Ling-Lunch
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'Small Degrees': Degree Modification in Nenets
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Contents

1 The Puzzles

1.1 Puzzle 1: The Semantics of the Positive Form

- the morphologically unmarked form of the

  adjective can be used a sentence with a positive meaning as in (1), as well as in sentences expressing a comparison:
  - in (2), we compare two individuals along a scale
  - example (3) is a case of a contextual comparative construction

(1) *Petja pirc'a.*
Petja tall
'Petja is tall.'[1]

(2) *Katja Masha-had pirc'a.*
Katja Masha-ABL. tall
'Katja is taller than Masha.'

(3) *Katja pirc'a-(rka).*
Katja tall-(RKA)
'Katja is taller.'
The context: Katja's height is 1,70m. Masha's height is 1,65m.

- In a crisp judgment context (cf. Kennedy 2007), where there is only a minimal difference in the heights of the girls and where it is established that both girls are small, i.e. where Katja's height is 1,52m and Masha's height is 1,50m, some speakers still accept (3)
- The gradable adjective stands in its basic form or is marked by the suffix *-rka* the meaning contribution of which we will explore

1.2 Puzzle 2: The Semantics of -rka

- (4) shows a comparison between two individuals with *-rka* present on the adjective

(4) *Katja Masha-had pirc'a-rka.*
Katja Masha-ABL. tall-RKA
'Katja is a little taller than Masha.'

- My fieldwork data clearly suggest that in comparisons *-rka* is used if there is a small difference between the comparee and the standard of comparison. → *-rka* is not the comparative marker, i.e. there is **no overt comparative marking on the adjective**

1.2.1 *-rka* outside of Comparisons

- strikingly, *-rka* is not restricted to the domain of comparisons

rka on nouns

- Examples from Terezhenko (1947)

(5) puxuc'a - old woman; puxuc'arka ('less of an old woman'.
My consultants: 'not a young woman, but also not an old woman yet')

[1] Abbreviations in glosses: ABL-ablative, ACC-accusative, ADV-adverbial marking, CONNEG-connegative, DAT-dative, DUR-durative, LOC-locative, OBJ-object marking, POSS-possessive, PST-past, SG-singular,

(6) sar'o - rainy; sar'orka ('less rainy'
My consultants: 'a littly bit rainy')

- Other examples of *-rka* on nouns:

(7) *ŋamderc'* - chair, *ŋamderc'arka* - kind of a chair
neb'a - mother, *neb'arka* - a mother who kind of fulfils her duties as a mother, but not quite
ne - woman, *nerka* - kind of a woman (but doesn't behave like one)
talej - thief, *talejrka* - 'someone who has started being a thief' (he might have been seen stealing once or so)

rka on verbs

- *-rka* can appear on verbs (not limited to degree achievements), as the example in (8) illustrates:

(8) *Man' s'urba-rka-dm.*
I ran-RKA-1.SG
'I ran a little.'

- it can appear on degree achievements as well (cf. Kennedy and Levin (2008)):

(9) *Evej xanteve-rka.*
Soup cool-RKA
'The soup almost cooled down.'

rka on adverbs

- *-rka* can also appear on adverbs:

(10) *Man' mera-rka s'urmbidamz'.*
I quickly-RKA ran
'I ran slightly.'

- what seems to be common to all of these cases: the meaning contribution of *-rka* is: '**to a small degree**'

My plan: develop a uniform analysis of *-rka* for comparatives and outside of comparatives (in the verbal and the nominal domains)

Proposal in a nutshell (informal): *-rka* is a difference degree modifier. It modifies a degree and states that this degree is small.

2 Some Facts about Nenets

- Nenets belongs to the Uralic language family
- two main branches:
  - Finno-Ugric languages
  - Samoyedic languages (→ Nenets!)
- the language is spoken by approximately 25.000 speakers (Chrystal 1993:304).
- the language is underrepresented
- according to "Ethnologue", the language is threatened
- Cyrillic script with several special characters
- Location (according to Ethnologue): Northwest Siberia, north Dvina river mouth tundra area to Yenisei river delta, scattered in Kola peninsula; Nenetskiy Avtonomnyy Okrug, Yamalo-Nenetskiy Avtonomnyy Okrug, and Khanty-Mansiyskiy Avtonomnyy Okrug; also in Krasnoyarskiy Kray, Komi, and Arkhangel'skaya Oblast'

