VÕRO DEMONSTRATIVES: CHANGING OR DISAPPEARING?

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**Abstract.** The paper deals with the changes occurring in the system of demonstratives and personal pronouns in the Võro language, the present-day variety of the South Estonian Võru dialect. In the Võro language the third person pronoun is *timä/tä* and there are three demonstrative pronouns (*sjoo~seo, taa, and tuu*) and three series of demonstrative adverbs (*siin:siia:siit; taha:tan:tast; sinna:seal:sealt*) are in use. The data for the study come from the newspaper *Uma Leht* (2012–2014) and mini-series produced by Estonian Public Broadcasting in 2011. The data show that the former addressee-centered system of South Estonian demonstratives has disappeared. At the same time, the language has retained all of the pronouns, although their frequency and context of use differs in the written and the spoken data.

**Keywords:** demonstratives, personal pronouns, Võro language

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1. Introduction

The present paper takes a look at a system of demonstratives which is in the process of changing and, for that reason, exhibits considerable variation. The main question is how the system of demonstratives and personal pronouns changes in a bilingual (Estonian-Võro) situation, in which the same demonstrative stems perform different functions and the whole system is built on different categories. I describe the use of nominal and local adverbial demonstratives (see Dixon 2003: 62 for terminology) and third person pronouns in the present-day Võro language (the present-day common language spoken mainly in the area of the historical Võru dialect). The objective is to establish how the archaic, relatively complex system of three spheres is changing into a new system with fewer distinctions due to the influence of the simpler system of Estonian (cf. also Tammekäänd 2015).
Demonstratives and third person pronouns, together with zero-forms, make up the set of minimal (Laury 2005) or reduced (Kibrik 2011) referential devices. Describing such a system requires taking syntactic, semantic and pragmatic factors into account (Diessel 1999, Dixon 2003, Hanks 2009). From the perspective of syntax it is important that while demonstratives can be used as determiners, third person pronouns cannot (Dixon 2003: 69, Kibrik 2010: 125). From the semantic perspective, a number of properties of the referent are vital, mainly the quality of the referent (animate/inanimate, human/nonhuman) and the location of the referent, a property traditionally used for describing demonstratives (deictic categories such as, for example, distal/proximal and visible/invisible; Diessel 1999). The most versatile is the set of properties derived from the communicative situation: the devices of minimal reference differ, for example, with respect to the properties of the referents (contrastive/non-contrastive, precise/vague; see Diessel 1999), cognitive (information) status (in focus, activated, familiar etc.; Gundel, Hedberg and Zacharski 1993, Gundel et al. 2010), and the role they play in different communicative activities (e.g. Etelämäki 2009, Priiki 2014, Hint, Reile and Pajusalu 2013).

The traditional account of demonstratives based on a merely spatial principle is clearly too primitive (Hanks 2009). There is no sharp difference between spatial deictic reference, anaphoric within-text reference and other types of reference. In fact, it is often considered more fitting to study demonstratives on the basis of the dynamic spheres of the speaker and addressee; these spheres can be either spatial, social, informational, etc. (Laury 1997). The most important question for an interactionally oriented study of referential devices is how speakers use demonstratives to construe the referent (Hanks 2009: 21).

The focus of the present paper is the change in demonstratives and personal pronouns due to language contacts. We are interested here in the reduction of the demonstrative system, where an important influence is that of Estonian, which in turn has been influenced earlier by the Germanic system featuring fewer distinctions.
2. Overview of the relevant demonstrative systems

2.1. Finnic demonstratives

Four demonstrative stems have been reconstructed for the Finnic languages: *tämä, *taa, *too and *se (Larjavaara 1986: 75). Nowadays, in the Finnic languages the number of demonstratives can vary from three (Finnish tämä, tuo, se, Karelian tämä, tua, še, South Estonian seo, taa, tuu) to one (Livonian sie) (Laanest 1982: 197–199, see Nordlund et al. 2013 for a comparison of Estonian and Finnish demonstratives).

The pronoun tämä, which used to be a demonstrative, has changed into a third person pronoun in Estonian, Livonian and Votic (Larjavaara 1986: 2): it has the form of tema/ta in Estonian1 and timä/t(i)ä in South Estonian. The etymological source of the short form of the third person pronoun of Estonian is thought to be the demonstrative taa (Metsmägi et al. 2012: 505). As a demonstrative, tämä still figures in the North-eastern dialects that are closer to the Finnish language (Tirkkonen 2007). The other demonstrative stems persist in other Estonian dialects, primarily in South Estonian (Pajusalu 1998, 2009).

The Finnic languages differ from one another not only in the number of demonstratives, but also in whether or not they have a demonstrative referring to the addressee’s sphere (addressee-oriented demonstrative, see Anderson and Keenan (1985: 282–286) and Diessel (1999: 39) for terminology). For example, in the spatial domain, the choice of demonstratives in Estonian does not depend on the location of the addressee with respect to the referent (at least according to the existing studies), while in Finnish, the demonstrative se may refer to the addressee’s sphere, while tämä refers to the speaker’s sphere. The Finnish system, therefore, has in addition to the relative abundance of demonstratives (three demonstrative stems), also a larger number of distinguishing features.

