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Postpositions and Prepositions in the Nerdvinsky Dialect of the Komi-Perm Language: Structural and Functional-Semantic Aspects

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Abstract. This paper examines the structural and functional-semantic aspects of specific postpositions in the Nerdvinsky dialect, which belongs to the southern dialect group of the Komi-Perm language. It also highlights borrowed prepositional constructions that are actively used by speakers in this area. The Nerdvinsky dialect is a peripheral dialect located in the southern part of the Komi-Perm Okrug. Prolonged geographical proximity to Russian vernaculars is the primary reason for the high degree of various borrowings. The relevance of the study is determined by the dialect's underrepresentation in linguistic research. Komi-Perm dialectology lacks specialized studies that assess the preservation of native grammatical paradigms and the extent of usage of foreign linguistic elements in local vernaculars. Contemporary data from the Nerdvinsky dialect enable such an analysis based on the use of native postpositions and borrowed prepositions in speech. The aim of the research is to analyze the structural and lexico-grammatical forms of postpositions in the Nerdvinsky dialect and to identify the patterns of Russian preposition usage in native-language communication. The materials comprise field recordings collected by the authors between 2024 and 2025 within the dialect's geographical area. The primary research methods involved synchronous analysis of dialect material, as well as phonetic and morphological word analysis. The postpositional system of the dialect is characterized by the disintegration of the serial postposition with the stem *выл-* [vyl-] and its transition into a case marker, cf.: *ы-блын* < *ыб вылын* [y·blyn < yb vylyn] (meaning 'in the field'); *ы-блӧдз* < *ыб вылӧдз* [y·blödʒ < yb vylödʒ] (meaning 'up to the field'). A number of simple postpositions tend to incorporate additional formants, cf.: *сы код'ӧм* vs. *сы код'* [sy kod'öm vs. sy kod'], *сы код'а* vs. *сы код'* [sy kod'a vs. sy kod'], *сы код'ӧма* vs. *сы код'* [sy kod'öma vs. sy kod']. All examples have the same meaning 'as he/she (does)'. The semantics of these additional markers is akin to that of derivational suffixes found in content words. The influence of Russian leads to palpable changes at the grammatical level. In speakers' speech, Russian prepositions are frequently used instead of the expected native postpositions or semantically corresponding case forms, e.g.: *чэ-рэз мы-р-то чапка-лӧ* [che-rez my·r-to chapka·lӧ] (meaning '(he/she) throws (smth.) over the stumps'); *сэ-кс'ин' до крэчэ-н'ийа* [se-ks'in' do kreche-n'ija] (meaning 'from that time until Epiphany'). The borrowing of entire prepositional constructions is observed, preserving the original grammatical forms of case, gender, and number. The data from the Nerdvinsky dialect reveal both general trends characteristic of Komi-Perm dialects and unique features of this specific area regarding the use of postpositions and Russian prepositions.

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Послелогии и предлоги в нердвинском диалекте коми-пермяцкого языка: структурные и функционально-семантические аспекты

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Аннотация. Авторами проанализированы структурные и функционально-семантические аспекты отдельных послелогов нердвинского диалекта, относящегося к южному наречию коми-пермяцкого языка; рассмотрены заимствованные предложные конструкции, активно встречающиеся в речи носителей обозначенного ареала. Нердвинский диалект является периферийным диалектом, занимает южную часть Коми-Пермяцкого округа; длительная территориальная близость к русским говорам является важнейшей причиной высокой степени различных заимствований. Актуальность исследования определяется недостаточной изученностью диалекта. В коми-пермяцкой диалектологии нет специальных работ, отражающих степень сохранения исконных грамматических парадигм и уровень употребления в говорах чужеродных языковых элементов. Современные данные нердвинского диалекта позволяют выполнить такой анализ на материале использования в речи исконных послелогов и заимствованных предлогов. Цель исследования — анализ структурных и лексико-грамматических форм послелогов нердвинского диалекта, выявление способов употребления русских предлогов при общении на родном языке. Материалами послужили полевые записи, собранные авторами в период с 2024 по 2025 г. на территории распространения названного диалекта. Использовались методы синхронического анализа диалектного материала, фонетического и морфологического анализа слова. Послеложная система диалекта характеризуется разрушением серийного послелога с основой на **ВЫЛ-** и его переходом в падежный формант (*ы-блын* < *ыб вылын* «на поле»; *ы-блөдз* < *ыб вылөдз* «до поля» и др.). Ряд одиночных послелогов стремится иметь в своем составе дополнительные форманты (*сы код'ём* вм. *сы код'*, *сы код'а* вм. *сы код'*, *сы код'ёма* вм. *сы код'* «как он (она)»). Семантика дополнительных показателей близка к словообразовательным суффиксам знаменательных частей речи. Влияние русского языка приводит

