On non-canonical (aka alienable) possession in Negidal

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Roadmap for the talk

- traditional analyses of \(-\eta V\) “alienable/indirect possession suffix”
- brief introduction to Negidal + data and methods
- overview of possessive marking in Negidal
- the function of \(-\eta i\)
Alienable possession marking in Tungusic languages?

**Nanai:**

(1a) nai dili-ni  
person head-px.3sg  
‘голова как часть тела человека’

(1b) nai dili-ŋo-ni  
person head-aln-px.3sg  
‘чья-то голова, оказавшаяся собственностью человека’(чаще всего часть тела убитого животного или человека)’

(Avrrorin 1959: 157)

**Evenki:**

(2a) dili-ιβ  
head-px.1sg  
‘my head’

(2b) dili-ŋi-ιβ  
head-aln-px.1sg  
‘the head [of an animal] which belongs to me’

(Bulatova & Grenoble 1999: 14)
Alienable possession marking in Tungusic languages?

**Negidal:**

(3a)  *deli-nin*
head-px.3sg
‘его голова (часть его тела)’

(3b)  *deli-ŋi-nin*
head-aln-px.3sg
‘его голова (ему принадлежащая голова убитого зверя)’

(Cincius 1982: 20)

**Udihe:**

(4a)  *bi dili:* < *dili-i*
1sg head-px.1sg
‘my head’

(4b)  *bi nakta dili-ŋi:* < *dili-ŋi-i*
1sg boar head-aln-px.1sg
‘my boar head’

Nikolaeva & Tolskaya 2001: 135
Straightforwardly alienable possession? → Udihe

“The meaning of the alienable possessive forms is not homogenous and clusters around five types:”

• Temporary ownership (body parts, hunter’s catch)
• Alienable possession (*naː* ‘land’, *moː* ‘tree’, *zä* ‘money’, *jaː* ‘cow’)
• Abstract associative relationship through a certain activity
• Substitutional meaning ‘instead of something’
• Predicative function (*-ŋi* on the possessor but only in predicative position)

(Nikolaeva & Tolskaya 2001: 135)
in this talk we will discuss the “alienable possession” suffix -ŋi in Negidal and show that

- its function is not to mark alienable possession
- it does not have several distinct functions
- it has a single function, namely to flag non-canonical possessive construction
Negidal

- Negidal belongs to the Northern group of Tungusic languages (closest relative: Evenki)
- Two dialects of Negidal are distinguished
  - Upper Negidal (Verkhovskoj)
  - Lower Negidal (Nizovskoj), extinct (Pakendorf & Aralova 2018)
- Upper Negidal is restricted to the village of Vladimirovka (Khabarovsk Krai) on the Amgun’ river (and in recent years Polina Osipenko village)
- Lower Negidal used to be spoken on the lower reaches of the Amgun’ and Amur rivers
Geographical location

Upper Negidal:

Vladimirovka

Polina Osipenko
Our findings are based on corpus data of Upper Negidal:

- Documentation project “Documentation of Negidal, a nearly extinct Northern Tungusic language of the Lower Amur” (Pakendorf & Aralova 2017)
- 9 speakers of various proficiency level (predominantly 5 fluent speakers, 4 of whom are from one family)
- ~ 76,500 words (18+ hours of recording)
Methodology

- Entirely corpus-based - we did not do any elicitation (yet):
- We looked at all instances of the suffix -ŋi in the corpus (685)
- We scanned the lexemes that occur with the suffix -ŋi in the corpus to understand how they are used overall (always directly possessed? not necessarily possessed?)
- We scanned lexemes belonging to particular categories (kinship terms, body parts, animals, plants, food, personal names)
- We scanned the use of possessive markers without this suffix
## Negidal possessive suffixes

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As is cross-linguistically common, possessive suffixes in Negidal mark:

- ‘true’ (prototypical) possession (e.g. ‘your blanket’, ‘my coat’)
- part-whole relationships (e.g. ‘leaf/root of a tree’)
- characterization (e.g. ‘sea stone’, ‘house animal = domesticated animal’)
- “associative” relationships - salient relationship between entities, discourse-based
Canonical possessive construction

(5a)  *su tɕeβkan-ma-sun bi jep-u-m*
2pl bird(small)-acc-2pl 1sg eat-nfut-1sg

‘I am eating your bird. // Вашу птичку я кушаю.’ (APK_2chindakan: 7)

(5b)  *tɕeβkan-ma-sun bi jep-u-m*
bird(small)-acc-2pl 1sg eat-nfut-1sg

‘I am eating your bird. // Птичку Вашу я ем.’ (APK_2chindakan: 14)

→ overt possessor very frequently omitted (can be retrieved from possessive-marking on possessum)
Associative possession

(6) \(\text{samoxodka-β} \quad \text{iltən-ə-n} \quad \text{a:ʨin} \quad \text{?steamer.R-px.1sg} \quad \text{pass-nfut-3sg} \quad \text{neg}\)

{A woman is driving a boat upriver and is unsure about where to go. She has been following a steamer, but then} ‘The steamer (lit. my steamer) passed [the riverbend] and disappeared.’