The devices of minimal reference can be used in the Finnic languages both anaphorically as well as deictically referring to both animate as well as inanimate referents; the Finnic languages do not make a strict distinction between animate/inanimate or human/nonhuman entities (see, e.g., Seppänen 1998, Hakulinen et al. 2004: 1366 for Finnish and Pajusalu 2006 for Estonian). Written languages differ from spoken

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1 Estonian here refers to the Estonian common language, historically based on North Estonian dialects and used nowadays all over Estonia.
languages in this respect: most likely under the influence of the Indo-European languages, the specialization of the third person pronoun to refer to humans in Finnish (see, e.g., Hakulinen et al. 2004: 707–708) and animate entities in Estonian has been partly artificially introduced into written varieties. Demonstratives in Finnish and Estonian are in the process of grammaticalizing into articles due to the influence of Indo-European languages, while at the same time retaining the regularities of their own system (Laury 1999, Nordlund et al. 2013).

2.2. Demonstratives in Võro and Estonian

This paper looks at the modern Võro language (also referred to as the Võro-Seto language), which has developed on the basis of the historical Võru dialect (one of the three dialects of South Estonian) and which is socially the most prominent regional language in Estonia at the moment. The majority of the Võro people are bilingual Võro and Estonian speakers and Võro is becoming more similar to Estonian in many aspects (K. Pajusalu 2009).

Table 1. Demonstratives and 3rd person pronouns in Estonian and South Estonian (Võro)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>3rd prs. sg.</th>
<th>3rd prs.pl.</th>
<th>proximal</th>
<th>distal</th>
<th>definite determiner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Estonian</td>
<td>tema/ta</td>
<td>nemad/nad</td>
<td>see</td>
<td></td>
<td>see</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonian</td>
<td>tema/ta</td>
<td>nemad/nad</td>
<td>see</td>
<td>too</td>
<td>see</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Võro</td>
<td>timä/(i)ä</td>
<td>nimä/nä</td>
<td>sjoo</td>
<td>taa</td>
<td>tuu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 schematically presents the Estonian and Võro demonstrative systems. In the Võro language the third person pronoun is timä, its short version is tiä or tää(ä). In addition, three demonstrative pronouns (sjoo~seo, taa, and tuu) and three series of demonstrative adverbs (siin:siia:siit; taha:tan:tast; sinna:seal:sealt) are in use. In general, it can be said that sjoo and siin:siia:siit are proximal demonstratives (referring to the speaker’s sphere), whereas tuu and sinna:seal:sealt are distal (referring outside the speaker’s sphere) and used as the definite determiner. What makes the system of Võro pro-forms interesting, however, is the third series of demonstratives: taa and taha:tan:tast. In the older Võro language this series was probably used to refer to the addressee’s
sphere; there have been traces of it in the recordings from 1995 from Västseliina parish. In example 1 from (Pajusalu 1998) we can see that speakers use *sjoö* or *taa* depending on whether the object is in their own hands (*sjoö*) or in the hand of the other person (*taa*). Already back then the system was fluctuating: the *taa*-pronoun was used to refer to spatially intermediate entities (intermediate between *sjoö/seö* and *tuu*). The aim of this article is to ascertain what has become of the *taa*-pronoun in the present-day Võro language, under the predominantly Võro-Estonian bilingual circumstances.

(1) K. holds an object in his hand and shows it to an old lady V., who is looking at it from a distance and trying to remember what it is.

K: a mis *sjoö*-ga tõmma-di?
   but what DEM-COM draw-IMP
   What was drawn with this?

V: *taa* um midägi /.../ *taa*-ga vahest tõmma-di
   DEM be.3SG something DEM-COM maybe draw-IMP
   midägi ku puu-anom-i-t tet-ti (.) *taa* um
   something when wood-vessel-PL-PART do-IMP DEM be.3SG
   *tuu*-jaoss jah *tuu* puu-anoma tegemise jaoss
   DEM-for yes DEM wood-vessel.GEN doing for
   This is something /.../ with this probably something was drawn
   when wooden vessels were made. This is for that, for the making of
   wooden vessels.

Unlike South Estonian, (Common) Estonian (based on North Estonian) has only two demonstrative pronouns and two series of demonstrative adverbs. The demonstrative pronouns are *see* (traditionally considered proximal) and *too* (traditionally considered distal). *Too* is actually rare in Estonian and there are varieties with only one demonstrative (based on some North Estonian dialects). In spoken varieties there are differences between people from southern Estonia who use *too* productively and people from northern Estonia who do not use *too* at all (Pajusalu 2006). The demonstrative *see* functions as a proximal or neutral demonstrative (depending on whether the speaker has two spatially opposed demonstratives or whether s/he uses *see* in all deictic contexts), as an anaphoric pronoun, definite determiner, and sometimes
as a placeholder (Keevallik 2010). Too is a deictic or anaphoric pronoun (mostly referring to a person); it is not used as a definite determiner in Estonian (unlike in Võro). The third person pronoun tema/ta refers to a concrete referent on a highly activated level, mostly to animate, but also to inanimate entities. One can find the pronoun ta referring to an inanimate referent particularly often in spoken language (Pajusalu 2009).

