PREFACE

The University of Vaasa Research Group for Translation, LSP and Multilingualism held the 36th annual VAKKI Symposium on February 11–12, 2016 in Vaasa, Finland. The theme of the Symposium was Text and textuality. According to the VAKKI tradition, papers were presented in Finnish, Swedish, English and German. The invited plenary speakers were Professor Susanne Göpferich (Justus-Liebig University Gießen), Docent Leena Kuure (University of Oulu) and Professor Else Mundal (University of Bergen). The Humanist of the Year prize 2016 was awarded to Kaarina Hazard, a versatile actor in the Finnish cultural field. The motivation is included in the present publication.

In her plenary lecture, Professor Susanne Göpferich dealt with the challenges that are evident when academic text is produced and processed in a foreign language. Göpferich’s starting point was the concept of “academic multiliteracy”, which emphasizes the ability to operate in a multilingual academic world in a foreign language – for example in English functioning as a lingua franca – as well as in one’s mother tongue. In her lecture, Göpferich drew attention to the significance of translation in producing and understanding foreign-language academic text. According to her, recent studies emphasize that a process in which ideas and structures are first formulated in the mother tongue and then translated into the foreign language can lead to a better end result.

Docent Leena Kuure’s plenary lecture discussed the effect of the new, multimodal practices, introduced by the technology-rich and ever-digitalizing world, on textuality and its definition. According to her, multimodality redefines not only textual processes and the requirements made of literacy but also the nature of communication and collaboration in general. In her lecture, Kuure also stressed that the redefinition of textuality necessarily has an affect on working life and education.

Professor Else Mundal examined the symposium’s theme of textuality from the point of view of the continuum of oral and written language. In her lecture, Mundal focused on Old Norse texts and culture as examples which, according to her, provide a good perspective into the various aspects of textuality. She pointed out, among other things, that the boundary between oral and written poetry based on the Old Norse tradition has been wavering throughout the history, and that these two genres have been in a deep interaction with each other in the course of centuries.

This year’s extensive symposium theme attracted an abundant audience who examined text and textuality from many different aspects of language-related research. This publication contains 37 articles that are based on the symposium’s plenary, section, poster and workshop presentations. The articles have been selected for publication through a double blind review procedure, which was this year carried out for the first time by VAKKI Publications’ brand new, international pool of referees. The articles can also be accessed electronically at http://www.vakki.net/publications/.