

## The discourse marker NU in Uralic languages

The discourse particle NU (in different phonetic and phonological variants) is found in a great number of languages of Europe, including the Uralic languages Finnish and Estonian (Auer & Maschler 2016: 2, 6–9). We examine nine Uralic languages (Livonian, Seto, Ingrian, Votic, Erzya, Komi, Udmurt, Kamas, and Selkup) where NU is a relatively frequent element. The aim of this research is to add to Auer & Maschler (2016) a comparative description of the functions of the discourse particle NU in minor Uralic languages.

The particle *nu* was borrowed into most languages of our interest from Russian, except for Livonian, where *nu* was borrowed from Latvian. In several languages, *nu* coexists with a variant *no* (Livonian, Ingrian (1), Komi, Kamas, Selkup), and *no/noh* in Seto. The availability and diversity of data vary depending on the language (written corpora for Komi, Udmurt, and Erzya; spoken corpora for Ingrian, Kamas, Livonian, Selkup, Seto, Votic, Komi, and dialectal varieties of Udmurt).

### (1) Ingrian (dialogue within a narrative)

01 <i>hää käi korjaiž näidä heiniä jogahiželle andoi v'eralle miulle i itselle otti</i>	01 She went, gathered some grass, gave it to each: to Vera, to me, and took (one) for herself.
02 <i>no ken že enžimäižeeškš mänñöö</i>	02 “NU (well/so), who will go first?”
03 <i>raja šaňnoo miä mään</i>	03 Raja says, “I will go.”
04 <i>a v'era šaňnoo ol'a šiiž šiä määd a šiiž miä mään</i>	04 And Vera says, “Olja, then you will go and then I will go.”
05 <i>no davajt'e šiiž</i>	05 “NU let's (do it) then!”
06 <i>no i raja algoi=gi</i>	06 NU and Raja did begin.

Our goal is to develop a unified framework that allows us to find comparable structures across the languages and to classify the examples in a comparable manner avoiding inconsistent assignment of functions (cf. e.g. Kuosmanen & Multisilta 1999: 52). We are especially interested in finding invariant meaning(s) across different structural positions. The data we have posits a challenge for the strictly discourse analytic approach (Schiffrin 1987) taken in the volume by Auer & Maschler (2016). We propose to conduct an analysis within the Dynamic

Speech Act Theory (Geis 1995), replacing the discourse sequential positions with roles of initiator and responder for interactive contexts.

Our preliminary conclusions are that NU in interactive contexts has the core meaning of cooperating in moving towards a goal (cf. Šmelev 2005 for Russian *nu*). It is manifested differently depending on the role of the participant of a situation (initiator vs. responder). In the talk, we will also give an account of non-interactive contexts (exclamatives, rhetorical questions, and tautologies) found in the Uralic data.

## References

- Auer, Peter & Yael Maschler (2016). The family of NU and NÁ across the languages of Europe and beyond: Structure, function, and history. In: Auer, Peter & Yael Maschler (eds.), *NU/NÁ: A Family of Discourse Markers Across the Languages of Europe and Beyond*, 1–48. Berlin & Boston: Walter de Gruyter.
- Geis, Michael L. (1995). *Speech Acts and Conversational Interaction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kuosmanen, Anne & Teija Multisilta (1999). Nu and vot in Spoken Russian. On discourse functions and prosodic features. *Scando-Slavica* 45:1, 49–64.
- Schiffrin, Deborah (1987). *Discourse markers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Šmelev (2005) = Шмелев, Алексей Д. (2005). Показатели hesitation в русской устной речи. *Язык. Личность. Текст*. Издательство Языки славянских культур, 518–530.