

### The Finnish non-finite referative constructions in interaction

The presentation focuses on the use of a type of embedded Finnish non-finite clause construction, referative constructions, in written and spoken language. The term *referative construction* (aka. *participle construction*) is used here to refer to structures formed with participle forms, their dependents and matrix clauses, such as below:

- (1) *Hän sanoo lähte-vä-nsä.*  
3SG say.3SG leave-PTCP-PX.3SG  
'She says that she is leaving.'
- (2) *Hän huomasi tois-t-en jo men-nee-n.*  
3SG notice-PST.3SG other-PL-GEN already go-PTCP-GEN/ACC  
'She noticed that the others had already gone.'
- (3) *Juna näyttää saapu-va-n.*  
Train seem.3SG arrive-PTCP-GEN/ACC  
'The train seems to be arriving.'

Referative constructions typically have matrix verbs expressing communication, cognition or perception, and they are often considered as alternatives to subordinate clause constructions with the conjunction *että* 'that'. The participles used have some clause-like properties, such as the opposition of past and non-past tense, and a passive form. (See e.g. ISK §538–540; from the development of the structure, see Forsman Svensson 1983, 5–7.) Added to tense and voice, the participle ending and its subject marking varies according to whether the subject is shared with the main clause (1) or not (2). In examples 1 and 2 above, the participles are objects of the transitive matrix verbs. The subject of the participle form is shared with the matrix verb also in example 3, but as the verb *näyttää* 'to seem, to appear' is intransitive, the participle cannot be its object. The subject (*juna* in ex. 3) is in nominative case. In the most recent comprehensive grammar of Finnish, the constructs like example 3 are analysed as "verb chains" with their matrix verbs (ISK §542). There is also a third type of referative construction, used with certain intransitive verbs, such as *osoittautua* 'to prove' or *paljastua* 'to be revealed' (ISK §542). Then, the participle acts as the subject of the matrix verb, and subject-NP of the participle is marked with a genitive case similarly to example 2. This type, however, is infrequent in the datasets examined here.

In Finnish, referative constructions are thought to be a feature of written Standard Finnish (Ikola et al. 1989, 468). In written and spoken language in general, nonfinite structures are used in different ways and to different degrees (Herlin et al. 2005, 18). The type presented in example 3, possible with intransitive sensory perception verbs, forms a larger proportion of referential constructions in spoken dialects than in written Standard Finnish (Ikola et al. 1989, 469). Spoken Finnish referative constructions have not been examined since the study on Finnish Dialect Corpus by Ikola et al. (1989). Dialect interview data are a specific genre with narratives and descriptions of old practices, and this kind of data may not tell much about the interactional contexts of referative constructions. Thus, modern spoken datasets need to be examined.

Finnish *että*-clauses have been examined in the framework of interactional linguistics, questioning earlier views about subordination (Koivisto et al. 2011). The notion that *että*-clauses and referative constructions are alternatives to each other, is based on written language. Although referative constructions are relatively infrequent in speech, they may have some specific functions in interaction. The presentation aims to answer the following questions: What kind of referative constructions are used in Finnish everyday conversation and in what contexts? How fixed they are: what kind of variation is found and with which matrix verbs they occur? The data come from annotated corpora of spoken Finnish: Arkisyn (everyday conversations) and Sapu (informal interviews from south-western Finland). The data will be compared to findings done in previous studies on Finnish dialect corpus and various written datasets, as well as in studies examining the functions of subordinate *että*-clauses in conversations. By comparing the dialect corpus data with more recent speech and analysing features that Ikola et al. (1989) did not consider (e.g. the frequency of shared and different subjects), new information can also be obtained about possible historical change and areal variation.

## References

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