

On non-possessive functions of the 3rd person singular possessive suffix in Komi-Permyak

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Introduction

- adnominal possessive phrases in Komi-Permyak

(1) Nasta-lön jurśi(-ys) basök.
Nastya-GEN hair-3SG beautiful
'Nastya's hair is beautiful.'

(2) Sylön jurśi(-ys) basök.
s/he.GEN hair-3SG beautiful
'Her/His hair is beautiful.'

Introduction

- previous sources claim that nominal possessors are marked by the genitive while possessives are **usually** unmarked (Ponomareva 2010)
- in case of pronominal possessors, possessive is also optional (ibid.)
- the lack of possessive agreement is **usual but not obligatory** (Batalova 1975, 2002, Rédei 1978)
- no possessive agreement with definite, genitive-marked possessors (Bartens 2000)

Introduction

- the 3Sg possessive suffix *-ys* is, however, used quite frequently

(3) Jen-ys zer-ö.
God-3SG rain-PRS.3SG
'It rains.'

Introduction

previous sources show that 3rd (and 2nd) person singular possessive suffixes have additional functions in many FU languages, such as:

- marking of topicality (cf. Nikolaeva 2003) and/or definiteness (cf. Simonenko 2014, 2017)
- in Komi the marker can function as a
 - definiteness marker (Rédei 1978)
 - determiner (Bartens 2000)
 - a definiteness marker that can be reinterpreted as a determiner or a definite article (Fraurud 2001)
 - definite article (under a broader definition, Dryer 2013)

Outline

- Background
- Aims and claims
- Sources and methods
- Results: possessive agreement
- Results: non-possessive functions of the suffix *-ys*
- A note on grammaticalization
- Concluding remarks

Background

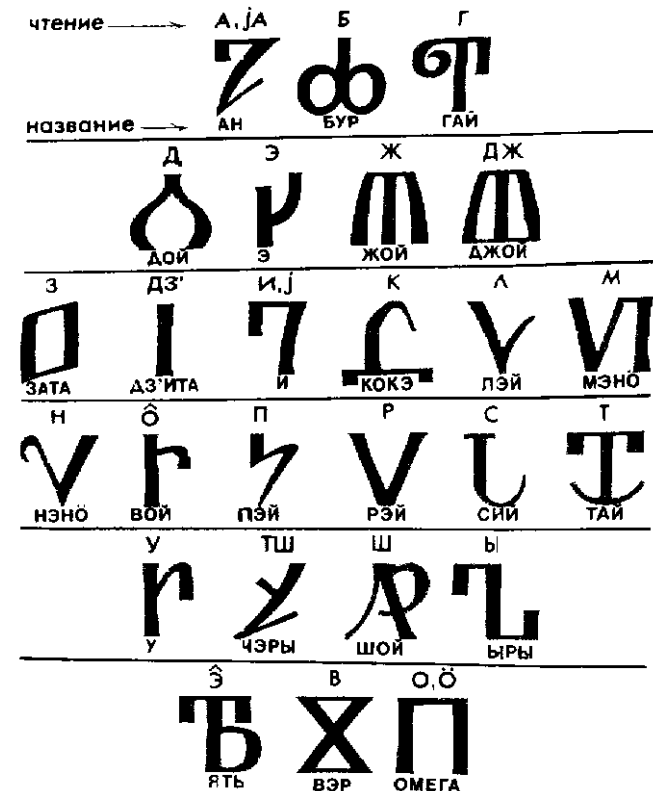
- Permic < Uralic
- Perm Region, Russia
- ca. 44,000 speakers (2020)
- closest relatives: Komi-Zyryan and Udmurt (Batalova 1975, Klumpp 2022, Kuznetsov 2022)
- less documentation than for KZ (but see, Lobanova 2017, 2018)
- intensive Russian influence



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Komi-Permyak_Autonomous_Okrug#/media/File:RussiaPermyakia.png

Background

- SVO but often left-branching
- nominative-accusative alignment
- 18 nominal cases
- no case marking asymmetry
- possessive and non-possessive case marking
- some syncretism within the possessive paradigm



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Permic_script#/media/File:Alfabeto_di_san_Stefano.png

Aims and claims

- to provide a classification of non-possessive functions of the morpheme *-ys*
- introduce possible directions of grammaticalization
- Q1: What is the distribution between the possessive and the non-possessive usage
- Q2: What functions can the suffix have in particular?
- Q3: How are these functions related to each other?

