

CONFERENCE REPORT

The 12th International Congress for Finno-Ugric Studies 17th - 21st August 2015. Oulu, Finland

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1 Introduction

The 12th International Congress for Finno-Ugric Studies was one of the major events in Finno-Ugristics this year. The Congress provided the opportunity for presenting recent research on Finno-Ugric languages from both a descriptive and theoretical point of view.

It was organised by the University of Oulu, Finland in August 2015. The programme of the five-day congress consisted of plenary talks, 21 symposia and thematically organised sessions. The participants at the Congress represented different universities and research institutes from Hungary, Finland, Estonia, the Russian Federation, Austria, Germany, the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands.¹

The Congress provided excellent opportunity for dissemination of recently conducted research in the field of Finno-Ugric Studies and for collaboration between researchers of Finno-Ugric Studies. The Congress has a long history. The first Congress was organised by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest in 1960. Since then the Congress has been held every five years in different cities in Finland, Hungary, Estonia and Russia (Budapest 1960, Helsinki 1965, Tallinn 1970, Budapest 1975, Turku 1980, Syktyvkar 1985, Debrecen 1990, Jyväskylä 1995, Tartu 2000, Yoshkar-Ola 2005, Piliscsaba 2010).

The latest edition of the Congress continued the line of the previous meetings by including a great variety of topics regarding the linguistic description of the Finno-Ugric languages both from a descriptive, as well as from a theoretical perspective. Moreover, linguistics was not the only research field at the Congress; literature, archaeology, ethnology and cultural studies received attention, as well.

Here we will briefly summarise the plenary sessions and the symposia. Then we will turn to two thematically chosen workshops, namely the two joint syntactic workshops, which we will review in greater detail.

2 Plenary session

Seven plenary talks were given at the Congress. They meant to cover current topics connected to Finno-Ugric Studies, for example language endangerment as discussed by Lyle Campbell & Bryn Hauk (Hawai'i at Mānoa) in their plenary talk entitled *Language endangerment and endangered Uralic languages*. The second plenary talk given by Cornélius Hasselblatt (Groningen) was connected to cultural studies (*The Finno-Ugric message: Literary and cultural contributions of our discipline*). Permic Studies were also represented in the plenary session by the third plenary speaker, Jevgeni Tsypanov (Syktyvkar), who gave a talk entitled *Modified model of linguo-ethnogenesis of the Permian people*. Valter Lang (Tartu) discussed archeological issues in his talk *Formation of Proto-Finnic – an archaeological scenario from the Bronze Age – Early Iron Age*. In her talk *The ditransitive constructions of the*

¹ The programme and the abstract book can be downloaded from the official website of the event:
<http://www.oulu.fi/suomenkieli/fuxii/englanti/etusivu>

Ob-Ugric languages Katalin Sipőcz (Szeged) gave an overview of the ditransitive constructions from a typological perspective. Zoltán Nagy (Pécs) gave a talk on cultural anthropology and more specifically on Khanty identity (*The labyrinth of identity: Khanty ethnic identity, its alternatives, and their place in the discourses of identity*). Kaisa Rautio Helander (Kautokeino) emphasized the role of one of the most current topics in sociolinguistics, namely linguistic landscapes with regard to the revitalisation of the Saami language (*Saami language toponymy in linguistic landscapes: The function of place-names in language policy*).

3 Symposia and sessions

The workshops and symposia held at the Congress covered a large scale of topics connected to the Finno-Ugric and Uralic Studies, for instance there were symposia on multilingualism (*Multilingual practices and code-switching in Finno-Ugric communities, Multilingualism and multiculturalism in Finno-Ugric literatures*), language technology (*Computational Uralistics, Language technology through citizen science and Archives enriching the present cultures of the Northern peoples*), historical linguistics (*Linguistic reconstruction in Uralic: Problems and prospects*). Furthermore, Finno-Ugric literature, ethnology, cultural studies were also represented at the symposia and sessions. Here we will review two of the workshops which dealt with the syntactic description of the Uralic languages.

3.1 Syntactic Structure of Uralic Languages

The first syntactic workshop was organised by Anders Holmberg (Newcastle University), Balázs Surányi (RIL HAS & Pázmány Péter Catholic University), Orsolya Tánzos (RIL HAS & Pázmány Péter Catholic University).

The two-day workshop aimed at shedding light at the syntactic properties of Finno-Ugric and Uralic languages both within one language and cross-linguistically. One of the goals of the workshop was to provide theoretical accounts for syntactic phenomena in these languages and to describe their syntax from a synchronic and/or diachronic perspective.

