

Introduction: Communicational Relations

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VAKKI Publications Volume 17 presents a wide-ranging collection of peer-reviewed articles under the theme of Communicational Relations. The eleven articles included in this issue, each in their own way, connect to the relations formed in and through communication. Relations are in the heart of communication, as in the age-old understanding of communication formed in rituals (Carey 1989: 19), where individuals interact symbolically and join together in various kinds of communities. The Latin roots of the term communication (*communicare*) refer to sharing and making something common, but the term *communicate* can also refer to connection or linkage (Peters 1999: 7). Communicative actions such as sharing, participation, and community-building all include relations of some sort, usually between people. Communication has the capacity to build, maintain and express relations, as well as break them.

This issue of VAKKI publications testifies the broad scope of communicational relations in its themes and methodological approaches. Articles in this issue explore communicational relations between nations, organizations, individuals, and authorities. The articles investigate linguistic communication, official communication, and human-computer interaction. Textual relations are also covered in this issue, as relations formed in contracts through language.

Communicational relations are not limited to relations between humans, as shown in the broadening field of human-computer interaction, where human and technological relationships are intertwined in complex ways. This field of research offers insight into human actions in computer-mediated contexts. Understanding our everyday digital communication as connections between actors in a dynamic network of ties, relations and dependencies can offer a fruitful perspective for understanding our connectedness with one another in digital spaces as well as our connections with the surrounding information infrastructure (Paasonen 2021: 26).

VAKKI publications aims at contributing to multidisciplinary communication studies and strives to be an inclusive publishing platform for a range of approaches from language and translation studies to the diverse field of communication studies. This issue is diverse also in languages and includes articles in four languages: English, Finnish, Swedish and German. The articles in this issue are based on presentations in the XLV international

VAKKI symposium held 13–14 February 2025 in Vaasa where researchers had the opportunity to build and maintain their relations face-to-face. All the articles are introduced briefly in the following sections.

In her conversation analysis, Sanna **Heittola** examines word searches in video-recorded art-related conversations among L2 learners of Swedish. According to her study, word searches function not only as a means of resolving linguistic challenges but also enable joint meaning-making and foster the construction of social relationships.

In the case study of animal import control situations, Heli **Koskinen** examines how interaction between authorities is formed. The interaction between customs authorities and veterinarians is examined through an observational method and analysis of news images. From a social-constructivist perspective, the study illustrates the construction of interaction as an activity in which the prevailing consensus is guided by both interaction practices and social structures.

The article by Päivi **Kuusi**, Svetlana **Probirskaja** and Tuija **Kinnunen** focuses on the cooperation between immigrant language groups and Finnish authorities in communication related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Interviews are used as research material in this study, which highlights that the pandemic communication of the municipalities of Southern Finland, the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare, and the Finnish Red Cross towards the immigrant community is based on cooperation between organizations and immigrant communities in translation work. The research also reveals some challenges of cooperation in pandemic communication directed at immigrants by public institutions.

Hans **Landqvist** presents a case study examining dictionary entries that describe elderly people. The study shows that the definitions and examples in these entries often reflect rather stereotypical views of elderly people, which raises the need for critical revision of potentially ageist content in the forthcoming edition of the dictionary.

Jannika **Lassus** and Andreas **Nord** have studied the Social Insurance Institution of Finland's (Kela) Swedish-language communication on Instagram. They use systemic-functional language theory as their theoretical framework and examine the communicative functions of Kela's social media presence. The study reveals that Kela aims to create relationships, especially with younger customer groups on social media.

Ella **Lillqvist** and Merja **Porttikivi** present a theoretical-methodological framework for examining the semantic dimensions of emotion language. They examine emotion language in a corpus of Finnish-language news media texts that mention investing and

investors (2015–2023). Their framework distinguishes between core, extended, and evaluative meanings and helps to identify and distinguish between different types of meanings that emotion vocabulary can bring to discourse.

Mikael **Mäenpää**, Pirjo **Yli-Viitala** and Juha **Arrasvuori** examine through a systematic literature review the possibilities of developing risk management training to be more interactive through gamification or artificial intelligence. The study highlights simulations, scenarios, collaboration, feedback, adaptive guidance and personalization as possible ways to develop risk management training.

Henrik **Oksanen**, Anne **Ketola**, Helena **Haapio** and Anna **Hurmerinta-Haanpää** analyzed the complexity of contract language of companies. Their research suggests that the European Model Clauses for Responsible Dealing (EMCs) emphasize complex *legalese* language, which can affect the general comprehensibility of model clauses and thus impair the ability of contracts to convey accountability obligations and objectives. The study offers a new term *sustainabilites*, a complex sustainability jargon, which may hinder the transmission of responsibility obligations and goals.

Miia **Santalahti** and Marja **Kivilehto** write in their article about interstate relations, namely treaties between Finland and Russia and Finland and Sweden. Their study uses the theory of systemic-functional linguistics to investigate how rights and obligations are created by means of language in treaties, instruments regulating the relations between states.

Marjukka **Säilä** and Laura **Havinen** examine navigation design in an intranet for students from a usability perspective. Focusing on the University of Vaasa student intranet Jolla, their study presents a 12-point guideline of best practices for student intranet design.

The study of Anu **Viljanmaa** is based on interview data with social workers and examines the social worker's perceptions of how interpreting affects the building and management of client relationships. According to the study, interpreted social work involves a complex network of trust and interactional relationships, where the interpreter's presence and actions can influence the relationship between social worker and client both positively and negatively.

We as the editorial board of VAKKI publications hope you enjoy this issue!

References

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