Aims and claims

I assume

- that possessive agreement is lacking in canonical cases,
- while there are some semantic and syntactic conditions where it is obligatory
- the reason for this is that the agreement marker developed at least four/three additional, non-possessive functions,
- which are all connected by definiteness

Sources and data

- elicitation
 - 4 native informants
 - 3 online interviews
 - translation tasks
 - grammaticality tests
 - a data set of ca. 1000 clauses
- corpus study
 - Korp (Borin et al. 2012)
 - 242,000 tokens
 - Wikipedia texts
 - ca. 1000 examples for the genitive forms (nouns and personal pronouns)
 - ca. 1500 examples for the suffix -ys

Possessive agreement

- all informants accepted both agreeing and non-agreeing phrases
- with animate (human or non-human) possessors

(4) Mam-ö-lön jurśi(-ys) śöd.
mother-1SG-GEN hair-3SG black
'My mother's hair is black.'

- this contradicts Bartens's claim (2000) stating that there is no possessive agreement with definite possessors

(5) Pon-lön gön(-ys) śöd.
dog-GEN hair-3SG black
'The dog's hair is black.'

Possessive agreement 2.

- with inanimate (human or non-human) possessors

(6) Ñebög-lön korka(-ys) ńaf'ös.
 book-GEN cover-3SG dirty
 'The cover of the book is dirty.'

Possessive agreement 3.

- all informants accepted both agreeing and non-agreeing phrases
- with possessives denoting kinship terms (7) and
- body parts (1) – not in all cases

(7) Nasta-lön mam(-ys) velötiś.
Nastya-GEN mother-3SG teacher
'Nastya's mother is a teacher.'

(1) Nasta-lön jurśi(-ys) basök.
Nastya-GEN hair-3SG beautiful
'Nastya's hair is beautiful.'

Possessive agreement 4.

- all informants accepted both agreeing and non-agreeing phrases
- with possessives denoting abstract concepts (8) – there are exceptions
- in other instances of alienable possession (9)

(8) Ol'ga-lön olöm(-ys) völ-i şökyt.
Olga-GEN life-3SG be-PST.3SG difficult
'Olga's life was difficult.'

(9) Ol'ga-lön pon(-ys)/ kerku(-ys) ćóćkom.
Olga-GEN dog-3SG house-3SG white
'Olga's dog/house is white.'

Possessive agreement 5.

- the informants accepted 90% of the examples both with and without possessive agreement
- in some cases, both variants are acceptable but agreement is preferred, i. e. there is a weak tendency towards agreement
- with some possessives denoting body parts such as *ki* 'hand', *jur* 'head', *śölöm* 'heart'
- with some possessives denoting abstract concepts such as *ńim* 'name' and *kad* 'time'

Possessive agreement 6.

- syntactic functions seldom play a role in agreement, except for
- differential possessor marking, which is well-documented and assumed to be of Turkic origin (cf. Rédei 1978, Bartens 2000)

(10) Me töd-i Petra-liś von-(sö).
I know-PST. 3SG Peter-ABL brother-ACC.3SG
'I knew Peter's brother.'

- elicited data shows a clear preference for the lack of agreement when the possessive phrase is a nominal predicate:

(11) Context: Myj eta? 'What's this?'
Eta Nasta-lön ñebög/*ñebög-ys.
this Nastya-GEN book/book-3SG
'This is Nastya's book.'

Possessive agreement 7.

- corpus data show similar tendencies
- the marking of the possessor is obligatory
- there is no possessive agreement in canonical cases and
- possessive marking is distinguished from external, predicative, and other instances of possession

Interim summary

- Q1: What is the distribution between the possessive and the non-possessive usage
- except for differential possessive marking, there are no strict rules in favour of agreement or the lack of it
- but there are some tendencies supported by both elicited and corpus data
- there is a strong tendency for the lack of agreement in corpus data

Non-possessive functions

- however, the use of suffix *-ys* is frequent in the corpus
- indicating that it has a function different from possessive marking
- from a set of 1475 instances, in 1324 cases *-ys* has non-possessive function vs. 151 cases of possession
- functions can be the marking of definiteness, specificity, and so-called partitive usage

Non-possessive functions 2.

