The article discusses selected issues concerning the Uralic terminology, focusing on Polish terms and names. We understand Uralic studies as both a study programme and a scholarly line of research. In Section 2 of the paper, we delimit a general point of reference for the Uralic terminology, whereas Section 3 provides an overview of specific terminological problems related to the labelling of Uralic languages and ethnolinguistic titles, with special emphasis on the Finno-Ugric group. We conclude that the Polish Uralic terminology lacks a number of relevant Uralic names/labels/terms and champions its own idiosyncratic terminological solutions. Further standardisation and internationalisation of the Uralic terms in Polish are recommended.

Keywords: Uralic/Finno-Ugric languages, linguistic terminology, theoretical (descriptive) linguistics vs. linguistic nomenclature, research vs. teaching

Uralic linguistic terminology: selected problems and examples

Summary

The article discusses selected issues concerning the Uralic terminology, focusing on Polish terms and names. We understand Uralic studies as both a study programme and a scholarly line of research. In Section 2 of the paper, we delimit a general point of reference for the Uralic terminology, whereas Section 3 provides an overview of specific terminological problems related to the labelling of Uralic languages and ethnolinguistic titles, with special emphasis on the Finno-Ugric group. We conclude that the Polish Uralic terminology lacks a number of relevant Uralic names/labels/terms and champions its own idiosyncratic terminological solutions. Further standardisation and internationalisation of the Uralic terms in Polish are recommended.

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Wybrane problemy i przykłady terminologii uralistycznej

Streszczenie

Analizie zostają poddane wybrane problemy terminologiczne w kontekście uralistyki rozumianej zarówno jako kierunek studiów uniwersyteckich, jak i specjalizacja badawcza ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem terminologii polskiej. Po wstępnych poszukiwaniach mniej lub bardziej ogólnych terminów na odniesienia do przedmiotu badań i studiów uralistycznych (część 2) następuje bardziej szczegółowy przegląd nazw języków uralskich, przede wszystkim podgrupy uryńskiej (część 3). W obu przypadkach stwierdza się albo brak nazw szeregu języków, pojęć i zjawisk, albo znikomą korelację między terminami

1 The authors declare that their respective contribution to the present publication is equal, which is K. Wojan – 50% and P. Łozowski – 50%.
1. Introduction

The most immediate objective of this contribution is to present selected terminological problems Polish scholars are likely to encounter while attempting to make references to Uralic and/or Finno-Ugric languages\(^2\). Although Polish-centred, the article is meant to illustrate more general issues as well, which include the following: (i) Polish terms show varying degrees of the assimilation of the Uralic research worldwide, (ii) they reflect some basic controversies of/in that research. In other words, we hope (iii) to justify the Uralic terminological deficiencies and shortcomings in Polish with the parallel imperfections in other languages, or (iv) to attribute these deficits to the lack of references to the languages that serve to be an international „communication platform” for the Uralic research, which, in the first place, includes English and Russian.

In terms of possible applications, we find it necessary to explore the above (i–iv) in order to foster, if not facilitate, the Finno-Ugric philological education at the university level. It is, then, our conviction that once the Uralic terminology, with all its peculiarities and intricacies, has found its way into the Polish linguistic research and, thus, has become internationalised enough to be subjected to unequivocal translation practice, the Polish students of Finno-Ugric languages and literatures will be able to take the chance to gain advantage from this. Seen in this (teaching) context, the present contribution is, in fact, an invitation to make attempts at normalizing the Uralic terminology for the benefit of both linguistic research and language education.

Let us now proceed to our preliminary example and delimit the subject and the scope of this examination.

2. Uralic terminology: in search of a general reference point

What makes the task of delimiting the point of reference problematic is, in the first place, the fact that the relevant subject-matter can be given both a more specific

\(^2\) We use *Uralic* here as the all-embracing term for our considerations and reflections. In this, we follow Wojan’s (2017: 382–390) index of 600 entries (be it language-, literature-, or culture-oriented) which are meant to constitute a possible basis for any attempt at terminological codification. As will become clear further on in our argumentation, we also use more specific terms, *Finno-Ugric* being one of them.
and a broader perspective, and that both can be assigned to at least two divergent orientations.

