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POSSESSIVE CONSTRUCTIONS IN SOUTHERN SELKUP DIALECTS

The use of possession in Southern Selkup can be divided in adnominal and predicative possession. In adnominal possession the possessor can be either a noun or a pronoun, the construction is usually head final. If the possessor is encoded pronominally, it can be marked with pronouns, possessive suffixes or a combination of the two. As in other Samoyedic languages possessive suffixes in Southern Selkup are also used to express non-possessive meaning. Predicative possession is essentially based on existential constructions as no habeo-verb exists in Southern Selkup; mostly nominative and locative constructions are in use.

Key words: *Southern Selkup, possession, possessive constructions.*

1. Introduction

Investigating possessive constructions one has to deal with the concept of possession which is not strictly linguistic but rather epistemological. Nevertheless, Hansjakob Seiler defines linguistic possession as follows: "It is the relationship between a human being and his kinsmen, his body parts, his material belongings, his cultural and intellectual products" (Seiler 1983: 4). In this definition, the possessor has to be a human being, but for the analysis made here, the possessor just had to be alive, i.e. animals also could take the position of possessor as they often act as protagonists in the texts and adopt human characteristics.

There is the possibility to define subgroups due to semantic categorization, i.e. due to the relation between the possessor and the possessed. The most common categories are inalienable and alienable; even though those terms are not unproblematic (see e.g. Seiler 1983: 28, Heine 1997: 10) they are a good starting point. Inalienable possession's core meanings cover body parts and kinship terms while alienable possession is used for possession one can separate from its owner (see Dahl – Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2001: 210). Obviously there are situations and languages where the separation between those two terms is not as strict as presented here.

Besides the semantic categorization, there is formal categorization. Usually possessive constructions are divided into adnominal and predicative possession, the first one being a noun phrase and the latter one a construction including a predicate. In addition, in adnominal constructions the possession is not in focus while in predicative construction the bare expression of possession is central (see Heine 1997: 27).

Southern Selkup is used here to describe both Central and South Selkup, i.e. all non-Northern Selkup dialects. The dialectal classification of Gluškov is taken as background for the study; according to him Vah, Tym, Vasjugan and Narym are Central Selkup and Middle Ob (Šeškup), Upper Ob, Čaja, Čulym and Ket Southern Selkup (see Gluškov – Bajdak – Maksimova 2013: 53).

The analysis is based on 103 texts which consist of 3,478 sentences. Five Southern and Central Selkup dialects are covered: 47 Narym texts, 22 Vasjugan texts, 19 Ket texts, 12 Tym texts and 3 Šeškup texts.[1] The transcription remains untouched, the glossing and translation of the examples shown here were done by myself.[2]

2. Adnominal Possession

A possessive noun phrase in Southern Selkup consists of a modifier (the possessor) and the head of the phrase (the possessed), the relationship between these two elements is encoded by a variety of linguistic strategies. The possessor can be a (proper) noun or a pronoun.

In case of the possessor being a noun, the following structure can be found:

(proper) noun $_{GEN}$ + head noun

(1)   *'amdə-l*   *Gu-n*   *i*   *'tö:-mba.*
        sit-ADJZ   human.being-GEN   son   come-PST.NAR.3SG
        'The tsar's son came.' (Fairytale about a girl and Baba-Yaga (Fairytale № 5) /30, Narym)

Southern Selkup marks the possessor with a genitive case suffix, the possessed is usually unmarked – if possessive suffixes are used, they are mainly used to mark a non-possessive (e.g. determinative) meaning (see example (2)). Therefore, the structure is dependent-marked (see Nichols 1986: 59) as only the possessor is

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marked. Overall the structure is head final, the possessor precedes the possessed. Analysis of data shows very few exceptions to this, which might be due to information structure.

(2) *üčedʲe-lʲi-ka-n*   *amba-d*   *ur-u-k*   *čur-e-li-mba.*
    child-DIM-DIM-GEN   mother-PX.3SG   force-EP-ADVZ   cry-EP-INCH-PST.NAR.3SG
    'The child's mother began to cry strongly.' (The mistress of the fire/79, Vasjugan)

Another way to encode possessive relations is the use of an adjectivization, but these occurrences seem to be restricted to animals which are meant to be used as source of food or material.