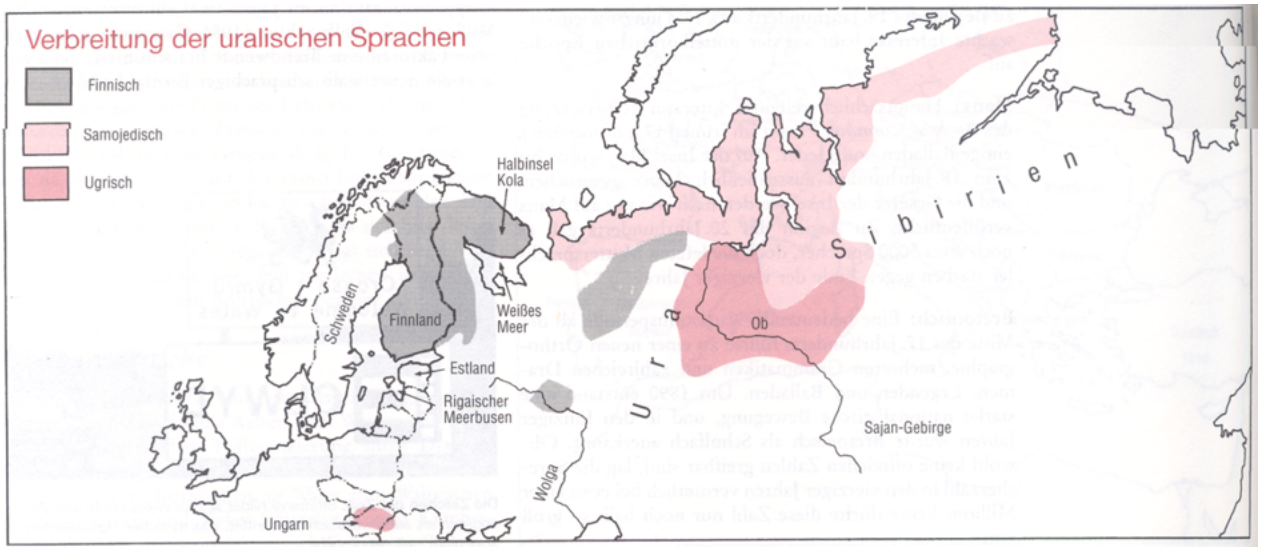


Figure 1: The Distribution of Uralic Languages. (Chrystal 1993: 304)

2.1 Grammatical Facts

- agglutinative language
- two main categories are verbs and nouns; smaller classes like personal pronouns, adverbs, adjectives and postpositions also exist. But:

  > The distinction between nouns and adjectives is weak, as is that between adjectives and adverbs. (Suihkonen 2002:171)

- head-final language (e.g. postpositions):

(11) *stol' ninja*
table on
'on the table '

—Postpositional Phrase—

- **rigid word order**: (Time adverbial) subject NP (place adverbial) object NP (manner adverbial) verb. → **SOV** (cf. e.g. Salminen 1998)

2.2 My Fieldwork

- All the data in this presentation unless stated otherwise stems from original fieldwork on Nenets conducted in February & March 2014 in Archangelsk and Saint-Petersburg, in September 2014 in Narjan Mar (NAO) and in September and October 2015 in Saint-Petersburg
- Archangelsk: 3 informants; Saint-Petersburg: 5 informants (Nenets students of the Institute of the Northern People, Herzen University); Narjan Mar: 7 informants

