Two paths running across the same field –
The grammaticalization of referential marking in Uralic languages

Barbara Egedi
Research Institute for Linguistics
Hungarian Academy of Sciences

Aims: The non-possessive use of possessive suffixes (Px) in Uralic languages resembles the use of the definite article in many respects; at the same time, the two behave quite differently, as was also claimed in the literature. This paper aims to provide a unified account of previous observations and to offer a model according to which the grammaticalization of the definite article and the grammaticalization of the Px-determination are two corresponding paths running across the same "field of grammar", but starting from different directions.

Observations and problems: The non-possessive, referential anchoring function of possessive affixes has long been observed in several Uralic languages (Cf. *inter alia* Collinder 1960, Künnap 2004), although the function itself has not been analyzed satisfactorily. Previous analyses (Fraurud 2001; Nikolaeva 2003; Schroeder 2006; Gerland 2014; Janda 2015) principally refer to *identifiability* and *associativity*, also involving aspects of information structure, but fail to account for two important facts: i) the use of non-possessive Px-s has been reported not to be obligatory in all the languages; ii) the distribution of non-possessive Px-s is not identical in the individual Uralic languages, as was pointed out by Simonenko (2014). While in Mari neither anaphoric nor situational uniqueness is encoded by a Px, in Udmurt and Khanty it frequently appears in anaphoric contexts. In Komi and Nganasan (Zayzon 2015) situational and inherent uniqueness can also be marked by adding a non-possessive Px to the noun. Whether Px-determination can be analyzed as a real grammaticalized element has also been challenged (e.g. Janda 2015 seems to argue against). However, the mere fact that different languages show a different distribution of Px-determination suggests that the claim is right and some kind of grammaticalization are taking place here, although on a different degree in the individual languages. In this case, however, a further question must be addressed: how is this process related to the process that characterizes the grammaticalization of definite articles, for instance, in Hungarian? Is there anything in common? Is it the same "field of grammar" which has changed (or is changing), but through two different paths?

Proposal: In what follows, a new approach will be offered to account for the different processes that might produce apparently similar systems. The proposal relies on an extended version of the model that refers to four different strategies by which discourse referents are identified (Himmelmann 1997, 2001; Lyons 1999, principally based on Hawking 1978). These strategies are (i) anaphoric use, (ii) associative-anaphoric use, (iii) situational use, and (iv) larger situational use. This paper proposes to consider an additional, fifth context, in which reference is usually encoded in grammar, but the strategy of identification differs from those mentioned above: in *associative-situational use*, the referent of the noun phrase is identified through association, as in the case of associative-anaphoric use, but its referential anchor is not present in the preceding discourse. It is rather directly accessible in the speech situation by the presence of the interlocutors, who typically, although not exclusively, appear as grammatical possessors. Less frequently, the anchor might be some other entity which is also accessible (e.g. visible) in the situation. This use can be illustrated, for instance, in Udmurt (1), where the occurrence of a possessive marker might be odd for non-Uralic speakers (and for Hungarians who would translate it with a definite article):

(1) *Guždor vylin turyn-ez čeber*   [Udmurt]
    field   on   **grass-3SG** beautiful
    'In the field, the grass is beautiful.'
    (grammatical, if the referent is available for direct sensory perception, cf. Nikolaeva 2003. For similar examples in Nenets, see Nikolaeva 2014)

At the same time, languages with a grammaticalized definite article allow the use of the article in the *associative-situational* context:

(2) *Hogy van a kutya?*   [Hungarian]
    how   is   **the dog**
    'How is the dog?' (Intended reference: *the dog* which is not present in the situation, but belongs to the addressee.)

Considering this fifth use of referential identification will make a more fine-grained approach possible, both from a diachronic and from a comparative perspective. In languages with a definite determiner developed out of a demonstrative element, the path of grammaticalization will follow a direction from anaphoricity and deixis to associative contexts (in which the use of the original demonstratives are not felicitous).

(3) Grammaticalization path of the definite article
    anaphoric use > associative-anaphoric use
    situational use > associative-situational use > larger situational use

In Uralic languages that make use of (a certain degree of) Px-determination, the grammaticalization path shows a mirror image of the one schematized for definite articles. In this cline, when possessive suffixes appear in new contexts in which the referent of the possessor is redundant or absent, the associative component is suppressed in favor of marking that the referent is familiar from the previous discourse or within the direct speech situation.

(4) Grammaticalization path of the Px-determination
    associative-anaphoric use > anaphoric use
    associative-situational use > situational use > larger situational use

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