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Helpless or without help?

On the division of labour between derivation and case inflection in Estonian

johanna.laakso@univie.ac.at

Adverbial noun modifiers

- Correspond to possessive (‘have’/‘lack’), locational *(the place (which) is in the sun)* or ascriptive clauses (*the book (which) is about cats)*
  - Having/lacking something: *a man with blue eyes; a woman without conscience*
  - Material, origin, sender, source: *a ring of gold, a dog of good breed, a letter from home, a man of New York*
  - Location, state: *a place in the sun, a man in panic*
  - Recipient, beneficiary, goal, dimension: *a letter to my mother, a ticket to ride, water up to the knees*
  - Subject: *a book about cats*

ANMs and their equivalents in (Western) Uralic languages

- Five options:
  1. Derivation: denominal adjective instead of adverbial modifier
  2. Compounding
  3. Prenominal relative (non-finite) clause with a dummy verb
  4. Case-inflected NP or AdpP following the head ("unauthentic"?)
  5. Prenominal case-inflected modifiers

Derived adjective

- Hungarian:
  Amint kijön a jó idő, sokan fognak hozzá
  a *kert-ben-i* *sütö-get-és-hez*
  DEF garden-INE-ADJ fry-FREQ-N-ALL
  'With the nice weather arriving, many people start ("get into") (the) grilling in the garden'
- Finnish:
  sokeri-ttoma-t *ja sokeri-llise-t* *juoma-t*
  sugar-ADJ.CAR-PL and sugar-ADJ-PL beverage-PL
  'beverages without and with sugar'

Compounding

- Finnish:

  kissa+kirja ‘cat book (= a book about cats)’

  kulta+sormus ‘gold ring’

  rotu+koira ‘dog of (good) breed’ (race + dog)

  matka+lippu “trip ticket”

- First (“modifier”) part in the nominative or (in Estonian often) in the genitive case
- Contact-induced innovation??

Compounding or modifying?

- Kont (1973): compounding in Western Uralic languages is contact-induced, more eastern Uralic languages have modifier phrases (with a noun as adjective-like modifier?!):
  Komi *kört tuj* iron road ‘railway’
- Fejes (2005): distinguishing nominative-modifier constructions from compounds is not that simple, compounding in Uralic can be an ancient phenomenon

Prenominal clause with dummy verb

- Hungarian:

  hallgassuk *a nagy halról* *szóló* *mesét!*
  listen.IMP.1PL DEF big fish.ABL tell.PCTP.PRS story.ACC
  'let's hear the story about the big fish'

  személyes adatok harmadik személynek számára
  personal data.PL third person.DAT account.ALL

  történő átadása
  happen.PCTP.PRS hand.over.NMLZ-POSS.3SG
  'surrendering of personal data to a third person'

  a térségben stratégiai érdekekkel
  DEF area.INE strategy.ADJ interest.PL.COM
  rendelkező *szereplő*
  dispose.PCTP.PRS actor
  'an actor with strategic interests in the area'

Case-inflected postnominal modifiers – less authentic...

Eesti keele käsiraamat: “The postnominal position of a modifier is not quite typical of Estonian and makes the sentence clumsy. Therefore, if the modifier adverb has a synonymous equivalent in the form of a prenominal modifier in the genitive case, the latter should be preferred.” (...)

visioon tulevikust [‘vision of future [ELA]’] > *tulevikuvisioon*

tagatis eduks [‘guarantee for success [TRSL]’] > *edu tagatis*

piletid teatrisse [‘tickets to theatre’ [ILL]] > *teatripiletid*

konsultant hariduse alal [‘counsellor in the area of education’] > *hariduskonsultant* [NB! NOM]

… due to problems with inflected head nouns…

- *Eesti keele käsiraamat:*

  Postponed adverbial modifiers are appropriate for instance on labels (*šampoon kuivadele juustele* [ALL] ‘shampoo for dry hair’) but “clumsy” in a sentence: *pesin juuksed šampooniga* [COM] *kuivadele juustele* ‘I washed my hair with shampoo for dry hair’ > *pesin juuksed kuivade juuste* [GEN] *šampooniga*

  (However, postnominal noun modifiers are not considered clumsy: *pesin juuksed šampooniga “Ultra Shine”* ‘I washed my hair with the shampoo (named) U.S.’)

