

PETS AS FAMILY MEMBERS: CONFLICTING PRACTICES IN THE USE OF THIRD-PERSON PRONOUNS TO REFER TO COMPANION ANIMALS IN WRITTEN BIOGRAPHICAL STORIES IN FINNISH

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Abstract. In many languages, humans are grammatically distinguished from other animals. In Standard Finnish, different pronouns are used for humans and other animals. The article examines biographical stories, written by nonprofessional Finnish writers, with qualitative and quantitative text analysis and focusing to the shift between these two pronouns in references to pets. In modern societies, companion animals fall between humans and animals in some ways, since people often consider them distinct persons and family members. Although the writers follow Standard Finnish norms in most other aspects, one out of three writers uses personal (human) pronouns to refer to animals. The rest humanise pets in other ways but do not deviate from pronoun norms. The use of personal pronouns in texts is influenced by several factors: the system of colloquial Finnish, the practices of referring to animals in other languages, especially in English, and the changing role of animals in society.

Keywords: Animacy Hierarchy, human–animal relationship, Finnish, perspective taking, pronouns, standard language

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1. Introduction

In the English language, third-person personal pronouns (*he*, *she*) are typically used for nonhuman animals in both spoken and written language, even though the neutral *it* is also available (Gardelle 2013; Krauthamer 2021: 54–57). Style guides generally recommend using personal pronouns to refer to nonhuman animals with a name and known gender. Most guides today recommend using *it* for generic

animal references (Miller & Swift 2000: 55–56; Wright 2020). However, animal welfare advocates have argued that the pronoun *it* should not be used for animals even when the gender is unknown but should be replaced by *they* (Merskin & Freeman 2020: 3–4). In English, the use of personal pronouns is linked to the expression of gender and to the concepts of individuality, personality and intimacy (Krauthamer 2021: 54–57). In Finnish, personal pronouns are gender-neutral. There is still an active debate about which pronoun should be used for animals: prescriptive grammar directs the use of different pronouns for humans and nonhumans, but language users do not always follow this guideline. This article discusses the pronoun choices made by non-professional Finnish writers when writing about their companion animals.

In Standard Finnish, the category of ‘humans’ is distinguished from other animates by the use of the personal pronoun *hän*, ‘he, she’ and the plural equivalent *he* ‘they.HUMAN’.¹ Prescriptive language guidebooks (e.g. Korhonen & Maamies 2015: 246–247) specify that nonhuman animals, as well as objects and abstract entities, should be referred to using the demonstrative pronouns *se* ‘it’ and *ne* ‘they.NONHUMAN’. Standard Finnish and informal colloquial Finnish use third-person pronouns differently, which adds another aspect to the study of animal references. In spoken Finnish, both humans and animals are usually referred to with demonstrative pronouns, which, in Standard Finnish, should not be used to refer to humans. In informal varieties, the standard language personal pronoun *hän* ‘he, she’ is usually used in contexts where the speech, thoughts, feelings or intentions of another being are reported (Laitinen 2005, 2009, 2021; Siitonen 2008). These kinds of reference to animals using personal pronouns are found in old dialects and in contemporary speech (Laitinen 2005, 2021; Siitonen 2008; Harjunpää 2021), as well as in literature (Kaiser 2018). Thus, it could be questioned whether the Finnish pronoun *hän* is an anthropomorphising device at all. I approach the subject from this perspective but with a critical eye. This study examines data from texts that generally follow the norms of Standard Finnish, where the categories of human and nonhuman are relevant,

1 In this article, I gloss translations as NONHUMAN or HUMAN when the Standard Finnish meaning includes a distinction that the English translation does not indicate. When the gender of an animal is unclear, I translate *hän* as ‘he/she’, and when a pronoun is not used, the translation is enclosed in brackets.

and the language users themselves view the personal pronouns as an anthropomorphising practice (Priiki 2021). This article explores how and why Finnish language users vary their use of pronouns in written texts. The results show that the use of personal pronouns in texts is influenced by at least two factors: firstly, the system of colloquial Finnish, and secondly, the international trends relating to the respectful way of referring to animals, especially in English, in a society where the role of companion animals is changing.

The data are biographical stories about pets produced by writers from various backgrounds. Most writers follow the norm of Standard Finnish and use the demonstrative pronouns *se* ‘it’ and *ne* ‘they.NON-HUMAN’ when referring to pets, but a considerable number of writers occasionally or systematically use the personal pronouns *hän* ‘he, she’ and *he* ‘they.HUMAN’. In analysing this variation, I ask the following questions: Do writers who use personal pronouns fall into certain demographic categories, such as age or regional dialect speakers, or do they express specific attitudes towards animals? What textual features, such as the animal’s described role, other humanising expressions (kinship terms, names), or colloquial features in the text, correlate with the use of personal pronouns? Is the current prescriptive grammar in line with the language used in narratives? In the latest language guide (Korhonen & Maamies 2015: 246–247), the use of personal pronouns for animals is described as colloquial and ‘playful’, but based on the current study, I suggest that the practice has other functions as well.

The relationship between human and nonhuman animals and the role of animals in modern societies has been the subject of many humanistic and social studies in recent years (for an overview, see Scanes & Toukhsati 2018). Research on the roles of animals in Finnish society has been published by Aaltola and Keto (2015), Kainulainen and Sepänmaa (2009) and Räsänen and Schuurman (2020). Linguists have also examined the role of language in establishing these roles (for Finnish, see Peltola, Jääskeläinen & Harjunpää 2021). In modern Finnish society, pet owners consider their animals conscious, sentient subjects (Schuurman & Syrjämaa 2021), and many of them want to use linguistic resources to distinguish their companion animals from inanimate objects (Priiki 2021). In the field of animal studies, researchers writing in English have adopted the practice of using personal pronouns when referring to animals. A similar convention is becoming more common

in Finnish. For instance, in their studies written in Finnish, Syrjämaa (2020) and Vihelmaa (2018) systematically used personal pronouns to refer to nonhuman animals.

The choice of pronoun is a decision about whether to promote the nonhuman animal referent to the same category in the Animacy Hierarchy as humans or to treat the referent similarly to inanimate objects (for more on the Animacy Hierarchy, see Gardelle & Sorlin 2018). Peltola (2021: 416) argued that standardised languages tend to emphasise the linguistic separation of categories of ‘human’ and ‘nonhuman’, creating a strong boundary; in non-standardised speech, these categories are flexible. In Standard Finnish, the norm for separate pronouns stabilised as late as the beginning of the twentieth century (Laitinen 2009). Before that, the human–nonhuman dichotomy still played a minor role in pronoun choices; this is also true of informal spoken language today (Siitonen 2008; Harjunpää 2021). Examining contemporary writers’ pronoun choices makes it possible to assess whether the use of personal pronouns to refer to animals in written Finnish is the same phenomenon observed in spoken dialects or a feature of modern language use that is connected to animal rights movements.

