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Finnish Nominal Ideophones as Evaluatives

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FINNISH NOMINAL IDEOPHONES AS EVALUATIVES

DATA Consider Finnish noun-noun constructions in (1)-(3) that share a visually descriptive ideophone ***kanttura***:

(1) Puu-n   **kanttura**
       tree-GEN   IdPh.NOM
       'a tree bent by wind, weight of snow, etc.'

(2) a. Uko-n   **kanttura**
        (old.)man-GEN   IdPh.NOM
        'a decrepit (old) man'

    b. Aka-n   **kanttura**
        (old.)woman-GEN   IdPh.NOM
        'a decrepit (old) woman'

(3) a. Lehmä-n   **kanttura**
        cow-GEN   IdPh.NOM
        'a large, bony, old cow'

    b. Hirve-n   **kanttura**
        moose-GEN   IdPh.NOM
        'a large, bony moose'

QUESTION How to account for these sound symbolic expressions?

PROPOSAL

→ **[N**Genitive **N**ideophoneNominative**]** is an evaluative
                                formed at phonology-syntax-semantics interface

ROADMAP
2. Phonological properties of **[N**Gen **N**ideoNom**]**
3. Morphosyntactic properties of **[N**Gen **N**ideoNom**]**
4. Semantic properties of **[N**Gen **N**ideoNom**]**
5. Proposal: **[N**Gen **N**ideoNom**]** is evaluative
6. Further questions

2. Phonological properties of [N_Gen N_ideo]

Q What identifies the **[N_Gen N_ideoNom]** construction within Finnish sound system?

    A It is a prosodic unit with particular sound properties.

→ There is no absolute division between ideophones & non-ideophones
<div align="right">cf. e.g. Mikone 2001, Jarva 2003, 2008</div>

→ However, some strong tendencies are observed, such as:

- Prevalence of certain phonemes in ideophones: e.g. /ø/ & /æ/
<div align="right">Kiviniemi 1971, Sivula 1989, Leskinen 1993, among others</div>

- Atypical word-initial, medial and –final consonant clusters
<div align="right">Karlsson 1983, Leskinen 1993, Mikone 2001, among others</div>

- Change of phoneme causes no (shade of) meaning change
<div align="right">Ruoppila 1934, 1935, Rytkönen 1940, among others</div>
- Such variation is not normally permitted in Finnish
Compare the ideophonic (4) with non-ideophonic (5)

(4)   *viuhka-n   löyhötys / löyhytys / leyhytys /leuhutus / leuhotus*
        fan-GEN   IdPh.NOM
        'movement, by a fan, that makes a stream of air or a breeze'

(5)   Minimal pairs:
        a. *löyt**ö**ä* 'of the find' vs. *löyt**y**ä* 'to be found'
        b. *k**u**va* 'picture' vs. *k**o**va* 'hard'

    For a more thorough discussion, see e.g. Mikone (2001) or Jääskeläinen (2013)

3. Morphosyntactic properties of [N_Gen N_ideoNom]

Q What identifies the **[N_Gen N_ideoNom]** construction within Finnish morphosyntax?

    A It behaves as a syntactic atom

Table 1. Properties of Finnish [N_Gen N_ideoNom]

	Argument: subj, obj	Adjunct: modifier	Moves as unit	One Infl: Num	One modifier/ quantifier	Split	Pause
[N_Gen N_ideoNom]	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗

➔ **[N_Gen N_ideoNom]** string behaves as a noun

It may function as a subject (6a), an object (6b), or a modifier (6c)

(6) a. **[**Hatu-n   reuhka**]**   roikku-u   naula-ssa.   SUBJECT
    hat- GEN IdPh.NOM hang- PRES.3SG hook-INE
    'The floppy, worn-out hat is hanging on a hook'

  b. Minä tykkä-än   **[**siitä   hatu-n   reuhka-sta**]**.   OBJECT
    I   like-PRES.1SG that.ELA hat- GEN IdPh-ELA
    'I like that floppy, worn-out hat'

  c. **[**Hatu-n   reuhka-n**]** reuna   repes-i.   MODIFIER
    hat- GEN IdPh- GEN edge.NOM rip-PAST.3SG
    'The edge of the floppy, worn-out hat ripped'