There are six demonstrative adverbs in Estonian which are based on a deictic contrast of proximal/distal, and they have three forms: siia – sinna for goal, siin – seal for location and siit – sealt for source. In addition to their deictic function, demonstrative adverbs are used as anaphoric devices for referents that can be characterised (literally or metaphorically) as a place. They can also function as definite determiners, if the head noun of the NP appears in a local case and can be interpreted as a spatial referent.

As can be seen, the demonstrative adverbs used in the Võro language are largely the same as in Estonian, save for the possible phonetic and morphological variants, e.g. siia conditioned by vocal harmony and siih conditioned by the different inessive case ending. However, the most crucial difference is the existence of the third series in Võro: goal taha, location: tan/tah, source tast. Thus far, the meaning of this series has not been sufficiently studied.

3. Data

The data for the study come from two sources. For present-day written Võro, a random sample of 200 references using a third person pronoun or a demonstrative was collected from random issues of the newspaper Uma Leht; the newspaper issues in the sample were published from 2012–2014.

The spoken data come from the Võro language mini-series Tagamõtsa (5 episodes: Tõnõ jõulupüha ‘Boxing Day’; Edimäne armastus ‘First Love’; Pritsimiis ‘The Fireman’, Pottsepp ‘The Potter’ and Salakütt ‘The Poacher’), produced by Estonian Public Broadcasting in 2011. The script writer for the series is Jan Rahman2 who writes in Võro; the cast is mainly comprised of non-professional actors who speak Võro as their mother tongue. All of the episodes are freely accessible on the Internet (see the archives section of the Estonian Public

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2 I am grateful to Jan Rahman for his help.
Broadcasting website). The original scripts were also sent to me by the script writer. When comparing the scripts and the actual text used in the series, it can be seen that the actors have not learnt their lines by heart word by word. I presume that minimal reference is such a spontaneous domain that the actors have used the pro-forms exactly the way they would use them in their everyday life. In total, there were 308 demonstratives and third person pronouns used in the Tagamõtsa mini-series.

Ideal data for the study of demonstratives would naturally comprise audiovisual recordings of spontaneous conversations. To my knowledge, there are no recordings of various situations to such an extent available in the Võro language at the moment. A typical dialect text is a narrative with its own specific patterns (for recent data consisting of Võro narratives see Tammekänd 2015). Since the aim is to study, first and foremost, the pro-forms as part of the linguistic and non-linguistic activities in present-day common language, the Tagamõtsa data sample is fit for the purpose. This article could be considered as a pilot study which could be expanded by gathering more data from real conversations in the future.

4. Demonstratives in Võro newspaper texts

In general, the Uma Leht Võro-language newspaper uses pronouns according to the model of written Estonian. Personal pronouns refer to persons, animals and other activated concrete referents; demonstratives refer to abstract and less activated referents. The difference lies in the vowels of personal pronouns (in Estonian tema/ta, in Võro timä/tä), slightly different plural forms of the third person pronoun (in Estonian nemad/nad, in Võro nimä/nä) and in the demonstrative: instead of the demonstrative see common in Estonian, the demonstrative tuu is used in Võro. timä/tä and tuu make up a large proportion of the total number of pro-forms encountered in the sample (see Table 2); timä/tä typically stands for an animate referent (example 2), while tuu typically refers to an inanimate, most commonly an abstract referent (example 3). However, the dividing line between the two is not that clear: there are a few solitary examples of short personal pronouns that refer to an inanimate referent (in the sample, only plural nä-pronouns, as in example 4) and some solitary uses of tuu referring to a person (example 5). tuu is clearly the definite determiner (example 6). Other demonstratives are considerably more rare and usually do not refer to a person.
(2) Mu ämm sai ildaigu 101, ja ku tää
1SG.GEN mother.in.law get.PST.3SG recently 101, and when 3SG
mei-le kirutas, …
1PL-ADE write.3SG

“My mother-in-law turned 101 recently, and when she writes to us, …”

(3) Ku tasakaalu ei olõ, tulõ arsti manu tulla
if balance.PRT NEG be must.3SG doctor.GEN to come.INF
ja mõtõlda, kuis tuud tagasi saia.
and think.INF how DEM.PRT back get.INF

“When you don’t have balance, you have to go to the doctor and think, how to get it back.”

(4) Mu-lle tundu-s, et võro-keelidse teksti omma mahlatsõmba
1SG-ADE seem-3SG that võro-language text.PL be.3PL jucier.COMP.PL
ja emotsionaalitsõmba – nääid om hää elävä-s lukõ.
and emotional.COMP.PL 3PL.PRT be good lively-TRANS read.INF

“It seems to me that Võro texts are juicier and more emotional – it is good to read them lively.”

(5) Mu iin saisõ järjekõrra-n üts vanõmb meesterahvas,
1SG.GEN front stand.PST.3SG line-INE one old.COMP man

“An elderly man was standing in front of me in the line; his ears went red as well.”