In the broader perspective, the terminological clash involves the choice of either the Altaic or the Uralic slant, thus pointing to the two quite radically different topographical reference points, i.e. the Altaic and the Uralic Mountains, respectively. Historically, the original scope of research interest, understood broadly as Altaic studies (cf. *altaistyka* in Polish), was coined by Philip Johan von Strahlenberg (1676–1747), who is said to have assumed that Altaic matters were related to the Asiatic ethnogenesis of Ugric peoples and, for this reason, Altaic languages had to be seen in relation to the Uralic ones (Stachowski 2008: 168). Currently in Polish, for example, although the specific reference terms are believed to have stemmed originally from *altaistyka*, this very term can hardly be found in the context of Uralic languages.

Instead, the available Polish terms for the corresponding field of study reflect mainly the more specific perspective and can be as different as *ugrofinistyka* / *ugrofennistyka* / *fennougrystyka* / *finougrystyka* / *uralistyka*, the first four playing with the components *Ugro* and *Finno/Fenno*, and the latter standing for ‘lit. Uralic studies’. The same terms can be identified in Russian: *финно-угроведение*, *фенноугристика*, *финоугроведение*, *финоугроведение*, *угрофилистика*, and *уралистика*, with the latter meaning ‘lit. Uralic studies’ and the others being combinations of *Ugro* and *Finno/Fenno*.

If we allow for some of the Finno-Ugric terms now, we find only three of them in Finnish: *fennougriistikka* ‘Fenno-Ugric studies’, *suomalais-uigrilainen filologia* ‘appr. Finno-Ugric studies’, and *uralistikka* ‘Uralic studies’ (cf. Saarikivi 2001; Palola 2015). Yet, when it comes to their rendering into English, the University of Helsinki prefers the term *Finno-Ugrian* (in reference to, for example, language studies)³, while the University of Turku offers a BA programme in *Finno-Ugric* languages, but runs The *Finno-Ugrian* Society⁴. To give yet another uneasy English translation, the University of Latvia invites prospect candidates to study *Finno-Ugric* philology/

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³ Interestingly enough, the corresponding note explains that “the term *Finno-Ugrian* is used in a wider sense, to describe both the languages previously considered Finno-Ugrian as well as the Samoyedic languages. Altogether these encompass the Baltic Finnic languages, Sami languages, Mordvinic languages, Mari, Ugric languages, as well as Samoyedic languages and similar” (quoted after https://www.helsinki.fi/en/faculty-of-arts/research/disciplines/finnish-finno-ugrian-and-scandinavian-studies/finno-ugrian-language-studies). For why this may appear controversial, see below.

⁴ To add to the confusion, the *Finno-Ugric* label embraces *Uralic* languages (and not the other way round), while The *Finno-Ugrian* Society boasts the following: “one of the oldest and largest learned societies in Finland. Ever since its founding, the society has striven to promote the research of *Uralic* and *Altaic* languages, the ethnography of their speakers as well as the latter’s historical and prehistorical past” (emphasis added; quoted after https://www.sgr.fi/en/). The “latter” means Altaic languages, so despite its name, The Society evidently fosters research into the (pre)history of languages such as Turkish and Mongolian, rather than Finnish, Estonian, or Hungarian.
languages/communities, making a claim that Finnish, Estonian, and Livian are all “Finnish [sic!] languages”.

As far as the English names are concerned, if Carpelan et al.’ (2007) collection can be of any indication, the Uralic references are definitely most numerous as they amount to more than 600 occurrences in comparison to the 220 examples of the second-most numerous Finno-Ugric compounds, the latter being found in, for example, Finno-Ugric studies, Finno-Ugric branch, Finno-Ugric words, Finno-Ugric languages (circa 20 examples) etc. This is quite understandable, providing Uralic is meant to serve as an umbrella term for the groupings of peoples, languages and cultures which are contrasted with those named Indo-European (Indo-Iranian), Aryan, or Caucasian (Kartvelian). If so, it would only be natural to expect, as Carpelan and Parpola (2007: 77) do, that “the protolanguage [of the Uralic family] first broke up into the Finno-Ugric and Samoyedic branches”, which means that Finno-Ugric came about as a product of the disintegration of Proto-Uralic (Ibid.: 78). However, related through hyponymy, Uralic and Finno-Ugric would involve different categories, more general and more specific ones, respectively. It does, then, make sense to speak of, as K. Häkkinen (2007: 174) does, about “record[ing] noticeably more words for the Finno-Ugric level than for Uralic” (emphasis added).

