Microvariation in head-exponent alignment: Finno-Ugric possessive suffixes

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Introduction

Puzzle 1: Polyfunctionality (Komi)

(1) Ponm-ej
     dog-1SG
     'my dog'

(2) Ponm-yd
     dog-2SG
     'your dog'

(3) Ponm-ys
     dog-3SG
     'his dog'

(4) Pon-num
     dog-1PL
     'our dog'

(5) Pon-nyd
     dog-2PL
     'your (pl.) dog'

(6) Pon-nys
     dog-3PL
     'their dog'

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(1) Ponm-ej
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'his dog'/'that dog'

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dog-2PL
'your (pl.) dog'

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dog-3PL
'their dog'

Introduction

Puzzle 1: Polyfunctionality (Komi)

- Head marking of a possessive relation:

(1) Petra-lyn ponm-ys
     Petr-GEN dog-3SG
     'Petja's dog'

- Non-possessive use:

(2) Šond-ys dep-š'i-s.
     Sun-3SG dep-DETR-PRT.3SG
     'The sun has set.'

Introduction

> ## Puzzle 2: Variation among cognates
>
> - Possessive suffixes are cognates in Finno-Ugric. 3sg marker is alveolar fricative based ([z] in Mari, [s] in Komi).
> - Morphosyntactic distribution and semantic licensing varies.
>   - ▸ Mari (Meadow, village Staryj Torjal, Mari El republic)
>   - ▸ Komi (Izhem, village Muzhi, Yamal-Nenets district)

Introduction

Puzzle 2: Possessive suffix co-occurrence is possible in Mari

(1) məj-ən nəl uškal-em ulo. məj ikt-əž-əm/ikt-əm
     I-GEN four cow-1SG is. I one-3SG-ACC
     užal-ən-em...
     sell-DESID-PRS.1SG
     'I have four cows. I want to sell one of them...'

(2) ...uškal-em-že šiž-eš što məj tud-əm užal-em
     ...cow-1SG-3SG feel-PRS.3SG that I he-ACC sell-PRS.1SG
     '...that cow of mine feels that I'm going to sell her.'

Introduction

> **Puzzle 2: Possessive suffix co-occurrence is possible in Mari but not in Komi**
>
> (1)   Sy-a   mösk-(*ym)-ys čuvstvujt-ö, myj me möd-a
>   that-NOM cow-(*1SG)-3SG feel-PRS.3SG that I   want-PRS.1SG
>   sij-ö   vuzoo-ny
>   that-ACC sell-INF
>   'That cow (*of mine) feels that I want to sell her.'

Background

Status of non-possessive uses of 3SG in Finno-Ugric

- Possessive suffixes have been discussed for Finno-Ugric as a group.
  - ▹ Fraurud (2001), Kuznetsova (2003): Possessivity Suffix;
  - ▹ Gerland (2011): Relational Suffix (marking Possessivity and Definiteness)
- The question of functional head-exponent mapping hasn't been raised.

Problems

- posed by homophony of exponents of distinct grammatical features (how are they mapped onto syntactic structure).
- posed by across Finno-Ugric variation (suffix "doubling" in Mari but not in Komi).

Outline

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The problem of head-exponent alignment

Questions

- Polyfunctionality: a marker appears in two different sets of contexts – expresses two grammatical features.

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  - ▷ Does it spell out homophonously two different functional heads or

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Questions

- Polyfunctionality: a marker appears in two different sets of contexts – expresses two grammatical features.
  - ▷ Does it spell out homophonously two different functional heads or
 - ▷ Is it spellout of the same functional head which corresponds to both features?

The problem of head-exponent alignment: Proposal

Matching of features and heads based on licensing contexts

- If licensing contexts of one feature (e.g. POSSESSIVITY) are a subset of the set of contexts of another (e.g. DEFINITENESS) – same head.

  - X^o:POSS; DEF

    ▷ Contexts of possessivity marking are a subset of contexts of definiteness marking in English; If *my dog* then *the dog*; *'s* and *the* "compete" for D^o, Sobin (2002).

- If licensing contexts of one feature (e.g. POSSESSIVITY) are not a subset of the set of contexts of another (e.g. FOCUS) – different heads.

