The NP/DP structure is broadly discussed in generative literature (cf. (Alexiadou 2014; Lyutikova 2017) and references therein). Finno-ugric data are challenging for this approach, formed mainly on European languages and developed also on Iranian and Altaic. Some of the challenges were already pointed out by Simonenko and Leontjev (2012). In this talk, using my field data collected in the villages of Kuznetsovo and Mikrjakovo (Gornomarijskij district, Mari El, Russia) in 2016-2017, I will introduce the puzzles relevant for Hill Mari particularly and provide their formal analysis.

There are three nominal categories that have morphological expression within the NP/DP: number, possessiveness and case. The main problem is that the order of possessive and case affixes differs in grammatical and lexical cases: possessive affixes precede case markers in the former (1) and follow them in the latter (2).

(1)  
\[ \text{tödö } \text{sumka-et-äm} / *\text{sumka-m-et} \text{ näl-ën} \]  
he bag-POSS2SG-ACC bag-ACC-POSS2SG take-PRF[3SG]  
‘He has taken your bag’.

(2)  
\[ \text{sumka-št-et} / *\text{sumka-et-štö} \text{ olma-vlä ki-ä-t} \]  
bag-IN-POSS2SG bag-POSS2SG-IN apple-PL lie-NPST.3-PL  
‘There are apples lying in your bag’.

The situation becomes more complicated when the plural marker is inserted. Both POSS-PL and PL-POSS affix orders are possible in grammatical cases (3), whereas in lexical ones -POSS can be inserted between stem and number but not between number and case (4).

(3)  
\[ \text{tödö } \text{sumka-et-vlä-m} / \text{sumka-vlä-et-äm} \text{ näl-ën} \]  
he bag-POSS2SG-PL-ACC bag-PL-POSS2SG-ACC take-PRF[3SG]  
‘He has taken your bags’.

(4)  
\[ \text{sumka-vlä-št-et} / \text{sumka-et-vlä-štö} / *\text{sumka-vlä-et-štö} \text{ olma-vlä} \]  
bag-PL-IN-POSS2SG bag-POSS2SG-PL-IN bag-PL-POSS2SG-IN apple-PL  
ki-ä-t  
lie-NPST.3-PL  
‘There are apples lying in your bags’.

Thomas McFadden (2001a) proposed an analysis for Finno-Ugric NPs/DPs in the Distributional Morphology framework using the operation of Lowering.

There appear however at least two problems with this analysis. First, considering constraints on Lowering, it predicts attested in Hill Mari affix order POSS-PL-CASE (cf. in (4) \textit{sumka-et-vlä-štö} (bag-POSS2SG-PL-IN)) to be ungrammatical. Second, it involves an arguable, additional operation, which seems not to be indispensable, as it will be shown in my analysis.

Following the idea of parallel syntactic analysis of locative (lexical) cases and locative postpositions proposed by Simonenko and Leontjev (2012) and developed for Moksha NP in (Pleshak, Toldova, Volkova 2017), I analyze locative cases as functional heads that have extended projection with possessiveness. Postpositions allow possessive marker either on the noun stem or after the postpositional head. The structures are presented in (5)

(5)  
\[ [[[\text{pört }\text{v}]/-\text{em POSSP}]/\text{v}]/\text{anzõl-n}\text{v}]/ [[[\text{pört }\text{v}]/\text{anzõl-n}\text{v}]/ -\text{em POSSP}]/ \]  
house -POSS.1SG front-IN house front-IN -POSS.1SG  
‘in front of my house’

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So that locative cases realize the second strategy (with lexical NP in the complement) and having extended projection (PossP). Compare structures in (5) and in (6) for postposition and locative case respectively.

\[
\text{[[[pört NP] -šṭ OblP]-em PossP]}
\]

\[\text{house -IN -POSS.1SG} \]

‘in my house’

Moreover, I spread this idea to explain the behavior of the plural marker, which I consider to be a grammaticalizing postposition.

Locative heads can have as heir complements only non-extended projections (NP/NumP). Plural head allows PossP in its complement (I), but being itself non-extended projection can appear as a complement of a locative head. When the complement of the plural head is NP, possessiveness appears as an extended projection of OblP (II). It explains grammaticality of both NP in (4), which realized challenging for the McFadden’s analysis.

(I)  
\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{OblP} \\
\text{Obl'} \\
\text{NumP} \\
\text{štə} \ldots \\
\text{PossP} \\
\text{vlä} \\
\text{sumka-et} \\
\text{sumka-et-vlä-štə} \\
\text{bag-POSS2SG-PL-IN} \\
\end{array}
\]

(II)  
\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{PossP} \\
\text{Poss'} \\
\text{NumP} \\
\text{štə} \ldots \\
\text{OblP} \\
\text{et} \\
\text{NP} \\
\text{vlä} \\
\text{sumka} \\
\text{sumka-vlä-št-et} \\
\text{bag-PL-IN-POSS2SG} \\
\end{array}
\]

Postposition-like analysis of the plural marker in Hill Mari does not seem to be contra-intuitive as it is recently grammaticalized (see some diachronic data and functional observations in Luutonen (1997).

In my talk I will provide more data including the accurate analysis of all word-order constraints, as well as constraints on the 3rd person possessive markers and dialectal differences. I will also discuss some semantic effects provoked by the differences in affix order.

References