Yet, there is much hesitation as to whether or not this can be the case, which is why one comes across a notation which suggests that the terms Uralic and Finno-Ugric can, in fact, be used interchangeably, cf.: “Uralic or Finno-Ugric etymologies” (K. Häkkinen 2007: 177), “Uralic/Finno-Ugric vocabulary” (Ibid.: 179), “Uralic or Finno-Ugric ethnohistory” (Carpelan et al. 2007: 8), “the emergence of the groups of people historically identified as speakers of Uralic/Finno-Ugric languages” (Ibid.: 37), “Proto-Finno-Ugric (Proto-Uralic)” versus “Proto-Uralic/Proto-Finno-Ugric” (Ibid.: 126), “Uralic/Finno-Ugric area”, or “Uralic/Finno-Ugric-speaking groups” (Sammallahtti 2007: 412).

In this respect, the title of Collinder’s (1955/1977) dictionary is all revealing: Fenno-Ugric Vocabulary: An Etymological Dictionary of the Uralic Languages. Taken at face value, there should be no doubts that Fenno-Ugric is just another name for Uralic, and Collinder himself cannot make it clearer in the very first sentence of his “Introduction”: “This book may equally well have been named Uralic Vocabulary” (Ibid.: ix). Yet, what immediately follows can only fuel terminological confusion:

Few people know what Uralic means. Even professional linguists often use the expression Fenno-Ugric when Uralic would be the correct form. Thus, for instance, the question of a hypothetic affinity between Uralic and Indo-European may be worth discussing, but it does not make good sense to ask whether Indo-European and Fenno-Ugric are related: they are related, provided that In-

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5 For more, see https://www.latvijaskvalifikcijas.lv/qualification/humanitaro-zinatnu-bakalaura-grads-somurgu-studijas-lu/.

6 For that the disintegration of Uralic escapes any simple dichotomy which the Finno-Ugric division may suggest and it should necessarily involve the Samoyed subfamily (see Salminen 1993 and Laakso 2001: 179).
do-European is akin to Uralic, but not otherwise. The Uralic family comprises (...) the Fenno-Ugric languages (...) and Samoyed (...). (Collinder 1955: ix)

By way of a comment, for Uralic to be a superordinate term in relation to Fenno-Ugric, the title of the book cannot possibly be Fenno-Ugric as much as Uralic. And, for the (superordinate) Uralic level to constitute a possible source of Indo-European correspondences, Collinder should not provide an extensive list of Indo-European loanwords on the (subordinate) level “of the Fenno-Ugric languages” (Collinder 1955: 128) if he considers the term Uralic to be generic and superordinate. Evidently, he himself appears to be confused about which of the two, Uralic or Fenno-Ugric, should be postulated to be the all-embracing term and, thus, constitute a reference point for making comparisons with other language families, such as the Indo-European one.

The third most frequent category term used in Carpelan et al. (2007) includes Fenno- compounds. The 30 occurrences are overwhelmingly geographical references, as in Fennoscandia and Fennoscandian reindeer, with just a handful of references to Collinder’s (1955/1977) work on Fenno-Ugric vocabulary.

No matter whether the preferable English term is Finno- or Fenno-based, it is unlikely to be an Ugro-based compound, which is what it precisely is in Polish. As remarked above, finougrystyka ‘Finno/Fenno-Ugric/Ugrian studies’ is technically possible and appears to be interchangeable with ugrofennistyka ‘Ugro-Finnish studies’, but the standard term for linguistic references is języki ugrofińskie ‘lit. Ugro-Finnish languages’ (cf. Wojan 2017; eSJP), and not the other way around. This does not merely mark an English-Polish terminological clash, but may also reflect a political issue in the sense that for speakers of Finnish it certainly is not irrelevant whether the language they speak is ultimately Finno-Ugric or Ugro-Finnish, as much as the speakers of Hungarian are certainly particular about the same.

