

Possessive clitic climbing as a pattern of agreement with the possessor in Permic and Mari postpositional phrases

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Introduction

The phenomenon: different forms – same function:

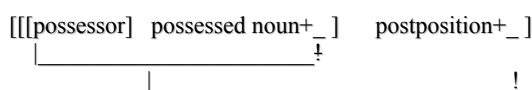
- *Irregular* (non-local) agreement by the postposition, ie. the P(ossessive) C(litic) C(limbing) pattern (left column in 1 and Figure 1)
- *Regular* (local) agreement by the possessed noun (right column in 1)

(1)

- a. Komi: *jur* *vylti-yd* ~ *jur-yd* *vylti*
 head over-2SG head-2SG over
 ‘over your head’ (Wiedemann 1884: 204)
- b. Udmurt: *ukno* *vyži-ad* ~ *ukno-jed* *vyžiy*
 window under-2SG window-2SG under
 ‘under your window’ (ibid.)
- c. Mari: *šongem-mōŋgə-že* ~ *šongeme-ž* *mōŋgō*
 aging-after-3SG aging-3SG after
 ‘after he had grown old’ (Wichmann 1978: 279)

- Lack of agreement also possible.

Figure 1.



Past work on the PCC paradox

- Schlachter (1960: 180ff): PPs exhibiting PCC in Komi are used mainly with meronyms and kinship terms, and must originate in possessive NPs headed by compounds
- Rédei (1962: 201ff): PPs exhibiting PCC are compound words
- Efremov 1955–56, Kokla 1963, Suhanova 1963

The questions to be examined here

- Different forms – different functions?
- What syntactic category are we dealing with really?
- If Rédei (1962) is wrong, how can we explain the coexistence of the two agreement patterns and why is it interesting in terms of grammaticalization?

Data sources

- Corpora consisting of cca. 1700 Komi, 1600 Udmurt and 1000 Mari sentences
- Elicitation

Results and discussion

1. Function and distribution

1.1 Conceptual configurations

Table 1. Conceptual configurations in PPs with PCC.

Type no.	“Object”-NP		Postposition	Examples
	Possessor	Possesum		
1	Animate	Entity controlled immediately by Possessor	Spatial	1a-b
2		Situation caused or experienced by Possessor	Temporal or causal-final	1c

1.2 A hypothesis

The PCC pattern is mainly used when possession is controlled, and the regular pattern is mainly used when possession is uncontrolled.

1.3 Testing the hypothesis

Table 2. Distribution of the alternative patterns by configuration.

		PCC pattern Controlled/ Uncontrolled		Regular pattern Controlled/ Uncontrolled		No agreement Controlled/ Uncontrolled	
		C (E, %)	UnC (E, %)	C (E, %)	UnC (E, %)	C (E, %)	UnC (E, %)
Komi	44	24 54,5%	2 4,5%	0 0%	0 0%	13 29,5%	5 11,4%
Udmurt	46	28 61%	2 4,3%	6 13%	4 8,7%	3 6,5%	3 6,5%
Mari	63	5 7,94%	1 1,58%	30 47,62%	13 20,63%	5 7,94%	9 14,29%

*Instances of non-possessive interpretation excluded!

2. Syntactic category

Arguments for and against the compound theory

For:

- meaning often not compositional (2a)
- variation of lexical items occurring in the construction relatively restricted
- what seems to be postposition can be inflected for number (though this does not necessarily have any implications on the meaning of the whole) (2b)
- phonological fusion of elements relatively frequent, esp. in Mari (2c)

Against:

What seems to be first component of a compound noun can be

- inflected for number (3a)
- separated from the seeming second component by pragmatic clitics (3b)
- modified by attributes and determiners (type 1) (and thus, be referential) (3c)
- extended by verbal arguments (type 2) (3d)

(2)

a. Komi: *vom ul-as*
mouth under-INE.3SG
'in himself' (Rédei 1978: 119)

b. Udmurt: *korka ber-jos-am*
house behind-PL-INE.1SG
'behind my house' (!) (Karakulova & Karakulov 2001: 89)

c. Mari: *wic'ambalne-m* (< *wüta ümbalne-m*)
stable.above-1SG
'above my stable' (Beke 1911: 237)

(3)

a. Udmurt: *kwin' ukno-os ul-am*
three window-PL under-INE.1SG
'under my three windows' (elicited)

b. Udmurt: *korka=no s'ör-ad*
house=and behind-INE.2SG
'behind your house' (Rédei 1962: 107)

c. Mari: *tuđo peče j̄re-m*
 that fence around-1SG
 ‘around that fence of mine’ (elicited)

d. Komi: *sijđ kar-đ vođm bđra-nym*
 that town-ILL arrival after-3PL
 ‘after we had arrived in that town’ (elicited)

3. Explaining the coexistence of the two agreement patterns

Table 3. Presumed development of the PCC pattern. (Px stands for possessive suffix.)

	<i>jur vyltiyd</i>	<i>juryd vylti</i>
Category and meaning of the source construction	NP ‘over your head top’	NP ‘over the top of your head’
Morpheme order	[N1+N2]+Px	[N1+Px]#N2
Decategorization	---	[N1+Px]#P
Category and meaning of the output construction	---	PP ‘over your head’
Reanalysis	[N1]#[P+Px]	---
Category and meaning of the output construction	PP ‘over your head’	---
Agreement pattern	Irregular	Regular

Prerequisites of the presumed process

- postpositions like Komi *vylti* ‘over’, originating from the translative form of *vyl* ‘top’
- a critical mass of compounds like Komi **jyrvyl* ‘head top’, headed by the same kind of spatial nouns from which *vylti* and the like originate
- possessive NPs with the possessed noun inflected for number and person of the possessor

Consequences of the presumed process

- N1 gains syntactic independence instead of losing any
- N2 undergoes decategorization on one hand, but it gains syntactic independence on the other
- the possessive suffix begins to behave like a clitic, in that it is separated from its main target

Conclusion and general linguistic relevance

- As to the function: PCC is used for encoding controlled possession. NB. This notion intersects with those of inalienability, inherentness, givenness, permanency, etc. (Seiler 2001: 29ff).
- As to the category: Constructions exhibiting PCC must be regarded as representing PPs, not NPs headed by compounds.
- As to explaining the coexistent patterns: PCC is presumably due to reanalysis based on the analogy of already existing PPs (cf. Schlachter *ibid.*).
- Inventories where PCC would fit:
 - non-canonical agreement domains (Corbett 2006: 59ff)
 - counter-examples for unidirectionality of grammaticalization

Future work

- PCC in double possessive NPs?
- Role of non-possessive use of possessive suffixes?
- Geographic distribution of the compound type underlying PPs with PCC, inside and outside the Finno-Ugric language family?
- Other possible devices for encoding controlled possession?

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Acknowledgements

Larisa Ponomareva, Elena Rodionova, Anastasiya Saypasheva, Yulia Speshilova, for their help regarding native language usage. All possible mistakes are mine.

Poster URL: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B6TIBsgy846USzhuQjVRTGRzUk0/view>