- definiteness

(12) Nyvka mun-i gort-ö.
girl go-PST.3SG home-ILL
'A/The girl went home.'

(13) Nyvka-ys mun-i gort-ö.
girl-3SG go-PST.3SG home-ILL
'A particular/The girl went home.'

Non-possessive functions 3.

- specificity

(3) Jen-ys zer-ö.
God-3SG rain-PRS.3SG
'It rains.'

(14) Una öni kad-ys.
much now time-3SG
'It's so late now.'

Non-possessive functions 4.

- partitive usage

(15) Ućöt-ys pyzan vylyn.
small-3SG table on

‘The small one is on the table.’

(16) Eta nébög-ys öd'd'ön int'eresnöj.
this book-3SG very interesting

‘This book is very interesting.’

Non-possessive functions 5.

- following König's (2018) classification, suffix *-ys* expresses direct anaphora

(17) Vör-yn em kerku.

forest-INE be.PRS.SG house

Kerku-ys važ.

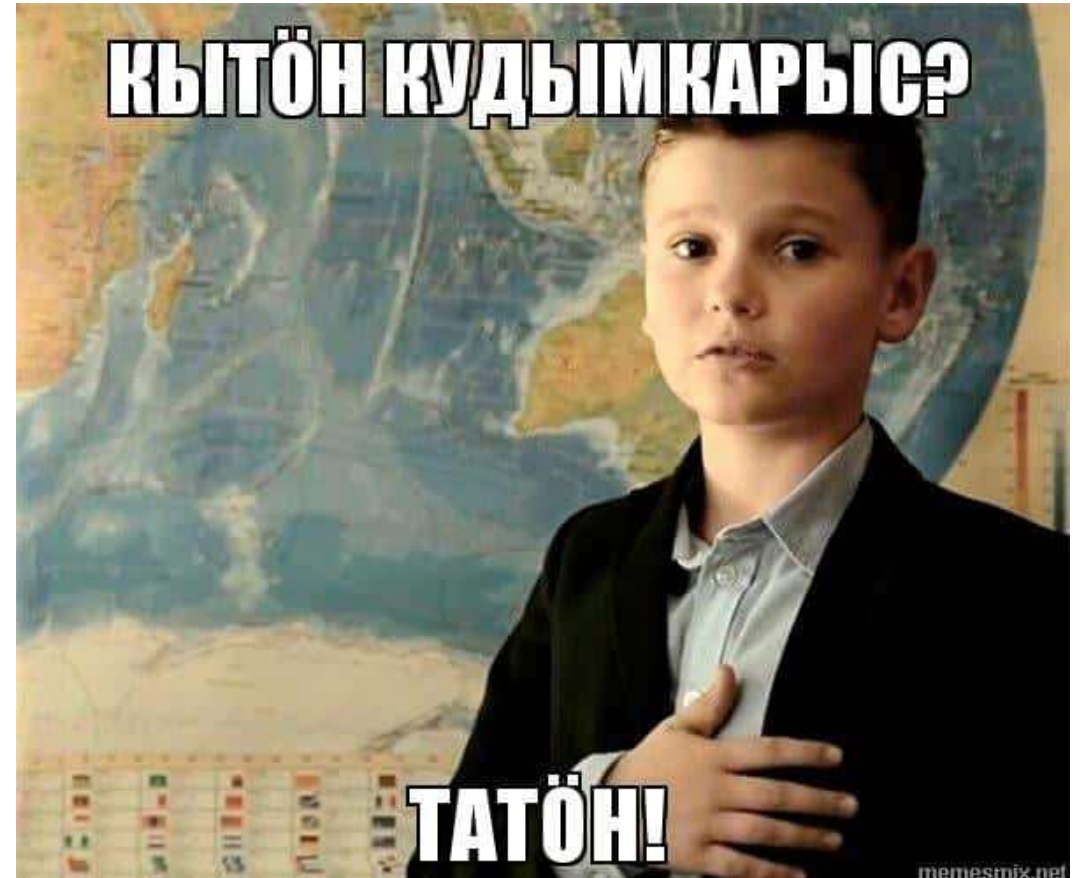
house-3SG old

‘There is a house in the forest. The house is old.’