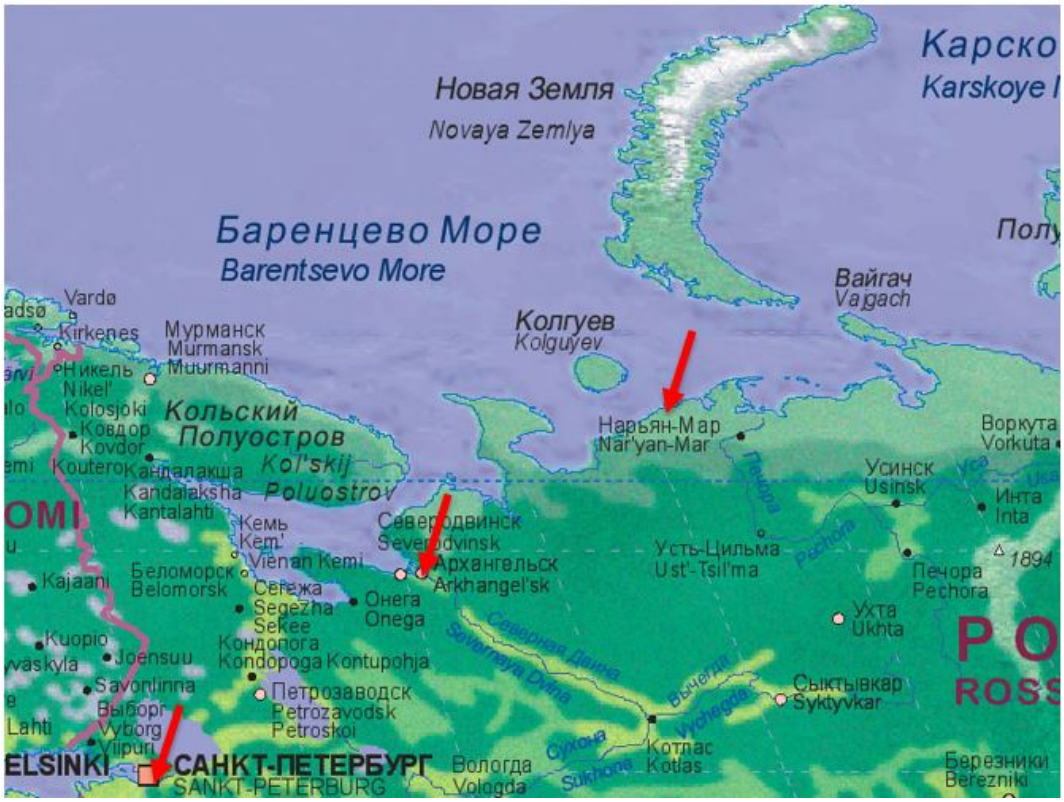


Figure 2: Loci of my Fieldwork (source: wissenladen.de)

- Methodology (cf. Matthewson 2004, Chelliah and de Reuse 2011)
  - corpus examples
  - translation tasks
  - acceptability judgment tasks

3 Analysis of Comparatives in Nenets without *-rka*

- **Starting point**:

> Comparationsgrade fehlen ursprünglich in allen Sprachen Finnischer und Tatarischer Abstammung. Einige unter ihnen haben jedoch nach und nach sowohl einen Comparativ als Superlativ entwickelt, während andere keine besonderen Formen für diese Grade haben. Unter den Samojedischen Sprachen bildet keine einzige regelmässige Comparationsgrade, sondern diese werden hier wie in den meisten Finnischen und Tatarischen Sprachen **theils durch einen Casus**, **theils durch Partikeln**, **theils auch durch Deminutivformen der Adjektive** ausgedrückt. (Castrén 1854: 187-188)[2]

3.1 First Ingredient: Degree Semantics

- Proponents of the degree approach, the 'standard approach' (cf. i.e. von Stechow 1984, Heim 1985, Heim 2001 Beck 2011) assume degrees as primitives in the semantic ontology
- degrees are reconstructed from equivalence classes of individuals (Cresswell 1976) according to the intuition that degrees are points on a scale
- In contemporary Nenets we find comparisons with a degree (CompDeg) as in (12) and difference comparisons (DiffC) as in (13)
- the question of whether languages integrate degrees into their semantics, has been investigated cross-linguistically, cf. e.g. Bochnak (2013) for Washo, Beck et al. (2009) for a sample of languages

(12) *Polka [sind'et juh santimetr-xad] jamb.*
Shelf eight ten cm-ABL. long
'The shelf is longer than 80 cm.'

—Comparison with a Degree (CompDeg)—

(13) *Katja Masha-xad saml'aŋg santimetra-nh pirc'a(-rka).*
Katja Masha-ABL. five cm-DAT. tall-(RKA)
'Katja is 5 cm taller than Masha.'

—Difference Comparison (DiffC)—

- DiffC and CompDeg are good diagnostics for degree semantics, according to Beck et al. (2009).

[2]English: Comparative degrees are absent from all languages of Finnish and Tartar origin. However, some amongst them have gradually developed both a comparative and a superlative, while yet others don't have any special forms for these degrees. Among the Samoyedic languages, there is not a single one that forms regular comparison degrees, they rather mark these as in most Finnish and Tartar languages **partly by a case, partly by particles partly also by deminutive forms of the adjectives**.