In the next section, I introduce the examined pronouns and relevant earlier studies on them and demonstrate their uses in different varieties of Finnish. Section 3 presents the quantitative data examined in this paper. Section 4 presents the qualitative analysis of the pet stories from different viewpoints, and Section 5 discusses and concludes the findings.

2. Finnish third-person pronouns and the human–nonhuman dichotomy

The use of Finnish third-person pronouns to refer to humans in spoken language has been well documented – scholars have studied dialects and contemporary conversations (Vilppula 1989; Laitinen 2005; Siitonen 2008; Lappalainen 2010; Priiki 2017a, 2017b). In old dialects, as well as in contemporary speech, *hän* is often used in the context of reported speech to refer to the original speaker or thinker or to someone whose viewpoint is being taken. Usually, the referent is human, but when the intentions and feelings of an animal are discussed, *hän*

may also refer to nonhumans (Laitinen 2005; Siitonen 2008). Despite using pronouns in this way, which may be described as *logophoric* (see Laitinen 2005; Priiki 2017a), language users are often unaware of this function – they notice that the pronouns alternate in speech, but few can pinpoint that this variation is connected to the constructions of reported speech (Priiki 2017b: 64). As using *hän* to refer to humans is considered polite and respectful (Lappalainen 2010), the nonstandard use of *hän* to refer to animals may also be a conscious choice to show respect, such as when a veterinarian discusses a pet with its owner. When nonlinguists discuss the use of personal or demonstrative pronouns referring to animals, showing respect is the most common reason they give for the choice to use the personal pronoun *hän* (Priiki 2021).

Laitinen (2009, 2021) studied the stabilisation of the Finnish third-person norm in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. She showed that, until the late nineteenth century, animals were referenced with *hän* relatively frequently in literary Finnish. Even though the development of Standard Finnish was the subject of lively debate in the nineteenth century, the human–animal dichotomy in the use of third-person pronouns was not widely discussed (Laitinen 2009). The modern prescriptive norm is simple: the use of *hän* for animals is nonstandard and contradicts the norms of Standard Finnish (Korhonen & Maamies 2015: 246–247).

Kaiser (2018) saw linguistic anthropomorphism, where animal referents are referred to similarly to human referents, as a kind of ‘grammatical transformation’ by which animals are moved to the category of humans. This may be observed in Finnish children’s books, where animal characters are often systematically referred to using personal pronouns (Kolehmainen & Priiki 2022). Kaiser (2018) argued that, in literature, occasional uses of *hän* are motivated by the animal character taking ‘the perspectival centre’ of the action described in the story. In the current article, I explore whether the variations found in the pet story data show similar tendencies. Logophoricity and perspective taking are discussed further in Section 4.3.

Anthropomorphic linguistic practices are common in descriptions of people’s relationships to their companion animals (Airenti 2018; for anthropomorphism in general, see Mitchell & Hamm 1997; Karlsson 2012). In conversation, people may vocalise dialogue on behalf of their pets or call themselves the animal’s mother or father, thus identifying

the animal as a family member (Arluke 1996: 67–71; Tannen 2004; Mondémé 2018: XIV). In the pet stories studied here, the roles of many animals are described as comparable to that of a child (see Archer 1997), and some pets are given human names (see Thomas 1983: 112–115). Although the humanising nature of the Finnish pronoun *hän* in spoken language may be questioned because pronoun choice is based on logophoricity instead of human–nonhuman dichotomy, many language users consider personal pronoun use to be an anthropomorphic linguistic practice (Priiki 2021).

3. The pet stories and the respondents

The Pets as Family Members dataset (SKS KRA Lemmikit) was collected during the winter semester 2014–2015 by the research project Animal Agency in Human Society: Finnish Perspectives, 1890–2040. An open call for stories was published on the Finnish Literature Society website. The call was also sent to the society’s network of respondents, which includes around 450 men and women from different social groups from all over Finland (FinLit: Vastaajaverkosto). Some of the writers may have been experienced respondents who had previously written for similar collections, while others were writing this type of text for the first time. The complete dataset (SKS KRA Lemmikit) consists of 193 responses and 1,187 pages archived in print by the Finnish Literature Society. Seventy-two stories (ca. 86,900 words, mean length ca. 1,200 words) are shared openly for research purposes in the Finnish Social Science Data Archive (FSD) with the permission of the writers. These 72 electronic texts form the core data of the current study (ES), and the 121 stories that are only accessible in print archives provide supportive material.

The instructions did not direct the respondents to use formal language but told them to write ‘in their own language and style’. Despite this, the language of the stories mostly follows the norms of Standard Finnish. This means, for example, that the writers use *minä* ‘I’ instead of the colloquial *mä*, conjugate third-person plural verbs according to Standard Finnish norms, and refer to humans with personal pronouns instead of demonstrative pronouns, writing, for example, *he tulivat* ‘they.HUMAN came’ (with the third-person plural suffix) instead of the

colloquial *ne tuli* ‘they.NONHUMAN came’. In cases where the language of the stories is not quite up to standard language norms, the errors are orthographic, such as mistakes in punctuation and the spelling of compound words, rather than colloquial forms. Responses that are clearly written in a distinct dialect or in verse have been excluded from the present analysis, as have stories written in the first or second person singular as if from the pet’s point of view or addressed to the pet. Within these limitations, the pronoun variations in 182 texts were examined.

The respondents wrote about the roles of pets in their families and how their attitudes toward pets had changed over time. The call specifically requested stories about cats, dogs and horses. From the core data of 72 electronic texts, one text in dialect and two texts without any pronoun references were excluded, leaving 69 texts. All occurrences of third-person pronouns referring to animals in these texts were collected. They comprised a total of 2,538 references to nonhuman animals using either the demonstrative pronouns *se* ‘it’ or *ne* ‘they.NONHUMAN’ or the personal pronouns *hän* ‘he, she’ or *he* ‘they.HUMAN’. Of these, 1,086 pronouns refer to cats and 802 to dogs. Even though horses were mentioned in the call, horses or ponies are only referenced in 24 pronoun occurrences. Other animal species, such as rodents, birds, turtles, farm animals, fish and invertebrates, are also referenced in the stories. However, references to cats and dogs are the only ones that show considerable variation in pronoun use: for both these species, about 8% of third-person pronoun references use the personal pronouns *hän* ‘he, she’ or *he* ‘they.HUMAN’. Of the 113 stories that are only available as paper prints or hand-written letters, only those with pronoun variation were examined more thoroughly.

