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ABOUT THE NON-PERSONAL DEFINITE FUNCTION  
OF THE URALIC 3rd PERSON POSSESSIVE SUFFIX

**Abstract.** Finno-Ugric, Selkup, Turkic and Tungusic share a common (preferred) use of the 3rd person possessive suffix (3Px) in the non-personal definite function. Based on the use of (Northern) Samoyedic languages one could imagine that in a number of Uralic languages the text meant for the addressee (= the 2nd person) sounds natural when determined by means of the 2Px, meaning something like 'the matter heard by you'. The 3Px usage is here related to a more general definiteness (in Samoyedic languages in case of the concepts 'sun', 'moon', 'sky', 'earth' etc., since these phenomena are determined by their unique and universal nature already, not by the listener's hearing). Thus, it may be supposed that a non-personal general-definite function has always been inherent to the Uralic 3Px.

As to its functions, in Uralic languages the use of the 3rd person possessive suffix (3Px) differs considerably from that of the 1Px and the 2Px. One of such differences is revealed by the use of the former instead of the two latter ones but not the other way round, e.g., Southwestern Finnish *min\_ōn e l ä m ä n s ä* [noun with 3Px] *ollus sellāne huanōne* 'I have all my life (lit. his life) been such a miserable (person)', *veisatkaa kukin kovalla äänellä ja s y d ä m e n s ä* [noun with 3Px] *pohjasta* 'sing everybody in a high voice and out of a full heart' (lit. out of her/his full heart) (Tauli 1966 : 63). The use of the 3Px occurs instead of both the 1Px and the 2Px in adverbs in Finnish, Karelian, Veps, Votic, Estonian and Livonian; similar usage is also characteristic of reflexive pronouns in Votic, Estonian and Livonian (Mark 1925 : 276—277, c.f. also Tauli 1966 : 60—63). E.g. Old Literary Finnish (Agricola) *mine se y x i n e n s* [adverb with 3Px] *olen* 'it's me alone' (lit. her/his alone) (Mark 1925 : 242), Votic *aina täütämm e n t ä ä z* [reflexive pronoun with 3Px] 'always our fill o u r s e l v e s' (lit. themselves) (Mark 1925 : 68). In case of the Lapp (Saami) languages, Valter Tauli indicates that in Wefsen Southern Lapp it may happen that the 3Px is commonly used only with kindred terms, replacing both the 1Px and the 2Px (Tauli 1966 : 63).

Such use of the 3Px in Finnic and Lapp is generally regarded as a recent development that was brought about by the dimming of the meaning of possessive suffixes, the omission of the 1Px and the 2Px in use as well as the phonetic mixing of possessive suffixes in different persons (see for it mainly

Mark 1925 : 276—277, Tauli 1966 : 60—65, 145—150). Without denying the possibility of all these reasons in principle, I would point to the fact that the 3Px in Finnic and Lapp differs considerably by its numerous functions from other persons' possessive suffixes and that earlier the difference could have been even greater. It could go back to the 3Px that was primarily not (only) a possessive suffix but (also) a suffix with some other functions. To understand it better, there is a good reason to observe non-possessive definite functions of the 3Px in the rest of Uralic languages.

When dealing with Uralic possessive suffixes, V. Tauli summarised his observations as follows: "Another important meaning of P[ossessive ]S[uffixe]s is determinative (corresponding to the definite article of the I[ndo-]E[uropean] languages). This occurs especially in the 3pssg mainly in Cheremis [Mari] [---] Vogul [Mansi], Ostyak [Hanti] and Samoyedic, infrequently also in Mordvin. The 3ps occurs in the determinative meaning also in the Turkic and Tungus languages. The 2pssg, too, occurs in the determinative meaning in the same languages as the 3ps [---] [Irén] N.-Sebestyén has found in SamYu [Nenets] texts examples of the occurrence of the 1sg, 1du and 1pl and 3pl in the determinative meaning." (Tauli 1966 : 148) Klara Majtinskaja indicated the non-personal definite meaning of the 3Px and the 2Px in a number of Finno-Ugric and Samoyedic languages. In case of the 3Px in Finno-Ugric languages, such use is supposed to be clearly observable in Volgaic, Permian and Ob-Ugric languages; the same languages display a somewhat less productive use of the 2Px (ОСНОВЫ 1974 : 270—271.)

In case of Uralic languages various authors have noted certain peculiarities in the determinative use of the 3Px and the 2Px. Eberhard Winkler writes about the Udmurt language: "The PX/3SG serves for marking definiteness (primarily in the area of the object and the attribute) [---] Sometimes the PX2SG, too, is used for expressing definiteness of the subject [---]" (Winkler 2001 : 29).