- DiffComp can be given a plausible analysis under the degree approach assuming the comparative operator in (14) and the maximality operator in (15). An example with the LF and the corresponding truth conditions is in (16)

(14) $[\![-er_{(\text{diff})}]\!] = \lambda D_{\langle d,t\rangle}.\, \lambda d_{\langle d\rangle}.\, \lambda D'_{\langle d,t\rangle}.\ \textsc{max}(\lambda D') > \textsc{max}(\lambda D) + d$

(15) $[\![\textsc{max}]\!] = \lambda D_{\langle d,t\rangle}.\, \iota d\ [D(d)\ \&\ \forall d'\ [D(d') \rightarrow d' \leq d]]$

(16) Jane is 3cm taller than Peter.
"The maximal degree of height that Jane reaches is three centimeters plus the maximal degree of height that Peter reaches."
$[\,[\,[3cm][-er]\,1[Peter\ is\ t_{1,<\text{d}>}tall\,]\,]\,][2[Jane\ is\ t_{2,<\text{d}>\ \text{tall}}]]$

3.2 Second Ingredient: Marking of the Standard

- Nenets shows a lack of clausal standards
- (17) and (18) are examples of a clausal comparative in English.

  (17) Mary has more cats [than John has children].

  (18) The air was even smokier today [~~than it was smoky yesterday~~].

- for English, the Reduced Clause Analysis is assumed, under which the comparison standard that we see on the surface is reduced from a clausal standard (cf. Bhatt and Takahashi 2011)
- cases like these are analyzed using the clausal operator in (19):

  (19) $[\![-er_{(\text{clausal})}]\!] = \lambda D'_{\langle d,t\rangle}.\, \lambda D_{\langle d,t\rangle}.\ \textsc{max}(D) > \textsc{max}(D')$.

- Elicitation of clausal comparatives yielded only paraphrases like the following:

(20) a. *Ichin'an mahm t'uku jal'a iba-rka.*
Mind-LOC.-1SG. say-1SG. this day warm-RKA
Literally: 'In my mind I say: this day is warmer.'
Intended: Today it is (a little) warmer than I thought.'
Comment: "I don't know how to say *čem j'a dumala* ('than I thought'). *čem* is in the way here.'

Context: This semester, Olja took more courses than usual. In addition to her studies, she also works in a bar. When talking to her friend, she complains about the huge workload and utters the sentence in (20-b)

b. *Man' manzaja-mi tarsi-v sahŋa man' tar'emh*
I work-POSS.1SG too.much-POSS.1SG(ACC) be.very.3SG I so
ni-vas' tasla-mb'u.
not.-PST.1SG.OBJ.>SG think.DUR.CONNEG
'My work is very hard. I didn't think so.'
Intended: 'For me it is harder than I thought to manage everything.'
Comment: "We don't have such difficult sentences."

- subcomparatives of the type in (21-a), semantically most transparent type of comparison, were also not elicitable in Nenets
- in (21-a), we compare the table and the shelf according to different dimensions
- the comparative operator needed here is the clausal one from (19)
- In Nenets, only paraphrases like in (22) were produced by informants (avoidance strategy)

(21) a. The table is higher than the commode is wide.
b. MAX(λd. the table is d-high) > MAX($\lambda d'$ the commode is d'-wide)
c. Paraphrase: "The maximal degree of height that the table reaches exceeds the maximal degree of width that the commode reaches."

(22) *Stol-vah pirc'arka, komod-vah ŋani lata-rka.*
Table-POSS.1PL high-RKA commode-POSS.1PL whereas wide-RKA
'The table is high, wheareas the commode is wide.'

→ avoidance of clausal structures, paraphrases instead!
→ a phrasal analysis (a direct analysis) is opted for

3.3 Analysis without *-rka*

- Two phrasal comparative operators, which are 3-place operators (as opposed to the clausal operator in (19)), feature in the literature: one goes back to Heim (1985) and the other one is due to Kennedy (1997)
- The two phrasal operators differ with respect to the order of their arguments and are often treated as mere variants of each other (cf. e.g. Hofstetter 2009)

(23) $[\![-er_{(\text{Heim})}]\!] = \lambda y_{\langle e \rangle}.\, \lambda R_{\langle d,\langle e,t \rangle\rangle}.\, \lambda x_{\langle e \rangle}.\, \text{MAX}(\lambda d.\, R(d)(x)) > \text{MAX}(\lambda d'.\, R(d')(y))$
(Heim 1985, Bhatt and Takahashi 2011)

(24) $[\![-er_{(\text{Kennedy})}]\!] = \lambda R_{\langle d,\langle e,t \rangle\rangle}.\, \lambda y_{\langle e \rangle}.\, \lambda x_{\langle e \rangle}.\, \text{MAX}(\lambda d.\, R(d)(x)) > \text{MAX}(\lambda d'.\, R(d')(y))$
(Kennedy 1997)

- Beck et al. (2012) show that schoenfinkelization matters and discuss the different uses of the two phrasal operators. The authors point out that attributive comparatives can only be interpreted with Heim's phrasal operator.