(6) Ja sis tuu-d ilmatu-t rehkendämis-t, medä
and then DEM-PRT big-PRT calculation-PRT, REL
statistika-s kutsuta-s!
statistics-TRANS call-PASS

“And then that never-ending calculation, that they call statistics!”
### Table 2. Demonstratives and 3rd person pronouns in the newspaper *Uma Leht*

| Demonstrative | Animate referent | Other referents | Deter- 
miner |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>timä</em> ‘3rd person long’</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>tä</em> ‘3rd person short’</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>tuu</em> ‘(distal) demonstrative’</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>seo</em> ‘(proximal) demonstrative’</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>taa</em> ‘demonstrative’</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>sinna</em>: <em>seal</em>: <em>sealt</em> ‘(distal) demonstrative adverb’</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>siin</em> ‘(proximal) demonstrative adverb’</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>tan</em> (demonstrative adverb)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since the use of *seo*, *taa* and *tan* does not follow the model of Estonian, let us look at their usage patterns. First of all, it is clear from Table 1 that *seo* and *taa* do not refer to a person in written Võro. It is hardly impossible, but no such examples could be found in the actual text: reference to person using a demonstrative is done exclusively with *tuu* (this is also common in Estonian, see Pajusalu 2006).

*seo* is first and foremost proximal and is not commonly used anaphorically or as a definite determiner (differently from *see* as its etymological equivalent in Estonian). This explains why *seo* is more often used in reports and/or contexts where the situation being described is not the immediate speech situation (example 7). *seo* is also used relatively frequently as the subject (of the verb *olema* ‘be’) in the predicative construction (example 8).

(7) … remondi-mehe mano. *Tuu tekk’ mitu proovi-sõitu,* … repair-man.GEN.cas DEM do.PST.3SG several test-drive.PRT

 võtt’ eski üte tsõõri alt, a ütel’, take.PST.3SG even one.GEN wheel.GEN from.down but say.PST.3SG

 et piduri piässi külh *seo-l* auto-l akuraat olõ-ma. that brake.PL must.COND prtcl DEM-GEN car-ADE good be-INF

“… to the car mechanic. He made several test drives, he even took one of the wheels off, but said that the brakes on *this car* should be working well.”
(8) Tuu-st kooli-st tettäs riigi-gümnaasium. Kas **seo** om
DEM-ELA school-ELA do.PASS state-gymnasium Q DEM be.3SG
mi kandi kõgõ kõvõmb kuul?
1PL-GEN place most strong.COMP school

“This school will be converted into a state gymnasium. Is this
the strongest school in my neighbourhood?”

Judging from the corpus sample, it can be said that **taa** is even less
frequent than **seo** in newspaper texts. It seems the context of use is
fairly limited: **taa** refers to a text (propositions, narratives, opinions,
etc.). In example (9) it occurs together with the adverb **tan**. However,
there are a few cases in the corpus sample when **taa** refers to or is used
with NP-s referring to other types of referents (e.g. human being in
example 10, see also example 11).

(9) no ja mis **taa** targutaminõ **tan** avitas-ki
PRTCL and what DEM lecturing DEM.ADV help.3SG-CLTC

“and what did that lecturing help there anyway”

(10) Tä-l ei saa tudõngi üte ja sama jutu /…/. A
3SG-ADE NEG get student.PL one.GEN and same story but
läbi **taa** tudõng inne ei saa, ku asi om selges tett.
through DEM student before NEG get when thing be clear done

“Students cannot with one and the same story /…/. But this student
cannot pass before the matter has been cleared up.”

tan is primarily an adverb that refers to an area close to the speaker;
the use of **tan** we saw in example (9) is rather exceptional. The demon-
strative adverb **tan** is used to talk about the vicinity of the speaker, and
depending on the context it may either be an inner room or an area.
In newspaper texts it is often used to refer to Võrumaa (as in example
11). At the same time, there are also contexts where **tan** refers to an
indicated more specific place, e.g. the shop shelf in example (12). There
seems to be no pragmatic difference between **tan** and the adverb **siin**.
No examples with **taha** and **tast** could be found in newspaper texts.
(11) No om tunnõ, et tahassi Võromaa-l inämb ümbre 
PRTCL be.3SG feeling that want.COND Võromaa-ADE more around 
kävvü ja kaemist om tan pall’o. 
go.INF and watching be.3SG DEM lot 
“I have a feeling that I want to travel around Võrumaa more and there 
is so much to see here.”

(12) Märkse taa as’a pääle poodi-n köögivilä-riioli man. 
notice.1SG DEM thing.GEN on shop-IN. vegetable-shelf.GEN at 
Tan olli kõrvuisi Hiina tsesnok /…/ ja Eesti uma. 
DEM be.PST next China garlic /…/ and Estonian POSS 
“I noticed this thing in the shop near the vegetable shelf. You can find 
there the Chinese garlic and the Estonian one next to each other.”

