

FOREWORD

The recent decades have witnessed the rise and evolution of usage-based approaches to grammar, which see grammar as a system of entrenched schemas that emerge in actual usage and gradually conventionalize to a greater or lesser degree. Prominent usage-based schools include cognitive, functional and interactional linguistics, all of which originally grew out of a need to provide the linguistic community with psychologically and cognitively more plausible toolsets than mainstream formalist approaches of the time were able to do. From the methodological point of view, this shift has been accompanied by a broadening of data from self-constructed, context-free examples to actual language use, in recent years often incorporated with the use of advanced statistical and experimental methodologies. In terms of language varieties, a focus on the standard language has been supplemented by a broader interest in both spoken and informal written varieties.

This development has suited well the community of linguists working on the Baltic-Finnic languages, in particular Finnish and Estonian, which are the most thoroughly studied ones and have the largest number of speakers. This is because the research tradition of these languages has for a long time relied on corpora that have been collected to enable analyses of their different varieties.

The papers in the current volume represent a range of usage-based approaches to three Baltic-Finnic languages: Finnish, Estonian, and Livonian. The papers combine qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, theoretical insights, as well as experimental methods. They test the methodologies against data from the Baltic-Finnic languages, addressing and discussing a number of problematic issues.

From the linguistic viewpoint, the topics of the papers range from central areas of grammar to less studied elements that are specific to certain language varieties, such as emoticons (Laippala *et al.*). Other linguistic expressions analyzed include Finnish logophoric pronouns (Priiki), the semantics and grammar of quantifiers and grammatical words (Huumo, Ojutkangas), the choice of the grammatical object (Kyöroläinen *et al.*), complementizer constructions (Jürine and Habicht), near-synonymous but grammatically distinct cases vs. adpositional constructions (Klavan and Veismann), verb semantics (Norvik and

Prillop), and more complex constructions that range from infinitival constructions and nominalizations (Lauranto, Pilvik) to clause types (Lindström) and to information structure and prosody (Sahkai).

The papers were originally presented at a workshop organized by the guest editors of the present volume in Tartu (January 2016). That workshop was a continuation of a tradition already established by three earlier workshops in a series lightheartedly titled “On milking grammar”. The first “milking” took place in Tartu (2011), and was followed by a second one in Kuressaare (2012) and a third one in Turku (2014). The title “On milking grammar” is a deliberately ambiguous metaphor, which leaves room for interpretations. For instance, grammar may be thought of as something “milked” out of language by the grammarian, or it may itself be something out of which the grammarian milks new ideas and analyses.

From its very beginning, the workshop has intended to bring together scholars at different stages of their career who are interested in Baltic-Finnic and utilize usage-based approaches in their work. Likewise, it has encouraged scholars of less intensively studied Baltic-Finnic languages to join the discussion and share their insights. We hope that this volume will serve to bring those insights to the attention of a wider audience interested in up-to-date grammatical approaches to Baltic-Finnic, as well as usage-based theories and different kinds of data analyses and methodologies.

Editors

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