- Attributive cases can be of two types: they can have an internal and an external reading, cf. (25) and (26)

(25) Mary knows a better boxer than John. —Attributive Internal—
= Mary knows a better boxer than John is.

(26) Mary knows a better boxer than John. —Attributive External—
= Mary knows a better boxer than John knows.

- Berezovskaya and Hohaus (2015), however, show that Kennedy's operator can be used for attributive comparatives, but only for internal uses. The reason: it cannot move parasitically and can thus only produce DP-internal attributive readings
- Attributive external comparatives are available in Nenets as shown in (27-a) and in (27-b)

(27) a. *Masha Katja divana-xad m'ir'ita divan-m temda.*
Masha Katja sofa-ABL. expensive sofa-ACC. bought
'Masha bought a more expensive sofa than Katja did.'

Context: Yesterday Julja told her friend Petja that she recently met a (female) boxer who won 5 matches. Petja remembered that another (female) boxer whom he met recently even won 7 matches (i.e. the boxer which Petja met is even stronger than the one whom Julja met).

b. *Petja Julja-xad minta-rka boks'orsha-mh jadamta.*
Petja Julja-ABL. strong-RKA boxer-ACC. meet.3SG
'Petja met a stronger boxer than Julja.'(under the external reading)

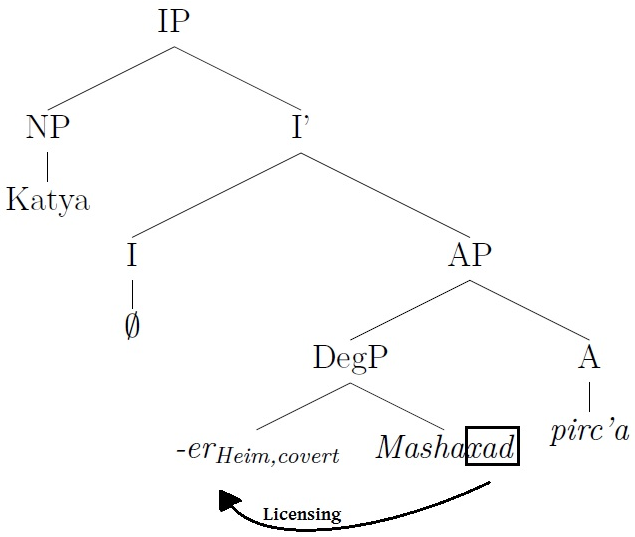
→ For Nenets, I therefore assume Heim's phrasal degree operator which can undergo parasitic movement.

- I take the **ablative case-marking to be a licenser for the covert phrasal operator**, i.e. whenever we have the ablative case, the covert degree operator is present at LF.
- the adjective receives the meaning in (28)
- the underlying structure for (2) repeated in (29) is in (30), the LF is in (31) with the semantic calculation in (32)

(28) $[\![tall]\!] = \lambda d.\lambda x.\text{HEIGHT}(x) \geq d = \lambda d.\lambda x.$ x is d-tall

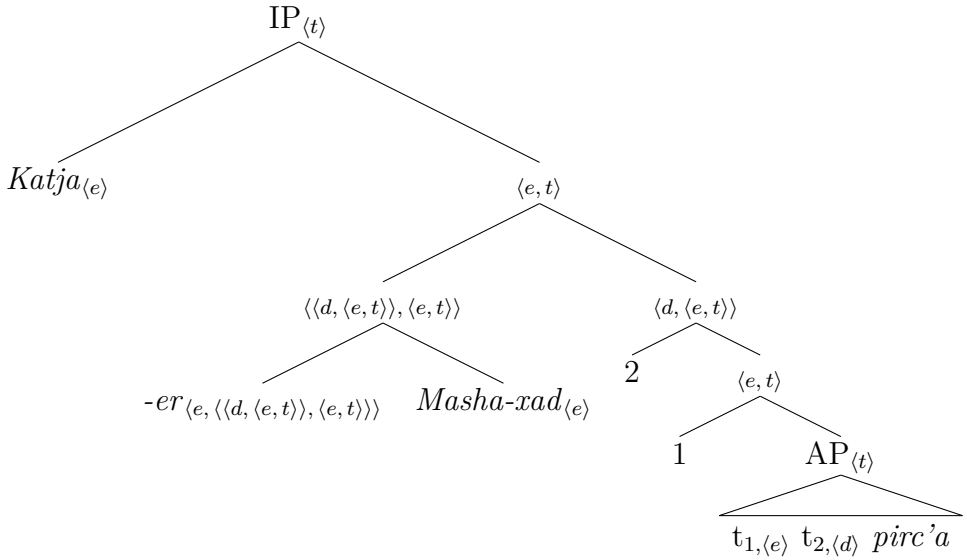
(29) *Katja Masha-had pirc'a.*
Katja Masha-ABL. tall
'Katja is taller than Masha.'