5. Pronouns in Tagamõtsa

The most frequent devices for minimal reference in the series 
Tagamõtsa are tuu and ta(a). Phonologically similar pronouns can also 
be found in Estonian: too in the written language is also used as a 
demonstrative, although relatively infrequently; ta(a) in its short form 
coincides with the short form of the 3rd person pronoun, which is the 
most frequent pronoun in Estonian overall.

The pronoun tuu is typically an anaphoric demonstrative pronoun. 
It normally has referents which have been previously mentioned but 
are not present in the ongoing situation. tuu may be used either as a 
noun phrase or a definite determiner. In example (13) tuu refers to a 
man who has been previously mentioned, whereas on the first occasion, 
tuu is used as a determiner of a proper noun, and on the two subse-
quent occasions as the subject of a predicative construction. In example 
(14) tuu refers to a suitcase which the speaker has just mentioned and 
which she has at home (i.e. not in the place where she is herself). The 
pro-form tuu, therefore, refers to something that cannot be indicated 
with a gesture and which is chosen from among the discourse referents 
(examples 13, 14).
(13) It has been said that there are poachers in the village. (Salakütt³)

Maive: Sa tiiat, **tuu** Vello, **tuu** om üts hirmus
2SG know.2SG DEM Vello DEM be.3SG one awful
inemise-tükk. Vat **tuu** om salakütt.
man-piece PRTCL DEM 3SG poacher

“You know, **this** Vello, he is an awful piece of a man. He is a poacher.”

(14) Maive and Marje are at Marje’s place and they are talking about Marje’s impending trip to Finland. (Edimäe armastus)

Maive: Mu-l om koto-n üts kohvri, ma või
1SG-ADE be.3SG home-INE one suitcase 1SG can
sulle **tuu-d** lainada.
2SG.ALL DEM-PART lend.INF

“I have a suitcase at home, I can lend it to you.”

In the case of abstract referents, **tuu** also refers to something that is not mentioned in the ongoing conversation or at least not in the focus of attention at the moment. In example (15) **tuu** refers to a misunderstanding which has occurred between the participants earlier; the referent in this case is the earlier situation which has not yet been mentioned in the ongoing conversation. In example (16) **tuu** is a cataphoric demonstrative which refers to the statement made in the following complement clause. Here it is the first mention of the **tuu** referent, followed by a more specific referring device – the proposition of the complement clause (**luulõtaja tõnõ nimi om nälg** ‘hunger is another name for a poet’). Similarly, **tuu**+NP in example 14 (**tuu arstitõend** ‘that medical note’) was also, in fact, the first mention of the referent, but the speaker believes that it should also be accessible to the partner. In the case of abstract referents, **tuu** refers to a relatively new topic in the conversation, which is either recalled from earlier (as in example 15) or introduced as completely new (as in example 16). Below, example (26) is another instance of **tuu**+NP used to introduce a new topic.

³ The examples from the series Tagamõtsa have the titles of the episode in the brackets. All names are given in the same form as they appear in the series.
(15) Marje remembers a difference of opinion that she and Maive have had. (Pottsepp)

Maive: Ah tuu, är tuu perast muretagu. Egä mi iks
PRTCL DEM NEG DEM about worry NEG 1PL PRTCL
tülü-n ei ole.
quarrel-INE NEG be

“Oh that, don’t worry about that. We haven’t fallen out.”

(16) (Edimäe armastus)

Agu: A sa tuu-d tiät, et luulôtaja tõnõ nimi
but 2SG DEM-PRT know.2SG that poet.GEN second name
om nälg?
be.3SG hunger

“But do you know this, that hunger is another name for a poet.”

Although a mention of a referent not present in the situation or of a new topic seems to be the main function of tuu, there were some isolated examples in the Tagamõtsa material where tuu referred to a specific referent present in the situation. The only truly clear instance of spatial reference can be found in example (17), where tuu refers to a shed door visible to the speaker, next to which the addressee happened to be standing. This solitary example indicates that the referent of tuu may be far away from the speaker and visible. At the same time, the door has been mentioned previously both in the present conversation as well as in the conversation Maive had with her husband Tarmo and to which Maive refers. Therefore, the other interpretation could be that the reason to use tuu in this case lies in reference to something previously mentioned.

(17) Maive looks out of the window and talks to Agu who is standing in the yard next to the shed door. She has just said that Agu should take a new pitchfork from the shed. (Salakütt)

Agu: Kuuri uss om luku-n.
shed.GEN door 3SG lock-INE

“The shed door is locked.”
Maive: Aa, oigõ jah. Ma käskse Tarmo-\textit{l} tuu enne kinni panda.

“...in the Tagamõtsa material is \textit{ta(a)}. The length of the \textit{ta(a)} vowel differs depending on the context. Since it is not always possible to unambiguously distinguish the length of the vowel, different versions of \textit{ta(a)} with different vowel length are treated as instances of the same demonstrative. In the examples, the length of the vowel is marked as it sounds when listening to the material. In example (18) it can be clearly heard that during the first reference the long vowel is used, while during the second reference, the short one is used. This gives reason to assume that \textit{taa} is used as a demonstrative and \textit{ta} as a personal pronoun. At the same time, there are contexts where the short form is used as a demonstrative (example 19). Additionally, there are case inflections where only the short form is used (e.g. the elative singular \textit{tast}). On the basis of the Tagamõtsa material, it can be said that the demonstrative \textit{ta(a)} has a tendency to be used with the long vowel when referring to a referent at an accessible level and with a short vowel with (anaphoric) referents at given level; however, since the dividing line is not always clear, such instances are treated as different versions of the same pronoun.

