciation. They have analysed laboratory recordings of non-native but proficient speakers of Finnish and compared the results of their measurements of diverse phonetic features with listeners' assessments of native-like pronunciation. According to this investigation, it seems to be, among other things, vowel distances and deviations in duration that create the impression of non-nativeness. This is important for language teachers, especially as studies have shown that pronunciation is one of

the central criteria by which non-linguists assess the language skills of other people.

Pille Eslon and Kais Allkivi-Metsoja present some tools for automated statistical analysis of corpus material and discuss, on the basis of studies on Estonian learner language, what these methods have contributed to the study of learner language and language learning. The article presents some research results obtained with linguistic cluster analysis and suggests some ways to apply them in language learning and teaching.

Birute Klaas-Lang and Kristiina Praakli in their article compare the non-state-language-speaking children and adolescents (in primary education) in Estonia and Finland, from the point of view of their relationship to the state language (Estonian or Finnish, respectively). In addition to the level of language skills and language use, they analyse these young people's relationship to the state language. One of the central questions is why in Finland young non-Finnish-speakers at the end of primary education have a better command of the state language than corresponding young language learners in Estonia.

Jaana Kolu has investigated the colloquial speech of Finnish-Swedish bilingual young people in Sweden and the influence of Swedish on their Finnish. Her material, consisting of spontaneous social interaction between young people already acquainted with each other, has been recorded in Finnish-medium schools in Stockholm and in Haparanta/Haaparanta by the Finnish border in Northern Sweden. The impact of Swedish in this data can be observed especially at the lexical level. Kolu shows that the influences of languages on each other are a complex phenomenon and that the languages of these speakers form a fixed and integrated repertoire. It is particularly interesting to compare the two datasets: the Stockholm data shows less impact of Swedish on the informants' Finnish, especially at the morphosyntactic level. According to Kolu, this might be due to the fact that young Finnish speakers in Stockholm use more Swedish between each other and therefore more easily switch to Swedish instead of struggling to formulate in Finnish.

Heidi Vaarala's contribution, like the previously mentioned ones, focuses on the education system and the language skills of young people. In her study, Vaarala investigates the so-called preparatory teaching (LUVA), a system created in order to prepare non-Finnish-speaking immigrant youth for upper secondary school by developing their Finnish language and learning skills. In particular, based on the idea of usage-based language teaching she has explored the opportunities of young immigrants to learn Finnish in cooperation with other students while using their whole repertoire of language skills in the sense of "translanguaging". Sadly enough, Vaarala's ethnographic study shows that in the learning groups which she has analysed the students' language skills beyond Finnish are hardly used. In the concluding chapter of her study, Vaarala gives practical recommendations for developing the preparatory teaching.

Pirkko Muikku-Werner and Helka Riionheimo have investigated how Finnish speakers understand written Livvi (Olonets) Karelian. This article, based on the idea of receptive multilingualism, connects to previous articles in LV about the mutual understandability between Finnish and Estonian. Livvi Karelian and Finnish are even more closely related than Estonian and Finnish, and it turns out that Finnish readers can understand written Livvi Karelian quite well. Moreover, the understanding strategies they apply are quite similar to those which are used by Finns confronted with Estonian texts. These studies can pave the way to further and more fine-grained investigations of mutual intelligibility between sister languages.

The articles by Ilia Moshnikov and Susanna Tavi also deal with the Karelian language, more precisely, the so-called Border Karelian dialects. These dialects were spoken in the easternmost corner of pre-war Finland; after World War II, the population of the areas annexed to the Soviet Union was resettled to other parts of Finland, and the language in Border Karelian families has been increasingly affected by Finnish. Throughout the 20th century, research on the Karelian language largely concentrated on Karelian as spoken on the Russian side of the border,

but recently, the official recognition of Karelian as a minority language in Finland and the initiation of new research and revitalization activities have brought Border Karelian as well into the focus of linguistic studies. As a continuum of Finnish and Russian influences, Border Karelian dialects are an attractive object for language contact studies. Accordingly, these two contributions focus on contact-induced developments and their continuum-like character. Moshnikov's study analyses the variation of the active past participle in Border Karelian dialects: the original Karelian participle types in *-n* or *-nUn* (*sanon* 'has said', *tarvinnun* 'has needed') are now competing with the participle type in *-nnA* (*sanonna* 'has said'), which has spread from the neighbouring Savo dialects of Finnish. Tavi, in turn, has analysed the spread of Russian elements in Border Karelian dialects.

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