➔ Movement test shows that **[N_Gen N_ideoNom]** behaves as a syntactic atom (7a)

One cannot front only N_i (7b) or N_{ii} (7c)

(7) a. **[**Siitä   hatu-n reuhka-sta**]** minä tykkä-än
    that.ELA hat-GEN IdPh-ELA   I   like-PRES.1SG
    'It is that floppy, worn-out hat that I like'

  b. * Siitä   hatu-n_j minä tykkä-än   **[t_j** reuhka-sta**]**
    that.ELA hat-GEN I   like-PRES.1SG IdPh- ELA
    Intended: 'It is hat that that I like that floppy, worn-out '

  c. *Reuhka-sta_j minä tykkä-än   **[**siitä hatu-n **t_j]**
    IdPh- ELA   I   like-PRES.1SG that.ELA hat- GEN
    Intended: 'It is that floppy, worn-out that I like hat'

➔ When **[N_Gen N_ideoNom]** inflects for Num, only one suffix is allowed, on N_{ii}

(8) a. Hatu-n reuhka-**t**   b. *Hattu-**je**-n reuhka-**t**   c. *hattu-**je**-n reuhka
    hat-GEN IdPh-**PL**   hat-**PL**-GEN IdPh- **PL**   hat-**PL**-GEN IdPh
    'floppy, worn-out hats'

➔One can modify the *entire* **[N_Gen N_ideoNom]** string, but not each individual N

➔The modifier precedes N_i, but agrees with N_{ii} in number and/or case (here
    NOMINATIVE SINGULAR, zero marked)

(9) a. suuri   hatu-n reuhka
    large.**NOM** hat-GEN IdPh.**NOM**
    'a large, floppy, worn-out hat'

3

b. *punaise-n hatu-n reuhka
   red- GEN   hat-GEN IdPh.NOM
   Intended: 'a red, floppy, really worn-out hat'

→ If a quantifier is used, it precedes **[N$_{Gen}$ N$_{ideoNom}$]**, yet it agrees in case with N$_{ii}$

(10)   a. Kaiki-**lle** hatu-n   reuhko-i-**lle**   b. *kaiki-**n** hatu-**n**   reuhko-i-lle
          all-**ALL**   hat-GEN IdPh-PL-**ALL**   all- GEN   hat- GEN IdPh- PL-ALL
          'to all the floppy, worn-out hats

→ Nothing can be inserted between the two elements

(11)   a. hatu-n reuhka   b. *hatu-n   suuri   reuhka
          hat-GEN IdPh.NOM   hat-GEN large.NOM IdPh.NOM
          'a floppy, worn-out hat'   'a large, floppy, worn-out hat'

→ There is no pause between the two elements.
→ Stress falls on the first syllable of N$_i$ or both N$_i$ and N$_{ii}$ may be stressed.

→ Native speakers prefer derivational suffixes on N$_{ii}$ (12a).

   The suffixes can surface on N$_i$, too (12b).

   They can also attach to both nouns, albeit with a stylistic overkill (12c).