(18) Marje sits down next to her son and sees that he is looking at the picture of a girl on the computer screen (Edimäne armastus)

Maive: Kes \textit{taa} om?

“Who is she?”

Kaspar-Oskar: Gertrud.

“Gertrud.”

/./

Maive: Kas \textit{ta} miildü-s sulle?

“Do you like her?”
Kaspar-Oskar has asked her mother for a basket; his mother brings the basket, holds it in her hand and asks: (Edimäne armastus)

Maive: A mis sa ta korvi-ga tee-t?

but what 2SG DEM basket-COM do-2SG

“But what will you be doing with this basket?”

The pronoun ta(a) is used more frequently than tuu when referring to a concrete referent (both animate and inanimate; as, for instance, reference to the girl in example 18). It is often accompanied by a pointing gesture (example 20), but not always. These referents are usually visible, and sometimes in the hands of the speaker (example 21, see also ta korviga ‘this basket’ in example 19 above). The pronoun ta(a) is also used as an anaphoric pronoun referring to a person (examples 18 and 23); this is also the most frequent function of ta in Estonian.

Tarmo is standing next to the fire truck and talking to Maive; he is indicating the fire engine with his hand. (Pritsimiis)

Tarmo: Taa-d massina-t om ju külla-l vaia.

DEM-PRT machine-PRT be.3SG PRTCL village-ADE need

“But the village needs this machine.”

Maive is in the next room and is trying to plug in the battery of her electric car. She calls out to Marje. (Tõnõ jõulupühä)

Maive: Taa ei lähe stepsli-he.

DEM NEG go contact-ILL

“It won’t plug in.”

A young woman is sitting in her car and when she is asked to step out, she says (Tõnõ jõulupühä)

Noor naine: Ma ei lää ta-st vällä.

1SG NEG go DEM/3SG-ELAT out

“I won’t step out of it.”

Leino can’t speak, he is mute.”

Marje: Leino ei saa kõnõlda, ta om tumm.

Leino NEG can speak.INF DEM/3SG be.3SG mute

“Leino can’t speak, he is mute.”
At the same time, there are situations where the referent of \textit{ta(a)} is abstract and invisible. In example (24), a strange sound has just been heard to which the speaker refers using the pronoun \textit{taa}. Although the referent here is the sound, it can be said that on a larger scale reference is made to the whole situation which has just occurred and in which both the speaker and the addressee have participated. Similarly below, in example (32), \textit{ta} refers to the cleaning-up which the speaker has been observing for a long time. In example (25) the speaker uses the pronoun \textit{tast} to refer to a situation which has already happened and which the addressee has no notion of. It is possible that what drives the use of \textit{ta(a)} in this context is the fact that the situation referred to took place at the same place where the conversation is being held and in this respect the speaker belongs to the sphere of this moment.

(24) Maive is cleaning a room at Vello’s place and hears a sound. (Pritsimiis)
Maive: Mis \textit{taa} olli?
what DEM be.PST
“What was that?”

(25) Maive is telling how she went to visit Marje and at the same time the kids who had been left home alone were misbehaving. (Tõnõ jõulupühä)
Maive: Egä \textit{ta} vaene vana-inemine es tiää et
NEG DEM poor old-person NEG.PST know.INF that
\textit{ta-st} sääne tramburai tule
DEM/3SG-ELA such mess come
“The poor old person didn’t know that it will all result in such high jinks.”

There is a general tendency in the \textit{Tagamõtsa} material for \textit{tuu} to refer to referents not physically present, but identifiable, and \textit{ta(a)} to referents physically present or identifiable in the speaker’s sphere in the world of discourse. At the same time, the pronoun \textit{ta} is also an anaphoric pronoun regularly used to refer to a person at the level of ‘in focus’ (examples 18c and 23). The referent is usually not visible in such instances; this usage pattern is somewhat contradictory to the usage pattern of \textit{ta(a)} when referring to a referent that is present, but new in the situation. It is probable that the anaphoric use of \textit{ta} to refer to a person is, at least partly, due to the influence of Estonian.
There are contexts where it is possible to see a stark contrast between *taa* and *tuu*. In example (26), Maive and Marju are talking about a number of problematic situations; *taa* is used to refer to a situation which has been the topic of the conversation for a long time and which has become the main topic by the moment of reference; *tuu*, on the other hand, is used in the NP that refers to a new topic, which both of the participants are aware of, but which has been mentioned at that moment from a new perspective. The analysis is complicated by the fact that in the same extract Marju also utters *seon asjan* ‘this thing’, which refers to the same situation (i.e. that the husband has a lover).