(3) […]   *pärʲ-e-şpi-ɣi-t*   *hibinʲdzʲa-t*   *ali*   *hirə-l*   *wadzʲ-p.*
    […]   fry-EP-IPFV-PST-3SG.OB   pig-GEN   or   cow-ADJZ   meat-ACC
    'She fried pork or beef.' (A story of Korobejnikova I. A. about herself/52, Narym)

Bekker (1995: 78) states in her grammar that it is also possible to use a locative case suffix to mark possessive structures. And indeed, some examples can be found for this concept:

(4) *loɣa-nan*   *mat-tɨ*   *tʲü-mba.*
    fox-LOC   house-PX.3SG   melt-PST.NAR.3SG
    'The house of the fox melted.' (The hare's house/12, Ket)

But the occurrences are very limited, therefore one may say that the genitive case is by far the most prominent and usual marker for adnominal possession involving a noun as the possessor.

If the possessor is present in the form of a pronoun the case is not as distinct. Three scenarios are possible: the possessor is indeed encoded by only a pronoun, by a possessive suffix or by a combination of those two. Therefore, the following structures can be found:

(pronoun) + head noun (PX)

Pronouns used to mark possession occur in two variants: the genitive version of the personal pronoun and a locative variation of the pronoun which has lost its locative meaning. Constructions with only the pronoun are head final again, the pronoun is put before the possessed noun.

(5) *man*   *nʲimbi-kka*   *mʲizut*   *a:*   *na:d-i-ri.*
    1SG(POSS)   grandmother-DIM   1PL.ACC   NEG   love-EP-FRQ.3SG
    'My grandmother doesn't love us.' (The old legend/78, Narym)

There are significantly fewer examples for the locative-marked variation; one of them is shown in example (6).

(6) *minan*   *warg*   *əlʲmad-la*   *nad-ə-r-kwa-t*
    1PL.POSS   big   child-PL   love-EP-FRQ-ITER-3SG.OB

    handzər-gu   *üčəga*   *kiba*   *mar-la-n-d-ə.*
    play- INF   little   little   child-PL-GEN-PX.3SG-COM
    'Our big children love to play with the little children.' (A story of Korobejnikova I. A. about herself/63, Narym)

Both types of pronouns are used for every semantic category of possession; there is no indication in the data that different pronouns are used for specific purposes.

It is also the case that both pronoun paradigms are also applied in combination with possessive suffixes:

(7) *man*   *adzu-ka-m*   *ugot*
    1SG(POSS)   grandmother-DIM-PX.1SG   earlier

    tabe-tč-le   *kwaja-kku-mba.*
    squirrel-TR-CONV   go-DUR-PST.NAR.3SG
    'Earlier my grandmother used to go squirrel hunting.' (My Grandmother/2, Narym)

In those cases, the data shows again that the genitive version of the personal pronoun is used more frequently and that these double markings are mainly eligible for kinship terms and body parts – the core meanings of inalienable possession. But for a definite statement about this more texts from different genres would be required.

The data also shows that it is not solely the speaker's preference as one speaker can mix the different options. In example (8) the first possessed, the father, is only marked with a possessive suffix while the mother is marked with a pronoun as well as a suffix.

(8)   *adʒa-m*   *kette-ŗpa-t*   *tɨdɨ-p*   *čwečo-t*
      father-PX.1SG   strike-IPFV-3SG.OB   cedar-ACC   ground-GEN

      ɨl-gɨt,   *mat*   *amba-m*   *takl-e-ŗpa-t.*
      down-LOC   1SG(POSS)   mother-PX.1SG   collect-EP-IPFV-3SG.OB
      'My father strikes a cedar, on the ground below, my mother picks (it) up.' (My mother and father struck cedar cones with a stick/2, Narym)

Encoding possessive relations between a pronominal person and the possessed with just a possessive suffix is by far the most frequent alternative in the corpus.