Two keynote speakers gave talks at the workshop. The first one was Katalin É. Kiss (Budapest) who discussed the Old Hungarian syntax as a link between Modern Hungarian and the other Modern Ugric languages. The second keynote speaker was Irina Nikolaeva (London) who introduced the complex focus construction in Tundra Nenets (Northern Samoyedic).

Then the symposium moved to discussing case studies on Finnish, Estonian, Hungarian, as well as on small Finno-Ugric languages such as Meadow Mari, Moksha and Northern Sámi. Central topics covered by the talks at the workshop were anaphoric dependencies, agreement, differential object marking, case systems and DP-structure.

Saara Huhmarniemi (Helsinki) proposed that movement to subject position in Finnish is triggered by discourse features. Anna Volkova (Moscow) discussed two reflexives in Meadow Mari and argued for a modular approach to binding. While András Bányi (Cambridge) contrasted two types of differential object marking observable in the Uralic languages, Svetlana Toldova (Moscow) focused on differential object marking in Moksha. Marta Ruda (Krakow) suggested that definite-plural-object drop in Hungarian is motivated morphologically and is not due to semantic recoverability. Mark Norris (Oklahoma) provided an account for the agreement in the Estonian negated clauses in the framework of Distributed Morphology. Phil Crone (Stanford) dealt with First conjunct agreement in Finnish. Farkas et al. (Budapest–Pécs) compared the syntactic properties of single event nominals and complex event nominals in Hungarian. Peter Svenonius (Tromsø) investigated the syntactic behaviour of the comitative-

marked adjuncts in Northern Sámi. Éva Dékány (Budapest) exemplified the quantificational case in three Finno-Ugric languages: Inari Sami, Estonian and Finnish. Tommi Gröndahl (Helsinki) examined the Finnish distance-neutral demonstrative with respect to the structure of the DP. Saara Huhmarniemi & Gisbert Fanselow (Helsinki, Potsdam) offered a new analysis for the split noun phrase constructions in Finno-Ugric languages. Kaiser et al. (Southern California, Tartu, Manchester) conducted a survey with Estonian speakers on the interplay between case, animacy and number and how these factors determine the interpretation of grammatical roles.

The workshop provided space for fruitful discussion and collaboration between researchers. The organisers of the symposium announced their decision to turn this meeting into regular event held every two years.

3.2 The Syntax of Samoyedic and Ob-Ugric Languages

The second workshop was organised by Larisa Leisiö (Kone Foundation & University of Tampere) and Irina Nikolaeva (SOAS, London). The goal of the one-day event was to discuss the syntax of the languages belonging to these two branches of the Uralic language family and to shed light on the syntactic variation, possible genetic heritage and language contact in the domain of syntax.

The talks at the symposium investigated the non-finite clauses, object-verb agreement and object marking, focus structures and possession. Zsófia Schön (Munich) compared finite and non-finite strategies for encoding adverbial subordinate clauses in three Khanty dialects. Márta Csepregi (Budapest) exemplified different patterns of denoting the subject in the Surgut Khanty non-finite clauses. Bernadett Bíró et al. (Szeged, Tampere) discussed the object-verb agreement and object marking in Mansi and in Northern Samoyedic languages. Melani Wratil (Düsseldorf) gave a talk on the relationship between differential object marking and the object agreement in the Samoyedic languages. Nikolett Mus (Budapest) examined the word order and the syntactic position of interrogative phrases in transitive content interrogatives in Ob-Ugric and Samoyedic languages. Alexey Kozlov & Ivan Stenin (Moscow) provided a morphosyntactic and semantic analysis of the Tundra Nenets focus intracitics. Finally, Gerson Klumpp (Tartu) demonstrated the use of possessive suffixes in Kamas.

The two syntax workshops organised a joint poster session, as well. The posters dealt with other syntactic phenomena, such as information structure (Erika Asztalos: *Identificational focus in Udmurt*, Sachiko Sosa: *The preferred morphosyntactic patterns in Surgut Khanty discourse*), non-finite and relative clauses (Ekaterina Georgieva: *Null and overt pronouns in the Udmurt non-finite clauses*, Eszter Ótrott-Kovács & Ekaterina Georgieva: *Syntactic similarities between the non-finite clauses in Udmurt and Tatar*, Maria Privizentseva: *Free relatives in Moksha*), impersonal constructions (Nikolett F. Gulyás: *3PL and non-finite impersonal constructions: A functional approach*) and clitic-climbing (Kata Kubinyi: *Possessive clitic climbing as a pattern of agreement with the possessor in Permian and Mari postpositional phrases*).

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