… but nevertheless used

- Finnish: *kuunnellaanpa satua suuresta kalasta*
  Estonian: *kuulame muinasjuttu suurest kalast*
  'let's hear the story about the big fish [ELA]'
- Finnish: *henkilötietojen luovuttaminen kolmannelle osapuolelle*
  Estonian: *isikuandmete üleandmine kolmandatele isikutele*
  'handing over of personal data to third persons [ALL]'

Prenominal case-inflected modifiers: only in Estonian?

Erelt 2003: 113–114:

- (...) (genitivus definitivus), e.g. *eesti keel* ‘Estonian language’.
- Oblique-case pre-noun modifiers that express a property may occur in:
  - (a) the partitive, e.g. *head tõugu lehm* ‘a cow of a good breed’ (...)
    (b) inessive, e.g. *paanikas inimene* ‘panicky person’ [sic] (...)
    (c) elative, e.g. *rauast uks* ‘iron door' (...)
    (d) adessive, e.g. *naerul suu* ‘smiling mouth’ (...)
    (e) terminative, e.g. *laeni kuusk* ‘a spruce reaching the ceiling’ (...)
    (f) abessive, e.g. *lasteta perekond* ‘childless family’ (...)
    (g) comitative, e.g. *nokaga müts* ‘beaked cap’ (...)
- “Estonian does not have relative adjectives. The genitive and oblique-case pre-noun modifiers are used instead of relative adjectives.”

“Properties”!

- state but not location: *paanikas mees* ‘man in panic’ / **köögis mees* ‘man in the kitchen’; *naerul suu* ‘mouth in smile’ / **riiulil raamat* ‘book on the shelf’
  - expressions of state are different: *võti on lukus* ‘the key is in the lock’ – *uks on lukkus* ‘the door is locked’, *lukkus uks* ‘a locked door’
- endpoint (dimension) but not goal: *maani seelik* ‘skirt down to the ground’ / **koju kiri* ‘a letter home’, **emale kiri* ‘a letter to mother’

- material but not source, origin or subject: *rauast uks* ‘door of iron’ / **kalast muinasjutt* ‘story about a fish’, **kodunt kiri* ‘letter from home’, **emalt kiri* ‘letter from mother’

No relative adjectives?

- Estonian does have cognates and counterparts to many other FU adjective derivations:
  - *-tu* (< PU **-ktA-mA*): *värvi-tu* ‘colourless’
  - *-kas: ande-kas* ‘talented’
  - *-line: värvi-line* ‘coloured’
  - *-ne: raud-ne* ‘of iron’, *sini-silm-ne* ‘blue-eyed’

  (cf. Fi. *väritön, lahjakas, värillinen, rautainen, sinisilmäinen...*)

No *productive adjective* derivation as an alternative to ANMs?

- Derived relative adjectives are
  - lexicalized, unproductive?
  - semantically specified:
    savi ‘clay’: *savi-ne muld* ‘soil containing clay’, *savi-ne saabas* ‘boot stained with clay’, but instead of *savi-ne figuur* rather *savi-st* [ELA] *figuur* ‘a figurine (made) of clay’
    ravi-ma-tu haigus ‘incurable disease’ – cf. *ravi-ma-ta* [ABE] *haigus* ‘an illness not cured (yet)’
  - semantically abstract, generic: *ande-tu* ‘talentless, without talent’ – ?**auto-tu* ‘carless’
  - nounified: Fi. *suoma-lainen* ‘Finnish; Finn’ – Est. *soom-lane* ‘Finn’, GEN *soome* for ‘Finnish’

What happened to adjectives in Estonian?

- Reduced word-formation?
  - in comparison with Finnish, Estonian word-formation is often characterized as more compact or less grammatical
- Reduced inflectional morphology in general?
- Reduced agreement?
  - agreement of adjective modifiers is an innovation in Finnic – is the reduction of agreement in Estonian an “atavism” or a “backlash”?