(9)   *tabɨnnan*   *haj-dɨ-n*   *kwedɨ-l*   *eppɨ-mba*
      3SG.POSS   eye-PX.3SG-PL   be.beautiful   become-PST.NAR.3SG

      kak   *nüŗŗund,*   *opt-ɨ-de,*   *nidɨ-n*   *eppɨ-mba*
      so   sky   hair-EP-PX.3SG   such-ADVZ   become-PST.NAR.3SG

      kwedɨl-le   *are-n-de*   *kadaf.*
      be.beautiful-CONV   moon-GEN-PX.3SG   light
      'Her eyes were as beautiful as the sky, her hair was as beautiful as the moon light.' (Tale about a hero/16, Vasjugan)

But as example (9) already shows, the use of possessive suffixes is not limited to pure possessive marking, Southern Selkup – as well as many other Uralic languages – features a "double use" of those suffixes. Other Uralic and more specifically some other Samoyedic languages feature the use of different persons of the possessive suffix, while it seems that in Southern Selkup only the 3SG- suffix is used in that regard. Mostly the second use of the suffixes is for marking something "inherently unique", time frames or for anaphoric use, i.e. reference to persons already mentioned in the ongoing conversation (see Nikolaeva 2003: 132 ff.). Inherently unique are usually heavenly or divine bodies, as the moon in example (9) or the sun in example (10).

(10)   *tʲele-dɨ*   *kwed-ɨ-mba.*
      sun-PX.3SG   shine-EP-HAB.3SG
      'The sun is shining.' (A tale about Idja and his grandmother/10, Vasjugan)

Still the suffixes are optional as they can just be left out in any context; in example (11) the sun is not marked, even though it appears also marked in the very same text.

(11)   *tʲe:lə*   *'tʲe:ləɣ-ˌnɨ.*
      sun   wake.up- PRS . 3SG
      'The sun wakes up.' (A tale about how the beasts searched the sun/11, Ket)

Also involved in the marking of possessive relations are reflexive pronouns (*on-*) – the data indicates that they cannot be seen as a sole solution but rather understood as an intensifying element, even though Bekker (1995: 78) lists them as an adequate variant. Example (12) shows the intensifying use of the pronoun:

(12)   *tau*   *mat*   *on-ek*   *man-m.*
      this   house   REFL-GEN.1SG   house-PX.1SG
      'This house is my own house.' (I came to my own native village/9, Narym)

If one compares all three options, one does get the following picture (the number indicated for possessive suffixes is restricted to the use of these suffixes in a possessive meaning):

Table 1

Distribution of possessive pronouns and suffixes

	Overall	inalienable	alienable
Pronoun	78	55	23
Pronoun + Possessive suffix	108	91	17
Possessive suffix	571	453	118

As already mentioned, possessive suffixes are the option most used, whereas pronouns on their own occur seldom. Inalienable and alienable possession do not seem to be marked differently, only the combination of

pronoun and suffix might have a tendency to be used for inalienable possession, but more data would be required to support this hypothesis. The data also shows that the dialects do not make a difference, since the distribution per dialect and option is largely the same.

3. Predicative Possession

The corpus contains several sentences with predicative possession, Table 2 compiles the different options which appear in the data. As expected there is no habeo-verb, therefore all constructions are basically existential constructions using an existential verb. For Southern Selkup that is the 'to be' verb, there is no distinction between an existential verb and a 'to be' verb.

Table 2

Distribution of the case suffixes used in predicative possession

Nominative	affirmative	22
	Negative	11
Locative	affirmative	57
	Negative	9
Genitive	Negative	2
comitative.instrumental	affirmative	4

The table shows evidently that the two latter options are only rarely used, both genitive examples are taken from the same text, and also the so-called with-possession (Stassen 2009: 54) cannot be seen as fully functional as all four examples are in principle the same sentence repeated in the same text. Therefore Southern Selkup presents two variants for expressing predicative possession – two variants one might be familiar with from other Samoyedic languages.

3.1. Nominative Possessive

The structure of the nominative construction is as follows:

(proper) noun/ (pronoun) + head noun $_{(PX)}$ + (not) to be

If the possessor is present in the form of a pronoun, that pronoun can be dropped if a possessive suffix is used. The possessive suffix is optional if the possessor is overt, whether it is in the form of a noun or pronoun.

In example (13) the possessor is only marked with the possessive suffix, in example (14) the possessor is overt and no suffix is used.