As far as Northern Samoyedic languages are concerned, according to Natalja Tereščenko, in a number of cases the 2Px of the Tundra Nenets indicates definiteness instead of possessiveness. It is the form 3PxSg that occurs in the non-possessive function with the substantives such as 'sea', 'sky', 'sun' et al. (Терещенко 1965 : 879). N. Tereščenko also explains that in another Northern Samoyedic language — Nganasan — in a number of cases the 2Px is used in the function of a peculiar definite article, e.g., *bārbəduŋ hontj koptua. k o p t u a r ə* [noun + 2Px] *četuamj nenenjku* [---] 'the master has a daughter (lit.: a girl). t h e g i r l (lit.: your girl) (is) very beautiful'. The Nganasan 3PxSg is also used in the non-possessive function with the substantives of the type 'sky', 'god', 'weather', 'earth', 'sun' etc., e.g., *m ə u δ u* [noun + 3Px] *sürü yilenu čimə* 't h e e a r t h (lit.: his earth) is covered by snow' (Терещенко 1979 : 95.)

Eugen Helimski has noted that in case of the Taz dialect of Southern Samoyedic Selkup the 3Px indicates a peculiar interrelation between the first mention and the following mentions of the same item, however, it is not an equivalent of the definite article. In this dialect a few names of celestial sources of light and temporal stretches are almost invariably provided with the 3PxSg (by way of examples given 'sun; day', 'moon; month', 'year', 'morning'). In the dialect, the nominative object of the 2nd person imperative is often formed by means of the 2Px, also when the

respective possessive relationship is lacking, e.g., *tõnna i r a l* [noun + 2Px] *apstätj* 'feed that t h e r e o l d m a n' (lit.: feed that your old man) (Кузнецова, Хелимский, Грушкина 1980 : 187—188.)

Consequently, we could briefly say the following. In Finnic and Lapp, the 3Px is used instead of the 1Px and the 2Px, but not the other way round. In Volgaic, Permian, Ob-Ugric and Samoyedic both the 3Px and the 2Px are mainly used in the non-personal definite function. Thereby, in Volgaic, Permian and Ob-Ugric the 3Px is used in the non-personal definite function more often than the 2Px. In Samoyedic the 3Px in the non-personal definite function is characteristically used with celestial sources of light and the concepts of the type 'sky', 'earth', 'sea' etc. In other cases the 2Px is more common in Northern Samoyedic. In the Taz dialect of Selkup only the 3Px, almost without an exception, is used in the non-personal definite function. The 3Px occurs in the non-personal definite function also in Turkic and Tungusic. Is there a feature, common for all or at least for the majority of the above-mentioned languages? Proceeding from the fact that the use of the 3Px instead of other possessive suffixes in Finnic and Lapp is substantially definite, then Finno-Ugric, Selkup, Turkic and Tungusic share a common (preferred) use of the 3Px in the definite function.

Based on the use of (Northern) Samoyedic languages one could imagine that in a number of Uralic languages the text meant for the listener (= the 2nd person) sounds natural when determined by means of the above-mentioned 2Px, meaning something like 'the matter heard by you'. The 3Px usage is here related to a more general definiteness (in Samoyedic languages in case of the concepts 'sun', 'moon', 'sky', 'earth' etc., since these phenomena are determined by their unique and universal nature already, not by the listener's hearing). Vladimir Napol'skih has also noted in case of the Udmurt language: "In *guždor vjļjn turjnez čeber* 'on the meadow the grass is beautiful' *-ez* in *turjnez* '(the) grass' functions really as a definite suffix ('this very grass'). But the suffix completely coincides with the possessive suffix of 3rd person singular and is just understandable: it is actually a possessive suffix! This can be proved also by putting of the possessive suffix of 2nd person singular (*-ed*) instead of it (*guždor vjļjn turjned čeber* with the same meaning, the slight difference is that in this case grass would be meant, which is just here, near, that may be pointed at during conversation): the latter may be used as markers of definiteness too [---], though in Udmurt not so often as in the related Komi languages." (Napol'skich 2003 : 293).

Thus, it may be supposed that a non-personal general-definite function has always been inherent to the Uralic 3Px. One could also assume that the 3Px in the mentioned general-definite function has been used in those Finnic languages in which the traces of the 1Px and 2Px are practically lacking — in Estonian and Livonian (see for it more closely in Künnap 2001 : 123—128). In those two languages the 1Px and the 2Px may never have been in general use, and the use of the 3Px may have originated from the possibly primary general-definite function of the 3Px.

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**О БЕЗЛИЧНОЙ ОПРЕДЕЛЯЮЩЕЙ ФУНКЦИИ  
УРАЛЬСКОГО ЛИЧНО-ПРИТЯЖАТЕЛЬНОГО СУФФИКСА 3-го ЛИЦА**

Общей чертой финно-угорских, селькупского, тюркских и тунгусских языков является употребление лично-притяжательного суффикса 3-го лица в безличной определяющей функции. По данным (северно)самодийских языков можно предполагать, что в предназначенном слушателю (= 2-е лицо) сообщении его суть детерминирована с помощью лично-притяжательного суффикса 2-го лица, при этом имеется в виду значение примерно 'что-то, услышанное тобой'. Лично-притяжательный суффикс 3-го лица связан с определением таких понятий, как 'солнце', 'луна', 'небо', 'земля' и др., детерминированных уже по своей сути, а не через восприятие слушателя. Поэтому можно полагать, что уральскому лично-притяжательному суффиксу 3-го лица была всегда свойственна и безличная общая определяющая функция.