



# DISCONTINUITY IN KILDIN SAAMI POSTPOSITIONAL PHRASES

16.06.2022

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# Introduction

- Kildin Saami belongs to the Eastern group of Saami languages (Sammalahti 1998)
  - Spoken mostly in Lovozero (Lovozerky district, Murmansk Oblast, Russia)
  - Largest of Eastern Saami languages spoken in Russia, about 100 active speakers (Scheller 2013)
  - Significant number of dialects
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- The present work is predominately based on the elicitation data collected In Lovozero in January 2022

# Order of constituents in nominal phrases

- Dependents of Kildin Saami nouns can both follow and precede the head of the NP (see also Rießler 2022)
- Adjective (1), determiner (2) and non-finite verbal (3) modifiers are mostly prenominal.

- (1)        nuur-a                      n'iiijt  
             young-COMP        daughter.NOM.SG  
             'A younger sister'
- (2)        tedd                      loaffk  
             this.NOM.SG        bag.NOM.SG  
             'This bag'
- (3)        vuesst-ma            peerrt                      (?vuesst-ma)  
             buy-PTCP.PST    house.NOM.SG        buy-PTCP.PST  
             'A house that has been bought'

- The possibility of postnominal usage of adjectives and determiners is still to be researched, but there seem to be no such cases in existing texts

# Order of constituents in nominal phrases

- Nouns in oblique cases and adpositional phrases can be nominal modifiers, unlike in some other Uralic languages (e.g. North Khanty)

- Nouns in oblique cases (4) and relative clauses (5) mostly follow the head of the NP

(4) (% ahkn-exa)                      peer̥t̥                      ahkn-exxa  
window-ABE.SG                      house.NOM.SG                      window-ABE.SG  
'A house without windows'

(5) (% koonn                      vuus't-e)                      per̥t̥                      koonn                      vuus't-e  
which.GEN.SG                      buy-PST.3SG                      house.NOM.SG                      which.GEN.SG                      buy-PST.3SG  
'The house that he has bought'

- Postpositional phrases can occur both prenominally and postnominally (6), although postnominal occurrences are more frequent in texts

(6) (paarrn-e                      vuejke)                      k̥ir'r'j                      (paarrn-e                      vuejke)  
child-GEN.PL                      for                      book.NOM.SG                      child-GEN.PL                      for  
'A book for children'

# Order of constituents in nominal phrases

- Genitive dependents usually precede the head of the NP, but some speakers allow (at least nominal) genitive dependents to follow their head

(7)	a.	nuur-a	v'il'j-an	vuejjv
		young-COMP	brother.GEN.SG-POSS.1	head.SG.NOM
	b.	%vuejjv	nuur-a	v'il'j-an
		head.SG.NOM	young-COMP	borthor.GEN.SG-POSS.1
		'My younger brother's head'		

# Constituent order in adpositional phrases

- Different types of adpositions are present in Kildin Saami: postpositions (8) prepositions (9), ambipositions (10)

(8)      vaan'c'                      pert                      gorre      (\*gorre pert)  
         walk.PST.3SG           house.GEN.SG      towards      towards house.GEN.SG  
         '(S)he walked towards the house'

(9)      mijj              voaan'c'-em      čuull      jog                      (\*jog                      čuull)  
         1PL.NOM      walk-PST.1PL      along      river.GEN.SG           river.GEN.SG           along  
         'We were walking along the river'

(10)      sonn              išt-e                      s'in-e      kesket      (<sup>OK</sup>kesket                      s'in-e)  
         3SG.NOM      sit-PST.3SG           3PL-GEN      between      between                      3PL-GEN  
         '(S)he sat between them'

# Constituent order in adpositional phrases: discontinuity

- If an NP is embedded under a postposition, all the postnominal dependents should follow the postposition (11). That is, a postposition must immediately follow the nominal head of its complement.

(11) a.    *peerɾt*                      *puarrs-a*                      *vuer'r'pen'*  
           house.NOM.SG            old-COMP                sister.GEN.SG  
           'The elder sister's house'

b.    *sonn*            *voan'c'-e*            *pert*                      ***raj***    *puarrs-a*    *vuer'r'pen'*  
       3SG.NOM    walk-PST.3SG    house.GEN.SG    past    old-COMP    sister.GEN.SG  
       *(\*pert*                      *puarrsa*                      *vuer'r'pen'*                      ***raj***)  
       house.GEN.SG                      old-COMP                      sister.GEN.SG                      past  
       '(S)he walked past the house of her/his elder sister'

# Constituent order in adpositional phrases: discontinuity

- Any prenominal dependent elements cannot follow the postposition (12).