(12)   a. Hatu-n reuhka-**nen**   b. Hattu-**se**-n   reuhka
          hat-GEN IdPh-**DIM**.NOM   hat-**DIM**-GEN   IdPh.NOM
          'a small floppy, worn-out hat'   'a small floppy, worn-out hat'

       c. ?? Hattu-**se**-n   reuhka-**nen**
             hat-**DIM**-GEN IdPh-**DIM**.NOM
             'a really small, floppy, worn-out hat'

4. Semantic properties of [N$_{Gen}$ N$_{ideoNom}$]

Q What identifies the **[N$_{Gen}$ N$_{ideoNom}$]** construction within Finnish semantics?
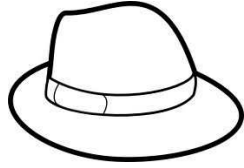
       A it provides speaker perspective on the entity at hand
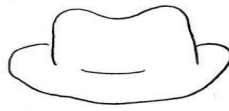   cf. Amanuma 1974, Hinton, Nichols & Ohala 1994; Jespersen 1922

→ Normally, the **[N$_{Gen}$ N$_{ideoNom}$]** string refers to an entity that is viewed pejoratively
   so (13) can refer to (14b) but not to (14a)

(13)   hatu-n reuhka
       hat-GEN IdPh.NOM
       'a floppy, worn-out hat'

(14) a.   b.

→ Can one use **[N$_{Gen}$ N$_{ideoNom}$]** in a positive context?

(i) ***Yes***, when the beauty standards set by the speech community are
                                   at odds with the beauty standard of ***the speaker***:

(15) Minä rakasta-n   tä-tä   **hatu-n reuhka-a** en-kä   ikinä hei-tä   si-tä pois.
       I   love-PRES.1SG this-PAR hat-GEN IdPh-PAR   NEG.1SG.and never throw-TA.INF it-PAR away
       'I love this floppy, worn-out hat and I'll never throw it away'

(ii) ***Yes***, when the beauty standards set by the speech community are
                                   at odds with the beauty standard of ***the addressee***:

(16) Sinu-lla   on   taas   tuo rakas vanha **hatu-n reuhka** pää-ssä-si.
       you-ADE be.PRES.3SG again that dear old   hat-GEN IdPh.NOM head-INE-1SG.POSS
       'You have that dear, old, floppy, worn-out hat on your head'

→ Crucially, the standard of evaluation may shift depending
                                                   on the perspective(s) of the interlocuters

→ **[N$_{Gen}$ N$_{ideoNom}$]** encodes the type of the entity combined with a property

- The burden of highlighting a particular property: the ideophonic N$_{ii}$
- The non-ideophonic Ni encodes the entity, already marked in some way
- The more neutral and formal N$_i$ is, the more awkward the expression and the less it is accepted by the native speakers as natural
                                             see also Leinonen 2010:208

E.g., the ideophone *käppänä* refers to a small, light, shrivelled entity

→ In its **[N$_{Gen}$ N$_{ideoNom}$]** use, there is a continuum of acceptability based on formality

- 'old fart' & 'bloke' in (18) or 'cop' in (19) **>**
                                   the neutral 'man' in (20) or 'police officer' in (22)
- 'grampa/gramma' in (19) **>**
                                   the formal 'grandfather /grandmother' in (22)
- the gender of N$_i$ ('uncle' in (20) **>** 'aunt' in (22)
- but 'Mrs' in (22) **>** 'Mr' in (23)

→ The position of each term on the continuum depends on a speaker's relationship

Best
(18) a. Äijä-n/Ämmä-n   käppänä
         (old.)man/woman-GEN IdPh.NOM 'a small, shrunken (old) fart/bag'

      b. Jätkä-n   käppänä
         bloke-GEN IdPh.NOM   'a small, shrunken bloke (of a man)'

Good
(19) a. Vaari-n / Mummo-n käppänä
         grampa/granny-GEN IdPh.NOM 'a small, shrunken grampa'

      b. Kytä-n   käppänä
         cop-GEN IdPh.NOM   'a small, shrunken cop'

Not so good
(20) a. Miehe-n/Naise-n käppänä
         man/woman-GEN   IdPh.NOM   'a small, shrunken man/woman'

      b. Eno-n/Sedä-n käppänä   'a small, shrunken uncle
         uncle-GEN   IdPh.NOM   (maternal/paternal)'