(26) Marje is consoling Maive, who complains that her husband has a lover. Thereafter she remembers that it is for the best that Maive did not have the pig slaughtered as she had asked some time ago. (Pottsepp)

a. Marje: är võtku *taa-d asja* nii-muudu /*...*/
   NEG take.IMP DEM-PRT thing.PRT this-way
   “shouldn’t take this thing this way /*...*/”

b. Marje: sa ei saa *seo-n asja-n* midagi tetä
   2SG NEG can DEM-INE thing-INE nothing do
   “you can’t do anything about it (lit. this thing) /*...*/”

c. Marje: a *tuu* oll iks väega hää, et te tsika
   but DEM be.PST PRTCL very good that 2PL pig
   mu pärast maha es lüü
   1SG.GEN because perf NEG.PST hit
   “but that was for the best, that you didn’t slaughter the pig on my account”

The third demonstrative *seo* (*sjoo*) occurs in the *Tagamõtsa* material considerably less frequently than *ta(a)* and *tuu*. The referents of *seo* may be different entities: living beings (sheep in example 27), things (a connector in example 28, a sign in example 29a), as well as abstract situations (putting up the sign in example 29b). All of the concrete referents in the *Tagamõtsa* data sample referred to using *seo* are physically present in the situation; the majority of the abstract referents are also identifiable in the physical situation (e.g. putting up the sign in example 29 has just occurred and the sign itself is visible).
(27) Contra is explaining to Vello what to do with the sheep they have just put into Vello’s car (Pritsimiis)

Contra: kui **seo-l** talle suureks kasusi
when **DEM-ADE lamb.PL** big-TRANS grow.3PL

“When **its** lambs grow up

(28) Marje is holding a connector and passes it to Maive, who needs to charge her electric car (Edimäne jõulupühä)

Marje: **seo** piass kõlbama, proovi **seo-d**
**DEM must.COND** fit.INF **try** **DEM-PRT**

“This should be ok, try **this** one (gives the connector to Maive)”

Maive: **seo** lätt jah
**DEM go.PST** yes

“This will do, yes”

(29) Vello is putting up the sign “Private property” on the camp site, so as to prevent the camp from taking place. Contra notices that the people from the camp have left and asks Vello what has happened (Edimäne armastus)

a. Contra: Sa pandse-t **seo** sildi taha vai?
2SG put.PST-2SG **DEM GEN** sign.GEN **dem.ADV.ILL** or

“Did you put **this** sign up?”

b. Contra: Oi Vello, Vello, **seo** nüt hüll illos es ole
**EXCL** Vello Vello **DEM now PRTCL** nice **NEG.PST** be

“Oh Vello, Vello, **this** wasn’t a very nice thing to do”

In addition to the demonstratives **tuu, taa** and **seo**, the Estonian demonstrative **see** is also, to some extent, present in the *Tagamõtsa* data sample. It is characteristic that **see** only occurs in the predicative construction **see on NP** ‘this is NP’ (example 30), which is also one of the most frequent usage patterns of the Estonian demonstrative **see**. There were also some instances of the long form of the personal pronoun **timä**; in all of these instances, the referent was a human being (example 31).
(30) Agu is bringing a gift to Maive’s children; one of the children is holding it. (Tõnõ jõulupühä)

Agu: See om tei-le katõ pääle.

DEM be.3SG 2PL-ALL two.GEN on

“This is for the two of you.”

(31) Tarmo has just told Hedy what he thinks of Contra.

Hedy: sa är kõnõlgu timä-st nii-muudu

2SG NEG speak.IMP 3SG-ELAT this-way

“you shouldn’t say such things about him”

All three series of demonstrative adverbs are present in the Tagamõtsa data sample: siia:siin:siit, sinna:seal:sealt and taha:tan:(tast). There were no instances of the separative form of the ta-stem series. The siin series referred to the physical surroundings of the speaker (example 32), the seal series to a more distant place under discussion. At the same time, the adverbs from the seal series were used to refer to a visible, relatively distant object. The adverbs of the ta series were also used to refer to the immediate vicinity of the speaker (example 33). When comparing the siin and tan series, there seem to be no pragmatic differences: both refer to spatial referents (locations) in the speaker’s sphere.

(32) Maive is cleaning Vello’s house and is saying that Vello, who has been sitting in the same spot all this time, should do the cleaning himself. (Pritsimiis)

Vello: sa olõ-t siin müta-nud tunni ao, olõ-i

2SG be-2SG here bustle-PRTCPL hour time be-NEG
ta kerge sukki

3SG/DEM easy at.all

“you have been bustling around here for an hour, it’s not easy at all”

(33) (from the same scene as the previous example) Maive has just heard a funny sound and is saying to Vello

Maive: näütä ette mis su-l tan helü tege

show before what 2SG-ADE DEM.ADV sound do

“show me what made that sound here”
From the above discussion, it can be seen that although there are three demonstrative pronouns as well as adverbs in the Tagamõtsa dataset (Table 3), there are only two distinctions using deictic spheres. *taa*, *seo*, *siin* and *tan* are all used to refer to referents within the speaker’s sphere; *tuu* and *seal* generally refer to referents that are outside the speaker’s sphere. It seems that the earlier distinction of three spheres, which was still evident in the material recorded in Vastselliina in 1995 (see example 1), is no longer productive in the common Võro language. There were no examples in the Tagamõtsa material which would indicate the existence of an addressee-central category. Still, having three demonstratives is a resource that speakers can use to construe a referent and there are situations where there is a division of labour between the three. In example (26) above, one can see the division of labour between *seo* and *taa* on the one hand and *tuu* on the other hand; *seo* and *taa* seem to have been used in this example in identical contexts.