к ощутимым изменениям на уровне грамматики: в речи носителей диалекта зафиксировано частое употребление русских предлогов вместо ожидаемых исконных послелогов или соответствующих в семантическом плане падежных форм: *чэ-рэз мы-р-то чапка-лӧ* «через пни-то бросает»; *сэ-кс'ин' до крэщэ-н'ийа* в зн. «с того времени до Крещения» и др. Наблюдается заимствование целой предложной конструкции с сохранением исходных грамматических форм падежа, рода, числа. Материалы нердвинского диалекта демонстрируют как общие тенденции коми-пермяцких диалектов, так и индивидуальные признаки ареала в области употребления послелогов и русских предлогов.

Ключевые слова: коми-пермяцкий язык, нердвинский диалект, послелог, предлог, адаптация, русский язык

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Introduction

The Nerdvinsky dialect belongs to the southern dialect group of the Komi-Perm language and is geographically located in the southern part of the Komi-Perm Okrug. Based on the alternation of the sounds [в] ([v]) and [л], a primary criterion for classifying Komi dialects, it is classified as an l-dialect.

In the second half of the 19th century, this area, by all indications, was already a peripheral, southern territory where the Komi-Perm language was still actively used. On the pages of his lexicographic work “Permyatsko-russkij i russko-permyatskij slovar’, sostavlennyj Nikolajem Rogovym” (“Permyak-Russian and Russian-Permyak Dictionary, compiled by Nikolai Rogov”),¹ N.A. Rogov annotated phonetic variants of lexemes with the sound [л] with the label **ю.** ([ju]) (short for yuzhny, meaning ‘southern’). We believe that the concept of “southern” is the first known designation for the dialect under study.

The component “Nerdvinsky” first appeared in the works of dialectologists only in the second half of the 20th century. In V.I. Lytkin’s work “Dialektologicheskaya khrestomatiya po permskim yazykam” (“Dialectological Chrestomathy of the Permic Languages”), describing the subdialects of the Komi-Perm language,

¹ Rogov N.A. 1869. *Perm’acko-russkij i russko-perm’ackij slovar’, sostavlennyj Nikolaem Rogovym*. S.-Peterburg.” (In Russ.).

it is noted: “within the southern dialect group, the following subdialects can be distinguished: Onkovsky, Nizhne-Invensky, Nerdvinsky, and Kudymkar-Invensky.”² The same view is reflected by him in the university textbook “Komi-permyatskij yazyk” (“The Komi-Perm Language”).³

Specific information on the Nerdvinsky dialect is provided in a number of works by R.M. Batalova [1–4] and A.S. Krivoshchekova-Gantman.⁴ The most recent data is presented in the scientific articles by S.A. Sazhina [5; 6].

Until recently, the dialect has attracted little scholarly attention, although sporadic publications have occasionally provided fragmentary information about it. The Nerdvinsky dialect remains the only dialect of the Komi-Perm language whose materials have not been comprehensively studied yet.

At present, there is a need for its systematic description. As the dialect, due to the small number of speakers, is among the endangered dialects of the Komi-Perm language, the Perm Federal Research Center of the Ural Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences has developed a major project related to the collection and analysis of dialect material. A monograph-chrestomathy with audio accompaniment on this area will appear in the near future. This will be the first research work that, in addition to a comprehensive lexico-grammatical analysis, will be supplemented by recorded dialect speech. The speech of Nerdvinsky dialect speakers, recorded in field conditions, will become publicly available, and transcribed texts will also be provided.

We believe that the dialect’s insufficient scholarly coverage constitutes the rationale for this study. The small number of active dialect speakers (approximately no more than 200 people — A.L., A.M.) is an additional reason for a comprehensive study of the language of this area.