(13) *nagur   neː-di   e-ku-nda.*
       three   daughter-PX.3DU   be-DUR-INFER.3SG
       'They had three daughters.' (Three sisters (Fairytale № 3) /2, Narym)

(14) *pʲua-lʲdzi-ka   wargi   haj   e-ja.*
       eagle-DIM-DIM   big   eye   be-PRS.3SG
       'The eagle has a big eye.' (Fairytale about Blizzard/32, Vasjugan)

Nominative possessive structures can be negated by the use of the Selkup NEG . EX -verb *čangu-* or the Russian loan *nʲetu* which can be used as a particle or be conjugated like a standard Selkup verb.

3.2. Locative Possession

The locative version is present in the following structure:

(proper) noun $_{LOC}$ /pronoun $_{LOC}$ + head noun $_{(PX)}$ + ((not) to be)

The possessor receives the locative case marking (the case suffix is directly attached to the possessor, not to a post position like in Northern Selkup and other Samoyedic languages). It is also possible to add the possessive suffix to the possessed, but once again the possessive suffix is not obligatory. Example (15) shows an affirmative sentence with a noun as the possessor, example (16) presents a pronominal possessor and is negated with the verb *čangu-*; as with the nominative possession, the Russian loan *nʲetu* can be used as well.

(15) *nʲab-ɨ-nnan   naj   şidi   haj   e-ja.*
       duck-EP-LOC   EMPH   two   eye   be-PRS.3SG
       'The duck has two eyes.' (Tale about Nikita/12, Vasjugan)

(16) *man-nan   fa   ḳaborg   čangu-ɣa.*
       1SG-LOC   good   cloth   be.absent-PRS.3SG
       'I have no good dress.' (Tale about her own life/42, Vasjugan)

The word order for these structures is quite variable (as it might overall be the case in Southern Selkup), SOV is in fact the most used order but almost every other variety can be found. Mostly that might be due to information structure, hence a shift in the focus point, as in example (17) in which the dogs are stressed.

(17)   *tolʲko*   *kana-la-m*   *ma-nan*   *e-ja.*
        only   dog-PL-PX.1SG   1SG-LOC   be-PRS.3SG
        'I have only dogs.' (I came to my own native village/11, Narym)

Another feature, already visible in the structure presented above, is the dropping of the verb, in the present tense zero copula is possible. In fact, the analysis of the corpus shows that this is the second most frequent choice.

(18)   *tabi-nan*   *okkɨr*   *ne-d.*
        3SG-LOC   one   daughter-PX.3SG
        'He has only one daughter.' (Tale about her own life/73, Vasjugan)

As shown for the distribution of the different strategies to mark adnominal possession, dialects are also not decisive in choosing a certain pattern to mark predicative possession. Nominative and locative possession seem to be coexisting.

Abbreviations

ACC	accusative	FRQ	frequentative	NEG	negative
ADJZ	adjektivizer	GEN	genitive	OB	objective
ADVZ	adverbalizer	HAB	habituative	PL	plural
COM	comitative	INCH	inchoative	POSS	possessive pronoun
CONV	converb	INF	infinitive	PRS	present
DIM	diminutive	INFER	inferential	PST	past
DU	dual	IPFV	imperfective	PX	possessivesuffix
DUR	durative	ITER	iterative	REFL	reflexive
EMPH	emphatic	LOC	locative	SG	singular
EP	epentheticvowel	NAR	narrative	TR	transformative

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ПОСЕССИВНЫЕ КОНСТРУКЦИИ В ЮЖНО-СЕЛЬКУПСКИХ ДИАЛЕКТАХ

Посессивные конструкции в южно-селькупских диалектах могут быть категоризированы на именные и предикативные. В именных посессивных конструкциях посессор может быть выражен как именем, так и местоимением, в обоих случаях конструкции характеризируются постпозицией вершины (обладаемого) по отношению к посессору. В местоименных конструкциях посессоры могут быть выражены как полным местоимением, лично-притяжательными аффиксами, так и комбинированным местоименно-аффиксальным способом. Как и в других самодийских языках лично-притяжательные аффиксы в южно-селькупских диалектах используются в других – непосессивных функциях. Предикативные посессивные конструкции по сути являются бытийными конструкциями. Так как в южно-селькупских диалектах отсутствует habeo-глагол, для выражения предикативной посессивности используются номинативные или локативные конструкции.

Ключевые слова: *селькупский язык, посессивность.*

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