

PREFACE

The 34th annual VAKKI Symposium for the University of Vaasa Research Group for Translation, LSP and Multilingualism was held February 13-14, 2014 in Vaasa, Finland, under the theme Democracy. In accordance with our tradition, the papers were presented in the working languages of the symposium: Finnish, Swedish, English and German. Invited keynote speakers were Professor Mikko Lehtonen (University of Tampere) and Dr. Tommi Lehtonen (University of Vaasa). Professor Kersti Juva was awarded the Humanist of the Year prize 2014, and the statement of motivation is included in this present publication.

Professor Mikko Lehtonen dealt with democracy, language and imagination. According to him, in contemporary liberal democracies equality is understood as equality of rights or opportunities, not equality of capacities. The current political task and challenge is therefore to answer the question how individuals can be at the same time both different and equal.

In his plenary lecture, Dr. Tommi Lehtonen discussed intensely the concept of democracy in today's multicultural societies. He started with a definition of the many elements that shape our individual and social 'point of view', emphasizing the need for a general comprehension of our perspectival way of interpreting reality and therefore of the acceptance of multiperspectivity in society as the basis for political decision making. Using a philosophical and social-ethical point of view in his paper he then discussed the role and tasks of citizens in a democracy that is an egalitarian and cooperative system of government.

This year's theme attracted participants from different fields of language-related research to interpret democracy from a variety of perspectives such as the philosophical, sociological, cultural, pedagogical, professional and the historical.

The articles in this publication have gone through a double blind review. The authors have given their permission for e-publishing, and thus the articles are also available on the website: <http://www.vakki.net/publications/>.