{Думаю: буду смотреть на самоходку, и за ней ехать. Я ещё не доехала до большого кривуна (до поворота)…} ‘Самоходка проехала – исчезла.’

(GIK_chertovy_zuby: 21)
The suffix -ŋi

- Occurs on the possessum, and is always followed by possessive suffixes to index number + person of the possessor

- Can also occur on possessor and other kinds of modifiers when possessum is omitted
Function of \( -\eta i \)

- to flag non-canonical possession constructions:

1. ‘possession’ of non-possessibles:
   a. body part that is possessed by other than inherent possessor
   b. associative possession of nouns denoting humans or natural phenomena, and demonstratives
   c. possession of large and uncountable mass to pick out particular subset (‘particularization’) \( \rightarrow \) in some cases already lexicalized

2. possessive construction with overt modifier, but omitted possessum
1a. Possessed body parts

(7) kaltaka oŋokto-ŋ-ŋəj tule-təa[-l]  
    half nose-poss-prfl.pl attach-pst-pl

‘They had attached one half of the nose [of the boat]…’
‘Одну половину носа соединили…’ (APN_two_sisters: 10)

→ the nose ‘belongs’ to a boat, but it is possessed by the two sisters who made it.
1b. Associative possession of a human

(8) ... ŋənu-jaːn=da  
... leave-ss.ant=add  
how.much-num[days]-prol[emph]   
dist  

bəjə-ŋi-n  
əmə-dgi-jə-n  

man-poss-px.3sg   
come-rep-nfut-3sg  

‘... having left, after a few days that person comes back.’

‘... через несколько дней опять этот человек пришел.’  (APN_akari 79)

→ that person = a neighbour of the protagonist who keeps coming to talk to him, to advise him on what to do
1b. Associative possession of environmental elements

(9)  

\[
\begin{array}{cccccc}
gə & ɲəɲə-ɲə-βun & ɲəɲə-ɲə-βun & siβu-ɲi-βun & tik-təa \\
dp & go-nfut-1pl.ex & go-nfut-1pl.ex & sun-poss-1pl.ex & fall-pst
\end{array}
\]

‘We go and go, the sun (lit. our sun) set.’

‘Мы идём, идём, солнце село.’ (APN_zabludilis: 27)

→ the setting of the sun has a direct impact on the women, who are lost in the forest.
1b. Associative possession of demonstrative

(10) \textit{taji-ŋi-βun} \textit{ali-l-la:n} \textit{gun-ə-n} \textit{ja=ka}
dist-poss-px.1pl.ex be.angry-inch-ss.ant say-nfut-3sg 1sg.R=foc
\textit{otkuda} \textit{gun-ə-n} \textit{nemec-duk} \textit{priexal} \textit{li}
from.where.R say-nfut-3sg German.R-abl come.pst.R q.R

{Two women saw someone in a boat who they thought was a relative, so they called him. But when he got closer they saw he was a stranger.}

‘He [lit. ‘that one of ours’] got angry and said: So where do I come from", he said, "from the Germans, or what?"

‘Тот рассердившись говорит: "Я-то откуда", говорит, "от немцев приехал, (что) ли?"' (APN_anecdotes: 27)
1c. Particularized mass noun: e.g. ‘water’

(11) \textit{\textit{inen}-\textit{ti} \textit{muː-ŋ-ŋi} \textit{əmə-β-ŋati-s}}

day-advr water-poss-prfl.sg come-val-deont-2sg

‘You must bring the water (lit. your water) during the day.’