  - X^o:POSS AND Y^o:FOC

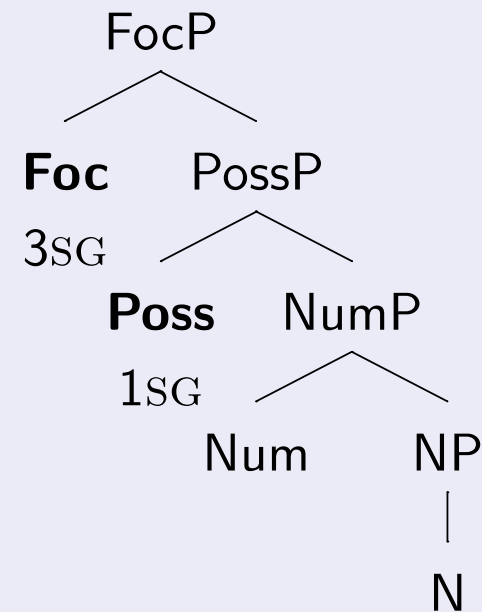# The problem of head-exponent alignment: Proposal
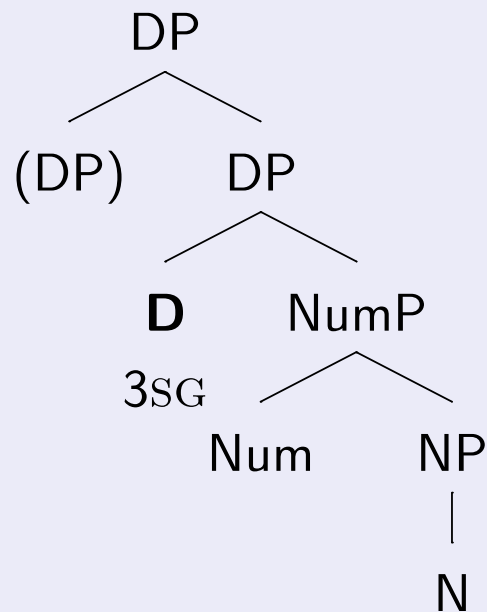
Head-exponent alignment: Larger perspective

- What looks like morphologically similar exponents might realize different functional heads in different languages once distribution patterns are carefully examined (Borer 2005, Wiltschko 2008, Butler to appear a.o.)

Outline

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Non-possessive use in Komi

> **Hawkins' (1978) anaphoric definiteness**
>
> (2)   Me mun-i   uliča   kuza   i   add-il-i   pon.
>   I   walk-PRT street along and see-ITER-PRT dog
>   Ponm-*(ys)   kuč-i-s   uut-ny.
>   dog.OBL-*(3SG)   start-PRT-3 bark-INF
>   'I was walking down the street and saw a dog. The dog started
>   barking.' [Kashkin 2008]

Non-possessive use in Komi

> **Hawkins' (1978) immediate situation definiteness**
>
> (2)   əbes-*(se)   sipt-i!
>   door-3SG.ACC close-IMP
>   'Close the door!' [Kashkin 2008]

Outline

Non-possessive use in Mari

3SG is NOT licensed by an anaphoric antecedent

(3)   Vasja kniga-m   nal-əm.   Tač'e tudo (tide) kniga-(*ž)-əm

        Vasja book-ACC buy-NARR.1SG today he   (that) book-(*3SG)-ACC

        lud-eš.

        read-PRS.3SG

        'Vasja bought a book. Today he is reading that book.'

3SG is licensed by an alternative set

(4)   Vasja kum kniga-m   nal-əm.   Tač'e ik   kniga-ž-əm   tude

        Vasja three book-ACC buy-NARR.1SG today one book-3SG-ACC he

        lud-eš.

        read-PRS.3SG

        'Vasja bought three books. Today he is reading a book (from those).'

Non-possessive use in Mari

- Non-possessive use of 3SG covers contexts where there is an alternative set.
  - ▶ We are dealing with FOCUS.

Outline

Towards an analysis

Licensing contexts of 3SG

	possessor	immed. sit.	anaphoric antec.	alternative set
Komi	✓	✓	✓	
Mari	✓			✓

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- In Komi the set of contexts is semantically cohesive.

Towards an analysis

Licensing contexts of 3SG

	possessor	immed. sit.	anaphoric antec.	alternative set
Komi	✓	✓	✓	
Mari	✓			✓

- In Komi the set of contexts is semantically cohesive.
- In Mari the set of contexts is not semantically cohesive.

Towards an analysis

Semantic cohesion of POSS–DEF contexts

- Presence of a possessor (either in the anaphoric context or in the discourse situation)
  1. either provides an argument for a possessive relation;
  2. or provides a situation in which uniqueness can be established (Schwarz (2009) for DEF in German)

Towards an analysis

Semantic cohesion of POSS–DEF contexts

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Semantic non-cohesion of POSS–FOC contexts

- Presence of a possessor
  1. provides an argument for a possessive relation;
  2. does not provide an alternative set antecedent required for an f-marked expression (Rooth 2007).