In 127 of the 182 pet stories examined, the demonstrative pronouns *se* ‘it’ and/or *ne* ‘they.NONHUMAN’ are used systematically to refer to animals, together with proper and common nouns. The demographic data for the writers of the stories with occasional or systematic personal pronoun use were compared to that of those who only used demonstrative pronouns. These metadata included date of birth, gender, occupation and place of residence. The gender distribution of the respondents was skewed: of the 182 writers, only 15 reported their gender as male, while all the others were female. Furthermore, not all the writers shared their metadata. The available data indicate that the respondents represent a range of age groups. Variations in pronoun use were evenly

distributed across all age groups and between men and women. The age distribution of respondents is shown in Table 1. Respondents who did not provide metadata wrote shorter stories, which may explain why fewer personal pronouns were found in their texts.

Table 1. Distribution of writers' ages and pronoun use.

Writer's age	Occasional or systematic use of personal pronouns	Use of demonstratives only	Number of stories
17–35 (born in 1980s or 1990s)	12 (35%)	22 (65%)	34
36–55 (born in 1960s or 1970s)	11 (34%)	21 (66%)	32
56–75 (born in 1940s or 1950s)	15 (37%)	26 (63%)	41
76–96 (born in 1930s or before)	9 (31%)	20 (69%)	29
Unknown	8 (17%)	38 (83%)	46
Number of stories	55 (30%)	127 (70%)	182

The information about respondents' regional backgrounds shows that the dataset does not represent the population evenly: writers from the Helsinki metropolitan area (39 respondents) and other regions of southern central Finland where Häme (Tavastian) dialects (see Institute for the Languages of Finland: Finnish dialects) are spoken (43 respondents) are overrepresented. Some effect of regional dialects was expected because the personal pronouns *hän* 'he, she' and *he* 'they, HUMAN' were more common in the older dialects of the south-west and south-east than in dialects of other regions (Vilppula 1989; Laitinen 2005; Siitonen 2008). Ten respondents live in a region where a south-western dialect is spoken, and nine live in a region where a south-eastern dialect is spoken. In all but one of the groups divided by the regional background, the share of respondents who used personal pronouns for animals varied from 22% to 36%. Respondents from south-western dialect regions stood out. Most of these (7 out of 10) used personal pronouns to refer to animals at least occasionally in their texts. The difference to other regions is statistically significant ($p = 0.009$, tested using Fisher's Exact Test).

4. Qualitative results

In the previous section, I compared the metadata for writers who used personal pronouns to those who only used demonstrative pronouns, finding out that personal pronoun use was linked to regional dialects but not to the writer's age. In this section, I examine textual features that occur with personal pronoun use. In Section 4.1, I examine how companion animals' roles are described in texts and whether these descriptions differ in texts that use personal pronouns to these in texts that only use demonstrative pronouns. The most common discourse observed describes the animal's role in the family as equivalent to that of a child. Personal pronoun use is also compared to the practice of giving human names to pets.

In Section 4.2, I look at the metalinguistic debate about the use of personal pronouns for animals and pronoun choice as a conscious stylistic decision. When analysing the style of the stories, I focus on word choice, structure, fluency and formality. Section 4.3 examines whether, in these texts, the function of the personal pronouns is similar to that in colloquial language, that is, describing the animal's perspective. Section 4.4 addresses generic references and some issues related to the use of plural forms found in the data, and Section 4.5 introduces a few confusing cases that show that pronoun choice may be problematic for some writers.

4.1. The role of pets in multispecies families

Keeping animals as human companions is not a new phenomenon, nor is it only a Western one, and even early humans had emotional relationships with their companion animals (Mornement 2018: 281). Throughout history, pets have been status symbols amongst the upper classes. During the 19th century, animals kept for company were distinguished from production and working animals, and the most recent change in the status of pets has been going on since the end of the 20th century (Vänskä 2014). In Finland today, one in three households has a pet; families with children and couples without children are the households most likely to have pets (Tilastokeskus 20.4.2020). The number of pets is continuing to grow, and more and more money is being spent on animals (Tilastokeskus 20.4.2020).

Pet owners are usually very attached to their companion animals and may regard these animals as extensions of their selves, as part of their own identity. Sociological studies describe the relationship between a pet and its owner as similar to that between a child and a parent, as this relationship is characterised by features such as dependency, caregiving and affection (Mornement 2018: 285). As Vänskä (2014: 365) states, '[t]he tamed and designed animal was not completely an animal anymore and occupied the space between the human and the animal.' The view of pets as surrogate children is reflected in the ways pet owners communicate with them (Burnham, Kitamura & Vollmer-Conna 2002). Not surprisingly, in the pet stories, many writers describe that their companion animals as similar to children, referring to themselves as the animal's 'mother' or referring to the animal as 'a baby'. The following examples explicitly equate the relationship between an animal and its caretaker to that between a parent and a child (1, 2). Both writers are describing their cats.

- (1) *Miisu on vähän kuin lapseni, ihmislapsia kun ei minulla ole. Se on huomion keskipiste ja omistaa läjäpäin leluja, omia fleece-peittoja sekä sähköllä toimivan lämpötyynyn jonka päällä se aina köllöttelee kun sohvalla ollaan.* [ES4,² 33-year-old woman, Tampere.]

'Miisu is a little like **my child** as I don't have human children. **It** is the centre of attention and owns heaps of toys, personal fleece blankets and an electric heat pillow, on which **it** always lounges around when we sit on the sofa.'

- (2) *Koska en aio hankkia lapsia, kissa on minulle kuin oma lapsi, pieni karvavauva. Uskon hyvin vahvasti, että Onnin kuolema joskus tulevaisuudessa on minulle yhtä kova paikka kuin joillekin on oman lapsen menetyt.* [ES44, 35-year-old woman, Helsinki.]

'Because I won't have kids, the cat is like a **child** to me, a little **furry baby**. I strongly believe that Onni's death in somewhere in the future will be as hard for me as losing a child would be to someone.'

2 ES with a number refers to the number of the story in the electronic data set. The supplementary print data are referenced as SKS KRA Lemmikit and the page number.

The writers of these excerpts (1, 2) are childless women; they describe how their cats take the place of children in their families. The cat's name in the first example, *Miisu*, is a gender-neutral animal name referencing the cat's species. The writer of example 2 also mentions her awareness that some people may disapprove of her comparison of a pet to a child, but she holds to her opinion. Her cat has a male human name, *Onni*, which means 'happiness'. Both of these writers, however, only use demonstrative pronouns to refer to their pets. The pronoun choice may be observed in example 1.

