Non-flip evidential questions in Kildin Saami

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Intro: Evidentials in questions often undergo the so-called interrogative flip (IF), i.e. become anchored to the hearer rather than to the speaker (Korotkova 2016, Murray 2017, San Roque et al. 2017). It is known, however, that there are languages where evidentials in questions remain anchored to the speaker: Aikhenvald 2004 and San Roque et al. 2017 provide a number of examples from different languages, while Bhadra 2017, 2020 discusses Bangla and Telugu speaker-oriented evidentials in polar questions in detail. This paper addresses the Kildin Saami (< Saami < Uralic) inferential Perfect, which is remarkable for it must be anchored to the speaker in both polar and wh-questions. We aim to provide the first description of the behavior of the Kildin Saami inferential Perfect in questions and sketch a possible compositional account of the data.

Background: The Kildin Saami Perfect (an analytic construction consisting of the auxiliary verb 'to be' in the non-past tense and the past participle of the main verb) is ambiguous between several readings, one of which is the inferential reading. The inferential Perfect signals that the evidence for its prejacent is an inference based on observed results (1). Among all the readings of the Kildin Saami Perfect, only the inferential reading is compatible with event time adverbials (such as *iince* 'in the morning'), thus, we use them in all our examples to ensure that we are dealing with the right reading. In declaratives, the inferential Perfect is anchored to the speaker.

(1) p'et'a **l'ii** ujjt-**ma** iince.
P. **be.NPST.3SG** leave-**PTCP.PST** in.the.morning
{The speaker does not see Petja's coat in the wardrobe.} '(**I infer**) Petja left in the morning.'

Inferential Perfect in polar questions: Polar questions in Kildin Saami are marked only by a special intonation. Polar questions with the inferential Perfect signal that the speaker has inferential evidence for the prejacent proposition and raise the issue whether the prejacent is true or not. This characterization is supported by the following observations: **(i)** polar questions with the inferential Perfect are felicitous only if the speaker has inferential evidence for the prejacent (2); **(ii)** they are felicitous if the speaker expects the hearer to provide the relevant information (this shows that we are not dealing with conjectural/self-addressed questions; see e.g. Eckardt 2020); **(iii)** the addressee is not required to use the inferential Perfect in the answer, which shows that the raised issue is about the truth of the prejacent proposition (3).

(2) p'et'a ejj tula l'ii čɒɒŋŋ-ma škɒɒhp'-e?
P. NEG.3SG long.ago be.NPST.3SG get.into-PTCP.PST wardrobe-DAT.SG
***{**The speaker has not seen the wardrobe but assumes that the addressee has some evidence for Petja getting / not getting into the wardrobe recently.} '(Given what you infer), did Petja get into the wardrobe recently?'
OK{The speaker sees that the wardrobe door is ajar.} '(I infer) Petja got into the wardrobe recently, (is that true?)'

(3) nɨd'd' p'et'a ejj tula **OK**l'ii čɒɒŋŋ-ma /
like.this P. NEG.3SG long.ago be.NPST.3SG get.into-PTCP.PST
OKčɒɒŋ-e škɒɒhp'-e.
get.into-PST.3SG wardrobe-DAT.SG
{As an answer to (2).} 'Yes, Peter got into the wardrobe recently.'

Inferential Perfect in wh-questions: Quite similarly, wh-questions with the inferential Perfect signal that the speaker has inferential evidence for an existential claim and raise the issue who or what satisfies that existential claim. Thus, such questions **(i)** require the speaker to have inferential evidence for the existential claim (4), **(ii)** are felicitous if the addressee is expected to provide an answer, and **(iii)** do not require the addressee to use the inferential Perfect in the answer (5).

(4) k'ee ejj tula l'ii čɒɒŋŋ-ma škɒɒhp'-e?
who.NOM.SG NEG.3SG long.ago be.NPST.3SG get.into-PTCP.PST wardrobe-DAT.SG
***{**The speaker has not seen the wardrobe but assumes that the addressee has some evidence for someone getting into the wardrobe recently.} '(Given what you infer), who got into the wardrobe recently?'
OK{The speaker sees that the wardrobe's door is ajar.} '(I infer) someone got into the wardrobe recently, (who was that)?'

(5) p'et'a ejj tula **OK**l'ii čɒɒŋŋ-ma / **OK**čɒɒŋ-e
P. NEG.3SG long.ago be.NPST.3SG get.into-PTCP.PST get.into-PST.3SG
škɒɒhp'-e.
wardrobe-DAT.SG
{As an answer to (4).} 'Petja got into the wardrobe recently.'

Proposal: For the reasons of space, the presentation of our account will be brief. We assume that all evidentials undergo IF in the scope of the question operator Q, which shifts the origo $o(c)$ (Korotkova 2016 and others) to the hearer. The absence of IF in Kildin Saami can be explained assuming that the Kildin Saami inferential must take scope above Q. In such cases, the inferential operator can be applied to the disjunction of the alternatives in the question denotation and produce a not-at-issue meaning (in the sense of e.g. Murray 2014).

We propose that Perfect morphology in Kildin Saami can be selected by the covert operator INFER displaced at the left periphery. The meaning of INFER is adapted from Eckardt 2020 ($q(c)$ is the maximal body of knowledge of $o(c)$ relevant for the current question under discussion, which must include witnessed facts; the relation STEREO is defined in Eckardt 2020: 18):

(6) $[\![\text{INFER}]\!]^c = \lambda p \lambda w. \forall w' (\text{STEREO}(o(c), w, q(c), w') \rightarrow p(w'))$

Questions are taken to denote sets of propositions (Hamblin 1973 and many others). Following Biezma & Rawlins 2012, we assume that polar questions have singleton denotations (7a). Wh-questions have standard Hamblin denotations (7b). Importantly, pointwise functional application of at-issue meanings is not allowed in the system (as in Kotek 2019).

(7) a. $[\![[\text{Q } [\text{John smokes}]]]\!]^c = \{\lambda w.[\text{John smokes in } w]\}$

b. $[\![[\text{Q } [\text{who smokes}]]]\!]^c = \{\lambda w.[\text{John smokes in } w], \lambda w.[\text{Peter smokes in } w], ...\}$

Finally, we claim that in Kildin Saami, INFER must take scope above the question operator. Due to a type mismatch, INFER in such cases cannot combine with its complement

directly. The semantic clash is resolved by a last-resort type-shifting operation which allows INFER to combine with the disjunction of the alternatives denoted by its complement and produce a not-at-issue meaning. Since INFER is outside the scope of the question, the judge is not shifted to the hearer. This correctly predicts the interpretations of Kildin Saami questions with the inferential Perfect.

Outro: In this paper, we have shown that Kildin Saami is a language where a grammaticalized evidential is obligatorily anchored to the speaker in both polar and wh-questions and sketched a compositional account of the data. We tentatively suggest that the account can be applied to other languages with similar behavior of evidentials in questions (Aikhenvald 2004, San Roque et al. 2017).

Abbreviations: 3 – 3rd person; DAT – dative; NEG – negation; NOM – nominative; NPST – non-past; PST – past; PTCP – participle; SG – singular.

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