

# When possessive suffixes are missing: non-agreeing possesses in Udmurt and Komi-Permyak

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# Research questions

Q1: What factors condition in Udmurt and Komi-Permyak (Permic, Uralic) the **lack of possessive agreement in adnominal** possessive constructions?

Q2: What can be the source of microvariation?

- i. e. Komi-Permyak seems to prefer non-agreement to agreement, while there is a strong tendency for agreement in Udmurt

# Adnominal (internal) possessive constructions in Udmurt and Komi-Permyak

- adnominal possessive phrases (PNP) show broad structural variation in Finno-Ugric languages (cf. Havas 2007, Honti 2007, Havas et al. 2015)

- Udmurt: double marking is the rule (1), lack of agreement is exceptional:

(1) **Yura-len**                      **ki-yz / ki?**  
Yuri-GEN                      hand-3SG / hand  
'Yuri's hand'

- Komi-Permyak: both double-marking and dependent-marking (lack of agreement) are common:

(2) **Nasta-lön**    **ki(-ys)**  
Nastya-GEN    hand-(3SG)  
'Nastya's hand'

# Possible parameters conditioning the lack of possessive agreement

- Possessor: lexical properties (nominal/pronominal) and animacy?
- Possessee: semantic properties (alienability, animacy, abstractness)?
- Possessee: syntactic function?

# Data and methods

- elicitation
  - native language experts
  - unified questionnaires
- corpus analysis
  - Wikipedia translations (and online journals) by Giellatekno (Korp)
    - ~50 clauses (with PNP-s) for Udmurt
    - ~100 clauses (with PNP-s) for Komi-Permyak
  - blog texts
    - ~300 clauses (with PNP-s) for Udmurt

Udmurt

## Previous findings on possessive agreement

- **sometimes inalienable** possessives do not agree (Vakhrushov 1970)
- non-agreeing possessors are **always external** (Edygarova 2010)
- lack of agreement occurs only in **external** poss. constructions (Pleshak 2018: 144)

→ no lack of agreement in adnominal possessive constructions?

# Problem: how to distinguish internal poss. constructions from external ones in Udmurt?

- ext. poss. constr.: the possessor is coded as a core grammatical relation of the verb and in a **constituent separate** from that which contains the possessee (Payne & Barshi 1999: 3)
- ext. and int. poss. constr.-s may be coded morphosyntactically the same way (cf. Pleshak 2018: 142)
- clearly external: predicative possessive constructions → excluded from the research



## How to distinguish internal poss. constructions from external ones?

- internal or external?

### (3) **Marina-len velik sörišk-i-z.**

Marina-GEN bike brake\_down-PST-3SG

‘Marina’s bike broke down. /

“To Marina the bike broke down.”’ (Y. S.)

- only examples with adjacent possessor + possessee were taken into consideration

# How to distinguish internal poss. constructions from external ones?

- Clearly internal:

(4) **Radío 54 Network – Itali-yś Kalabrija region-len**

radio 54 Network Italy-ELA Calabria region-GEN

**Redžo-Kalabrija provinci-len Lokri kommun-len tuž-ges**

Reggio-Calabria province-GEN Locri village-GEN very-CMPR

**kema uža-ś radíostancija.**

for\_a\_longtime work-PTCP.IMP radio\_station

‘Radio 54 Network is the most long-standing radio station of Locri village of the Reggio-Calabria province of the Calabria region of Italy.’  
(Corp)

## Non-agreeing possessives in Udmurt: frequency

	<b>nr. of examined PNP-s</b>	<b>lack of possessive agreement</b>
<b>corpus</b>	50	4%
<b>blog posts</b>	290	4,5%

- total nr. of examples with non-agreeing possessives: 33 (corpus, blog posts, grammatical test sentences, examples quoted in the literature)

# Animacy of the possessor and (in)alienability of the possessee with non-agreeing possesseees

Possessee → Possessor ↓		inalienable					alienable			
		body part	other part-whole	kinship term	other animate	abstract	other inanimate	human	anim. -human	inanim.
animate	1st/2nd Pron	✓✓		✓		✓✓✓		✓		✓✓✓
	3rd Pron									
	PropN	✓✓			✓	✓✓✓✓				✓
	other human					✓✓				
	-human	✓								✓✓
inanimate	concrete		✓✓✓			✓				
	abstract		✓			✓		✓✓		✓✓

1st/2nd Pers Pron possessors (30%)

**(5) Mi'am fakul'tet noku no taće**  
1PL.GEN faculty never PCL such  
**vožvyljaškon-jos-yn vormyl-emyn övöl.**  
contest-PL-INE win-PTCP be.NEG

'Our faculty had never won such contests.'