Non-possessive functions 6.

- the suffix denotes an entity identifiable from general knowledge (exophoric usage)

(18) Kytön Kudymkar-ys?
where Kudymkar-3SG
'Where is that Kudymkar?'



Non-possessive functions 7.

- the suffix denotes an entity identifiable because it is unique (exophoric usage)

(3) Jen-ys zer-ö.
God-3SG rain-PRS.3SG
'It rains.'

Non-possessive functions 8.

- the suffix occurs (less frequently) in associative-situational contexts (cf. Egedi 2017), particularly in cases when it refers to an entity that is different from the interlocutors and is available from direct sensory perception

(19) Va-ys kynm-ö okt'abr pom-yn.
water-3SG freeze-PRS.3SG October end-INE
'The water freezes in the end of October.'

A note on grammaticalization

- functions of of the suffix *-ys*:

possessive > associative-situational > situational/larger situational use

- possible path for grammaticalization of the suffix *-ys*:

possessive agreement marker > determiner > ?? definite article

- for the second stage, cf. Hungarian *-ik* 'a certain one'

Concluding remarks

- Q1: What is the distribution between the possessive and the non-possessive usage
- there is a strong tendency for the lack of agreement in corpus data, while informants allowed both variants in 90% of cases
- Q2: What functions can the suffix have in particular?
- anaphoric, definite, specific, and partitive
- (possessive), associative-situational, situational/larger situational
- Q3: How are these functions related to each other?
 - we can either assume that the suffix is polyfunctional or
 - explain these functions as different stages of grammaticalization
 - the change from a possessive suffix to a determiner (or a definite article) is a common phenomenon
 - and the vanishing of possessive agreement also can support the above change

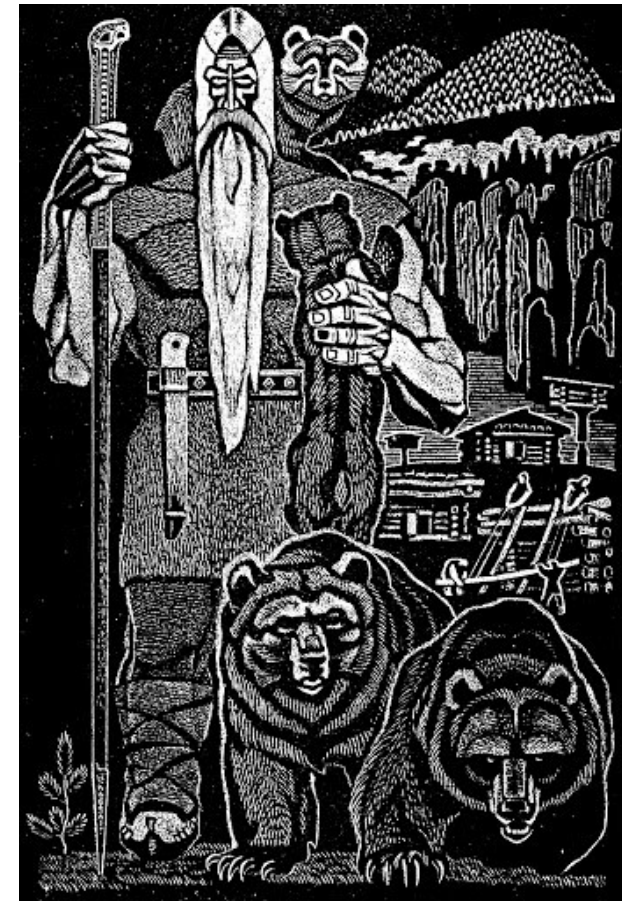
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Thank you!
АТТЬӧ!
Kiitos!



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