Distinguishing functional heads

Hypothesis

- FEATURE SUPERIMPOSITION: subset/superset relation between sets of licensing contexts.
  - ▹ Features in relation of Superimposition (e.g. POSS & DEF) are mapped onto the same head.
  - ▹ Features not in relation of Superimposition (e.g. POSS & FOC) are mapped onto different heads.

Expected

- No co-occurrence of two possessive suffixes in Komi. ✓
- Co-occurrence of two possessive suffixes in Mari. ✓

Suffix co-occurrence in Mari

MARI

(3)   uškal-em-že
cow-1SG-3SG
'that cow of mine'

FocP

Foc   PossP

-že

Poss   NumP

-em

Num   NP

N

uškal
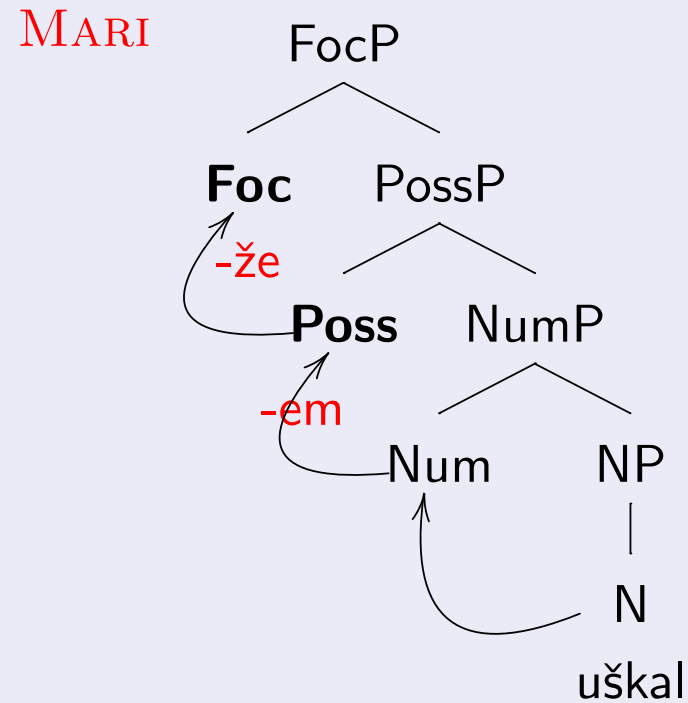
Foc^o:FOC $\rightarrow$ 3SG
Poss^o:POSS $\rightarrow$ 1SG

Results

- The contrast in possessive suffix "doubling" is accounted for via a formal procedure for feature-head-exponent mapping.

- Syntax is sensitive to semantic relations between features, mapping Superimposed features onto the same head.

Conclusions: Mappings

> **FEATURE → X^o → exponent mapping is not uniform**
>
> **Wiltschko (2008)**:
>
> | | | | | |
> |---|---|---|---|---|
> | German | DEF | → | D^o | → definite article |
> | Halkomelem Salish | DEF | → | Class^o | → definite article |
>
> **Present findings**:
>
> | | | | | |
> |---|---|---|---|---|
> | Komi | POSS & DEF | → | D^o | → possessive suffix |
> | Mari | POSS | → | Poss^o | → possessive suffix |
> | | FOCUS | → | Focus^o | → possessive suffix |

Conclusions: Syncretism

(At least two) origins of syncretism.

- Superimposition: contexts of one feature include as a proper subset contexts of another.

- ?

FEATURE → X^o → exponent mapping is not uniform

Wiltschko (2008):

German	DEF	→ D^o	→ definite article
Halkomelem Salish	DEF	→ Class^o	→ definite article

Present findings:

Komi	POSS & DEF	→ D^o	→ possessive suffix
Mari	POSS	→ Poss^o	→ possessive suffix
	FOCUS	→ Focus^o	→ possessive suffix

Conclusions: Syncretism

(At least two) origins of syncretism.

- **Superimposition**: contexts of one feature include as a proper subset contexts of another.
- **Shared semantic component**:
  - ▶ Semantics of POSS involving a pronominal element (variable over individuals)
  - ▶ Semantics of FOC involving a pronominal element (variable over sets of individuals)

FEATURE → X^o → exponent mapping is not uniform

Wiltschko (2008):

German	DEF	→	D^o	→ definite article
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Present findings:

Komi	POSS & DEF	→	D^o	→ possessive suffix
Mari	POSS	→	Poss^o	→ possessive suffix
	FOCUS	→	Focus^o	→ possessive suffix

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