The Nerdvinsky dialect is spoken in the territory of a number of small villages: Pyatina, Ivankova, Sidorova, Yakina, Podgora, etc., located in the Leninskoye rural settlement, a part of the Kudymkar municipal district in the Komi-Perm Okrug. The distance to the administrative center, the city of Kudymkar, is about thirty kilometers; to the neighboring Kudymkar-Invensky dialect, no more than fifteen kilometers.

Geographically, the dialect area is quite compact: the distance between settlements ranges from one to seven or eight kilometers. The language is spoken by older people.

A significant part of the territory has long bordered Russian-speaking populations. Socio-economic ties, interethnic marriages, and prolonged close cohabitation

² Lytkin, V.I. 1955. *Dialectological Chrestomathy of the Permic Languages*. Moscow, p. 26. (In Russ.).

³ Lytkin, V.I. (Ed.) 1962. *The Komi-Permyak Language: Introduction, Lexicon, Phonetics, and Morphology: A Textbook for Higher Educational Institutions*. Kudymkar: Komi-Permyak Publishing House, p. 29. (In Russ.)

⁴ *The Komi-Permyak Dialects: A Textbook*. 1980. Compilers: A.S. Krivoshchekova-Gantman, L.P. Rategova.

of speakers of the two languages have impacted the linguistic specificity of this region: the dialect is experiencing substantial Russian influence.

In this regard, there is a need to assess the degree of preservation of native grammatical paradigms and the implementation of foreign linguistic elements by the dialect's speakers. It should be noted that the adoption of phenomena not inherent to the native language is typically accompanied by various adaptations, which can be readily explained by the specifics of the host language.

Within such a comparative framework, the rich field material collected on the Nerdvinsky dialect will allow us to examine the functional peculiarities of grammatical words such as postpositions and to draw attention to the active use of foreign elements — prepositions — in native-language communication.

We assume that a similar situation — the simultaneous functioning of native and foreign grammatical elements — may also affect other Komi-Perm dialects.

It should be recalled that postpositions, as a class of grammatical words (alongside a developed case system), constitute a crucial part of the language for expressing various spatial, causal-final, temporal, and other relations. Having emerged in deep antiquity (their formation is dated at least to the Common Permic period), they have assumed a highly important role in the language and are capable of expressing a wide range of subtle semantic and grammatical distinctions today. There are virtually no borrowed lexemes among postpositions. Their semantics, structure, and origin derive from the source language.

Prepositions are completely uncharacteristic of most Finno-Ugric languages. Mastering this class of grammatical words appears to be a rather complex process: when switching to Russian in oral speech, prepositions are often omitted [8]. Nevertheless, speakers of the Nerdvinsky dialect quite actively use Russian prepositions even when communicating in their native language. In the following part of the article, we will attempt to identify the peculiarities of the usage of native postpositions and to determine the reasons for the active use of prepositions, which are alien to the grammatical system of the Komi-Perm language.

Discussion

Postpositions in the Speech of Nerdvinsky Dialect Speakers

The considerable functional-semantic potential of postpositions, the established ways of their formation (most often they derive from nouns and adverbs), and the structural features of postpositions (so-called serial postpositions with case and other inflectional markers and simple postpositions lacking an inflectional component) — all these designated semantic and grammatical features are inherent to this class of grammatical words. The historically formed features of the postposition most often do not admit foreign lexico-grammatical phenomena from another language.

The transition of postpositions into case markers is a phenomenon recognized fairly recently in Finno-Ugric studies [8. P. 32–35]. However, this phenomenon is not foreign either — this transition is characteristic of most Finno-Ugric languages. Note that this process takes a considerable amount of time and proceeds through obligatory stages. Due to various reasons, primarily the elimination of the pause between the content word and the grammatical element in a postpositional phrase and the loss of independent stress by the postposition, the number of cases increases through the transformation of so-called serial postpositions.

In Komi-Perm dialects, two serial postpositions are undergoing disintegration: postpositions with the stem *вѳл-* [vyl-] (from the noun *вѳл* [vyl] (*вѳлв* [vyv]) meaning ‘surface, upper part’) and with the stem *дѳл-* [dyn-] (from the noun *дѳл* [dyn] meaning ‘a place near something’). The decisive reason for the disintegration of the postposition with the stem *вѳл-* [vyl-] and its transition into case markers is the quality (property) of the use of the sounds [в] ([v]) and [л]. This is why in so-called v-dialects the transformation process follows one pattern, while in l-dialects it follows another.