Linguistically equating animals to children is not limited to female writers in their thirties, as older respondents also use humanising terms. The writer of example 3 was born in 1940 and is the mother of at least one child. In her text, she refers to herself as the *mummi* 'granny' to her daughter's dogs—to her, they are surrogate grandchildren. In example 3, she describes the dog she owned in the 1970s before her daughter was born, referring to the puppy as *vauva* 'baby' and *tyttö* 'girl' and to herself as *yksinhuoltaja*, a 'single parent', although she marks this unconventional usage by enclosing this word in quotes. Another humanising element is that she says the puppy has 'ADHD' (attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder), again in quotes, a condition that is usually only diagnosed in humans. In this excerpt, the writer uses demonstrative pronouns to refer to the puppy, but she also uses personal pronouns for the puppy in other contexts.

- (3) *Mieheni työtoveri tajusi jotenkin koirakaipuuni/vauvahaluni, ja myi minulle ihanan dalmatialaispennun Ofelian. Se tuli hetkessä vauvakseni, mutta kasvoi nopeasti "ADHD" -pennuksi: en saanut hetkeksikään rauhaa. Se hyppi selkääni, kaatoi kumoon, juoksi yli huonekalujen kuin hullu – silti rakastin ja kannustin sitä. Oli tosi dramaattinen tilanne, kun aloin opettaa pentua sisäsiistiksi. Rohkean tytön reippaus katosi jo talomme porraskäytävässä [---]. Olin "yksinhuoltajana" pääsääntöisesti, koska mieheni osallistui samaan aikaan kahteen intensiiviseen kurssiin ja oli paljon matkoilla. [ES31, 75-year-old woman, Espoo.]*

'My husband's colleague somehow realised my wish for a dog/baby and sold us a lovely Dalmatian puppy, Ofelia. **It** became **my baby** in no time but quickly grew into an 'ADHD' puppy: I couldn't get a moment's peace. **It** jumped on my back, knocked me over, ran over furniture like crazy – yet I loved and encouraged **it**. It was very dramatic when

I started teaching the puppy to be housebroken. The spunk of a brave **girl** disappeared in the stairwell of our house [---]. I was a **‘single parent’** for the most part, because my husband was attending two intensive courses at the same time and was travelling a lot.’

Male writers also anthropomorphise animals, although only a few men responded to the request for data collection. The men do not use the analogy of parent–child relationships, but they do use other human terms to describe pets. In example 4, a male writer equates his female dog to women in general. The dog has a human name, *Maija*, and the writer systematically uses the pronoun *hän* to refer to her.

- (4) *Ennen Piipaa minulla oli Maija. Hän oli ensimmäisiä hännällisiä Corgeja Suomessa. Maija oli itsepäinen, kuten naiset yleensä.* [SKS KRA Lemmikit: 60, 58-year-old man, Ikaalinen.]

‘Before Piipa, I had Maija. **She** was one of the first Corgis with tails in Finland. Maija was stubborn, as **women** usually are.’

As shown above, animals are humanised in these pet stories, but no clear connection can be found between these linguistic practices and the use of personal pronouns. In the detailed analysis of the electronic core dataset of 69 texts, 12 of the 46 writers who only used demonstrative pronouns (26%) and six of the 23 writers who used personal pronouns (27%) explicitly compared their pet’s role in their family to that of a child.

One way to humanise animals is to give them proper names that are also used by humans. In general, names are given to animals who are considered individuals and having a close relationship with humans (Ainiala, Saarelma & Sjöblom 2016: 205). Naming and pronoun choice can be linked: in English, whether an animal has a name is an important criterion for the use of personal pronouns (Krauthamer 2021: 54–55). In the stories analysed here, some pets are given names that are normally only used for animals, such as *Fufu* or *Mörri*, while some have human names, such as *Maisa* or *Pekka*. Finnish speakers have conflicting opinions on whether pets should be given human names (Keinänen 2009), and they associate these naming conventions with the use of pronouns (Priiki 2021: 328). About half of the cat or dog names mentioned in the stories are also human names (151 out of 299). Similar trend was

reported in earlier studies (Ainiala, Saarelma & Sjöblom 2016: 207). *Human name* is here defined by the criterion that the name has been reported as the official name of at least 100 people to the Finnish Digital and Population Data Services Agency (Nimipalvelu).

No statistically significant correlation was found between giving companion animals human names and referring to pets with personal pronouns. Personal pronouns were used for 33 (out of 151, 22%) animals with human names and for 27 (out of 148, 18%) animals with animal names. It is possible, however, that this criterion does not correspond to people's perception of names. For example, common human nicknames were categorised as animal names here, because they are not listed as official given names. On the other hand, some very typical names for nonhumans were categorised as human names here, since they are listed as the official names of more than 100 individuals.

The use of human kinship terminology for animals and giving them human names are not standardised in the same way that pronoun use is. The results presented in this section show that, contrary to language users' perceptions, the connection between humanising animals and using personal pronouns is not a clear one. Most people who humanise animals with other linguistic means still prefer demonstrative pronouns in their texts.

4.2. Stylistic choices

It is possible that the pronoun variation in the written texts reflects writers' attitudes towards the norms of Standard Finnish rather than towards nonhuman animals. Language users tend to prefer the idea of a variety with clear, unambiguous rules (for more on the standard language ideology, see e.g. Cameron 1995; Milroy 2001). Finnish speakers view the use of personal pronouns for animals as a deviation from Standard Finnish rules, and some may interpret it to indicate irrationality or a lack of skills and education (Priiki 2021). Thus, people who want to present themselves as skilled writers may choose to use demonstratives for animals, as the prescriptive rule states, even if they value their companion animals highly and see them as individual persons.

Finnish speakers' discussions of the use of personal pronouns for animals follow quite similar lines of arguments as discussions of animal names (Keinänen 2009; Priiki 2021). Those who oppose the use of

personal pronouns claim that the personal pronoun users do not recognise the differences between humans and other animals: according to them, nonhuman animals should be treated as animals in every way, suggesting an understanding of the needs of a different species. Those in favour of personal pronouns argue that the pronoun choice shows respect and indicates that the animal is an individual person, distinct from plants and objects (Priiki 2021).

This metalinguistic debate could be observed in the data examined. Two writers, both women in their 60s, describe how their pronoun use has changed over the years as they have become more attached to their companion animals (SKS KRA Lemmikit: 899, 564). Example 5 is an excerpt from a story about two stray cats, Mari and Muru, whom the writer and her husband took in at their holiday home. The cats were probably owned by their neighbour, Turunen, but they had been badly treated. Before this passage, the writer only uses demonstrative pronouns to refer to the cats. Here, she describes talking to one of the cats (for more on perspective taking, see Section 4.3). To explain her choice of pronoun, she specifically states that she had begun to use personal pronouns for the cats. Later in her narrative, she uses both personal and demonstrative pronouns. In this story, the use of pronouns is analogous to a change in real life.

