Introduction

Allomorphic variation is a well-known issue in morphological theory and has been widely discussed by various researchers (e.g. [Carstairs 1987], [Aronoff 1994], [Booij 1997], to name but a few). Taken broadly, allomorphy can be of very different nature, and more empirical data is needed for its better understanding. In Uralic, the problem of allomorphy has not been fully solved either. In the case of minor Uralic languages, there is a huge lack of data, as most of the grammars only describe the written standard of these languages, which is often a constructed (and virtually non-existent) phenomenon. The Mansi language (<Ob-Ugric <Finno-Ugric <Uralic) is also poorly described, and the only available grammars -- [Murphy 1968] and [Rombandeeva 1973] -- provide data from the Sosva dialect, which is the base of contemporary written standard. In our talk, the allomorphy in Mansi nominal paradigms will be accounted for on the basis of our own fieldwork data from the extremely under-described Upper Lozva dialect, which has less than 100 living speakers (see [Zhornik, Pokrovskaya 2017a]). This dialect exhibits some features that are not found in the descriptions of the Sosva dialect.

Mansi is a highly agglutinative language, so if the noun has several affixes, the boundaries between them are normally unproblematic. However, the shape of these markers may differ, and this is the main subject of our talk. We will describe such cases of allomorphy consequently for the categories on number, case and possession.

1. Number

The Mansi language distinguishes between singular, dual and plural markers. The singular is unmarked, the marker for dual is -(ə)ɣ and the marker for plural is -(ə)t. However, in the possessive declension, the shape of these affixes is different: -(a)ɣ for dual and -(a)n for plural.

- xāp-ɣ  boat-DU
- xāp-t  boat-PL
- xāp-ɣ-um  boat-DU-POSS.1SG
- xāp-an-um  boat-PL-POSS.1SG

While the dual markers in these two cases seem the same (apart from slight vowel variation: a is reduced to ə in the final syllable, see [Zhornik, Pokrovskaya 2017b]), the plural affixes look different, which can be classified as an ordinary case of morphological allomorphy. However, another hypothesis is that the -(a)n marker is actually the same as the plural -(ə)t marker. As Mansi possessive affixes derive from personal pronouns, most of which begin with a sonorant (see [Honti 1998], the [t] in the plural marker might have undergone assimilation and transformed into the corresponding dental sonorant [n]. Initially, this process occurred in the first and the second person, where the personal pronoun did start with a sonorant. Then, it has analogously spread to all other paradigm slots, namely the third person, thus resulting into full-fledged morphological allomorphy ([Booij 2005]).

2. Case

Here we will discuss the allomorphy in the marker of the lative case, which is -(ə)n/-n̩al/-ne/-en. Earlier, the origin of this marker was thought to be the Proto-Uralic locative marker (see [Castrén 1854]). However, there is an alternative view. For example, Peter Haidu [1985] states that this marker originates from the grammaticalized postposition *nā. This explains the variation between -n̩al/-n̩al/-ne, but not the metathesis -en [Rombandeeva 1973]. The additional problem is vowel alternation in the anlaut and auslaut of the marker, because there is no vowel harmony in Mansi. Sporadic cases of double case marking (“case stacking”) have been attested in the diachronic development of Uralic languages, witness the dative-lative affix -nik in

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Samoyedic containing an additional lative marker *-k. Thus, the shape -en may be a result of double marking by the Proto-Uralic Locative *-ń. We could explain the vowel quality by appealing to the lative marker *-k, which transforms into -i/-i in the Western and Southern Mansi dialects or undergoes vocalization: šopii ‘2 halves’ pari - parii ‘backwards’. In the Northern Mansi dialect, it either appears as -γ or disappears completely: cf. ti-γ ‘here’, šup ‘across’. Consider the lowered and lenis articulation of the Mansi consonant [γ], (see [Zhornik, Pokrovskaya 2017a]) which may transform into the [e] vowel by merging with the final vowel or even on its own. The strategy of marking the stem with the former lative case marker *-k, which is responsible for the a/e vocalization, is very likely. Certainly, it is only possible when stem boundaries are easily reanalyzed. From the rhythmical structure of the Mansi (epenthetic vowels, alternation of quality and quantity of consonants in stems and markers such as marker of infinitive form: -unjw/-unkw/-ukw/-uk…), we can see that the stem boundary reanalysis is very widespread in Mansi. The similar strategy of case-marking is possible for other Mansi noun cases. We will present more data to support this theory in our paper.

3. Possession
In the domain of possession, we witness the process of paradigm simplification. In literary Mansi, there are different markers listed for 2DU, 3DU and 2PL. However, in the Upper Lozva dialect they all have merged into one affix (-ën) in most contexts. The merge of 2DU and 2PL markers is not unexpected, but the disappearance of the former 3DU marker is. If we delve deeper, we see that Mansi other possessive markers of the third person also behave differently from those of the first and the second persons. The 3PL marker is a complex morpheme consisting of two elements, -an being probably the same pluralizer as the plural marker in the possessive declension (see section 1). The second marker, -əl is thought to be of the same origin as the Finnish location affix -la/-lää, which has developed into a pluralizer in some Karelian dialects (see [Honti 1998]).

Conclusion
The cases of allomorphy in Northern Mansi may be of different nature, either morphological, phonological or phonetic. However, in some controversial cases listed above, the exact reason for allomorphic variation is unclear. In the talk, more cases of dialectal variation will be presented (for example, the shortening of the elative marker in the Upper Lozva dialect) and the ones listed above will be discussed in-depth.

LIST OF GLOSSES
1, 2, 3 - person, DU - dual number, PL - plural number, POSS - possessive affix

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