The dialect material from the Nerdvinsky area regarding the use of various postpositional forms demonstrates interesting grammatical features that are inherent to almost all Komi-Perm dialects, yet they are either completely absent from existing scholarly works or are presented without the necessary commentary. This enhances the relevance of the proposed study, as it brings into scholarly discourse well-known but previously undescribed dialectal facts. We believe that the reflections concerning the use of postpositions in the Nerdvinsky dialect of the Komi-Perm language will be useful for researchers working on other Finno-Ugric languages.

Superficially, postpositions in the Nerdvinsky dialect of the Komi-Perm language are represented by semantically and structurally familiar variants. The dialect materials do not reveal any lexically new words.

During the recording and subsequent analysis of the field material on the Nerdvinsky dialect, we anticipated encountering various grammatical forms in so-called serial postpositions. We also expected to identify individual formant-markers within simple postpositions, as a similar non-standard structure is observed in other Komi-Perm dialects. However, we concluded that the additional markers within simple postpositions exhibit features of derivational morphology characteristic of content words only after analyzing them. It should be added that the external structure of a Komi-Perm word is always influenced by phonetic processes. This situation is also evident in examples with postpositions.

It is not feasible to examine the entire postpositional system of the dialect in a single article. Therefore, we will focus on two, in our view, most significant aspects: 1) the transition of the serial postposition with the stem *вѳл-* [vyl-] into case markers, and 2) the presence of derivational components within simple postpositions.

The postposition with the stem был- [vyl-] in the Nerdvinsky dialect

In the dialect under study, an active transition of the serial postposition with the stem *был-* [vyl-] into a case form is currently taking place. Field data demonstrates both full forms, intermediate variants, and firmly established new case markers, a series of which is commonly referred to as external-local cases. The simultaneous use of several forms of this postposition is also characteristic today of the dialects of the Northern dialect group of the Komi-Perm language: the Kochevsky, Kosinsko-Kamsky, Mysovsky, and Verkh-Lupinsky dialects. In the southern territories adjacent to the Nerdvinsky dialect, in the so-called v-dialects—the Kudymkar-Inyvensky and Nizhneinyvensky dialects—the process of transition of the postposition with the stem *был-* [vyl-] (in v-dialects, *выв-* [vyv-]) into a case marker was completed as early as the second half of the last century. Due to the phonetic peculiarities of the v-dialects, this process occurred earlier and faster there. In the l-dialects, external-local cases are forming at a slower pace.

Let us consider specific examples. Full forms of this function word are already encountered quite rarely in speech. For example: *мы-йкӧ тай мыс былӧ кату-шка кэ-расӧ* [my·jkö taj mys vylö katu·shka ke·rasö] (meaning ‘somehow they’ll make a slide on the mountain’). In this context, the postpositional phrase *мыс былӧ* [mys vylö] (literally ‘onto the mountain’) is represented by the full form of the serial postposition: the stem *был-* [vyl-] + the suffix of the illative case -ӧ [-ö].

Кэ-рӧнӧ ма-скаэз йурс’и-былӧ, вот э-ччӧ, ву-джджэзлас, ишоб укрэпл’а-лос’ [Ke·rönö ma·skaez yurs’i·vylö, vot e·chchö, vu·dzhdzhezlas, shtob ukrepl’a·los’] (meaning ‘They make masks for the hair, right here, on the scalp, so that it strengthens’). In the given utterance, one postpositional phrase *йурс’и- былӧ* [yurs’i·vylö] ‘onto the hair’ and one form of the external-local illative case *ву-джджэзлас* [vu·dzhdzhezlas] (cf. literary *вужжез вылас* [vuzhhez vylas]) ‘on the (hair) roots’ are used. The phonomorphological changes in this utterance proceeded through the following stages: *ву-джджэз вылас* [vu·dzhdzhez vylas] > *ву-джджэз ылас* [vudzhdzhez ylas] > *ву-джджэзлас* [vu·dzhdzhezlas] (from *был-а-с* [vyl-a-s] > *ыл-а-с* [yl-a-s] > *л-а-с* [l-a-s]). All transitions of the postposition with the stem *был-* [vyl-] into a case marker occur according to this principle. These examples confirm the fact that for a native speaker of the dialect, it is not important which grammatical form of this postposition they use in speech. Postpositions with this stem, varying in their structure, may occur within a single phrase.