(30)



- Note that the ablative marking on the standard of comparison licenses the presence of the covert comparative operator

(31) LF for (2):



- In this example, the comparative operator forms an LF-constituent with the standard of comparison
- Note that there is an instance of parasitic movement here

(32) a. $[\![COMP_{(\text{Heim})} Mashaxad]\!] = \lambda R.\lambda x.\textsc{max}(\lambda d.R(d)(x)) > \textsc{max}(\lambda d.R(d)(\text{Masha}))$
b. $[\![$ [2 [1 [$t_{1,\langle e\rangle}$ $t_{2,\langle d\rangle}$ *pirc'a*]]] $]\!] = \lambda d.\lambda x.$ $\textsc{height}$ $(x) \geq d$
c. $[\![(2)]\!] = \textsc{max}(\lambda d.\, \textsc{height}(\text{Katja}) \geq d) > \textsc{max}(\lambda d'.\, \textsc{height}(\text{Masha}) \geq d')$

- As mentioned before, the analysis with the Heim operator can be extended to cases that require movement, such as the attributive external cases.

- An analysis that also uses the Heim operator is proposed for Persian, Tajiki and Ishkashimi by Karvovskaya (2013) and by Hofstetter (2009) for Turkish.

4 Back to Puzzle 2: Analysis of Comparisons with *-rka*

4.1 The Role of the Suffix *-rka*

- The standard of comparison in (12), (13) and also in (2) is ablative-marked[3]
- The gradable adjective stands in its basic form, though it can be marked by the suffix *-rka*
- Nikolaeva (2014) describes in her grammar that the affix *-rka* indicates comparison:

> The comparative affix *-rka* is most often found on predicative and attributive adjectives and on adverbs. This affix indicates comparison. (Nikolaeva 2014: 133)

- Later, one can find the following quote in her grammar:

> In comparative and superlative constructions adjectives stand in their basic form, although they can take the comparative affix addressed in Chapter 6, Section 2.5. However, it is highly optional and cannot be analyzed as marking the comparative degree.(Nikolaeva 2014: 174)

- Terezhenko (1947) marks what she takes to be the comparative form of the adjective with the suffix *-rka* as well
- Décsy (1966) classifies *-rka* as an adjectival suffix which can mark "**incompleteness of quantity**" (i.e. *veva*('bad') - *vevarka* ('slighty, somewhat bad')) and which in addition can also be used for comparison

→ **The status and meaning contribution of *-rka* in comparisons is unclear!**

- My fieldwork data suggest that *-rka* is used if there is a small difference between the comparee and the standard of comparison

(33) a. *Katja Masha-xad ŋarka-vna* ***pirc'a.***
Katja Masha-ABL. large-ADV. tall
'Katja is much taller than Masha. '

b. *Katja Masha-xad ŋarka-vna* ***#pirc'a-rka.***
Katja Masha-ABL. large-ADV. tall-RKA
'Katja is much taller than Masha. '
Comment by informant: "If there is a big difference in heights, you cannot use *-rka*."

[3]This case marking is not unique for Nenets. We also find ablative marking in comparisons in Turkish (cf. Hofstetter 2009), Persian (cf. Karvovskaya 2013) and possibly other languages.

(34) *Ty wen'e-kohod pirc'a-rka*
reindeer dog-ABL. tall-rka
'The reindeer is bigger than the dog.'
Comment by informant: "Here, the speaker is not quite sure. As if the speaker is not sure whether the reindeer is taller than the dog."

(35) *Polka sind'etyuh santimetr-xad jamb(-rka)*
Shelf eighty cm-ABL long
'The shelf is longer than 80cm. '
Comment by informant: "If we add the ending *-rka*, we want to make clear that the shelf is a little longer."

(36) *Katja Masha-xad saml'aŋg santimetra-nh pirc'a-rka.*
Katja Masha-ABL. five cm-DAT. tall-rka
'Katja is 5 cm taller than Masha.'

