

Universal quantifier *xälä* in Hill Mari: Towards syntax and semantics

Anita Soloveva
Lomonosov MSU
nit-sol@mail.ru

1 Introduction

This paper focuses on the Hill Mari (<Finno-Ugric) universal quantifier *xälä*. The data was collected during the fieldwork in the village of Kuznetsovo and its surroundings (2018, Mari El, Russia) by elicitation, as well as by consulting the corpus of transcribed oral narratives (ca. 55000 tokens). This item was mentioned among quantifiers in Mari grammars (Alhoniemi 1993; Savatkova 2002: 165–166). A recent paper (Khomchenkova and Sidorova 2017) states that *xälä* forces the exhaustive interpretation in quantified NPs. However, the syntactic and semantic properties of this quantifier remain outside the previous research. I will concentrate on the latter issues.

2 Data

First, *xälä* can encode both types of «completion» (Cinque 1999: 101): the plural set has been totally affected (1) and each member of the set has been totally affected (2).

- (1) d'ir'ektör klas xälä üž-än
headmaster class entirely call-PRET
'The headmaster called the whole class (to the office)'.
(2) (cilä) kôm kagêl' xälä stöl vël-nö ki-ä / ki-ät
(all) three pie entirely table top-IN2 lie-NPST.3SG / lie-NPST-3PL
'(All) three pies are lying on the table'.

Second, the distribution of this item is limited to structural case positions (nominative and accusative). Inherent (dative) and lexical case markers are not possible either on the noun or on the item:

- (3) * tãmdê-šê klas-(lan) xälä-(län) dvojkê-m sënd-ö
teach-PTCP.ACT class-(DAT) entirely-(DAT) "D" -ACC seat-AOR.3SG
'The teacher gave all the class "D"s'.
(4) * klas-(êštê) xälä-(štê) örvezä-vlä uke
class-(IN) entirely-(IN) boy-PL NEG.EX
'There are no boys in the whole class'.

Third, occupying one of the structural case positions *xälä* is able to quantify only over those nominals, which **do not** have any dependents that are higher than quantifiers in the order of nominal dependents in Hill Mari (attributive adnominal modifiers and possessors), (see Pleshak 2017), and **do not** bear possessive or number markers. Otherwise, this item is reinterpreted as having a "comitative" function (the predicate will agree with the "accompanier"):

- (5) mën'-ën klas-**em** xälä tol-ên-(â^t)
 I-GEN class-POSS.1SG entirely come-PRET-(3PL)
 *‘My whole class came’.
 ‘Someone came with my whole class’.
- (6) klas-**vlä** xälä tol-ên-(â^t)
 class-PL entirely come-PRET-(3PL)
 *‘All the classes came’.
 ‘Someone came with all the classes’.

3 Analysis

I claim that *xälä* as a universal quantifier can modify only “small nominals” (Pereltsvaig 2006), since they do not have a syntactic case feature and thus remain caseless. Other cases, in contrast, have to be realized in the sentence, but they cannot in these contexts, therefore the derivation fails in (3-4). The impossibility of co-occurrence of number (PIP) and possessive (PossP) projections with a quantification reading also serves as an argument for claiming that *xälä* cannot quantify over extended projections (5-6). In my talk, I will elaborate on this analysis, relying on the study of Hill Mari NP structure (Pleshak 2017), a cross-linguistic research on nominal structure (Lyutikova 2017, among others) and theoretical approaches to natural language quantification (Bach et al. 2014, among others).

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Abbreviations

3	3rd person
ACC	accusative
ACT	actor
AOR	aorist
DAT	dative
EX	existential
IN	inessive
NEG	negation
NPST	non-past tense
SG	singular
PL	plural
PRET	preterite
PTCP	participle

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