

## The role of suffixal element -s in North Saami adjectives

The adjective system in Saami languages is complex, filled with suffixes and it is rather underdescribed. The adjective system in the Saami languages has interested many scholars, but its complexity has been reducing the real interest to describe the adjectives in Saami more closely. Mostly the interest has concerned the attributive marker -s and its origin (Nielsen 1933; Rießler 2006).

Both derived and non-derived adjectives may or may not have separate attributive form. The attributive forms also vary between the Saami languages and dialects. The attributive is not always marked, instead, sometimes the marked form is predicative, such as North Saami *ođas* 'new (pred.)', which has attributive form *ođđa* 'new (attr.)'. The predicative form is marked with -s whereas the attributive form is unmarked. The adjective attributive system has been roughly described (Korhonen 1981, Sammallahti 1998), but it has not been described in more detail.

If the attribute form is marked, it is marked with -s. It is rather uncertain what the attributive marker -s is, as also many Saami adjective suffixes include -s. Such are three-syllabic adjectives formed with suffixes -is (e. g. *boaris*, gen.acc. *boarrása*, attr. *boares* 'old') and -as (*garas*, gen.acc. *garrasa*, attr. *garra* 'hard'), contracted adjectives formed with -is (as *njálggis*, gen.-acc. *njálgá*, attr. *njálgga* 'sweet, tasty'). As can be seen in the examples, the attributive form may or may not include -s.

The aim of this presentation is to describe more closely the role of suffixal element -s in North Saami adjectives. The study is material based, and this presentation attempts to compare the use of these adjective types in three material: J. K. Qvigstad's collection *Lappiske eventyr og sagn* I–IV from early 20th century, so called Dálvadas-material from 1960's (a folklore collection project in the University of Turku), and from various places collected oral material from 2010's.

Instead of looking at dictionaries and grammars the aim is to see the real use of adjectives and try to see whether the suffixal -s plays a role in the variation of inflectional types and attributive forms. We can take an example of adjectives ending in -as. Probably most common type is three-syllabic one, that has attribute ending -a: *ođas* (sg.nom): *ođđasa* (sg.gen-acc), attr. *ođđa* 'new' (< PU \**wuðe*). Second type is three-syllabic type of which the attribute is the same as nominative singular: *divrras*: *divrasa*, attr. *divrras* 'expensive'. However, there are also some two-syllabic adjectives ending -a, but that have attributive form -as, such as *gievra*: *gievrra*, attr. *gievrras* 'strong'. Do speakers keep these different but close inflectional categories separate? How do speakers handle the complexity of the system? Does the use of suffix -s increase in the attributive position or rather in predicative forms, forming new three-syllabic words?

## References

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