(Mynam malpanjosy)

## Inanimate possessors (30%)

(6) **Radío 54 Network – Itali-yś Kalabrija region-len**

radio 54 Network Italy-ELA Calabria region-GEN

**Redžo-Kalabrija provinci-len Lokri kommun-len tuž-ges**

Reggio-Calabria province-GEN Locri village-GEN very-CMPR

**kema uža-ś radiostancija.**

for\_a\_longtime work-PTCP.IMP radio\_station

‘Radio 54 Network is the most long-standing radio station of Locri village of the Reggio-Calabria province of the Calabria region of Italy.’  
(Corp)

Inalienable possessives: body parts (15%)

(7) **Ivan-len śin l'ećyt, peł' koťku sak.**

Ivan-GEN eye sharp ear always watchful

'Ivan's eyes are sharp, (his) ears always watchful.' (Vakhrushov 1970: 101)

Inalienable possessives: abstract possessee  
(33%)

(8) **syće ińi mynam śam.**  
such PTCL 1SG.GEN character  
'Such is my character.' (Edygarova 2010: 267)



Alienable possessives: inanimate possessee  
(24%)

(9) **Kafedra-len kompjuter žurget-e.**

department-GEN computer buzz-3SG

‘The department’s computer is buzzing.’ (Y. S.)

(10) **Mi’am kolkhoz uzyr.**

1SG.GEN kolkhoz rich

‘Our kolkhoz is rich.’ (Vakhrushev 1970: 101)

# Non-agreeing possessives in Udmurt: syntactic functions

syntactic function	occurrences	total
S (of tr. V)	✓	1
S (of unerg. V)	✓✓✓	3
S (of unacc. V)	✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓	10
S (of nom. sentence)	✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓	9
nom. predicate	✓✓✓✓✓✓	6
O	✓	1
Gen	✓✓	2
other PP	✓	1

# Differential possessor marking in Permic

- In both languages, object PNP-s are coded differently than subject and oblique PNP-s:

(11) Udmurt

**Kolhoz-leś muzjem-ze arenda-je bašt-i-my.**  
kolkhoz-ABL land-ACC.3SG rent-ILL take-PST-1PL  
'We rented the land of the kolkhoz.'

- this phenomenon is well-documented and assumed to be of Turkic origin (e. g. Rédei 1978, Csúcs 1990, Bartens 2000, Bereczki 2002)

## Non-agreeing possessee: object

- only 1 instance, with *possessee–possessor* order (Russian influence):

(12) **Dor-e      berta-ku      ćem      adźyl-i**

home-ILL return-CVB often see-PST.1SG

**reklama              vyl'      pot-iś                      serial-leś.**

advertisement new come\_out-PTCP.IMP series-ABL

‘On the way home I often saw the advertisement of the new series.’

(Mynam malpanjosa)

# External poss. constructions and hierarchies

- „EP constructions are favored cross-linguistically if they are high on the hierarchies in (13)” (cf. König & Haspelmath 1997):

(13) a. **The Animacy Hierarchy** (EP constructions are favored if the possessor is a)  
*1st/2nd p. pronoun > 3rd p. pronoun > proper name > other animate > inanimate*

Possessee → Possessor ↓		inalienable					alienable			
		body part	other part-whole	kinship term	other animate	abstract	other inanimate	human	anim. -human	inanim.
animate	1st/2nd Pron	✓✓		✓		✓✓✓		✓		✓✓✓
	3rd Pron									
	PropN	✓✓			✓	✓✓✓✓				✓
	other human					✓✓				
	-human	✓								✓✓
inanimate	concrete		✓✓✓			✓				
	abstract		✓			✓		✓✓		✓✓

# External poss. constructions and hierarchies

(13) b. **The Inalienability Hierarchy** (EP constructions are favored if the possessum is a)

*body part* > *garment* > *other contextually unique items*

Possessee → Possessor ↓		inalienable					alienable			
		body part	other part-whole	kinship term	other animate	abstract	other inanimate	human	anim. -human	inanim.
animate	1st/2nd Pron	✓✓		✓		✓✓✓		✓		✓✓✓
	3rd Pron									
	PropN	✓✓			✓	✓✓✓✓				✓
	other human					✓✓				
	-human	✓								✓✓
inanimate	concrete		✓✓✓			✓				
	abstract		✓			✓	✓✓			✓✓

# External poss. constructions and hierarchies

(13) c. **The Syntactic Relations Hierarchy:** *PP* > *direct object* > *unaccusative subject* > *unergative subject* > *transitive subject*

syntactic function	occurrences	total
S (of tr. V)	✓	1
S (of unerg. V)	✓✓✓	3
S (of unacc. V)	✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓	10
S (of nom. sentence)	✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓	9
nom. predicate	✓✓✓✓✓✓	6
O	✓	1
Gen	✓✓	2
other PP	✓	1

