Arja Hamari
Department of Finnish, Finno-Ugrian and Scandinavian Studies
University of Helsinki
E-mail: arja.hamari@helsinki.fi

The abessive case of the Permic languages

In my presentation, I will focus on a rather marginal but still productive case of the Permic languages, namely the abessive (sometimes also known as the caritive or the privative case). The presentation is part of my research project in which I study the functions of this case category in the Finno-Ugric – or more precisely – in the Finno-Permic languages; the purpose of my work is to consider the functional development of the case in different sister languages. The abessive ending has etymological equivalents throughout the Uralic language family, which means that the suffix most likely goes back to the Uralic protolanguage. The original form of the suffix may have been *-ktå/-ktä*, but it is not clear whether it was originally a case ending or a derivational suffix (Janhunen 1982: 29, 31). Especially in the modern Finno-Permic languages the use of the descendants of this suffix have many similar features, but also differences do appear – these differences range from morphological to syntactic characteristics.

In the Permic languages, the forms of the abessive case suffix are *-tẹg* in Komi (K) and *-tek* in Udmurt (U). In both languages the suffix can be attached to both nouns and verbs. In nouns, the function of this case is to express the lack or shortage of something (K *traktortẹg* 'without a tractor', U *traktortek* 'id.'), while in verbs it is employed in the formation of negative gerunds (K *tẹdlịtẹg* 'without noticing', U *todịtek* 'without knowing'); both nouns and verbs carrying the abessive case suffix usually have an adverbial function (Bartens 2000: 102, 256–257). My paper deals with the similarities and differences that can be detected in the use of these suffixes in the two Permic languages. I will concentrate on the literary language of both Komi and Udmurt, but descriptions and grammars of dialects and old text materials will, of course, be considered when available.

The study is based on a material mainly collected from two newspapers that appear in Komi and Udmurt. Both the Komi paper *Komi mu* and the Udmurt paper *Udmurt duńńe* appear three times a week and the articles are published both in a paper format and through the Internet. In the case of Komi, material has been collected from the issues of *Komi mu* that have appeared between October 1st, 2008 and September 30th, 2009, while the Udmurt material covers all the issues of *Udmurt duńńe* in the year 2007. Additional Komi material comes from five issues of the monthly journal *Vojvịv koӡ̌uv* (1–5/1997). Altogether, the size of the data base is approximately 2000 expressions in both languages.

References:

BARTENS, RAIJA 2000: *Permiläisten kielten rakenne ja kehitys*. Mémoires de la Société Finno-Ougrienne 238. Helsinki.
JANHUNEN, JUHA 1982: On the structure of Proto-Uralic. *Finnisch-Ugrische Forschungen* XLIV. Helsinki.