Encoding subjects in participial relative clauses in Mari languages
Anna Volkova (National Research University Higher School of Economics)

Participial relative clauses (pRCs) in Mari languages (Uralic) allow overt subjects and encode them in a number of ways: (i) with a possessive suffix on the head noun; (ii) with nominative; or (iii) with genitive. The present paper contrasts the fieldwork data from two Mari languages: Meadow Mari and Hill Mari, which differ with respect to constraints on subject encoding.

Meadow Mari presents a rather rigid system of subject encoding. The subject of a participle derived with –*me* can be marked with genitive (all argument types on the animacy hierarchy, AH (1)) or with nominative (only the lower part of the AH, Brykina & Aralova 2012) – cf. (2) & (3). In case of +human nouns, both genitive and nominative are possible (4).
(1) 1&2 person > other pronoun > proper name > human > non-human > inanimate
(2) Məj [təj-*(ən) / Vasja-*(n) purl-mo] melna-m   kočkaš om   tüŋal.
    I   you-GEN   Vasja-GEN bite-NZR pancake-ACC eat   NEG.PRS.1SG will
    'I will not eat the pancake nibbled by you / Vasja.'
(3) Məj [pərəs-(ən)   purl-mo] melna-m   kočkaš om   tüŋal.
    I   cat-(GEN)   bite-NZR pancake-ACC eat   NEG.PRS.1SG   will
    'I will not eat the pancake nibbled by the cat.'
(4) Jəvan [buxgalter(-ən)   pu-əmo] pašadar   nergen šon-a.
    Ivan   bookkeeper(-GEN) give-NZR wages   about   think-PRS.3SG
    'Ivan is thinking about the wages given to him by the bookkeeper.'
The time adverb *teŋgeč'e* 'yesterday' can both precede and follow the Genitive subject in a pRC (5), while it can only precede, but not follow the Nominative subject (6).
(5) Jəvan [(teŋgeč'e) buxgalter-ən   (teŋgeč'e) pu-əmo] pašadar-ž-əm   šotl-a.
    Ivan   (yesterday) bookkeeper-GEN (yesterday) give-NZR wages-P.3SG-ACC count-3SG
    'Ivan is counting the wages that the bookkeeper gave (to him) yesterday.'
(6) Jəvan [(teŋgeč'e) buxgalter   (??teŋgeč'e) pu-əmo] pašadar-ž-əm   šotl-a.
    Ivan   (yesterday) bookkeeper (yesterday)   give-NZR wages-P.3SG-ACC count-3SG
    'Ivan is counting the wages that the bookkeeper gave (to him) yesterday.'

Hill Mari: The subject of a participle derived with –*mə̂* can also be marked with genitive or with nominative, but genitive encoding is only obligatory for the personal pronouns (7). In the other cases, genitive encoding is optional (8).
(7) Mən' [tən'-*(ən)   pə̂rə̂l-mə̂]   melenä-m   a-m   kač.
    I   you-GEN   nibble-NZR   pancake-ACC NEG.NPST-1SG eat
    'I will not eat the pancake nibbled by you.'
(8) [Maša(-n) / buxgalter(-ən)   pu-mə̂] oksa-m   Ivan   šotl-a.
    Masha(-GEN) bookkeeper(-GEN) give-NZR money-ACC Ivan   counts-PRS.3SG
    'Ivan counts the money given to him by Masha / by the bookkeeper.'
When combined with the time adverb *tengeče*, all four options for the position of the adverb in the pRC are possible irrespective of the encoding of the subject (9).
(9) [(Tengeče) buxgalter(-ən)   (tengeče) pu-mə̂] oksa-m   Ivan šotl-a.
    Yesterday   bookkeeper(-GEN) yesterday give-NZR money-ACC Ivan counts-PRS.3SG
    'Ivan counts the money given to him by the bookkeeper yesterday.'
From that I conclude that (i) in both Mari languages, Genitive subject is assigned Case within the embedded clause; (ii) in Meadow Mari, Nominative is assigned lower in the structure than Genitive. Mari data supports drawing finer differences in the syntactic structure of pRCs (contra Doron & Reintges 2005 and in line with Miyagawa 2011) resulting in a more adequate typology of pRCs.

References:

Brykina, Maria M. and Natalia. B. Aralova (2012) Sistemy prichastij v marijskom i permskix jazykax [Participle systems in Mari and Permic languages]. In Kuznetsova, Ariadna I., ed., *Finno-ugorskie jazyki. Fragmenty grammaticheskogo opisanija* [Finno-Ugric languages. Fragments of grammatical description]. Moscow, YSK, pp. 476—520.
Doron, Edit and Chris Reintges (2005) On the syntax of participial modifiers. Ms., the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.
Miyagawa, Shigeru (2011) Genitive subjects in Altaic and specification of phase. *Lingua* 121: pp. 1265–1282.