Passable
(21) Poja-n/Tytö-n käppänä
      boy/girl-GEN   IdPh.NOM   'a small, shrunken young man/woman'

Barely acceptable
(22) a. Tädi-n   käppänä
         aunt-GEN IdPh.NOM   'a small, shrunken aunt'

      b. Isoisä-n / Isoäidi-n   käppänä   'a small, shrunken
         grandfather/mother-GEN IdPh.NOM   grandfather/grandmother'

      c. Rouva-n käppänä   'a small, shrunken married woman,
         Mrs-GEN   IdPh.NOM   or simply any adult woman'

      d. Poliisi-n   käppänä
         police-GEN IdPh.NOM   'a small, shrunken police officer'

Not acceptable
(23) a. #Ihmise-n   käppänä
         human-GEN IdPh.NOM   'a small, shrunken human being'

      b. #Herra-n   käppänä
         Mr-GEN   IdPh.NOM   'a small, shrunken mister'

→ The acceptability of the more neutral and formal nouns in (22) depends on the attitude of the speaker towards N_i.

The inherently positive examples in (24) are unacceptable under normal circumstances, but possible, e.g., in a scenario where a brawny but non-heroic person derisively refers to a scrawny hero as *sankarin käppänä* 'a small, shrunken hero'. A listener *without* background knowledge of the relationship between the non-hero and hero would find such a statement highly contradictory and confusing.

(24) a. #Enkeli-n   käppänä
          angel-GEN   IdPh.NOM   'a small, shrunken angel'

      b. #Sankari-n   käppänä
          hero-GEN   IdPh.NOM   'a small, shrunken hero'

5. Proposal: [N$_{Gen}$ N$_{ideoNom}$] is an evaluative

GENERALIZATIONS

[N$_{Gen}$ N$_{ideoNom}$] is a constituent in terms of sound, form and meaning:
        It is a prosodic unit with particular sound properties.
        It behaves like a syntactic atom.
        It provides speaker perspective.

ASSUMPTIONS

- Syntax mediates between sound~meaning relation in generative grammar
                                            Chomsky 1995, among many others

- Syntactically, sound-symbolic **[N$_{Gen}$ N$_{ideoNom}$]** is a possessive construction

- Grammatical possession is semantically heterogeneous, it covers, e.g.:
  - *my colour (property)*
  - my book (property/possession/authorship)
  - my father (kinship)
  - my leg (part-whole relationship)
  - my train (temporal relationship)   Postma 1997:275
  - Jo has a lot of anger (emotional state)
  - Jo has the answer (knowledge state)
  - Jo has nothing (absence of ownership)   Francis 2000:87

- Genitive-Nominative structure may be an instance of modification

- In the case of adjectival modification (*a white wall*), the variable provided by the modifier to the nominal has the relevant features such as size, color, etc.

In the case of nominal modifier, there is no semantics to provide the parameters of the variable (*Hilary's wall*).
The ***interpretation of modification is undefined*** and ***is open to any number of possible relations*** which will be fixed in an extra-grammatical component.   Massam 1993:123

▪ Semantically, genitives vary cross-linguistically as to whether they are determining/non-determining, definite/indefinite/generic
                                    Alexiadou 2007, Willemse 2007, among others

▪ Pragmatic features are enter syntax, as e.g., Evaluative Mood Phrase
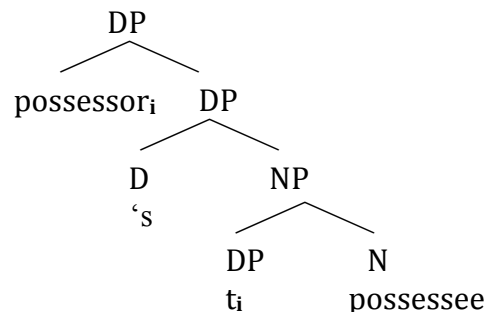   Cinque 1999, Speas 2004, among others