- (12) a. *muur* *peerɾt*  
wood. GEN.SG house.NOM.SG  
'A wooden house'
- b. *sonn* *voan'c'-e* *muur* *pert* *luz*  
3SG.NOM walk-PST.3SG wood. GEN.SG house.GEN.SG to  
(*\*pert* *luz* *muur*)  
house.GEN.SG to wood. GEN.SG  
'(S)e walked towards the wooden house'



# Constituent order in adpositional phrases: discontinuity

- There is no similar requirement for prepositional phrases: a preposition does not have to immediately precede the nominal head of its complement

(13) a. nuur-a v'il'j-an vuejjv  
young-COMP brother.GEN.SG-POSS.1 head.SG.NOM  
'My younger brother's head'

b. OK<sub>sonn</sub> čec'k-e paall peejel' nuur-a  
3SG.NOM throw-PST.3SG ball.ACC.SG over young-COMP  
v'il'j-an vuejv  
brother.GEN.SG-POSS1 head.GEN.SG  
'(S)he threw the ball over my younger brother's head'

# Constituent order in adpositional phrases: discontinuity

- Ambipositions show the same behavior as postpositions and prepositions respectively depending on whether they follow (14) or precede (15-16) their complement.

(14) *sonn*      *išt-e*      *keskel vuer'r'pn-et'*      *nuur-a*      *n'ijjt-es'*  
3SG.NOM   sit-PST.3SG   between sister-DAT.PL   young-COMP   dauhhter.GEN.SG-POSS.3  
'(S)he sat between the sisters of his/her younger daughter'

(15) *sonn*      *išt-e*      *vuer'r'pen'*      *keskel*      *nuur-a*      *n'ijjt-es'*  
3SG.NOM   sit-PST.3SG   sister.GEN.PL   between   young-COMP   dauhhter.GEN.SG-POSS.3  
'(S)He sat between the sisters of his/her younger daughter'

(16) *sonn*      *išt-e*      *vuer'r'pen'*      *nuur-a*      *n'ijjt-es'*      *keskel*  
3SG.NOM   sit-PST.3SG   sister.GEN.PL   young-COMP   dauhhter.GEN.SG-POSS.3   between  
'(S)He sat between the younger daughters of his/her sister'  
# '(S)e sat between the sisters of his/her younger daughter'

- It is much more preferable, though, to use an ambiposition as a preposition in such cases

# Constituent order in adpositional phrases: discontinuity

- The above-mentioned data show the exact same pattern that Marit Julien (2017) has described for North Saami (Western Saami group) postpositions: postpositions must immediately follow the nominal head of their complement.
- Julien states that this requirement is phonological in nature. The Kildin Saami data supports this hypothesis.
- Note that in Kildin Saami the described principle works not only for such dependents as nouns in oblique cases, adpositional phrases and relative clauses (that can be viewed as more peripheral), but also for genitive nouns.

# Constituent order in adpositional phrases: discontinuity

- There are, however, two exceptions to this principle:
  - i. *“Light” postnominal dependents (i.e. only consisting of one or two words) can sometimes stay between their head and the postposition (17). Ambipositions used as postpositions seem to be more inclined to behave like this than the entities that can only function as postpositions*
  - ii. *Postnominal dependents can stay between their head and the postposition in conjunct nominal groups embedded under a single postposition (18)*

*The groups of consultants that allow i. and ii. do not coincide. The first exception is more frequent*

# Constituent order in adpositional phrases: discontinuity

■ “Light” postnominal dependants:

- (17) a. %sonn      moajn-es'      kir'j      paarn-e      vuejke      **bajas**  
3SG.NOM    tell-PSV.PST.3SG    book.GEN.SG    child-GEN.PL    for      about  
'(S)he told us about a book for children'
- b. \*sonn      moaajn-es'      kir'j      kuu      l'ii      lihk-ma  
3SG.NOM    tell-PSV.PST.3SG    book.GEN.SG    which.NOM.SG    be.NPST.3SG    write-PTCP.PST  
paarn-e      vuejke      **bajas**  
child-GEN.PL      for      about  
Exp. '(S)he told us about a book that was made for children'

# Constituent order in adpositional phrases: discontinuity

- Conjunct NPs embedded under a single postposition: postnominal dependents can stay between their head and the postposition if the head is embedded under the postposition together with another nominal phrase.

(18)

- a.
- |                      |                |                   |                  |               |                    |
|----------------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| <i>sonn</i>          | <i>saarn-e</i> | <i>v'il'j</i>     | <b>bajas</b>     | <i>ja</i>     | <i>vuer'r'pen'</i> |
| 3SG.NOM              | speak-PST.3SG  | brother.SG.GEN    | about            | and           | sister.SG.GEN      |
| <b>bajas</b>         | soon           | <i>kaalls-en'</i> |                  |               |                    |
| about                | 3SG.GEN        | husband-COM       |                  |               |                    |
| <i>(*vuer'r'pen'</i> |                | soon              | <i>kaalls-en</i> | <b>bajas)</b> |                    |
| sister.SG.GEN        |                | 3SG.GEN           | husband-COM      | about         |                    |
- b.
- |               |                   |                 |           |                    |                |
|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------|--------------------|----------------|
| % <i>sonn</i> | <i>saarn-e</i>    | <i>v'il'j</i>   | <i>ja</i> | <i>vuer'r'pen'</i> | <b>(bajas)</b> |
| 3SG.NOM       | speak-PST.3SG     | brother.SG.GEN  | and       | sister.SG.GEN      | about          |
| soon          | <i>kaalls-en'</i> | <b>(%bajas)</b> |           |                    |                |
| 3SG.GEN       | husband-COM       | about           |           |                    |                |
- ‘(S)he spoke about his/her brother, his/her sister and her husband’