The intermediate stage of the postposition's transition into a case format is observed in the following examples: *по-лка ылас* (cf. literary *полка вылас*) *эм* [po·lka ylas (cf. literary polka vylas) em] (meaning ‘there is (something) on the shelf’); *пӧл ылас* (cf. literary *пӧв вылас*) *кы-кӧн-куи-мӧн су-лтасӧ* [pöl ylas (cf. literary pöv vylas) ky·kön-kui·mön su·ltasö] (meaning ‘they will stand on the board two or three at a time’). The presence of such forms, where the first sound of the postposition [в] ([v]) is subject to loss, demonstrates how the function word

transforms into a case formant: *вылын* [vylyn] > *ылын* [ylyn] > *лын* [lyn]. R.M. Batalova wrote about this when characterizing similar processes in the northern dialects of the Komi-Perm language: “the loss of the initial sound [в] ([v]) takes place, followed by a reduction in the number of syllables” [2. P. 136]. It is not possible to identify a phonetic dependency that could influence the loss of the postposition’s first sound: both full postpositions and their truncated forms, or even an already fully formed case form, may appear adjacent to the stem of a content word, whether it ends in a vowel or a consonant.

For the most part, contemporary dialect materials from the studied area demonstrate already formed new word forms that have arisen from the postpositional combination: content word + serial postposition with the stem *выл-* [vyl-]. Consider the following examples: *о·джджык вил'моги·лкалас* (cf. literary *могилка вылас*), *све·жойлас* (cf. literary *свежой вылас*) *пу·кс'асö чи·сто* [o·dzhdzhyk vil' mogi·lkalas (cf. literary *mogilka vylas*), *sve·zhöjlas* (cf. literary *svezhöj vylas*) *pu·ks'asö chi·sto*] (meaning ‘earlier, on the grave, on the fresh one, everyone would sit down’); *му·на фэ·рмалас* (cf. literary *ферма вылас*), *дак эд мый дырна·а·бу*) [mu·na fe·rmalas (cf. literary *ferma vylas*), *dak ed myj dyrna·a·bu*] (meaning ‘I’ll go to the farm, and that means I’ll be away a long time’).

Based on field data, it can be asserted that the processes of the postposition with the stem *выл-* [vyl-] transitioning into case forms are an objective reality that has affected all dialects of the Komi-Perm language, including the Nerdvinsky dialect. The only difference lies in the fact that in different dialects, the process of the postposition transitioning into a case formant proceeds unevenly: in the v-dialects it has already been completed, while in the l-dialects all forms are still in use — from the full form of the postposition and its truncated form to the established new case formant.

The postposition кодъ [kod'] ‘as, like’ in the Nerdvinsky dialect

Due to its structural features, the simple postposition *кодъ* [kod'] ‘as, like’ should not contain additional components; inflectional formants, characteristic of serial postpositions, are not inherent to it. However, in the dialect under study, this postposition incorporates additional markers, presenting a picture quite interesting in terms of semantics and structure. A systematic analysis of these markers across a broad dialectal area has not yet been conducted. It is hoped that the material and reflections presented here will aid future research in proposing a more objective picture. Thus, the simple postposition *код'* [kod'] ‘as, like’, whose origin dates back to the Pre-Permian period,⁵ occurs in the Nerdvinsky dialect in the following forms: *код'* [kod'], *ко·д'öм* [ko·d'öm], *ко·д'а* [ko·d'a], and *ко·д'öма* [ko·d'öma].

⁵ Lytkin, V.I., & E.S. Gulyaev. 1970. *A Concise Etymological Dictionary of the Komi Language*. Moscow: Nauka publ., p. 127.

The non-derived postposition *код'* [kod'] 'as, like' coincides in meaning and structure with the literary variant: *ко·с'тöм пис'т'и-ксö ма·с'тан, дак си·а пис' код' ло·о* [ko·s'töm pis't'i·ksö ma·s'tan, dak si·a pis' kod' lo·o] (meaning 'you grind dried horsetail, and it becomes like flour').

