

The polysemy of the Finnish *jonnet ei muista* ('youngsters don't remember') construction

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Jonnet ei muista (*jonne*-PL NEG remember 'youngsters don't remember') is, according to the Dictionary of Contemporary Finnish (Kielitoimiston sanakirja), a benevolent phrase which is used in situations when a younger person doesn't know something that older people are familiar with. *Jonne* is originally a male first name, but it has gone through the process of appellativization, that is, it has also gained an appellative meaning. In contemporary colloquial Finnish *jonne* means a stereotypical teenage boy. In a way, it can be compared with the rapidly spread English expression *Karen* which is used for stereotypical middle-aged white women acting inappropriately and racist (see Garcés-Conejos Blitvich 2022).

In my poster, I analyse the semantic, lexical, and grammatical properties of the *jonnet ei muista* construction, using two kinds of data sets, one compiled from the Suomi24 ('Finland24') internet forum and another from Twitter. I demonstrate that besides the sense mentioned above the construction also has another basic meaning.

The analysis shows that the subject of the construction is the plural form *jonnet*, and it includes a cognitive verb in negative form. The verb is in most cases *muistaa* ('remember'), but it can also be some other cognitive verb, such as *tietää* ('know') or *ymmärtää* ('understand'). Typically, the construction also has an NP as an object.

I argue that the construction is polysemous and has two different basic meanings. First, it is indeed used in situations when a younger person is not familiar with something that happened in previous decades (1). Second, it is used in situations when a younger person does not yet know something that they will probably learn later (2). In this latter meaning, the thing that will be learned later can also be proper behaviour in contrast to the immature behaviour of younger people.

(1) *Jonne-t ei muista GTA 1.*
jonne-PL NEG remember GTA 1
(‘Youngsters don't remember the GTA 1 game’)

(2) *Jonne-t ei ymmärrä metafor-i-a.*
jonne-PL NEG understand metaphor-PL-PTV
(‘Youngsters don't understand metaphors’)

I adapt the methodology and concepts of cognitive semantics. In cognitive concepts (see Langacker 2008), in the constructions bearing the first meaning type, the landmark (object NP) is situated in the past, more precisely in the time when the issue being discussed was an everyday thing, whereas the trajector (*jonnet*) is situated in the present moment. However, in the constructions conveying the second meaning type, the trajector (*jonnet*) is still situated in the present moment, but the landmark (object NP) is situated in the future, in the time when the young person should learn the thing expressed in the object NP.

In my poster, I will give a detailed analysis of *jonnet ei muista* construction, revealing its lexical and semantic boundaries.

References

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