- (5) *Meille ei kuitenkaan selvinnyt, pitikö Turusen aviomies kissoja ominaan vai jutteliko hän niistä muuten vain. Tilanne vakiintui. Kun ajoimme pihaan, kissat tulivat heti jalkoihimme, yleensä emme ehtineet nähdä mistä, äärimmäisen nälkäisinä. Kerran alkuaikoina Muru katsoi minua niin kuin ei olisi tuntenut ja lähti hyvin masentuneena Turuselle päin. Kysyin ihmeissäni, eikö hän muista minua. **Suunnilleen tähän aikaan aloin käyttää hän-pronominia.** Muru vilkaisi toistamiseen ja juoksi ovelle. Ruokaa ja heti!!! Tapamme kehittyivät vakioiksi. Kissat halusivat ensin syödä, niin kuin eivät olisi ikinä ruokaa tai maitoa nähneetkään, ja sitten he hyppäsivät sänkyyni kainalooni. [SKS KRA Lemmikit: 570, 68-year-old woman, Helsinki.]*

‘It was not clear to us, however, whether Turunen’s husband considered the cats his own or whether he just talked about **them.NONHUMAN**. The situation stabilised. When we drove into the yard, the cats immediately came to us, usually so quickly that we couldn’t see where (they had come) from; (they were) extremely hungry. Once, in the early days, Muru looked at me as if (he/she) didn’t know me and left looking very

depressed, heading for Turunen's place. Amazed, I asked if **he/she** didn't remember me. **Around this time I started using the pronoun he/she.** Muru took a second look and ran to the door. Food, and now!!! Our habits became the norm. First, the cats ate as if (they) had never seen food or milk before, and then **they.HUMAN** jumped on my bed and lay under my arm.'

One text brought up a counter-argument in this debate. An elderly woman stated that even though her dog became a family member, the dog was never referred to with personal pronouns (example 6). She emphasizes the pronouns with capital letters.

- (6) *Koirasta tuli jostain ihmeen syystä perheenjäsen. **Se ei kuitenkaan koskaan ollut Hän vaan Se.*** [SKS KRA Lemmikit: 869, 89-year-old woman, Joensuu.]

'For some strange reason, the dog became a family member. **But it was never Him/Her, it was It.** '

In example 7, the writer admits that he sometimes uses personal pronouns for animals. In the same context, he describes calling the animal a member of the family and giving it a human name.

- (7) *Ja kyllä, nimitän kissaa perheenjäseneksi. Annan **sille** nimen, jollaisia voidaan antaa ihmisillekin. Saatanpa toisinaan äityä peräti viittaamaan elikkoon persoonapronominilla, jolla viitataan tavallisesti vain ihmiseen, vaikka joitakin mielensäpahoittajia tällaiset ylvästä ihmisrotua halventavat tavat riepovatkin.* [ES25, 42-year-old man, region unknown.]

'And yes, I call the cat a family member. I give **it** a name that can be given to humans. Sometimes I may even escalate to referring to the animal with a personal pronoun that is usually only used to refer to humans, even though some grumps get annoyed by this practice, (which they think) degrades the noble human race.'

The wording ('I may even escalate') suggests that he sees the use of the personal pronoun as a stronger phenomenon than the other two anthropomorphising practices. He describes the pronoun choice as anthropomorphic, and he also mentions that some people disapprove of it. In his text, he only uses demonstrative pronouns. Thus, his comment refers to spoken language or some less formal written variety. The style

of his story is literary; he uses unusual words such as *äityä* ‘escalate’, *elikko* ‘animal’ and *ylväs* ‘noble, majestic’, as well as complex noun structures. Here, the choice of pronoun manifests as part of his efforts to present his literary skills in Standard Finnish.

The writer of example 8 marks her pronoun choice as unconventional with quotation marks. This links the pronoun choice to another humanising expression, calling the female cats ‘hags’ (see also example 3 in Section 3.2). At the beginning of the story, the writer uses a demonstrative pronoun to reference the farm cat in her childhood family, but when she writes about the pedigreed cats she later kept, she systematically uses the form of reference shown in the example. This suggests a hierarchy amongst the animals in her story, and this hierarchy impacts pronoun use. Personal pronouns are marked with quotation marks and a capital letter (“*Hän*”).

- (8) *Marraskuussa 1990 syntyi pentue, josta [name of cattery removed] Tyyne oli yksi. Noudin "**Hänet**" Jyväskylästä v. 1991 alussa. Vitalin kanssa "**Hän**" ystäväystyi pian, mutta kesti 8 viikkoa, ennen kuin Nina hyväksyi "**Hänet**", minkä osoitti yhdellä nuolaisulla. Eivät "akat" myöhemmin kään ystäväystyneet, vaan peräti tappelivat kesällä 1993. [ES67, a woman aged 78, Järvenpää.]*

‘In November 1990, a litter was born, of which Tyyne was one. I picked ‘**Her**’ up from Jyväskylä in early 1991. ‘**She**’ soon became friends with Vitali, but it was eight weeks before Nina accepted ‘**Her**’, which (she) demonstrated with a single lick. The two ‘hags’ did not become friends afterwards; they even had a fight in the summer of 1993.’

In some stories, similarly to example 5, the pronoun changes at a certain point in the narrative, indicating that a pet has a distinct persona and establishing a dramatic style of writing. As personal pronoun references to animals other than cats and dogs were infrequent in the data, their occurrence attracted particular attention. The writer of example 9 describes the fish and hamsters he had as a child and mostly uses demonstrative pronouns to refer to them. However, he uses personal pronouns for one fish and one of the hamsters a couple of times.

- (9) *Kalat eivät koskaan olleet erityisen rakkaita, mutta hautasin **niitä** usein tulitikkurasioissa pihallemme kuusiaidan juurelle. Erityisesti muistan toisen leväbarbeista, joka eli todella pitkään ja ehdin **sen** jo nimetä Kalle-kalaksi. Kun Kalle kuoli, **hän** sai sankarihautajaiset enkä **sen** jälkeen enää innostunut uusien kalojen hankkimisesta, sillä tuolloin minulla oli jo uusia lemmikkejä. [ES38, 24-year-old man, living abroad.]*

‘I was not particularly fond of the fish, but I often buried **them**. **NONHUMAN** in matchboxes in our garden under the spruce hedge. I remember in particular the other Siamese algae eater, which lived a very long time; I named **it** Kalle Fish. When Kalle died, **he** received a hero’s funeral, and after that, I was not interested in getting new fish, because I already had other pets.’