3. Uralic terminology: specific considerations

If we were now to limit the more specific perspective further on within the bounds of Finnic alone, we would need to match the Polish terms etnolekty zachodniofińskie ‘West-Finnic ethnolects’ and etnolekty bałtyckofinnickie ‘Balto-Finnic ethnolects’ with the languages referred to in English as Finnic, Fennic, Baltic Finnic, Balto-Finnic or Balto-Fennic. These are rendered as fennistyka / finnistyka / finistyka / finlandystyka in the Polish university context and as suomalainen filologia / fennistinen filologia / fennistiikka in the Finnish context. Of the two more specific fields of study and research, karelistyka ‘Karelian studies’ and estonistyka ‘Estonian studies’,

While it goes beyond the scope of this examination to arrive at the ultimate source of why the Polish term favours the Ugro- element, whereas in English it definitely is the Finno-/Fenno- one, some indication may be found in the German and Russian terminological traditions (see, for example, Gertsenberg 1975; Jacobsohn 1922; Köppen 1890).
the former practically does not exist as a research field and the latter features mainly in contrastive linguistics analyses (e.g., Bielecki 2005; Buncler 2019).

In reality, the Uralic family may be given as many specific profiles as there are languages/ethnolects distinguished, as in, to mention some of the Polish names, hungarologia / hungarystyka ‘Hungarian studies’, udmurtologia / udmurtystyka ‘Udmurt studies’, permistyka / permologia ‘Permic studies’, saamistyka / loparystyka / la- ponistyka ‘Saami/Lappish studies’ (Fin. saamentutkimus). As to the term Saami, it certainly needs a wider publicity and recognition in the Polish research circles, but this is mainly for the internationalisation purposes rather than for political reasons. In the English-language literature on the subject, the corresponding terms, Lapp and Lappish, may well be believed to be non-native equivalents for the self-designating Saami (cf. Carpelan and Parpola 2007: 74; Bakró-Nagy 2012: 1002), but they happen to be used at least as frequently as the native name, without evoking any pejorative connotations. Note how frequent Lappish actually is in Schrijver (2007: 421; emphasis added):

[..] various scenarios to account for the history of Proto-Lappish *kuti and Proto-Germanic *kuti-present themselves. Either the word was borrowed by Germanic from the language of geminates, and Lappish borrowed the word from Germanic; or Proto-Lappish borrowed the word from the language of geminates, and Germanic borrowed it from Proto-Lappish; or, finally, Germanic and Lappish borrowed the word from the language of geminates independently.

Neither does Lapp tend to be avoided in academic discourse:

A. Thoma […] emphasized the fact that the […] Lapps are an exception to the general rule […]. The skeletal characteristics of the Janisławice man are in full accord with data of modern Lapp bone material. According to A. Thoma, this Tardenoisian population may be identified, at least partially, with the Proto-Lapps. In the territory of Poland, the areas of Tardenoisian and Swiderian cultures overlap, and consequently the people of the Swiderian culture may have given the Lapps their [Uralic] language. (Makkay 2007: 327)

Uralic studies can indeed be very extensive. Some of its subbranches are autonomous already, such as Samoyedic studies, known in Polish as samodystyka (Sorokina 2005) / samojejedologia / samojejedystyka (Janhunen 1996), and Yukagiric studies (Pol. jukagirystyka; cf. Knüppel 2013: 173). The latter seems to be a bone of contention because only few scholars would consider Yukagir to be Uralic in origin and affiliation. Instead, Yukagir (in both of its varieties) is claimed to be either a Paleo-Asiatic isolate or a member of the hypothetical Uralic-Yukagir family (Bouda 1941; Angere 1956; Collinder 1957; Ruhlen 1987; J. Häkkinen 2012a,b; Piispanen 2013; Aikio 2014).

Another term which is virtually lacking in Polish is the Russian квенистика (Pol. appr. kwenystyka), embracing the language and culture of the Kven people. They themselves call their language kainun, which appears as kvenin in Finnish and as kvensk in Norwegian. There are Kven scholars in Poland (e.g., Petryk 2009; 2012; 2014), and they tend to call the corresponding language kweński. However desirable,
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the terms kwenistyka ‘Kven studies’ and the related kweński ‘Kven language’ may be found confusing on the grounds of Polish, as it can be mistaken for Tolkien’s Quenya language (Pol. język quenejski), an artificial (fictional) language created for the purposes of The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings, where it is also known as High-Elf.