Reduced agreement

- Past participles **<u>as modifiers</u>** do not inflect in Estonian (and Livonian)

Sur-nud		*luuletaja-te*	*ühing*
die-PTCP.PST.ACT		poet-GEN.PL	society
Surma	*hinda*	*küsi*	*sur-nu-te-lt*
death.GEN	price.PART	ask.IMP.2SG	die-PTCP.PST.ACT-PL-ABL

- 'Behind the nose' *(nina taga)*:
  - Modern Standard Estonian: nouns in the so-called *nina taga* cases (terminative, essive, abessive, comitative) have their modifiers in the genitive: *viimase piirini* 'up to the last border', *vana autoga* 'with an old car'

Phonological factors?

- Nurkse 1937 > Erelt 1999:
  - *syllable economy:* in dialects and in Old Written Estonian, case agreement (mostly) appears when the case ending would not increase the number of syllables (*targa-st mehe-st* ELA ‘from a wise man’) but is (often) missing where it would add a syllable (*targa mehe-le* ALL ‘to a wise man’)
  - lacking case agreement of modifiers also with Livonian datives: *tuoiz ibīzõn* other.GEN horse.DAT, *sie vanā mi’en* that(?GEN) old(?GEN) man.DAT

New type of lacking agreement

- The *nina taga* (and in dialectal and old Estonian also other) case suffixes behave syntactically like postpositions:

suure metsa-ni	*suure metsa taga*
big.GEN forest(.GEN)-TERM	big.GEN forest.GEN behind
'up to the big forest'	'behind the big forest'

- The genitive (synchronically unmarked) acts as basis for inflections and derivations!

Uninflected adjectives

- *Vaegomadussõna* [‘deficient adjective’] in Estonian grammars (cf. Viitso 2007, Erelt 2008)
  - orphaned genitive (*katoliku* ‘Catholic’) or partitive forms (*iselaadi* ‘peculiar’, “of one’s own kind”)
  - (adverb-like?) uninflectable adjectives: *väärt poiss* ‘a good boy’ (cf. *sa oled seda väärt* ‘you are worth it’), *täis (~ täie* GEN) *kõhuga* ‘with a full stomach’ (cf. *vala klaas täis!* ‘pour the glass full!’ – Fi. *kaada lasi täyteen* [ILL] ~ *?täydeksi* [TRSL])
  - Some uninflectable adjectives also in Finnish: *pikku pojalle* [ALL] ‘to a little boy’, *kelpo työntekijöitä* [PART.PL] ‘competent workers’

Summing up: what happened?

- Case-inflected prenominal modifiers (for states or inherent properties) have supplanted derived relative adjectives, as it seems, among all Uralic languages only in Estonian
  - because they must: (generic relative) adjective derivation is dwindling, but modifiers must nevertheless occupy the position preceding the head
  - because they can: modifier agreement is weakening (again?)

And how, or why?

- Viitso (2007: 887):
  - Prenominal ANMs “have lost their adverbial character, i.e. their connection to a verb, thanks to the loss of the participle *olev* [‘being’] or *olnud* [‘having been’]”: *paanikas mees* ‘in-panic man’ < **paanikas olev mees* ‘man being in panic’?
- More fixed word order – less clear borders between parts of speech (cf. Hengeveld & al. 2004): prenominal modifier position becomes more important than adjectiveness?

The moral of the story

- There are morphosyntactic changes which cannot be explained by foreign influences nor general typological drifts only...
- ... and also not (only) with speculations about possible syntactic change.
- Most probably, there are numerous interacting factors at play
  - ... perhaps, among others, even the notorious avoidance of homonymy?

… sleeping furiously

värv-i-tud *muna-d*
colour-V-PTCP.PST.PASS egg-PL
‘coloured eggs’

värvi-tu-d *muna-d*
colour-CAR-PL egg-PL
‘colourless eggs’

värvi-ta *muna-d*
colour-ABE egg-PL
‘eggs without colour’

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