The form *ко·д'öм* [ko·d'öm] 'as, like' is the most frequent in functional terms. Examples with the postposition *ко·д'öм* [ko·d'öm]: *то·жо ва· код'öм* (cf. literary *кодь*) *мы·йкö* [to·zho va·kod'öm (cf. literary kod') my·jkö] (meaning 'also something like water'); *мэ вö·ли о·с'та ö·м код'öм* (cf. literary *кодь*) [me vö·li o·s'ta öm kod'öm (cf. literary kod')] (meaning 'I was as if with an open mouth', i.e., 'absent-minded'). In these contexts, the presence of some quality is manifested quite clearly. In the following context, the postposition contains not only the participle suffix *-öм* [-öm], but also the plural suffix *-öс'* [-ös'], characteristic of adjectives and participles: *вэ·рхн'öй од'э·ждаыс, то·жо э·тö, ву·рöмöс', кон'э·шно, н'э ö·ниа код'ö·мöс' вö·лисö* [ve·rkhn'öj od'e·zhdays, to·zho e·tö, vu·römös', kon'e·shno, n'e ö·nia kod'ö·mös' vö·lisö] (meaning 'the outer clothing was also sewn, of course, it was not like the modern one'). Although we have not been able to find these forms in research works on Komi-Perm dialects, we venture to assert that the comparative postposition in the form *ко·д'öм* [ko·d'öm] also occurs in the speech of Komi-Perm people in other territories.

Numerous examples with the postposition *ко·д'а* [ko·d'a] 'as, like' are found in our data: *мы·йкö ва·ыс кыздз йö·л код'а* (cf. literary *моз*) *визы·лтö* [my·jkö va·ys kydz jö·l kod'a (cf. literary moz) vizi·ltö] (meaning 'the water flows somehow like milk'); *ма·мö код'а* (cf. literary *моз*) *стара·ччи кэ·рны* [ma·mö kod'a (cf. literary moz) stara·chchi ke·rny] (meaning 'tried to do like my mother'). This form is active in other dialects of the Komi-Perm language as well, and even appears in literary texts.

Semantically close to *ко·д'а* [ko·d'a] is the form *ко·д'öма* [ko·d'öma] 'as, like'. The latter is recorded only in isolated examples: *н'ан' кө·тан да стра·пайтан ма·мö код'öма* [n'an' kö·tan da stra·paitan ma·mö kod'öma] (meaning 'you knead the dough and do the cooking like your mother does'); *ворожиччы·лисö тай мы·йкö, кл'у·ччэс дорын öнджа·код'öма пу·кс'асö да ворожи·ччöны* [vorozhichchy·lisö taj my·jkö, kl'u·chches doryn öndzha·kod'öma puks'asö da vorozhi·chchöny] (meaning 'they used to tell fortunes, you know — they'd kind of sit by the spring and do their fortune-telling'). The postposition in the form *ко·д'öма* [ko·d'öma] 'as, like' is also characteristic of other dialects of the Komi-Perm language. However, it has not been represented in scholarly sources to date.

The formants *-öм* [-öm] and *-а* [-a] within this postposition are semantically very close to the participle suffix *-öм* [-öm] (in context, postpositional phrases require the question 'what kind of?') and the adverbial derivational suffix *-а* [-a] (these postpositional phrases require the question 'how?'). It turns out that the additional formants within the simple postposition *код'* [kod'] 'as, like' do not appear randomly; they are capable of "regulating" the semantic nuances of the

utterance. In the compound component *-öma* [-öma], the above-mentioned markers have merged, but the semantics of the final formant, the so-called adverbial suffix *-a* [-a] ‘how, in what manner’, has come to prevail over the ‘what kind of?’ meaning of the marker *-öm* [-öm].

The postposition коста [kosta] ‘during’ in the Nerdvinsky dialect

In the Komi-Perm language, the postposition *коста* [kosta] ‘during’ is used to express temporal relations. In oral speech, this function word can even combine with converbs. In the dialect under study, this postposition also has another grammatical form: *ко-стикö* [ko·stikö]. Consider the following examples: *жар **коста** йур ылын, мый, кус’и-нкаэс но-йлимö* [zhar **kosta** yur ylyn, myj, kuš’i·nkaes no·jlimö] (meaning ‘**during** the hot season, we wore headscarves on our heads’); *война **костикö** вö-ли сэ-тштшöм д’эви-з* [vojna· **kostikö** vö·li se·tshtshöm d’evi·z] (meaning ‘**during** the war there was such a motto’). The unusual grammatical form *ко-стикö* [ko·stikö] ‘during’ is not coincidentally composed of a component resembling the converbal suffix *-икö* [-ikö]. In context, a postpositional phrase with the component *коста* [kosta] ‘during’ will depend on verb forms, just like converbs with the suffix *-икö* [-ikö] (orthographic literary — *икö*). In both cases, the appropriate question is ‘when?’, and in the sentence they function as temporal adverbial modifiers.