—Difference Comparison (DiffC)—

An informant's comment to the DiffComp in (36) was: "*pirc'arka* is belittling and caressing. So as not to offend Masha."

→ This example of difference comparison in Nenets clearly shows that *-rka* is not itself a difference degree, since it can appear in difference comparisons with a clear difference degree (5 cm in this case)!

This optional suffix *-rka* is not the comparative marker,i.e. there is no overt morphological marking on the comparative in Nenets.
Caveat: contextual comparatives (Puzzle 1)!

4.2 The Semantics of *-rka*

- *-rka* is a degree modifier, i.e. it has to be able to access a degree
- I propose the following lexical entry for *-rka*:

(37) $[\![-rka]\!] = \lambda d_{<\mathrm{d}>}$. [d is small]

- in addition, I propose a special version of the RESTRICT operation in the spirit of Chung and Ladusaw (2004)

(38) Original RESTRICT (from Chung and Ladusaw 2004: 5)
A noun incorporation example: *John dog-fed Fido.*

a. RESTRICT ($\lambda y.\lambda x$ [feed'(y)(x)], dog') = $\lambda y.\lambda x.[feed'(y)(x) \wedge dog'(y)]$

b. FA (FA (RESTRICT ($\lambda y.\lambda x$ [feed'(y)(x)], dog'),Fido),John) = [$feed'(Fido)(John) \wedge dog'(Fido)$]

→ The result of restricting the predicate with property p ('dog' in this case) is the original function with its domain restricted to the subdomain to element having the property p. Note that the argument slot of the predicate does not get saturated!

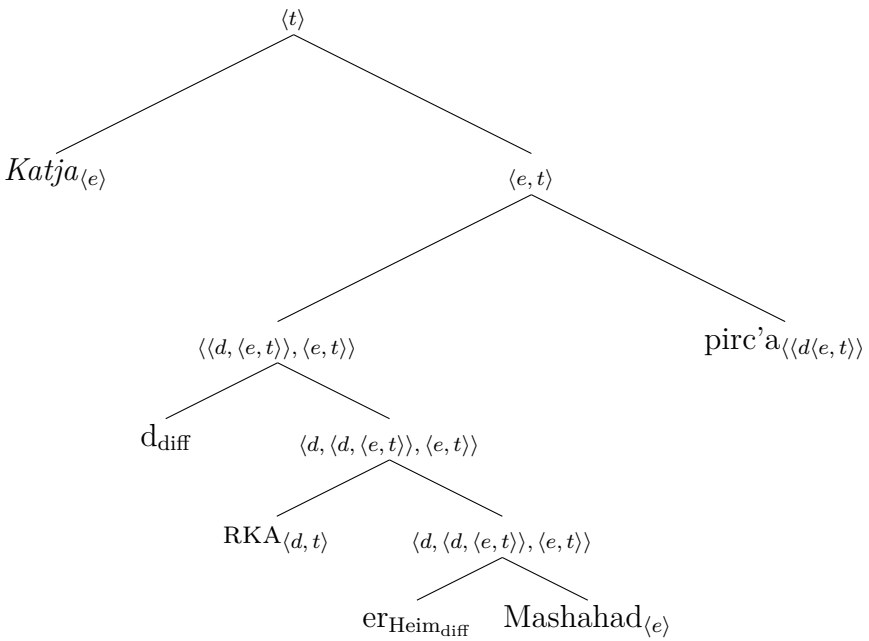
- we also need to tweak the phrasal comparative operator so that it also can accommodate differential degrees, i.e. we need to add an additional argument slot for the differential degree[4] :

(39) $[\![-er_{(\text{Heim}_{\text{diff}})}]\!] = \lambda y_{\langle e \rangle}.\underline{\lambda d_{\langle d \rangle}}.\, \lambda R_{\langle d,\langle e,t\rangle\rangle}.\, \lambda x_{\langle e \rangle}.\, \text{MAX}(\lambda d'.\, R(d')(x)) > \text{MAX}(\lambda d''.\, R(d'')(y) + d)$

- Let us now illustrate the analysis on our original example:

(40) *Katja Masha-had pirc'a-rka.*
Katja Masha-ABL. tall-rka
'Katja is a little taller than Masha.'