He states that he was not particularly fond of fish in general. The fish called Kalle, however, stuck in his mind more than the other fish. *Kalle* is a male human name and alliterates with *kala*, the Finnish noun for ‘fish’. The use of personal pronouns here distinguishes this pet from the other fish, which are systematically referenced using the plural demonstrative pronoun. When the writer introduces Kalle, he first refers to this fish with a demonstrative pronoun. The personal pronoun reference occurs later, in a sentence describing Kalle’s death and ‘hero’s funeral’; this underscores that fish’s individuality and the importance of this dramatic event to a little boy, using a somewhat playful style. Pronoun choices that emphasise an animal’s personhood and agency connect these uses of personal pronouns to the phenomenon of logophoricity, which is discussed in the next section.

In this section, I have demonstrated that the writers of the pet stories may choose personal or demonstrative pronouns for stylistic reasons. They are aware of the metalinguistic discourses around the use of personal pronouns, and they link their pronoun choices to other linguistic methods of anthropomorphising animals. Although respondents are all affectionate towards their pets, their opinions on the use of personal pronouns differ. Writers may highlight their literary skills by consistently using demonstrative pronoun, even though they use personal pronouns for animals in spoken interactions, or they may exploit the nuances of these pronouns for dramatic effect or to highlight an animal’s individuality. Sometimes, typographic tools are used to clearly mark the pronoun choice as unconventional. In many stories, writers seem to carefully consider their pronoun choices.

4.3. Perspective taking

As mentioned above, earlier studies have shown that the primary function of the pronoun *hän* in colloquial Finnish is logophoric: it is used for reported speech and to describe a person's thoughts and feelings, as well as to describe second-hand information, regardless of whether the referent is human or nonhuman (Siitonen 2008; Laitinen 2009, 2021; Priiki 2017a). Kaiser (2018) examined references to animal characters in children's books. In her data, while demonstrative pronouns are used to refer to animals as a default, personal pronouns are used in free indirect discourse and with verbs that describe mental functions (Kaiser 2018: 646–647). Example 10 shows an embedded clause where *hän* is used to describe an animal's mental process in Kaiser's data.

- (10) *Orava_i mietti, miksi t_i tahtoi antaa **hänelle_i** pähkinöitä* (Kaiser 2018: 646).

‘The squirrel_i pondered why the lady wanted to give **him/her_i** nuts.’

In the pet story data, canonical logophoric constructions with introductory phrases and embedded indirect quotes (such as ex. 10 above, see also Priiki 2017a) are rare. A few occurrences, such as example 11, are found in the supplementary data. The pronoun in example 11 is the only occurrence of *hän* in a three-page story.

- (11) *Mikki₁ tiesi, että Kimi₂ oli niin vanha, ettei se₂ **hänelle₁** mitään tekisi.*
[SKS KRA Lemmikit: 22, 79-year-old woman, Helsinki.]

‘Mikki₁ (the cat) knew that Kimi₂ (the dog) was so old that **it₂** would not do anything to **him₁**.’

The pronoun choice here may be a slip into the vernacular. The writer describes an animal's thoughts and feelings in two other passages but does not use personal pronouns. Her story includes some other colloquialisms as well. In example 11, the use of different pronouns for the cat and the dog help ensure that the referents are not mixed up.

Compared to canonical logophoricity, free indirect discourse (quotes without introductory phrases), where quoting seemed to trigger the use of personal pronouns, is more common in the data examined here. In the story that includes example 12, the default pronoun is *se* ‘it’. The

writer describes the behaviour of a dog, Ruu, whose gender is not given. The writer infers the dog's thoughts based on their behaviour. The last sentence in example 12 can be seen as a free indirect quote of a thought the writer attributes to Ruu. Here, a personal pronoun is used.

- (12) *Äitini teki keittiössä lihapullia ja Ruuta oli kielletty menemästä keittiöön. **Se** jäi odottamaan kiltisti maaten keittiön viereen, kuitenkin näköyhteyden säilyttäen. Hetken kuluttua Ruun koko olemus kirkastui. Korvat ja pää nousivat pystyyn. Pää meni kallelleen ja **se** nousi istumaan. Lähes samantien **se** lähti kiertämään tilanjakajaa. Koska **hüntähän** oli kielletty menemästä keittiöön vain tätä yhtiä kautta.* [ES5, 34-year-old woman, Helsinki.]

'My mom made meatballs in the kitchen, and Ruu (the dog) had been forbidden to go to the kitchen. **It** waited politely, lying near the kitchen and keeping visual contact. A moment later, Ruu's manner changed. The ears and head went up. The head went to one side, and **it** (the dog) sat up. Almost instantly, **it** set out to go around the room divider. Because **she/he** was forbidden to go into the kitchen only one way around.'

Most of the writers interpret animals' behaviour using other linguistic means and do not attribute quoted thoughts to the animals. They assume their pets have certain feelings and describe the reasons and intentions behind the animals' actions. In these contexts, both with demonstrative and personal pronoun references, the animal is usually the subject of the clause experiencing emotions (e.g. love, dislike) or doing intentional acts (e.g. calling, searching, listening). In the data, both types of pronouns were used in these kinds of contexts, as shown in examples 13 and 14.

- (13) *Nykyään Nikke on rauhallinen ja rento nautiskelija, joka viihtyy sylissä, eikä uloskaan oikein mielellään tunnu menevän. Toivottavasti syy on **se**, että **hän nauttii** niin paljon kotona olost ja hemmottelusta.* [ES59, 55-year-old woman, Helsinki.]

'Nowadays, Nikke (the cat) is a peaceful and relaxed hedonist who enjoys being in (one's) arms and does not seem to like to go out. Hopefully, that's because **he enjoys** being pampered at home so much.'

- (14) *Piha tarjosi sille kaikenlaista virikettä. Talvella esimerkiksi **se nautti** liukumäestä, joka vietti puutarhasta sivuportin alitse suoraan ohikulkevalle kävelytielle. Kesäisin se kirmasi läheisellä nurmialueella jänisten ja rusakoiden perään.* [ES31, 75-year-old woman, Espoo.]

‘The yard provided it (the dog) with all kinds of stimulation. In winter, for example, **it enjoyed** the slide that led from the garden under a side gate directly to a passing footpath. In the summer, it scampered around the nearby grassy area in search of hares and rabbits.’