### Table 3. Demonstratives in Tagamõtsa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Human being or animal</th>
<th>Other referents</th>
<th>Determiner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>timä</em></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>tä</em></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>tuu</em></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>seo</em></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ta(a)</em></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>see</em></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>sinna:seal:sealt</em></td>
<td>–</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>siia:siit:siist</em></td>
<td>–</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>taha/tanne:tan/tah:tast</em></td>
<td>–</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. **Comparison of the two data samples**

The comparison of the two data samples – the newspaper and the TV series – is given in Table 4. For each referent type, the percentage of references has been given for both data samples. Figures highlighted in grey indicate that the pronoun in question accounts for over 25 per cent of all the instances of the corresponding referent type in a particular
data sample (newspaper or mini-series). The following major differences may be identified:

1. Newspaper texts use the third person pronoun tä and sometimes its long version timä to refer to a person; in the mini-series, this function is performed primarily by the pronoun ta(a).
2. The pronoun tuu is consistently used in newspaper texts to refer to other referents (i.e. a referent other than a person); in the mini-series, tuu and taa figure more or less equally.
3. By far the most common definite determiner in both data samples is tuu; in the mini-series, the pronoun taa is also used relatively frequently.
4. Among the demonstrative adverbs (see Table 5), the taa series was considerably more often used in the mini-series. The strong bias towards using the sin and tan series of adverbs in Tagamõtsa is definitely caused by the physical situation (as opposed to the newspaper narratives) of language use in the TV show. The interesting thing, however, is that all three series are found in the newspaper texts.

Table 4. Comparison of pro-forms in Uma Leht and Tagamõtsa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human or animal</th>
<th>Other referent</th>
<th>Determiner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Uma Leht</strong></td>
<td><strong>Tagamõtsa</strong></td>
<td><strong>Uma Leht</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>timä</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>5% (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tä</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tuu</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seo</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2% (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ta(a)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>see</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Demonstrative adverbs in Uma Leht (200 references in total) and Tagamõtsa (308 references in total)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Uma Leht</th>
<th>Tagamõtsa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sïna:sel:sealt</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sïia:sïn:sii:sïst</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taha/tanne:tan/tah:tast</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Conclusions

In conclusion, the former addressee-centered system has disappeared from the Võro common language, probably under the influence of the less complex system of Estonian demonstratives. At the same time, the language has retained all of the pronouns, although their frequency of use differs. The personal pronoun tõ and the demonstrative tuu are predominantly used in written Võro. However, the demonstrative taa is used in spoken Võro – this pro-form is a blend of the demonstrative, the Estonian third person pronoun ta and the Võro third person pronoun tä. Two demonstratives – taa and tuu – are used in spoken Võro, the main difference between the two probably being accessibility: tuu is not physically present in anyone’s sphere at the moment of speaking, while taa is present for both the speaker as well as the addressee. The higher frequency of taa in spoken language is supported by the corresponding higher frequency of taa-series adverbs in spoken language. The pro-form seo seems to be relatively rare in both data samples. The difference between seo and taa is not clear-cut, but it may be assumed that seo is ostensive and stands for a new referent; the referent of taa, however, is identifiable without gesturing.

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Abbreviations

In the glossings appear the following abbreviations not included in Leipzig glossing rules: ADE – adessive, ELA – elative, ILL – illative, INE – inessive, PRT – partitive, TRNS – translative.
References


Kokkuvõte. Renate Pajusalu: Võro keele demonstratiivid: muutumas või kadumas? Artikkel käsitleb võro keele demonstratiivide süsteemis toimuvaid muutusi. Võro keele kolmanda isiku pronoomen on $\text{timä}/tä$, lisaks kasutatakse kolme demonstratiivpronoomenit ($\text{sjoo} \sim \text{seo}$, $\text{taa}$ ja $\text{tuu}$) ja kolme komplekti demonstratiivadverbe ($\text{siin}:\text{siia}:\text{sii}; \text{taha}:\text{tan}:\text{tast}; \text{sinna}:\text{seal}:\text{sealt}$). Uurimuse materjal pärineb ajalehest Uma Leht (2012–2014) ja 2011. aastal Eesti Rahvusringhäälingus toodetud lühisarjast "Tagamõtsa". Andmed näitavad, et varasem adressaadikeskne lõunaeesti demonstratiivide süsteem on kadunud. Samal ajal on keeles säilinud kõik pronoomenid, kuigi nende sagedus ja kasutuskontekst kirjalikus ja suulises keeles on erinevad.

Märksõnad: demonstratiivid, personaalpronoomenid, Võro keel