PROPOSAL

→ **[N$_{Gen}$ N$_{ideoNom}$]** is an evaluative formed at phonology-syntax-semantics interface
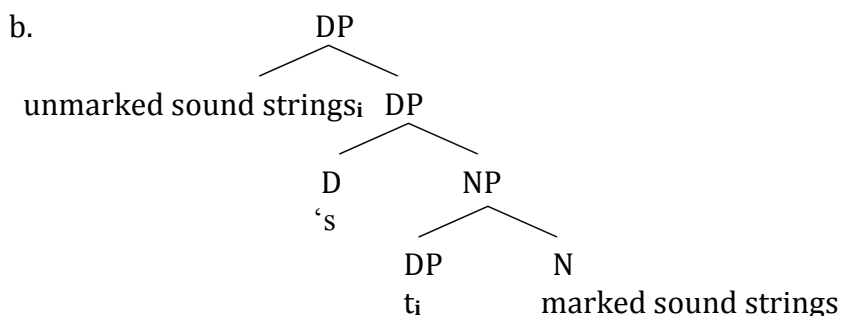
Structure

Genitive-Nominative structure allows for a loosely defined property relationship between possessor ~ possessee.

(25) a.   Schematic blueprint of possessive relationship

```
                    DP
                   /  \
        possessorᵢ     DP
                      /  \
                    D     NP
                   's    /  \
                       DP    N
                       tᵢ  possessee
```

Sound

Phonotactics specific to Finnish ideophones mark the constructions as salient

b.
```
                    DP
                   /  \
  unmarked sound stringsᵢ   DP
                          /   \
                        D      NP
                       's     /  \
                            DP     N
                            tᵢ   marked sound strings
```

Meaning

Possessor content: entity type, possessee content: pejorative property (visual)[1]

c.

```
                    DP
              ╱          ╲
      entity type_i        DP
                        ╱      ╲
                      D          NP
                      's      ╱      ╲
                           DP          N
                           t_i      pejorative property
```
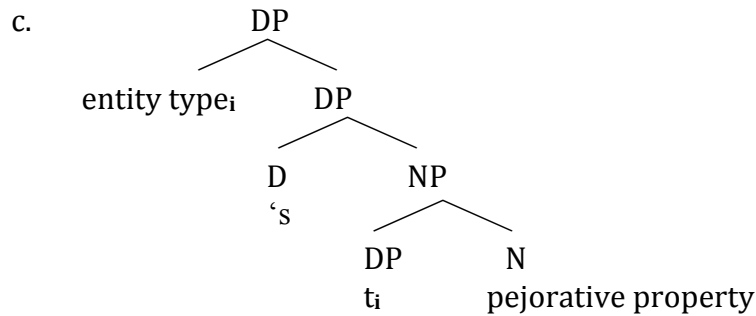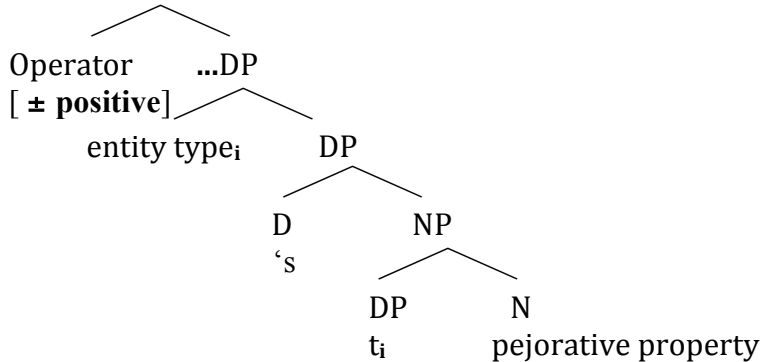
Pragmatics

