

## From Possessive Suffix to Affective Demonstrative Suffix in Hungarian: a Grammaticalization Analysis

**Introduction:** Uralic languages are known for non-possessive uses of possessive morphology (Fraurud 2001, Nikolaeva 2003, Gerland 2014, Janda 2015, É. Kiss and Tánčzos to appear). The possessedness suffix in these languages can express various flavours of identifiability, definiteness and demonstrativity. In my talk, I will focus on a phenomenon from Hungarian, where the third person singular possessedness suffix (POSS.3SG) can be used in a negative emphatic demonstrative function:

- (1)            *a*        *hülyé-je*  
                  the    idiot-POSS.3SG  
                  i. ‘his/her/its idiot’  
                  ii. ‘that total idiot’

That is, the phrase in (1) can either be interpreted as (i) a possessive structure with a 3SG silent *pro* possessor or it can be interpreted as (ii) an emphatic demonstrative construction. This emphatic demonstrative usage of POSS.3SG is fully productive, with the limitation that it can only be used to express a negative or ironic evaluation, but not a positive one.

**Previous work:** This phenomenon has been noted in earlier literature in a descriptive fashion, but no formal or informal analysis has been provided so far to the best of my knowledge. A separate non-possessive use of POSS.3SG in Hungarian, the partitive construction, has been analyzed by É. Kiss (to appear) in a grammaticalization framework. More generally, most authors are of the view that the non-possessive uses of possessive morphology in Uralic are not the result of grammaticalization, but should be regarded as an inherent feature of these languages (Fraurud 2001, Nikolaeva 2003, Gerland 2014, Janda 2015).

**Analysis:** My main claim is that this suffix is an affective (or recognitional) demonstrative suffix (Lakoff 1974, Himmelmann 1997, Liberman 2008, Potts and Schwarz 2010), and that it has developed as a result of grammaticalization from a full-fledged possessive construction of the form *a világ hülyé-je* (the world stupid-POSS.3SG) ‘lit. the world’s stupid, meaning: the biggest idiot in the world’.

I will show that this suffix, in addition to having the discourse function of deictic anchoring, is also a demonstrative in terms of its syntactic behaviour. Pieces of evidence include the complementary distribution with pronominal demonstrative modifiers and the obligatory definiteness of phrases marked by this suffix. It will also be shown that this suffix displays all the hallmarks of affective demonstratives: predicative evaluation, speaker-hearer solidarity, familiarity and exclamation.

In terms of syntactic position, I will propose (based on morphosyntactic observations) that this suffix occupies the head position of a lower DetP (a determiner projection subsumed by DP first claimed by Szabolcsi 1994):

- (2)            [DP a [NumP [DetP -je [NP hülye ]]]]

Note that the suffix is linearized after the NP in accordance with the Mirror Principle (Baker 1995, Bartos 2000).

The grammaticalization process through which the possessedness suffix came to be reanalyzed as an affective demonstrative suffix will be reconstructed accurately using historical and contemporary electronic corpora. I will show that the source of the reanalysis was a bona fide possessive construction which had the function of encoding the relationship between a set and an element of the set which was maximal along a certain property. Consider:

- (3)            *a*        *falu*        *rossz-a*  
                  the    village    bad-POSS.3SG  
                  ‘the worst guy in the village’

The phrase in (3) denotes that individual from the set of the inhabitants of the village who is maximal along the property denoted by the possessum, i.e., the worst guy in the village. This construction also admitted *világ* ‘world’ as a possessor, and it was this construction which was reanalyzed through the drop of the semantically vacuous possessor as a demonstrative construction. Consider:

- (4) a. *a világ hülyé-je*  
 the world stupid-POSS.3SG<sub>POSSESSIVE SUFFIX</sub>  
 ‘the biggest idiot in the world, metaphorically: the total idiot’
- b. *a pro hülyé-je*  
 the pro stupid-POSS.3SG<sub>POSSESSIVE SUFFIX</sub>  
 silent *pro* interpreted as *világ* ‘world’ (due to default recovery mechanism)  
 ‘the biggest idiot in the world, metaphorically: the total idiot’
- c. *a hülyé-je!*  
 the stupid-POSS.3SG<sub>NEGATIVE AFFECTIVE SALIENCE SUFFIX</sub>  
 ‘the total idiot’
- d. *a hülyé-je!*  
 the stupid-POSS.3SG<sub>NEGATIVE AFFECTIVE DEMONSTRATIVE SUFFIX</sub>  
 ‘that total idiot’

(4b) is still a possessive construction, where the silent *pro* possessor is being reconstructed by default to the broadest possible possessor set (which is trivially *világ* ‘world’: the maximal set of individuals). This construction is reinterpreted first as a non-possessive construction with a suffix encoding negative affective salience (4c). In the second step, the discourse function of ‘identifiability through salience’ is syntacticized and the suffix is reinterpreted as a negative affective demonstrative suffix.

