

Contexts and tools of language learning

Under a new editor-in-chief, the journal *Lähivõrdlusi. Lähivertailuja* (“Close Comparisons”) continues the work of Annekatriin Kaivapalu, our editor-in-chief for 15 years. This 34th issue will again present a collection of research related to contrastive linguistics and language learning and teaching. Throughout its history, the publication has reflected what has been current in the study of Finnish and Estonian and their cognate languages, and this issue is no exception.

Questions related to language learning are discussed in this issue from multiple points of view. In her article *Materials use in L2 classroom interaction: The practices of card handling in the construction of agency and joint action in a shop encounter task*, Katriina Rantala studies the use of learning materials in L2 classroom interaction, especially with respect to authenticity. Learning materials are also in the focus of Mare Kitsnik’s case study *Developing Estonian speaking skills according to the B1 level textbook “Naljaga ...”*. Raili Pool, in turn, has investigated the development of oral language skills within a longitudinal study. In her article *Changes in the interactions between learners of Estonian and native speakers over one year*, she describes the diversification in communication strategies as the learners’ language skills develop.

Two of the articles deal with language proficiency and immigration. In her article *After Integration Training: Variation in profiles and investment in Finnish as a second language* Tanja Seppälä studies adult migrants’ situation in Finland one year after completing Integration Training. Hanna-Ilona Härmävaara, Topi Levänen and Olga Nenonen, in turn, focus on the initial stages of immigration. Their article *The Toisto method: Language learning experiences of newly arrived Ukrainians in*

Finland reports on experiences from a teaching method developed as an easy-to-apply “linguistic first aid” for newly arrived immigrants.

Our traditions of contrastive linguistics are continued in Petra Hebedová’s article *Deictic motion verbs and anchoring the direction of motion in Estonian, Finnish and Czech*, drawing from literary texts and their translations. Furthermore, we continue to publish studies on mutual intelligibility between cognate languages, also beyond Finnish and Estonian. In his article *Planning and novelty values of a test measuring mutual intelligibility of Baltic Finnic languages*, Aleksi Palokangas expands the systematic testing of mutual intelligibility to encompass other Finnic languages as well.

We thank the authors for their interesting and thematically diverse articles and the reviewers for their expert comments. Thanks are due to everybody who participated in the editing process for their commitment, efficiency and flexibility in preparing this volume. Special thanks go to Annekatrin Kaivapalu for her support in editorial work and in making the transition smooth. In particular, our gratitude goes to the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research for their financial support, and to the Estonian Association for Applied Linguistics for allowing us continuously publish *Lähivõrdlusi. Lähivertailuja* under their aegis.

In Helsinki and Vienna
Hanna-Ilona Härmävaara
Johanna Laakso
Triinu Viilukas