Tartu 2016

The 4th International Winter School for Finno-Ugric Studies took place at the University of Tartu from 1.-6.2.2016. It comprised a language course, two workshops, two guest lectures and a student colloquium.

Language Course: Komi
This language course aimed to acquaint students with the Komi-Zyrian language on a basic level. Practical lessons were combined with units providing information on sociolinguistics, dialects, and some peculiarities of the Komi grammar. One unit was devoted to the Iźva dialect, the northernmost of the 10 main dialects of Komi spoken in the northern regions of the Komi Republic and also outside the Republic in a number of diaspora settlements in a wide swathe of territory from the northwest of European Russia to northwestern Siberia.

Workshop I: Transcriptions, transliterations, orthographies
This workshop aimed to critically analyze the complex relationships between writing systems (past and present; scientific transcriptions, transliterations, and orthographies used by speaker communities), phonological/ phonetic properties of the relevant languages, and the societal/political/historical context in which these exist (or existed).

Workshop II: Information structuring
This workshop aimed to show the strategies Uralic languages use in order to formally present the character of information within a sentence, e.g., in terms of OLD/GIVEN or NEW. The terms used for this phenomenon include information structure (Halliday 1967), information packaging (Chafe 1974, Vallduví & Engdahl 1996), functional sentence perspective (the Prague school: Firbas 1975; Sgall et al. 1986, Sgall 1993), or common ground management (Stalnaker 1974, Karttunen 1974).

Guest lecture by Pärtel Lippus & Eva Liina Asu-Garcia (University of Tartu): "Uralic phonetic studies at the University of Tartu: the state of the art"
The talk gave an overview of the past and present of phonetic research at the University of Tartu. The focus was on projects dealing with the phonetic study of Uralic languages such as the book series on the prosody of lesser studied Finno-Ugric languages, which was initiated by the late Prof. Ilse Lehiste. Current research projects, phonetic databases as well as international collaboration were introduced.

Guest lecture by Santeri Junttila (University of Helsinki): "The criteria of a loanword etymology"
The arguments used in loan etymologies are related to form, meaning, source language, distribution and the existence of layers of loans. By examining the usage context of each argument type, Junttila gave an overall view of all possible criteria of a valid loan etymology.