Phonologically based on Finnish, Quenya should never be confused with Kven, which is often the case in the Russian-language literature (cf. DuBois, Mellor 2002).8

The terminological problems that we have so far identified in reference to the Uralic group of languages have to do with delimiting the very subject, local and/or global, of Uralic language education and linguistic research. In other words, depending on what actually needs to be subjected to linguistic description or university instruction, one arrives at different or similar reference terms. The names that particular languages are given, if at all, depend directly not only on real research/teaching interests and questions, but also reflect the actual geopolitcal circumstances, identity problems, or particular research traditions/paradigms. As to the latter, for example, there seem to be three distinctive schools of Uralic terminology, distributed geographically as the Western, Eastern, and Northern (Scandinavian) school.

One good example of this research particularism involves Samoyedic languages. The controversy is whether or not they constitute a separate language family. In Russian Uralic linguistics, the prevailing term is now самодийские языки ‘Samoyedic languages’ (Helimsky 1990; Sorokina 2005: 8–12; Korâkov 2018), whereas elsewhere the names merely include the Samoyed- element as a dependent part of the whole term, Samoyed having to do with the Russian самоед ‘lit. the one that eats oneself; a cannibal’. The Russian tradition is reflected in other languages, cf.: samojeedi keel in Estonian (Bibliographia Uralica 1976), samoedikielet in Finnish (cf. Tieteen termipankki), Samoyedic / Samoyed languages in English (e.g., Encyclopedia Britannica9), langue samoyède in French, lengua samoyeda in Spanish (UNESCO Thesaurus)10. The term that prevails in all these languages is, in fact, common-sense and pre-scientific, and it reflects the state of research which takes us back to Daniel-Gottlieb Messerschmidt’s and other travellers’ ethnographic and linguistic fascinations and penetrations. In Polish, the term samodyjskie języki and its synonym samoiedzkie języki are attested in Encyklopedia PWN online.

Two standard names are also given to Mari. One of them resembles the English Mari (e.g., język maryjski in Polish, марийский язык in Russian, mari in Finnish), while the other is a continuation of the term that was coined in Russian still before

8 It is to one of our Reviewers that we owe an observation that any attempt to name Kven as kwenijski in Polish, i.e. following the Russian pattern, rather than kweński, is not likely to be successful. Indeed, a Google search of the former term does not yield any results, whereas there are several hundred tokens of the latter.

9 Cf. Encyclopedia Britannica: “Samoyedic languages, group of languages spoken in Siberia and the Russian Arctic that, together with the Finno-Ugric languages, constitute the family of Uralic languages (q.v.)” – online: https://www.britannica.com/topic/Samoyedic-languages (20.11.2019).


No doubt that the multiplicity of Uralic language/ethnolect names appears problematic for the Polish-language Uralic terminology. First of all, many terms are simply lacking (cf. Wojan 2017), and, second, many of those that exist have not been as yet subjected to any deliberate standardisation\(^\text{11}\). It is not only that one term may have several variants, but that some of these variants violate the basic spelling conventions of Polish. Consider the following: wotski (Majewicz 1989), wodzki (Bednarczuk 1999), wocki (Kudzinowski 1983), wotycki (Wikipedia; evident influence of the English Votic); saamski vs. samski, skolt vs. koltta/kolt, samski (Majewicz 1989) vs. saamski (Wojan 2016) vs. lapoński (Bielecki 2015); csángó (Kozakiewicz 2012) vs. czango (Wawrzyńczyk and Wierzchoń 2016b); (dialect) seklerski/Szeklerów (Pietruszewski 2008) vs. seklerski/Seklerów (Krasowska 2010; Wojan 2016; 21; Wikipedia\(^\text{12}\)) vs. sekelski/Sekelów (Wikipedia\(^\text{13}\)) etc.

Finnish exemplifies yet another problem for the Polish terminology, which has to do with its actual regional distribution. However crucial linguistically and relevant geographically, the term suomi hardly appears in Polish lexicographic reference works. The first to recognize suomi is the online edition of Słownik języka polskiego SJP (henceforth: eSJP): suomi ‘a Finno-Ugric [Pol. “ugro-fiński”] language; an official language of Finland’\(^\text{14}\). Were it not for the eSJP entry, suomi would feature marginally (in parentheses) in Polański’s Encyklopedia językoznawstwa ogólnego as a near-synonym for fiński język ‘the Finnish language’ (Polański 1999: 154). The lack of suomi makes it impossible to express in Polish the difference that is taken for granted elsewhere: suomi is the language used by the Finns in Finland, whereas język fiński ‘Finnish’ is one of the Finno-Ugric (or, to use the Polish terminology, Ugro-Finnic) languages, such as Estonian or Karelian. For technical reasons, the Finns themselves call their ethnolect suomensuomi ‘lit. Finnish in Finland’ and contrast it with ruotsinsuomi ‘lit. Swedish Finnish’ (cf. Wojan 2016).