I will show that this process displays the parameters of grammaticalization such as structural simplification, change of selection criteria, semantic bleaching and the reduction of morphology. I will also discuss why this construction is apparently limited to expressing negative or ironic evaluations but not positive ones: this is due to analogy with a swearword construction which also contains the remnants of possessive morphology and to the fact that distal affective demonstratives are cross-linguistically correlated with expressing negative evaluations (Potts and Schwarz 2010). A central piece of my analysis concerns how uniqueness within a closed set of individuals by virtue of maximality along a certain property is reinterpreted first as salience in terms of the said property; and then how the suffix encoding identifiability through salience is reinterpreted as a suffix encoding affective demonstrativity.

I will claim that this grammaticalization pathway is very natural as it is based on a set-element relationship which is often expressed by possessive constructions cross-linguistically. I will also identify two crucial parameters which facilitate this grammaticalization process: the availability of silent *pro* possessors and the lack of gender agreement on the possessive suffix.

**Implications:** Since Uralic languages in general have these two parameters, I will argue that this grammaticalization pathway should be regarded as one of the possible sources of the demonstrative (and definiteness marking) uses of POSS.3SG suffixes in Uralic languages. Note that the *demonstrative marker* > *definiteness marker* grammaticalization chain is well-known from Indo-European linguistics and also from other language families such as Nilo-Saharan and Niger-Congo (Greenberg 1978, 1991). Add to this the *possessive* > *demonstrative* grammaticalization chain analyzed here, and what emerges is a rather plausible grammaticalization chain for the definite-like non-possessive uses of POSS.3SG in Uralic: *possessive suffix* > *demonstrative suffix* > *definiteness suffix*.

Finally, my analysis is also a clear case of a demonstrative having been grammaticalized from a different functional element, something which has been argued by many authors to be cross-linguistically unattested (Plank 1979, Traugott 1982, Himmelman 1997).

## References:

- Baker, Mark. 1985. *The mirror principle and morphosyntactic explanation*. *Linguistic Inquiry* 16. 373–415.
- Bartos, Huba. 2000. *Az inflexiók jelenségek szintaktikai háttere* [The syntactic background of inflexional phenomena]. In Kiefer, Ferenc (ed.) *Strukturális magyar nyelvtan 3. Morfológia* [Hungarian structural grammar 3. Morphology]. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó. 653–761.
- É. Kiss, Katalin (to appear): Possessive agreement turned into a derivational suffix. In Bartos, Huba et al. (eds.): *Boundaries crossed, at the crossroads of morphosyntax, phonology, pragmatics and semantics*. Dordrecht: Springer.
- É. Kiss, Katalin and Orsolya Tánzos (to appear): *From possessor agreement to object marking: the grammaticalization path of the Udmurt -(j)ez suffix*. Ms.
- Fraurud, Kari. 2001. Possessives with extensive use: a source of definite articles? In Irène Baron et al. (eds): *Dimensions of possession*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 243–267.
- Gerland, Doris. 2014. Definitely not possessed? Possessive suffixes with definiteness marking function. In Gamerschlag, Thomas et al. (eds.): *Frames and concept types: applications in language and philosophy*. Springer. 269–292.
- Himmelmann, Nikolaus. 1997. *Deiktikon, Artikel, Nominalphrase: Zur Emergenz syntaktischer Struktur*. Tübingen: Niemeyer.
- Janda, Gwen Eva. 2015. *Northern Mansi possessive suffixes in non-possessive function*. *ESUKA – JEFUL* 2015, 6-2: 243-258.
- Lakoff, Robin. 1974. *Remarks on this and that*. *Chicago Linguistic Society* 10. 345–356.
- Lieberman, Mark. 2008. *Affective demonstratives*. *Language Log*, <http://languagelog.ldc.upenn.edu/nll/?p=674>
- Nikolaeva, Irina. 2003. Possessive affixes in the pragmatic structuring of the utterance: evidence from Uralic. In Suihkonen, Pirkko et al. (eds.): *Proceedings of the International symposium on deictic systems and quantification*. Udmurt State University and Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology. 130–145.
- Plank, Frans. 1979. Ikonisierung und De-Ikonisierung als Prinzipien des Sprachwandels. *Sprachwissenschaft* 4. 121–158.
- Potts, Christopher and Florian Schwarz. 2010. Affective ‘this’. *Linguistic Issues in Language Technology*, 3(5). 1-30.
- Szabolcsi, Anna 1994. The noun phrase. In Kiefer, Ferenc and Katalin É. Kiss (eds.) *The Syntactic Structure of Hungarian*. San Diego / New York: Academic Press. 179–274.
- Traugott, Elizabeth C. 1982. From Propositional to Textual Meanings: Some semantic-pragmatic aspects of grammaticalization. In W. P. Lehmann and Y. Malkiel (eds.): *Perspectives on Historical Linguistics*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 245–271.