

Demonstrative proadjectives in spoken Livonian: morphosyntactic and semantic use

Demonstrative proadjectives (e.g. Livonian *seļļi* ‘such, like this’, *tūoļi* ‘like that’) are a type of demonstrative words that has not been that much researched compared to the other demonstratives like demonstrative pronouns (e.g. Livonian *se* ‘this’) and demonstrative proadverbs (e.g. Livonian *tāsā* ‘here’). The reason can be that demonstrative proadjectives often tend to occur as attributes for other substantives and adjectives, so it can be more difficult to research proadjectives independently. In addition, demonstrative proadjectives are semantically very dependent on the text around them, so they can have different semantic functions depending on the context. Lately there have been more researches on demonstrative words, their use and meaning (e.g. Keevallik 2011, König & Umbach 2016), but morphosyntactic and semantic use of demonstrative proadjectives could be still researched more precisely to describe their diverse meanings, different forms and positions in sentences. An example of a sentence with a demonstrative proadjective that is non-attributive, but its meaning depends on following subordinate clause:

(01)

<i>Ažā</i>	<i>u'm</i>	<i>seļļi,</i>	<i>ku</i>	<i>ma</i>	<i>mūpō</i>
thing	be.3SG	such	that	I	tomorrow
<i>ā'b</i>	<i>lī</i>	<i>kuo'nnō.</i> (LELS)			
NEG.1SG	will_be	at_home			

‘The thing is like this that I am not going to be at home tomorrow.’

Demonstrative proadjectives are especially widely used in Finnic languages. Most of the Finnic languages have several different proadjectives (in Karelian there are even up to 20 different proadjectives), often distinguished by spatial oppositions (Larjavaara 1986). In Livonian there are two different proadjectives *seļļi* and *tūoļi* and in addition one demonstrative proadjective compound *seļļi-tūoļi* (‘like this, like that’) combining them both, showing different types of characteristics occurring at the same time. Livonian as an endangered Southern Finnic language which also has a literary language is an interesting and important source for research, as

there are recordings of spoken Livonian where demonstrative words are used more often than in the literary language and their different uses and meanings could be spotted.

This research paper is based on the material of recordings in Archives of Estonian Dialects and Kindred Languages of University of Tartu (TÜ EMSA) with native Livonian speakers. For the analysis, 30 recordings with four different Livonian native speakers are used, recordings are dialogues between researchers and native Livonians which were recorded in 1986–2012. The research focuses on the question which demonstrative proadjectives and their forms are used in spoken Livonian the most. After that, the morphosyntactic and semantic use of demonstrative proadjectives is analyzed. Morphosyntactic analysis focuses on attributiveness or non-attributiveness of demonstrative proadjectives, their syntactic position and morphological use in the sentence. Semantic analysis describes semantic functions of demonstrative proadjectives in different types of sentences. For example, demonstrative proadjective could have a physical pointing function, a referring function to a previous or a following part of the text, a function referring to a well-known type of qualities and a function referring to a general type of qualities, depending on the structure of a sentence. The results of morphosyntactic and semantic analysis are presented descriptively.

References

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LELS = Viitso, Tiit-Rein and Valts Ernštreits (2012)

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TÜ EMSA = Tartu Ülikooli eesti murrete ja sugulaskeelte arhiiv. Available online at <<http://www.murre.ut.ee/arhiiv/>>. Accessed on 20.05.2019.