Describing action from the animal’s perspective is a reason for choosing a personal pronoun only when a writer considers personal pronoun references acceptable in written language or when the writer slips into colloquial language. In the electronic core data of 69 stories, I identified all pronoun occurrences in contexts where the writers are describing animals’ thoughts, feelings or intentions to measure the frequency of this phenomenon in the data. In this dataset, writers who use personal pronouns do not interpret pets’ thoughts or feelings more than those who only use demonstrative pronouns. In the 69 stories, only nine stories do not provide any interpretation of animals’ feelings or thoughts, and this may be because these texts are shorter than the average (40–511 words compared to an average of ca 1,200 words in the whole dataset). Of the 47 texts that exclusively use demonstrative pronouns, 40 include interpretation; of the 22 texts that also use personal pronouns, 20 include interpretation.

In the 22 stories with pronoun variation, however, 64 of the 176 personal pronouns (36%) were used in discussions of animals’ mental processes. Only 166 of 1000 total occurrences of demonstrative pronouns were used in such cases (20%). This difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$; $\chi^2 = 37.16$; $df = 1$; tested with Pearson’s Chi Square Test). When evaluating the results, however, it should be noted that most of the personal pronouns used in interpretive contexts clustered in three texts (ES34, ES61, ES67). These results support Kaiser’s (2018) observation that the logophoric function for personal pronouns is found in written Finnish – but only in some writers’ texts.

In literary fiction and spoken narratives the logophoric function can extend to a focalizing system in which the main character, to whom the reader or listener is meant to identify, is referred to with the personal

pronoun and all other characters with demonstrative pronouns (Laitinen 2005: 93–96). Most of the pet stories are too short and mention too few nonhuman minor characters to make it possible to identify such a system. I will return to this theme in the discussion section.

4.4. Special types of plural and generic references

Another phenomenon related to third-person pronoun choice in Finnish is the distinction between specific and generic references. By *generic*, I mean references that target any member of a group (Hakulinen et al. 2004: §1407, 1408; Vilkuna 1992: 149–155) instead of a specific individual. In the pet stories, the writers describe not only their specific companion animals, but also animals in general (15) and the characteristics of a species or breed. Generic references can be found in both plural and singular.

- (15) *Ilman eläimiä ei osaisi elää, ne merkitsevät niin paljon ja ovat niin olennainen osa elämää.* [ES9, woman, age unknown, Mäntsälä.]

‘(One) could not live without animals, **they.NONHUMAN** mean so much and are an essential part of life.’

When referring to humans in colloquial Finnish, personal pronouns usually refer to specific individuals, and generic references are made with demonstratives (Lappalainen & Priiki 2022). This distribution is similar in animal references in the texts: the great majority of generic references (174 occurrences in the electronic core data) use demonstratives. In the core dataset, there are three exceptions that use the plural *he* ‘they.HUMAN’, and six more generic uses of personal pronouns (5 *he*, 1 *hän*) were found in the supplementary dataset. All these were from texts with systematic personal pronoun use and in a context discussing the importance of companion animals (16), which is a typical context for generic references in the data. Since generic references cannot be used to highlight the specificity of an individual, the choice of pronoun in these cases is motivated by respect for animals in general.

- (16) *Olen oppinut lapsuudessani ymmärtämään eläinten viisautta ja kohtelemaan **heitä** aina hyvin kunnioittavasti.* [SKS KRA Lemmikit: 396, 60-year-old woman, Haapavesi.]

‘In my childhood, I learned to understand the wisdom of animals and to always treat **them.HUMAN** with great respect.’

Plural references were more complex to analyse than singular references because the group to which the pronoun refers may be heterogeneous. A special subtype of plural references is references to a group that includes a human and a nonhuman. Laitinen (2021) touches on the use of pronouns in such cases in literary Finnish. In the pet stories, eight groups that include humans and pets are referred to with the personal pronoun *he* ‘they.HUMAN’, as in example 17; in one example, the demonstrative *ne* ‘they.NONHUMAN’ is used.

- (17) ***Heidän** yhteiselonsa jatkui vielä pojan ollessa armeijassa.* [ES8, 61-year-old woman, Siilinjärvi.]

‘**Their.HUMAN** (a cat and a human) living together continued even when the boy left for military service.’

In light of the Animacy Hierarchy, it is not surprising that groups consisting of several types are referred to in ways appropriate for the individuals that are higher in the hierarchy. It is, however, interesting that pairs consisting of a human and a nonhuman were considered solid and integrated enough to be referred to by a shared plural pronoun. In Standard Finnish, this would not be possible: according to these norms, the reference in example 17 should use two separate pronoun references, *hänen ja sen* ‘his and its’.

4.5. Problematic references

In spoken language, the pronouns used to refer to both humans and animals vary quite freely, but native speakers rarely report comprehension problems. Non-native speakers, however, are sometimes confused by the colloquial Finnish pronoun system (Jokela 2022). In the pet stories, most nonstandard personal pronoun references to animals can be easily understood. Only two texts might be confusing. In example 18,

the writer uses the personal pronoun *hän* to refer to the cat, Pörri, but because another referent, a human (the writer's sister), is also mentioned, the personal pronoun could be understood to refer to the human antecedent. The context of a pet story, however, makes it clear that the referent is the cat. The writer, a speaker of southwestern dialects, systematically uses personal pronouns for animals.

- (18) *Vaikka sisko oli Pörrille rakkain, hän tuli aina minua vastaan terassille, kun tulin loma-aikoina kotona käymään.* [ES34, 27-year-old woman, Turku.]

‘Even though the sister (of the writer) was Pörri’s (the cat’s) favourite, **he/she** (the cat) always came to meet me at the terrace, when I came to visit home on holidays.’

Siitonen (2008) reports that some Finnish speakers claim that they would rather avoid third-person pronouns altogether. In spoken interactions, it is impossible to avoid pronoun references for long. In short texts, however, it appears to be a feasible strategy. One writer produced a 322-word story without any third-person pronoun references to her dogs. She repeats the noun ‘dog’ and uses elliptic sentences (19).

- (19) *Sisäkoiria. Nukkuvat samassa vuoteessa omistajan kanssa. Koirat saavat olla vapaasti sohvalle ja nojatuoleissa.* [ES14, 43-year-old woman, Pattijoki.]

‘Indoor dogs. Sleep in the owner’s bed. The dogs are allowed free access to the sofa and armchairs.’

Like the personal pronouns *hän* and *he*, the zero-person construction and passive voice in Finnish are prescriptively limited to human referents (Shore 1988; Helasvuo 2006; Kaiser & Vihman 2006). Nevertheless, some writers seem to consider these devices more neutral ways to refer to animals than third-person pronouns, which they avoid because they consider both pronoun options problematic. Passive voice and the zero-person construction are also used to refer to multispecies groups (see ex. 17). These examples will be examined in another study.