The list of the missing Finnish ethnolect/dialect names can, indeed, be quite long in Polish: meänkieli ‘a Swedish variety of Finnish; Tornedalian Finnish’, Savonian ‘a Finish dialect of the province Savonia’, stadi ‘Helsinki slang’, Finglish ‘an Amer-

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\(^{11}\) One notable exception is Polański’s (1999) Encyklopedia, where several of the minor Uralic ethnolects are recognized (e.g., karelski, oloniecki, liđyjski, ingryjski), each specified in a separate entry. Majewicz’ (1989) attempts at classifying languages of the world did mark a valuable contribution, but both terminological strategies/conventions and the Uralic research findings have changed significantly since this publication appeared in print.


\(^{13}\) Ibid.

\(^{14}\) See the term suomi [in:] Słownik języka polskiego SJP, http://sjp.pl/suomi (10.03.2019).
ican variety of Finnish’, *penedo* ‘a Finnish- and Portuguese-based variety spoken by the Finns in Brazil’, let alone *vermlandzki, vòro/vòroski, vòrosko-setuski/setuski/seto/setu*, or the dialects of the Finnish Roma/Romani people, such as *kaalo* and *fennoromski* (more on these varieties understood as “blends” (Pol. *miksty*), see Wojan 2016: 90–94).


As can be seen, none of the Polish labels in the Permic group can boast universal agreement with the corresponding terms in other languages. Moreover, what may be recognised as a dialect in Polish (*Komi-Yazwa*) appears in Russian as a degrading and low-status *наречие* (‘appr. patois, local parlance’; cf. Lytkin 1961), while the label Polish uses for *Komi-Zyrian* is, in fact, the judgemental/patronising term *коми właściwy* (‘lit. *Komi proper*’).

Finno-Ugric studies cannot possibly be complete without mentioning those research areas that have to do with what we suggest could be called *Uralic interlinguistics* (Pol. *interlingwistyka uralistyczna*) and embrace Uralic-based constructed (artificial, invented, auxiliary) languages. Wojan (2016: 130–147) enumerates several constructs of this kind: *Budinos, Nashik, Quenya, Samboka, Vozgian* (*vuozgašchai*; Pol. *wozgijski*), and Proto-Uralic-based *Kënta-käxli*. Apart from invented languages, the Finno-Ugric research interests also include *selkology* (Pol. *selkologia*), which has been developing over the last 30 years. Selkology aims at working out the theoretical foundations and practical reconstructions of *selkokieli* (lit. ‘clear/plain language’), which is understood as a simplified, or auxiliary, form of present-day Finnish (for more on selkokieli, see Wojan 2016).
4. Final remarks

In this inquiry, we have limited our attention to two related labelling problems, which concern the naming of the general and specific areas of the Uralic-related field of study and research (Section 2), and the naming of specific Uralic/Finno-Ugric languages/ethnolects (Section 3). The conclusion seems to be that in both cases the Polish Uralic terminology either lacks a number of relevant names/labels/terms or that it cherishes its own idiosyncratic preferences. Further insights into the Uralic terminology in Polish should include theoretical linguistics issues, such as, for instance, the names of Uralic-specific linguistic processes, exemplified with the morphophonological consonant gradation (Fin. astevaihtelu), for which Polish scholars can resort only to Kudzinowski’s (1983) unfortunate term wymiana stóp ‘lit. feet exchange’. More detailed terminological and theoretical linguistic examinations can be hoped for once the process of building a linguistically annotated database of the Uralic languages, including endangered tongues, has been completed. It is a natural prerequisite, if not the sine qua non, of such a database that it needs to follow strict principles of language documentation, use international standards of labelling and referencing, and, thus, correlate theory and terminology (cf. Simon and Mus 2017).

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