

A borrowed hortative particle in Kola Saami

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Hortative is a verbal modality semantically related to the imperative mood, but not a morphological category. A bound particle *-ka* marking the hortative in Kola Saami features in contemporary writing, for instance in Alexandra Antonova's literary translations into Kildin Saami. It also drifts like a ghost across theoretical literature on Saami and Uralic linguistics.

It was Julius Mägiste (1968) who first mentioned the borrowing of a “hortative particle” from Russian in Kola Saami. His evidence were two examples from spoken Kildin Saami, published as transcripts in a volume by Georgi Kert in 1961. Kert's descriptive grammar of Kildin Saami (1971) – published ten years later and using one of these two examples – briefly describes this particle and its Russian-language origin too, but without reference to Mägiste.

Whereas Mägiste's finding deals with “suffix borrowing”, the formative is described as a “borrowed discourse-pragmatic marker” (without further discussion and mistakenly attributing Mägiste's finding to Ter Saami) in a study on contact-induced language change in Kola Saami (Blokland/Rießler 2011). In the same study the authors also briefly mention the observation of hortative constructions in today's Kola Saami speech.

In a recent handbook chapter on TAM and evidentials in Uralic languages ([Bradley/Klumpp/Metslang 2022](#)), the borrowing of the “hortative particle =*ka*” from Russian in Saami is touched upon, but without specifying which Saami language and referring only to the very short description in the meta study by Klara Majtinskaja (1982). A recent grammar sketch of Kildin Saami in the same handbook does not mention the particle either (Rießler 2022).

The particle's phonetic form, syntactic locus as an enclitic particle, and function as an interrogative marker – incl. syntactic and stylistic restrictions – is like the Russian source word.

This study provides the first detailed description of the hortative particle in Kildin Saami and Ter Saami and shows that it is regularly used, including in Standard Written Kildin Saami.

References

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