(41) LF for (40):



(42) semantic composition:

a. $[\![-er_{(\text{Heim}_{\text{diff}})} Mashaxad]\!] = \lambda d.\lambda R_{\langle d,\langle e,t\rangle\rangle}.\lambda x.[\text{MAX}[\lambda d'.R(d')(x)]] > [\text{MAX}[\lambda d''.R(d'')(Masha) + d]]$ (via FA)

b. $[[\![\text{RKA}[-er_{(\text{Heim}_{\text{diff}})} Mashaxad]]\!] = \lambda d.\lambda R_{\langle d,\langle e,t\rangle\rangle}.\lambda x.[\text{MAX}[\lambda d'.R(d')(x)]] > [\text{MAX}[\lambda d''.R(d'')(Masha) + d \wedge \text{ d is small}]]$

[4] An alternative to this would be existential closure of the differential argument.

(via RESTRICT)

c. $[\![\, d_{\text{diff}}[\text{RKA}[-er_{(\text{Heim}_{\text{diff}})} Mashaxad]] \,]\!] = \lambda R_{\langle d,\langle e,t\rangle\rangle}.\lambda x.[\text{MAX}[\lambda d'.R(d')(x)]] > [\text{MAX}[\lambda d''.R(d'')(Masha) + \underline{d_{\text{diff}}} \wedge \underline{d_{\text{diff}}} \text{ is small}]]$

(via FA)

d. $[\![\, d_{\text{diff}}[\text{RKA}[-er_{(\text{Heim}_{\text{diff}})} Mashaxad[pirca]]] \,]\!] = \lambda x.[\text{MAX}[\lambda d'.\text{HEIGHT}(x) \geq d']] > [\text{MAX}[\lambda d''.\text{HEIGHT}(Masha) \geq d'' + d_{\text{diff}} \wedge d_{\text{diff}} \text{ is small}]]$

(via FA)

e. truth conditions for (40):
$[\![\, (40) \,]\!] = [\text{MAX}[\lambda d'.\text{HEIGHT}(Katja) \geq d']] > [\text{MAX}[\lambda d''.\text{HEIGHT}(Masha) \geq d'' + d_{\text{diff}} \wedge d_{\text{diff}} \text{ is small}]]$

(via FA)

5 Extensions

-rka on verbs

- coming back to cases with *-rka* in other domains:
- *-rka* in the verbal domain. Example in (8) repeated in (43)

(43) *Man' s'urba-rka-dm.*
I ran-RKA-1.SG
'I ran a little. '

- we need to decompose the verb in order for *-rka* to be able to operate on a degree (i.e. modify it):

(44) $[\![\, run \,]\!] = \lambda d.\lambda x.\lambda e.run(e)\&agent(x)(e)\&degree(d)(e)$
"something is a running event to degree d"

- What would be a possible semantics here?
- a first suggestion:

(45) $[\![\, (8)/(43) \,]\!] = \exists e \text{MAX}(\lambda d.run(e)(I) \geq d) \geq d_{\text{c}} + d_{\text{diff}} \wedge d_{\text{diff}} \text{ is small}]$

-rka on nouns

- Remember the examples from the beginning:

  (46) *ŋamderc'* - chair, *ŋamderc'arka* - kind of a chair
  neb'a- mother, *neb'arka* - a mother who kind of fulfils her duties as a mother, but not quite
  etc.

- Here, again, we might think about the possibility of changing the denotation of the noun to make it gradable:

  (47) $[\![chair]\!] = \lambda d.\lambda x.$ x is a chair to d

- the question remains of what we would actually be comparing to in this case: a chair with a prototypical chair? How do we determine the "chairiness ", i.e. what has to be the case for something to be a chair?

6 Concluding Remarks

Conclusions

- Nenets has developed a grammar that integrates degrees into its semantics
- lack of clausal comparatives points to a phrasal analysis
- the phrasal operator that is applied is the Heim-operator (test data: external attributive comparative)
- the comparative meaning (i.e. the covert phrasal operator) is licensed by ablative-marking in all comparison constructions except for contextual comparative
- *-rka* has the meaning of 'to a small degree'. It is a special kind of degree modifier and not a comparative marker in Nenets (contra claims in some descriptive grammars)
- what we learn from close examination of *-rka*:
  - close examination and taking the idiosyncrasies of a certain language seriously is very important and fruitful
  - it can get us thinking about our basic understanding of such fundamental notions as verb and noun denotations

Questions

1. How can we transfer my account to nouns, verbs and adverbs?
2. How can I deal with contextual comparatives where *-rka* seems to be obligatory for most speakers?
3. What do we learn from *-rka* about the nature of nouns and verbs in general? → The denotation of verbs and nouns should contain a degree argument, at least for some nouns and verbs.

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