*During the elicitation process I made sure that the Russian stimulus that consultants were asked to translate was interpreted as indicated and not as ‘He spoke [about his brother and his sister] with her husband’*

# Constituent order in adpositional phrases: discontinuity

- Another difference between Julien's (2017) descriptions of North Saami postpositions and the system observed in Kildin Saami concerns pronominal phrases
- If the head of a postposition's complement is a pronoun, it does not have to be immediately followed by the postposition (19).

(19)      mun        jurddašan            nu        din                    (buohkaid)        birra  
             I            think.PRES.1SG    so        you.PL.GEN        all.PL.GEN        about  
             'I think so much about you (all).' (Julien 2017, p. 172)

# Constituent order in adpositional phrases: discontinuity

- Kildin Saami pronouns, on the other hand, show the same pattern as Kildin Saami nouns. Namely, the postposition must immediately follow the head of its complement unless the constituent between the complement head and the postposition is “light” (20-21)

(20) 

<u><i>k'eenn</i></u>	<u>(%keskel</u>	<u>s'in-e)</u>	<b>bajas</b>	<u>keskel</u>	<u>s'in-e</u>
who.GEN.SG	between	3PL-GEN	about	between	3PL-GEN
sonn	saarn-e				
3SG.NOM	speak-PST.3SG				

  
'Which of them did (s)he talk about?'

(21) 

sonn	moajn-es'	<u><i>tenn</i></u>	<b>bajas</b>	<u>kooxxt</u>	<u>l'aajj</u>	<u>vaar'-es</u>
3SG.NOM	tell-PSV.PST.3SG	this.GEN.SG	about	how	be.PST.3SG	forest-LOC.SG
(* <i>tenn</i>		kooxxt	l'aajj		vaar'-es'	<b>bajas</b> )
this.GEN.SG		how	be.PST.3SG		forest-LOC.SG	about

  
'(S)he was talking about the time he was in the woods'  
(Lit. 'about that how he was...')



# Typological perspective

- Matthew Dryer (2013) calls the type of adpositions similar to North Saami and Kildin Saami ones *inpositions* (adpositions that occur inside the noun phrase they accompany) and also states that this kind of location is phonological in nature.
- According to Dryer, systems like North and Kildin Saami are typologically rare: there are only eight languages with inpositions (interestingly, North Saami is not considered to be one of them) in WALS

# Typological perspective

- Even among these eight languages most seem to differ from the pattern observed in Kildin Saami: thus, in Anindilyakwa (isolate; Northern Territory, Australia) the inposition attaches to the first word within the NP regardless of its category (22)

(22) narri-ng-akbilyang-uma      [eyukwujiya=**manja**      eka]  
NC<sub>1</sub>.PL-NC<sub>2</sub>-stick.to.end-TA      small=LOC      stick  
‘... they stuck them (the feathers) to a little stick.’  
(Groote Eylandt Linguistics-langwa 1993: 202)

# Typological perspective

- In Kildin Saami the postposition follows the head of its complement which does not have to take a specific position within its phrase (23)

- (23) a.   sonn           voan'c'-e       pert                   luz  
          3SG.NOM    walk-PST.3SG   house.GEN.SG   to  
          ‘(S)e walked towards the house’
- b.   sonn           voan'c'-e       muur                   pert                   luz  
          3SG.NOM    walk-PST.3SG   wood. GEN.SG   house.GEN.SG to  
          ‘(S)e walked towards the wooden house’

# Conclusion

- In conclusion, the Kildin Saami data supports Julien's hypothesis that the order of constituents in postnominal phrases is phonological in nature:
  - *The pattern is the same for a postnominal dependent of any category*
  - *There is a distinction between lighter and heavier postnominal dependents*
  - *The presence of dependents that follow the head of an ambiposition's complement is a factor of choice between a prepositional and postpositional use of the ambiposition*

# Literature

- Dryer, Matthew S (2013) Order of Adposition and Noun Phrase. In: Dryer, Matthew S. & Haspelmath, Martin (eds.) *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online*. Leipzig: Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology. (Available online at <http://wals.info/chapter/85>, Accessed on 2022-06-14.)
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