→ the lack of possessive agreement is also possible with categories at the right edge of the scales → this also suggests that, contrarily to the literature, it can also occur in internal possessive constructions



# Komi-Permyak

## Previous findings on possessive agreement

### Komi-Permyak:

- nominal possessors are marked by the genitive, while possessives are **usually** unmarked (Ponomareva 2010)
- in pronominal possessive constructions, either the possessor or the Px (14) can be omitted in all persons (ibid.)
- no possessive agreement with definite, genitive-marked possessors (Bartens 2000)
- the lack of possessive agreement is **usual but not obligatory** (Batalova 1975, Rédei 1978)

(14) Sylön                      kerku-(ys)              löz              röm-a.  
3SG.GEN                      house-3SG              blue              colour-ADJ  
'His/Her house is blue.'

# Non-agreeing possessives in Komi-Permyak: frequency

	<b>nr. of examined PNP-s</b>	<b>lack of possessive agreement</b>
<b>corpus</b>	100	<b>83%</b>
<b>elicitation</b>	100	<b>90%</b>

# Human possessors

(15) Komi-Permyak (Korp)      inalienable, abstract possessee

Komi kyv    –    menam      olöm da    vöt.

Komi language    1SG.GEN      life    and    dream

‘Komi language, you are my life and dream.’

(16) Komi-Permyak (V. E.)      alienable, concrete possessee

Marina-lön /      mam-ö-lön      pašköm(-ys)      löz.

Marina-GEN      MOTHER-1SG-GEN      dress-3SG      blue

‘Marina’s / my mother’s dress is blue.’

# Non-human possessors

(17) Komi-Permyak (L. P.)      inalienable, body part possessee

Marina-(lön)      pon-ys-lön    gyn-(ys)      śöd.

Marina-GEN      dog-3SG-GEN hair-3SG      black

‘The hair of Marina’s dog’s is black.’

(18) Komi-Permyak (Korp)      inalienable, abstract possessee

Majkop      kar-lön      iśtorija

Majkop      town-GEN      history

‘history of Majkop town’

# PNP constructions with obligatory agreement in Komi-Permyak

Possessee →  Possessor ↓		<u>inalienable</u>					<u>alienable</u>		
		<u>body part</u>	<u>other part-whole</u>	<u>kinship term</u>	<u>other animate</u>	<u>abstract</u>	<u>other inanimate</u>	<u>human</u>	<u>anim. -human</u>
<u>animate</u>	<u>1st/2nd Pron</u>	✓				✓			
	<u>3rd Pron</u>	✓				✓			
	<u>PropN</u>	✓				✓			
	<u>other human</u>	✓				✓			
	<u>-human</u>					✓			
<u>inanimate</u>	<u>concrete</u>								
	<u>abstract</u>								

# Obligatory agreement

- In Komi-Permyak, informants considered the lack of agreement ungrammatical with certain possessives

(19) Komi-Permyak (L. P.)                      body part  
Nasta-lön / nyvka-lön sylön                      ki-ys                      vyn.  
Nastya-GEN / girl-GEN                      3SG.GEN                      hand-3SG                      strong  
‘Nastya’s/the girl’s /her hand is strong.’

- ‘head’, ‘hand’, ‘eye’ > ‘leg’ > ‘hair’

(20) Komi-Permyak (L. P.)                      abstract noun  
Kyčöm                      tenat                      níim-yt?  
how                      2SG.GEN                      name-2SG  
‘What’s your name?’

# Syntactic properties

- syntactic functions hardly play a role in agreement

(21) Komi-Permyak (L. P.)

Menam        mam-(ö)        öd'dön        basök.

1SG.GEN        mother-1SG    very        nice

'My mother is very nice.'

(22) Komi-Permyak

Me        töd-i        Petra-liś        von-(sö).

1SG        know-PST    Peter-ABL        brother-ACC.3SG

'I knew Peter's brother.'

- differential possessor marking is well-documented and assumed to be of Turkic origin (e. g. Rédei 1978, Csúcs 1990, Bartens 2000, Bereczki 2002)



# Syntactic properties

- the possessee is a nominal predicate

(23) Komi-Permyak

Context: Myj eta? ‘What’s this?’

Eta Nasta-lön nébög/\*nébög-ys.

DEM Nastya-GEN book/book-3SG

‘This is Nastya’s book.’

- obligatory non-agreeing possessee due to other factors?

# Conclusions

- the examined parameters (lexical properties and animacy of the possessor, inalienability, animacy and syntactic function of the possessee) do not seem to condition the lack of possessive agreement in either of the languages
- lack of agreement is possible both in external and internal possessive constructions
- lack of agreement is rare in Udmurt and common in Komi-Permyak
  - due to
    - a stronger influence of Russian on Komi-Permyak?
    - the influence of the neighboring Turkic languages in the case of Udmurt?
    - or motivated by pragmatics?

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