

Aanaar Saami demonstrative pronouns: a reappraisal

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Saami demonstratives have received little attention in literature, and most of it focuses on the diachronic development of the demonstrative stems (Bergsland 1950; Kont 1970; Keresztes 2010). The most recent treatment is by Ylikoski (2020), who provides synchronic descriptions of the demonstrative systems in six Saami languages, including Aanaar Saami.

There appears to be an agreement that the Proto-Saami demonstrative system had 2–4 members. According to Ylikoski (2020: 399), Proto-Saami probably had four demonstrative stems of the type **tV-*; Koponen (2022: 109) elaborates by postulating at least a proximal **tāt* and distal **tēt* and possibly also **tiet* (closer to the addressee) and **tuot* (farther away from the speaker and the addressee).

Aanaar Saami, traditionally classified as the westernmost member of the eastern Saami languages, has minimally a fourfold demonstrative system, according to synchronic descriptions of the language. Following Ylikoski's classification (2020: 408), they are the deictic ones *tiet* (proximal, near addressee), *taat* (proximal, near speaker) and *tuot* (distal, far), and the anaphoric *tot*. The fifth member, *tovt* (distal, further), is rare in use and appears to have a defective inflectional paradigm. (Olthuis 2000: 157–158; Morottaja 2007: 60–61; Morottaja & Olthuis 2023: 211–212.)

The system described above would appear to match closely with the Proto-Saami system. However, the historical situation seems to have differed from the current one and deserves closer scrutiny. For example, sources before the 21st century only give a tripartite system consisting of *táát* ~ *taat*, *tot* and *tuot* (Lönnrot 1854: 183; Andelin 1861: 393; Itkonen 1991: 33). Of course, the limited nature of the descriptions by Andelin and Lönnrot may result from other factors, such as their age. Nevertheless, an interesting finding is that Erkki Itkonen's *Inarilappisches Wörterbuch* (1986–1989), whose material was collected in the 1950s and earlier, does not recognize *tiet* only in its current addressee-proximal meaning (op. cit., 4959). In addition, the dictionary contains a hitherto undescribed demonstrative stem *ti-* (op. cit., 4951), whose meaning seems to vacillate between almost all other deictic pronouns.

In my presentation, I attempt to bridge the gap between the historical and current demonstrative pronoun repertoires in Aanaar Saami and shed some light on the enigmatic *ti-* pronoun and its role in the deictic system.

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