The Manual for the Standardized Description of the Uralic Dialects after 30Years

In 1988, the final version of "The Manual for the Standardized Description of the Uralic Dialects" created by K. Maytinskaya and W. Veenker, was approved. The standardized description would have allowed doing the typological comparison of the Uralic dialects by parameter set. For that time the Manual was very progressive. There have been written some monographs according to the Manual, most of them were published in the series of "Mitteilungen der Societas Uralo-Altaica".

In recent years, researchers of the Uralic idioms avoid making descriptions following the Manual. I think the main raison is that the linguistic paradigm changed in some ways since the creation of the Manual. While 30 years ago linguists paid more attention to the formal expression of language meanings, now the priority is grammatical semantics. The Manual gives very few opportunities, if any, to present grammatical semantics. Besides, linguistic science has since accumulated many new facts that changed our understanding of grammatical categories. In addition, that time the syntax description was not given due attention, so using the Manual, it is impossible to describe the syntax in detail at the present level.

However, the Manual is not completely outdated, and we could use it, if we make some changes. For example, the option to describe semantics of cases should appear. New version of the Manual should distinguish between the voice and the markers of argument derivation and between linear and quantitative aspects as well. It should give more opportunities to describe complex sentences without conjunctions etc.

In my paper, I will tell in detail what changes need to be made that the Manual become corresponding to modern representations and suitable for adequate language descriptions.