Thus, through the analysis of two simple postpositions, we have attempted to demonstrate that they — the simple postpositions — are by no means such; they tend to incorporate components (in our cases, suffixes) that bring them semantically and grammatically closer to content parts of speech. These processes are not an exclusive feature of the Nerdvinsky dialect; the presence of additional grammatical forms is characteristic of the majority of Komi-Perm dialects; the materials of the aforementioned dialect merely confirm the commonality of processes characteristic of contemporary Komi-Perm dialectology.

Prepositions in the speech of Nerdvinsky dialect speakers

The preposition, as a function part of speech in Russian that is absent from the grammar of the Komi-Perm language, is acquired with considerable difficulty by Komi-Perm speakers. This unfamiliar lexico-grammatical form causes difficulties when speaking Russian, both in terms of semantics and in terms of verb government.

Nevertheless, the use of Russian prepositions in oral speech when speaking the native language is not a new phenomenon. Similar forms of borrowings are cited in V.I. Lytkin’s work “Dialectological Chrestomathy of the Permic Languages.”⁶ The

⁶ Lytkin, V.I. 1955. *Dialectological Chrestomathy of the Permic Languages*. Moscow, p. 26. (In Russ.).

foreign lexical item is incorporated into speech together with the preposition, while preserving its foreign grammatical form.

There have been no comments in the scholarly literature regarding prepositional constructions in the speech of Komi-Perm speakers. Using data from the Nerdvinsky dialect, we will attempt to identify the most noteworthy aspects.

First, when speaking their native language, Komi-Perm speakers quite frequently use Russian prepositions. Native postpositions or case forms could well correspond to their semantics. Second, a preposition used in speech “pulls” along with it the entire chain of necessary grammatical forms: the presence in the content word of the grammatical meanings of number, case, and gender.

In this regard, quite a number of examples can be demonstrated; we will cite just a few: *на по-л'э, по-л'эыс вы-лӧ эд му-нӧ, сэ-ччин луниӧри-ка* [*na po-l'e, po-l'eys vy-lö ed mu-nö, se-chchin lunshöri-ka*] (meaning ‘**to the field**, don’t go **onto the field**, Noon Woman is there’); *штоб до до-ма, штоб го-ртӧдз ва-йны* [*shtob do do-ma, shtob go-rtödž va-jny*] (meaning ‘so that **home**, so that (to) bring **home**’); *ло-кти мэ кытӧ-нкӧ, на-т'тӧ, ну, мо-жэт к с'эн'т'а-быр' и-л'и окт'а-быр'* [*lo-kti me kytö-nkö, na-t'tö, nu, mo-zhet k s'en't'a-byr' i-li okt'a-byr'*] (meaning ‘I probably arrived, well, maybe **by September or October**’); *а ко фрола-м ми-ан с'о, вӧ-ли вил' бра-жно* [*a ko fro-la-m mi-an s'o, vö-li vil' bra-zhno*] (meaning ‘and **by the Frols** (religious holiday), we had new (of fresh harvest) **brazhno** (a mixture of oat flour with malt. — *A.L.*)’); *кӧт' мымда-ӧ-кты бӧз д'э-лу-ту* [*köt' mymda-ö-kty bez d'e-lu-tu*] (meaning ‘no matter how much you collect, it's a **pointless deed**’); *с'о чэ-рӧз мы-р-то чапка-лӧ* [*s'o che-rez myr-to chapka-lö*] (meaning ‘(he/she) throws everything **over the stump**’); *сэ-кс'ин' до крещэ н'ийа* [*se-ks'in' do kreshche-n'ija*] (meaning ‘from that time **until Epiphany**’); *си-а за куды-мкарӧм, йо-гваыс* [*si-a za kudy-mkarom, yo-gvays*] (meaning ‘it is **beyond Kudymkar**, the Yögva’); *л'э-дзан чэ-рӧз мйасору-пкы* [*l'e-dzan che-rez mjasoru-pku*] (meaning ‘(you) put **through a meat grinder**’), etc.

