

Conference abstract for WIREC 2018

All the contributor's names and professions: Helena Omma, PhD-candidate
Institution: Sámi allaskuvla/ Sami University of applied sciences
Email address: helenao@samas.no

On Sámi Language, Landscape and Reindeer Herding Knowledge

In Sámi culture, place names and topographical nouns are essential as a basis for knowledge of landscape and local resources. The topographical noun is, furthermore, also a means by which to linguistically categorize landscape, as it contains within it information about the characteristics of the referent. In a reindeer herding context, topographical nouns also represent a part of the reindeer herder's professional terminology, which in addition, also includes a more specific knowledge that relates to herding practices in a particular area.

The Sámi reindeer herders' language has developed through generations of people interacting and communicating with each other about reindeer, herding practices and strategies, as well as the surrounding environment. Reindeer herders' landscape terminology can therefore be viewed as *cultural conceptualizations*, which are shared by the herders and expressed through the language. Cultural conceptualizations are defined as: categories and schemas that are shared by members of a cultural group, and which embody group level cognitive systems such as world views. They enable the members of the group to think as with one mind, and are negotiated and renegotiated through time and space and across generations. (Sharifian 2011: 5)

In my Ph.D. research, I focus on the reindeer herders' landscape terminology, as I want to know how knowledge is embedded in language. The aim is to analyze reindeer herders' conceptualizations of landscape in relation to the reindeer's behavior and habits. I have recently concluded my fieldwork, in which, through conversations with Sámi speaking reindeer herders in the North and Lule Sámi areas of Sweden, I was able to collect landscape terms and discuss both the local landscape as well as the reindeer herders' own nomadic pastoralist use of it. In this presentation, I shall provide some examples of my research material, i.e. landscape and herding terminology, and discuss how to interpret them using cognitive and cultural linguistic frameworks.

Gáldut

Sharifian, Farzad 2011: *Cultural conceptualisations and language : theoretical framework and applications* vol. 1. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.