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Creation of physical space by deictic expressions in Lithuanian dialects

Abstract:

The present talk aims to reveal the newest data on systems of demonstrative pronouns in Lithuanian dialects and to discuss it. Analysis of deictics in the exophoric usage requires examples of on-going interactive situations. Therefore, experimental method was employed and video recordings were made. The experiment was performed in three different cities, representing two of the main Lithuanian dialects (Aukštaitian (highlanders) and Samogitian (lowlanders)) and three subdialects (Utena subdialect, Viduklės subdialect, Skuodiškiai subdialect). After applying the method of a qualitative interview, precisely a semi-structured interview (Richards 2009: 186), 30 people were questioned and approximately 3 hours of video material were recorded.

The collected material was evaluated taking into account previous approaches to space deixis (Enfield 2003). In order to know, how the space deictic structures are changing over the years, the current data was compared to the previous researches on physical space construction in some Lithuanian dialects (Rosinas 1982: 141).

Based on examples of demonstrative pronouns in exophoric uses, I am making the following claims. First, the researched Eastern dialects showed the deictic system consisting of two members (šis ‘proximal’ vs. tas ‘distal’) and the system is familiar from the previous researches (Rosinas 1982: 141). The Samogitian subdialect with a binomial system of demonstrative pronouns is still in use (tas, ta ‘proximal’ / anas, ana ‘distal’; Rosinas 1982: 141), but in a slightly different way: it is becoming/or already became a trinomial one. Moreover, the system differs from others, i.e. proximity here is expressed by using a distal demonstrative tas. Thirdly, one representing the last subdialect constructs physical space by using a specific formula: šitai + tas, tas + šitai ‘proximal’ / antai + tas, tas + antai ‘distal’, where just one of lexemes is a demonstrative pronoun (tas ‘distal’, šitai = ‘proximal’ adverb of space; antai = ‘distal’ adverb of space). After all, there are no enough arguments to state that most of Samogitian dialects have a one-member system as it was stated before (Rosinas 1982: 141). After comparing the collected video material from the Skuodiškiai subdialect to languages with pure one-member deictic systems (Diessel 2013), I propose that the actual system in this subdialect does not correspond to other one-member systems.
References:


