

PREFACE

Studies of Finnic languages, cultures, and peoples have expanded in recent years both in respect of research material and in respect of methods. However, interdisciplinary discussions dedicated to studies of Finnic peoples are not frequent. The idea of this special issue of the *Journal of Estonian and Finno-Ugric Linguistics* arose from the Finnic Languages, Cultures, and Genius Loci conference that took place at the University of Tartu on March 7–8, 2013. The conference was dedicated to Tiit-Rein Viitso, professor emeritus of Finnic languages at the University of Tartu, who celebrated his 75th birthday on March 4, 2013. The aim of the conference as well as the aim of the present collection of articles is to enliven discussion between researchers of various disciplines and to introduce recent research results on the history as well as on the present situation of Finnic languages and cultures. Alongside language the studies focus on the cultural history of the Finnic peoples reflected in folklore and social processes.

This special issue of the *Journal of Estonian and Finno-Ugric Linguistics* contains nine articles from different disciplines, six of which are based on papers presented at the conference. As with the conference, the present article collection represents quite different research fields, from linguistics to cultural studies, stretching from speech acoustics to translation and creation of national epics.

Kairi Tamuri presents the results of research into speech acoustics and fundamental frequency (F0) as an important prosodic cue for emotion in Estonian emotional read-out speech, looking at anger, joy and sadness. The results revealed that in the investigated material, F0 was highest for joy and lowest for anger. The F0 range, however, was widest for anger and narrowest for sadness.

The Votic language is in the focus of two articles. Fedor Rozhanskiy and Elena Markus provide a comparison of two varieties of the Votic language: Jõgõperä and Luuditsa. Based on field materials mainly collected during the first decade of the 21st century, the authors compiled a list of the most important phonetic and grammatical features that distinguish between those two varieties. Tatiana Agranat's article demonstrates the process of grammaticalisation of the deictic pronoun *se* into a definite article in Votic. For following the grammaticalisation process

diachronically, the author has studied the usage of *se* in the folktale *Kuptionsaa' emännää' poika* 'The merchant's wife's son', written down by August Ahlqvist (published in 1856), and in the same narrative written down recently during the author's fieldwork with speakers of Votic.

Heinike Heinsoo's and Eva Saar's article focuses on expressive verbs in four closely related Finnic languages: Estonian, Finnish, Ingrian, and Votic. They compare the differences between expressive verbs and general vocabulary in those languages in terms of phonetic composition, describing common derivational patterns and mutual perception of expressive verbs in the light of sound symbolism theory. Ekaterina Zakharova's article deals with the field of onomastics, presenting the results of research on the Finnic substrate in the eastern Obonezh'e toponyms. The investigations shows that geographical terms of substrate origin occur both in the longer lasting hydronyms, and in the more variable and younger microtoponyms, evidencing an early arrival of a Finnic population in eastern Obonezh'e and its relatively recent russification.

Two articles expand upon the language attitudes and the status of minority languages on the western shores of Lake Onega. Using critical discourse analysis Outi Tánzos has investigated the representations of Karelians and the Karelian language in Karelian and Russian local newspapers published regularly in the Republic of Karelia, with a special focus on the effects that these representations have on the preservation and revitalisation efforts of Karelian. Laura Siragusa analyses Vepsian communicative practices and challenges the international rhetoric that shapes the attitude towards Vepsian language using drastic terminology like *endangerment* and *language death*. The article aims to bring to the surface local ontologies and worldviews in order to query the paradigms around language shift and language death that dominate worldwide academic and political discourse.

National epics is the common and connecting topic for the last two articles of this collection. Nikolay Rakin compares the occurrence of the alliteration in the *Kalevala* and its translation by Adolf Turkin into the Komi language. The analysis reveals that the translator made efforts to use alliteration as a characteristic feature in the target text. However, it proves to be not as structural as in the original text of the *Kalevala*. The reasons can be found in the structural differences of the Finnish and Komi languages. The author of the Vepsian epic *Virantanaz*, Nina Zaitseva, describes in depth the creation process of the epic. She reports the events that have lead her to the idea of creating an epic in Vepsian,

i.e. in the language of a people whose memory has preserved no epic-style pieces of literature, who have no large oral literary forms, whose folklore heritage is not so rich, whose nation itself is a minority, and whose language is already red-listed. The author sees the writing process and the epic itself as a chance to retrieve from the people's memory many facts, real or imaginary events, rituals, customs and legends, and melodious idioms and sayings that might help revitalise the people, its language and culture. The paper demonstrates the folklore and mythological background of the epic, and represents and substantiates the key aspects of the style poetics and its folk heritage roots.

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We wish you inspiring and enjoyable reading!

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