Russian Influence on Adessive Case Marking in Tver Karelian

Tver Karelian is an endangered dialect of the Karelian language spoken by approximately 2,750 elderly individuals in the Tver’ Oblast’ of western Russia (Russian Census 2010). The Tver Karelians settled in central Russia – only 250 km from Moscow – at the beginning of the 17th century, but have retained their language for 400 years in spite of increasing pressure from Russian. Nevertheless, Tver Karelian has been influenced by Russian both phonologically and morphosyntactically, as well as in its lexicon. In this paper/presentation I discuss the Russian influence on adessive case marking in Tver Karelian, and provide a few examples for the most important parts of the discussion. My research is based on my own fieldwork (20-29.05.2017, Lihoslavl’skij rajon), data obtained by Pertti Virtaranta (1960s-1970s), and existing prose literature in the Tolmači dialect (1930s, 1990-2010s).

The adessive case is one of the six so-called locative cases traditionally found among the Finnic languages, dating back to Proto-Finnic (Laakso 2001): inessive, elative, illative, adessive, ablative, and allative, with the prototypical semantic functions of “in(side),” “out of/from,” “into,” “on,” “from,” and “to,” respectively. These cases have been retained in most modern Finnic languages, e.g. Finnish, Estonian, Votic (Ariste 1968), Veps (Gründhal 2015), Livvi Karelian (Pyöli 2012); while certain cases have been lost in others, e.g. loss of the adessive, ablative and allative cases in Livonian (de Siviers 2000). Many of these cases have other functions in addition to their prototypical locative functions. In many Finnic languages, for instance, the adessive case is also used in constructions denoting possession, time, and instrument, as here exemplified by Tver Karelian: *photnikalla on oružja* ‘the hunter has a rifle,’ *talvella lapšet čurissah regüzillä* ‘in winter the children ride on sleighs,’ *tuohen leikattih veičellä lentakši* ‘the birchbark was cut into strips with a knife.’ Interestingly, however, in Tver Karelian, like in most other Karelian Proper dialects, the adessive case has also adopted the functions normally covered by the allative case, resulting in the loss of a separate allative case. As a result, while the adessive case has traditionally been used to indicate a static action or state with little or no movement (as indicated above, “on”), in Tver Karelian it is also used for actions indicating movement or transfer (“to”); cf. (1a) in Tver Karelian and (1b) in Finnish.

   3SG give.PST 3SG.ADE horse.ACC 3SG give.PST 3SG.ALL horse.ACC
   ‘He gave him a/the horse.’ ‘He gave him a/the horse.’

The functional domain covered by the adessive case in Tver Karelian appears to continue to expand, most likely due to prolonged and ever-increasing contact with Russian, and it is no longer limited to possession, time, instrument, movement and indirect objects, but is also used to mark the logical subject and direct objects of certain verbs. Verbs that require the logical subject to be marked by the adessive case all denote some kind of feeling or stimulus passively experienced by the subject, e.g. urge (2a), wish (2b), belief (2c), joy (2d).

(2) a. Tänäpiänä meilä pidä vähembi paissa, jo äijän pagizima.
   today 1PL.ADE ought.PR.3SG less speak already a lot speak.PR.1PL
   ‘Today we ought to speak less, we already spoken a lot.’

   b. Meilä tahottau, što elettäis’ küläššä nuoret, […]
   1PL.ADE wish.PR.3SG that live.PASS/3PL.COND village.INE youngster.NOM.PL
   ‘We would like / we wish that more young people lived in the village, […]’

   c. Hukalla ožuttuači, što ammuttih kohti häneh.
   wolf.ADE seem.PST.3SG that shoot. PASS/3PL.PST towards 3SG.ILL
   ‘It seemed to the wolf as if / the wolf thought that they were shooting at him.’
d. Tiän tütö meilä mieldüü.
   2PL.POSS daughter.NOM 1PL.ADE please.PR.3SG
   ‘We like your daughter.’ (lit. ‘Your daughter pleases us’)

The adessive case marking does not extend to all verbs, for instance the subject of toivuo ‘wish, hope for’ is unmarked (i.e. nominative). Consequently, the distribution of adessive case marking appears to be arbitrary among these verbs of experience, at least superficially. If the constructions are compared to their Russian counterparts, however, it becomes evident that the adessive case matches the dative case employed by Russian in these constructions, cf. nam nado ‘we (dat.) ought to,’ nam hočets’a ‘we (dat.) would like,’ volku pokazalos’ ‘the wolf (dat.) thought’ and vaša dočka nam nравит’s’a ‘we (dat.) like your daughter.’ Interestingly, in Tver Karelian these constructions – with the exception of (2a) – have near-synonymous equivalents, in which another verb is employed alongside a nominative subject: müö tahomma ‘we would like’ (cf. 2b), hukka duumaičči ‘the wolf thought’ (cf. 2c), and müö šuačemma händä ‘we like her’ (cf. 2d). The choice of construction is likely determined by or related to volition, the adessive subject being less volitional than the nominative subject.

The direct object marking of certain verbs in Tver Karelian also reflects their Russian counterparts. In Tver Karelian the majority of verbs requiring a direct object to be marked by the adessive case are direct borrowings from Russian (see 3a), but a few inherited native verbs have also been influenced by Russian in this respect (see 3b). Note that the Russian verb equivalent to zaviduija in (3a), zavidovat’, marks its direct object by the instrumental case; while the Russian verb equivalent to kāškie in (3b), prikazyvat’, marks its direct object by the dative case.

(3)  a. Hiän zaviiduiččou šiun mašinalla.
   3SG.NOM envy.PR.3SG 2SG.POSS car.ADE
   ‘He envies your car.’

   b. Noštī salduatan i kāškōu šillā juottua hebozet.
   lift.PST.3SG soldier.ACC and order.PR.3SG 3SG.ADE water horse.PL.NOM
   ‘He grabbed the soldier and ordered him to water the horses.’

The adessive case marking of direct objects is not as stable as the adessive marking of subject, which is obligatory and used by all speakers. For instance, although the direct object of the verb kāškie ‘order, command’ is generally marked by the adessive case, it has also been attested with the accusative case.

References