5. Discussion and conclusions

In this article, I have studied how and why Finnish speakers vary their use of third-person pronouns in written texts about companion animals. In these biographical stories, most writers follow the standard norm and use demonstrative pronouns to refer to animals, even though they to write about their pets in very warm tones. Approximately one in three writers use personal pronouns, and a few use them systematically. Of the metadata available about the writers, the only factor that correlated with pronoun variation was regional background. Respondents living in south-western areas used personal pronouns more often than others.

Non-linguists discussing the Finnish language believe that the use of personal pronouns for animals in both spoken and written language was increasing and that the main reason for this development was the changing role of pets in society, that pet owners “do not understand the difference between humans and animals any more” (Priiki 2021). Research does not support these perceptions. In spoken Finnish, personal pronouns have been used for animals throughout ages, and also the prescriptive norm is relatively recent (Laitinen 2021). The age distribution of the respondents in this dataset does not suggest that the use of the personal pronoun is increasing in written Finnish, at least not to the degree that younger respondents use personal pronouns to refer to animals significantly more than older ones do. All respondents humanise pets in one way or another, but only one in three uses personal pronouns.

In the data, mostly only cats and dogs are referenced using personal pronouns, even though other animals are also discussed in the stories. This differs from older materials, such as dialect interviews and early literary Finnish, where personal pronouns were used to discuss the communication, emotions or motives of a wide variety of wild and domestic animals (Laitinen 2005, 2021). Cats and dogs are the most common pets, and the metapragmatic discussion about pronouns also focuses on these species (Priiki 2021). Similarly, in English, speakers use personal pronouns rather than *it* to describe cats and dogs more frequently than other species, even if the animal’s gender is unknown (Krauthamer 2021: 55–57). As with English pronouns, Finnish practices highlight the animal’s individuality and the writer’s close relationship

with an animal as criteria for the use of personal pronouns. The aim for respectful language use is reflected in the fact that some writers use personal pronouns even in generic references in contexts that emphasise the importance of animals.

The logophoric function is observed in the examined pet stories, but other factors seem to be at work as well. The use of personal pronouns in texts is influenced by at least two factors: the system of colloquial language on the one hand, and the modern, international practices of using respectful language when referring to companion animals, who are understood as individual persons and family members. Language users are often unaware of the canonical logophoric function of the pronoun *hän* (Priiki 2017b: 64). In contrast, at least some of them are aware of the debate about using this pronoun to refer to animals. Although language users associate pronoun choice with other humanising practices, no clear correlation is found in this textual data. Many of the respondents in this dataset have a high regard for animals, consider their pets to be members of the families and use other humanising linguistic expressions to refer to their pets. To them, cats and dogs are more like humans than other animals or inanimate objects. However, only one in three writers uses personal pronouns, which indicates an orientation towards the standard language ideology (see e.g. Cameron 1995; Milroy 2001). The data also show that, for some writers, the choice of pronoun is difficult, apparently because different practices pull them in different directions.

The Finnish pronoun *se* ‘it’ is not directly equivalent to the English pronoun *it*, as the Standard Finnish non-human pronoun is widely used in spoken language to refer to people. Nevertheless, discussions of the English pronoun use on nonhuman animals also resonate with the Finnish-speakers’ perceptions of Finnish pronouns. The respectful use of personal pronouns for animals, however, has a basis in the Finnish language’s own system also: the logophoric pronoun refers to an intentional, sentient and communicating actor, an individual interacting with other beings, and to a referent that others can identify with. In Finnish literature, this kind of extensions of logophoricity has been utilized throughout the ages (Laitinen 2005, 2021). It is possible that the pronoun practices in literature are familiar to the respondents of the data examined here. Thus, in the pet stories, the traditional way of using the pronoun *hän* in spoken language and literature as well as the modern

way of respecting the individuality of a companion animal with pronoun choice, intertwine.

Both practices promoting the use of personal pronouns still contradict the norms of pronoun use in Standard Finnish. According to the standard grammar guidelines, referencing an animal with the pronoun *hän* is only acceptable in colloquial, ‘playful’ language (Korhonen & Maamies 2015: 246–247), nor does descriptive grammar mention pronoun variation in animal references (Hakulinen et al. 2004: §717, 1469, 1470). This study complements existing descriptions of Finnish language use by showing that personal pronoun references to animals are not only a method of playful expression but a useful and versatile resource for many language users, in written as well as spoken texts. Animal-referring personal pronouns found even on the pages of prestigious Finnish newspapers may be related to the fact that animals as individuals are now more visible in the media, and thus the use of personal pronouns referring to them, which has always been part of the Finnish language, becomes more prominent.

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Data

ES = Finnish Literature Society, Kirsi Lauren, Reetta Niemelä, Nora Schuurman & Taina Syrjämaa: Pets as Family Members 2014–2015 [dataset]. Version 1.0 (2017-05-22). Finnish Social Science Data Archive [distributor]. <http://urn.fi/urn:nbn:fi:fsd:T-FSD3139>

SKS KRA Lemmikit = Finnish Literature Society Archives, Materials on Traditional and Contemporary Culture, Pets as Family Members 2014–2015.

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Kokkuvõte. Katri Priiki: Lemmikloomad nagu pereliikmed: lemmikloomadele viitavate pronoomenite vastuoluline kasutamine soomekeelsetes elulugudes. Paljudes keeltes eristatakse inimesi ja loomi grammatiliselt. Soome standardkeeles kasutatakse inimeste ja loomade kohta erinevaid pronoomeneid. Artiklis uuritakse, kuidas mitteprofessionaalsed soome keeles kirjutajad vahetavad biograafilistes tekstides lemmikloomadele viitavaid pronoomeneid. Kaasaegses ühiskonnas jäävad lemmikloomad mõnes mõttes inimese ja teiste loomade vahele, sest inimesed peavad neid sageli omaette isikuks ja oma pere liikmeks. Kuigi kirjutajad järgivad üldiselt soome keele standardnorme, kasutab üks kolmest kirjutajast lemmikloomadele viitamiseks isikulist asesõna. Ülejäänud humaniseerivad lemmikloomi muul viisil ega kaldu pronoomenite kasutusnormidest kõrvale. Isikuliste asesõnade *hän* 'tema' ja *he* 'nad' kasutamine tekstides on mõjutatud mitmetest teguritest: soome kõnekeelest, võõrkeeltest, eriti inglise keelest, ja lemmikloomade muutuvast staatusest.

Märksõnad: elusushierahia, inimese ja looma suhe, soome keel, perspektiivi võtmine, pronoomenid, standardkeel