The first two examples demonstrate the parallel use of a prepositional phrase and a postpositional expression. That is, in spontaneous speech, both grammatical forms — the borrowed and the native — appear within the same semantically unified utterance. In all aspects, they are equivalent. The speaker duplicates the Russian form with a native grammatical variant. Expressions with the Komi-Perm grammatical form demonstrate the classical method of adapting a foreign word to the grammar of the recipient language. However, this situation is beginning to break down: the foreign prepositional expression is becoming the more familiar variant.

We note that most often prepositions are preserved and appear in speech together with the borrowed word, and only in one combination, *чэ-рӧз мы-р-то* [*che-rez myr-to*] ‘**over the stump**’, a Russian preposition adjoins a native word. Unfortunately, no further examples of this kind — Russian preposition + native word — are found in our data.

Very rarely are there exceptions to the expected grammatical forms. For instance, in the expression *к с'эн'м'а-быр'* [k s'en't'a-byr'] (instead of the expected *к с'эн'м'а-бры* [k s'en't'a-bru]) ‘by September’, the content word appears in the nominative case; this is precisely the grammatical form that would have occurred if the dialect speaker had used a native postposition: *с'эн'м'а-быр' кэжө* [s'en't'a-byr' kezhö] ‘by September’. The grammatical form *к с'эн'м'а-быр'* [k s'en't'a-byr'] ‘by September’ may have been influenced by the phonetic structure of the word: the consonant cluster br' is not characteristic of word-final position in the Komi-Perm language, hence its orthoepic adaptation is observed: br' > byr': *к с'эн'м'а-быр' и-л'и окт'а-быр'* [k s'en't'a-byr' i-li okt'a-byr'] ‘by September or October’; adding the ending -[y] ([u]) (orthographic -ю ([ju])) to this already pronunciation-adapted form would have been an even more complex option. Moreover, in the Komi languages, the sound [y] ([u]) in word-final position of polysyllabic words is practically never used.

The recorded example *с'о чэ-рээ мы-р-мо чанка-лө* [s'o che-rez myr-to chapka-lö] ‘(he/she) throws everything over the stump’ shows that Russian prepositions in the Nerdvinsky dialect are beginning to “come into contact” with Komi-Perm lexemes as well. We believe that the trend of combining a Russian preposition with a native word has been established, and in subsequent fieldwork, more examples of this kind may come to light.

Analyzing this Russian function part of speech of interest, it can be stated that the prepositions typically incorporated into colloquial speech are those of time, place, and manner. They “displace” semantically equivalent native postpositions; in one example, the caritive case has been “affected”: *бээ д'э-лу-мы* [bez d'e-lu-tu] instead of the expected *д'э-ломөз* [d'e-lotög] ‘a pointless deed’.

Conclusion

Thus, in the Nerdvinsky dialect of the Komi-Perm language, an active process of transition of the serial postposition with the stem *выл-* [vyɫ-] into case formants is observed. This is a unified phenomenon characteristic of all Komi-Perm dialects, but one that proceeds rather unevenly.

A number of simple postpositions contain additional morphological markers that, in structural and semantic terms, bring them closer to the derivational processes of content parts of speech. These processes are also characteristic of the majority of dialects, yet virtually nothing has been noted in the scholarly literature in this regard. We believe that these markers are by no means coincidental: their appearance results in a kind of reduplication of the general meaning of the function word. A broader body of material is needed to be able to assert that this phenomenon is characteristic of all Komi-Perm dialects.

Long-term territorial proximity to the Russian-speaking population and active social contacts with it lead to noticeable changes at the grammatical level: Russian

prepositions are actively used in the dialect instead of the expected native postpositions or corresponding case forms. Foreign function words are incorporated in spoken language as entire constructions: Russian preposition + content word (typically Russian) in the required grammatical form. Very rarely does a preposition become “attached” to native words.

This situation cannot be linked to a lexical process of borrowing: these lexemes have been used in the speech of Komi-Perm speakers for more than one century. We believe that this phenomenon arises due to the active use of the Russian language in everyday life: it is preferred at home, at work, and in social settings.

Nevertheless, the combination in oral speech of both native forms and foreign elements actively being incorporated into it represents the real picture of the current state of the Nerdvinsky dialect of the Komi-Perm language.

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