Evaluative Mood content is context-dependent
                        and may override the default pejorative interpretation

d. Evaluative Mood Phrase

```
          ╱      ╲
Operator      ...DP
[ ± positive]    ╱      ╲
      entity type_i        DP
                        ╱      ╲
                      D          NP
                      's      ╱      ╲
                           DP          N
                           t_i      pejorative property
```

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[1] Note that the nominalized form of the verbal serial verb construction has *the same structure* as the examples that we look at:

a. Laulu-n   lurit-us   b. Hauku-n   luskut-us
  song-gen IdPh-nominalizer   bark-gen IdPh-nominalizer
  'the warble of song'   'the (deep) yelping of barking'

Semantically, however, it is not the same as the one we're looking at, i.e., no pejorativity is involved. It is in line with the proposal that the genitive structure is semantically heterogeneous.

6. Further questions

Table 1 (repeated). Properties of Finnish [N~Gen~ N~ideoNom~]

	Argument: subj, obj	Adjunct: modifier	Moves as unit	One Infl: Num	One modifier/ quantifier	Split	Pause
[N~Gen~ N~ideoNom~]	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗

→ **[N~Gen~ N~ideoNom~]** string behaves as a N atom

      provides speaker evaluation of an entity

Table 2. Properties of Finnish [V~Inf~ V~ideoTense~]

	One subject	One object	One tense	One aspect	One negator	Co-ordination	Sub-ordination	Pause
[V~inf~ V~ideoTense~]	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗

→ **[V~inf~ V~ideo~]** string behaves as a V atom

      provides Aktionsart of an event see Armoskaite & Koskinen 2014 for more detail

(26)   Minä sinne lume-en kaatu-a   ***tupsahd-i-n***
     I   there snow-ILL fall-INF IdPh-PAST-1SG
     'I tumbled into the snow with a soft, sudden, unexpected thud.'
                                              Armoskaite & Koskinen, 2014

→ What, if any, is a unified account of **[N~Gen~ N~ideoNom~]** and **[V~Inf~ V~ideoTense~]**?
What if Pesetsky (2013) is right, and all nouns are born Genitive?
If, as have been argued, Nom is Tense on N (Pesetsky & Torrego 2004), is Genitive the Infinitive on N? What does this entail?

→ What is the relationship that holds between a **simplex N** and [N~Gen~ N~ideoNom~]?

e.g., for Päivi, *reuhka* without Ni means 'hat', but based on web forums, blogs & other youth hangouts, for the average 17-year-old now it means 'messy hair'.

As for something like *käppänä* 'small shrunken entity', if Päivi hears you say 'some KÄPPÄNÄ is standing in the back yard', she will assume that this will be a male, slightly built, undesirable person, rather than the small twisted fir tree that stands

there all the time. In order to make *käppänä* be a tree, house anything other than human, or to make a human be female, cop, etc., you need N-N.

Current hypothesis: the ideophone is used on its own either:
  (i) when it has been codified to a default referent
  (ii) or when your previous conversation has set the context of what refers to

  So 'I lost my REUHKA' actually sounds quite weird to Päivi, without the N_i 'hat', UNLESS we have already established that you are looking for some hat, and are just specifying that it is your dear old floppy one you are after.

→ How predict the relationship that holds between **[N_{Gen} $N_{ideoNom}$]** and context? Speaker intent? How to integrate this relationship into the unified account?

(27) Tytö-n   typykkä
      girl-GEN IdPh.NOM

For Päivi's generation, the term is a mild endearment for a little girl
Apparently not so for the younger one, as Google images for the term brings up scantily clad young women, and Wiktionary translates the term as 'babe'.

So for Päivi the connotation is a mildly positive, but she is not sure which way it goes for the younger – negative for women who don't want to be sex objects? Or positive for guys who desire them, but at the same time view women negatively?

(28) Poja-n pallero/pullero
      boy- GEN IdPh. NOM
      'a plump male baby/toddler'

Positive in the sense that you're admiring a cute tot; negative in that you're insinuating that the baby is too fat.

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