
Morphosyntax of possessive constructions in Moksha and Hill Mari¹

Polina Pleshak
Lomonosov Moscow State University
polinapleshak@yandex.ru

This paper is dealing with syntactic status of possessor in adnominal possessive constructions of two Finno-Ugric idioms: Moksha and Hill Mari (based on field data collected in 2014-2017).

In both languages possessor is in genitive case and triggers possessive agreement (cf. Hill Mari ex. (1)).

- (1) mən' ədərämäš-ən plat'ə-(žê)-m už-a-m
I woman-GEN dress-POSS.3SG-ACC see-NPST-1SG
'I see woman's dress'.

Here three main problems arise:

1. There are nominal phrases with genitive possessor but without possessive agreement on the head.
2. Possessive phrases can appear also without expressed genitive possessors.
3. As oblique phrases lack DP, there is no functional head that could assign case to DP of possessor.

Following Alexiadou et al. (2007) (see also references in it) and Simonenko and Leontjev (2012), I claim that possessors move from the NP to DP or ObIP (in oblique phrases) to receive the case and there is an anaphorical *pro* in Spec,PossP.

In my talk I show, how it supports the separate analysis of direct and oblique cases both in Hill Mary and Moksha.

References: • Alexiadou et al. (eds.) 2007: Noun phrase in the generative perspective / ed. by A. Alexiadou, L. Haegeman, and M. Stavrou. Berlin — New York: Mouton de Gruyter. • Simonenko A. P. & Leontjev A. P. (2012): Morfosintaksis imennogo kompleksa [Morphosyntax of the nominal complex]. In Finno-ugorskije jazyki: fragmenty grammatičeskogo opisanija, Formalnyj i funkcionalnyj podkhody. Moscow: Russkije slovari. P. 259–337.

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