

### **Variation in Aanaar Saami adjective attribute marking**

From an areal perspective, the two most common ways of marking adjective attributes in the languages of Northern Eurasia are juxtaposition and agreement. Juxtaposition is considered to be the prototypical marking of adjective attribution in Uralic languages. In other words, the morphologically unmarked adjective typically precedes the head of the noun phrase (Rießler 2016: 125). In some languages, e.g. Finnic languages, juxtaposition has been replaced by agreement marking of adjective attributes.

The prototypical marking of Saami adjective attributes, however, is unique within the Uralic language family as well as within the languages of Eurasia in general. Saami languages generally distinguish between two separate adjective forms, of which one is used as a predicate, the other as an attribute. While the former agrees with the subject in number, the latter typically does not show agreement, e.g. Aanaar Saami *visteh láá muččâdeh* [room.PL be.3SG beautiful.PL] ‘the rooms are beautiful.’, but *mučis visteh* [beautiful.ATTR room.PL] ‘beautiful rooms’.

Yet, the adjective attribute marking system of the Saami languages is far from uniform. Not all Saami adjectives have a distinct attributive form and in some languages, there are also instances of head-driven agreement. Aanaar Saami in particular stands out by the wide range of adjectives which show (optional) agreement with the head noun in attribute position (Rauhala 2013: 211). Moreover, in Aanaar Saami, the attribute marking of some adjectives is inconsistent, i.e. their so-called attributive form is occasionally disregarded in favour of the unmarked base form which then also may agree with its head noun (e.g. *muččâdeh visteh* [beautiful.PL room.PL] ‘beautiful rooms’, cf. examples above). Previously, the inconsistency in the attribute marking of Aanaar Saami adjectives has been described as a feature of the Eastern dialect (Morottaja 2007: 23), but to this day, there have been no thorough studies on the variation and its possible determinants.

The present research aims to shed more light on Aanaar Saami adjectives with inconsistent attribute marking. More specifically, I will give an overview of these adjectives and discuss the intra- and extralinguistic factors which might play a role in their variation. Particular attention will also be paid to the optional head-driven agreement attested with these adjectives.

For the present study, adjective attributes were collected from two anthologies, Inarinlappalaista kansantietoutta ‘Aanaar Saami Folklore’ and Aanaarkiela čájtuzeh ‘Aanaar

Saami Language Samples' which contain transcriptions of language samples collected in 1887 and 1952, respectively. In addition, more recent examples of Aanaar Saami adjective attributes were collected from the text corpus provided by the SIKOR corpus at UiT The Arctic University of Norway.

## References

- Morottaja, Matti. 2007. *Anarâškielâ ravvuuh*. Helsinki: Kotimaisten kielten tutkimuskeskus.
- Rauhala, Ilona. 2013. Attribuutin kongruenssi: adjektiivit, demonstratiivit ja \*para. *Suomalais-Ugrilaisen Seuran Aikakauskirja* 94. Helsinki: Suomalais-ugrilainen seura 199–221.
- Rießler, Michael. 2016. *Adjective attribution (Studies in Diversity Linguistics 2)*. Berlin: Language Science Press.