

Animate and inanimate in the Uralic languages

This article is the side product of a longer paper studying objective affixes in the Uralic languages (Honti 2022). The concepts of the living versus the inanimate, and the opposition of these play a role in the syntax of Uralic languages, which was probably the case in the protolanguage as well. In Finnish the following forms occur: *kyl mi Kallet tunnen* 'I do know Kalle', *Petrit* 'Petri', *äitit* 'Mum'. This phenomenon lets me conclude that in the protolanguage, the nominative plural form could express both the subject and the object, as in the case of nouns referring to living creatures the **-t* plural suffix could be followed by the **-t* object's suffix, and the plural accusative form could be something like: „Rx-Nx-Cx: noun + plural suffix **-t* + object's suffix **-t*”, then the pleonastic-looking *t-t* sequence was simplified to *t*, thus making the plural nominative and the then syncretic accusative forms homonymous, which became general over time in the declination system, while in the case of inanimate nouns, the definite object was possibly suffixed with **-t-3m*.

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