‘Днем должен воду принести.’ (DIN\_rite: 12)

→ i.e. the subset of water that you need in the house for drinking, cooking, washing...
1c. Special case of particularization: ‘old man’ and ‘old woman’ → ‘husband’ and ‘wife’

(12a)  
\begin{align*}
\text{otikaː} & \text{-ŋi-nin} \\
\text{old.man-poss-3sg} & \text{‘her husband’}
\end{align*}

(12b)  
\begin{align*}
\text{atikaː} & \text{-ŋi-nin} \\
\text{old.woman-poss-3sg} & \text{‘his wife’}
\end{align*}

These lexemes can be the base for the further derivation (with general verbalizer -laː): \text{otikaː}ŋ-laː / \text{atikaːŋ-laː} ‘to marry’

292/685 examples of -ŋi in corpus refer to ‘husband/wife’ or ‘marry’

→ already lexicalized
1c. Special case of particularization

In Udihe, a similar case is found with ‘boy’ and ‘girl’ → with “alienable possession” suffix (and direct possessive suffixes) they mean ‘son’ and ‘daughter’ (Nikolaeva & Tolskaya 2001: 139-140)

BUT ‘husband’ is expressed by direct possession of ‘old man’ without –ŋi (Nikolaeva & Tolskaya 2001: 127)
-ŋi in a different syntactic construction

- Can also mark the **modifier** when the head noun is omitted
- Two types: -ŋi on possessor and -ŋi on other kind of modifier
- Does not take possessive suffixes when possessor is marked, with one exception: when the possessor is him/herself ‘possessed’
-ŋi marking the possessor

Omitted possessum

(13)  som-ŋi    kak    sapjan-gatɕin  
catfish.R-poss how.R morocco.leather-sml
‘A catfish's [skin] is like morocco leather.’
‘У сома как сафьян.’ (APN_DIN_rybjakozha: 27)
→ sobgo ‘fish.skin’ is ellipted

som-ŋi          <       som     sobgo-nin  
catfish.R-poss  catfish.R fish.skin-3sg
‘the one of catfish’ ‘the skin of catfish’
-ŋi marking other kind of modifier

Omitted possessum

(14) ɐ́  tər  əjəki  bi-təa  unən  ke:ruken-ŋ-ŋi
dp  dist.Evk  frog  be-pst.ptcp  hesit  unripe-poss-prfl.sg
mani-n  ʒəp-pa-n  unən-mi
self-3sg  eat-nfut-3sg  hesit-prfl.sg
i:-təa-ŋ-ŋi  okin-du-j  na:jən
ripen-pst.ptcp-poss-prfl.sg  older.sister-dat.ess-prfl.sg  put-nfut-3sg
‘Well, as for the frog, it eats the unripe (berry) himself, and the ripe one he keeps (lit: puts) for his older sister (the pujin).’
‘А лягушонок-то незрелую ягоду сам съедает, то, что созрело, сестре кладёт.’ (APK_frog_tale: 37)
Construction with ellipted possessum in other Tungusic languages

- In Nanai, possessors in predicative position take suffix –ŋi while a different suffix (-ŋo/-ŋu) occurs with possessum (Avrorin 1959: 155-163, 186-192).

- In Udihe, this construction is restricted to predicative function (Nikolaeva & Tolskaya 2001: 634-635).

- In Evenki, suffix occurring with the possessor is analyzed as a separate suffix –ŋi: by Bulatova & Grenoble (1999: 14-15, see also Boldyrev 1976: passim), and it does not seem to be restricted to ellipted possessum (see Nedjalkov 1997: 158).
This contrasts with Negidal

- always with ellipted head

- only eight out of 33 examples with omitted possessum are in predicative position, constituent marked with \(-\eta i\) also occurs as subject, direct object and adjunct.
The single function of $-\eta i$:

- $-\eta i$ marks non-canonical possessive constructions

when head noun is ellipted

- $-\eta i$ on possessum = "possession" of non-possessibles

- $-\eta i$ on possessor: no possessive marking
- $-\eta i$ on other kind of modifier: possessive marking inherited from head noun
References:


-ŋi on the possessor

Possessive markers can be “inherited” from the possessor of the possessor

amin-ŋi-β  tɕaː:-ɡu  onin-ŋi-β  gun-ə-n  ijeɡin
father-poss-px.1sg  far-adjr  mother-poss-px.1sg  say-nfut-3sg  nine
siektɑː-kaːn  oldan-du-n  baldi-tɕɑ
willow-dim  side-dat-3sg  grow(plants)-pst.ptcp

‘The one [the grave] of my father is further, and the one [the grave] of my mother is on the side where nine willows grew.’ (APN_bewitched: 28)
Possessive markers can be “inherited” from the possessor of the possessor

amin-ŋi-β
father-poss-px.1sg
‘The one of my father’

<

[[bi amin-mi]
1sg father-px.1sg
‘The grave of my father’

mogila-nin]
3sg grave-3sg

-on the possessor

The one of my father
The grave of my father