Thesis of doctoral (PhD) dissertation

Ivett Kelemen

EXAMINATION POSSIBILITIES
OF PLURATIVES (PLURALIA TANTUM)
WITH SPECIAL REGARD TO NORTHERN SAMI

Supervisor: Dr. Sándor Maticsák

UNIVERSITY OF DEBRECEN

Doctoral School of Linguistic
Debrecen, 2013

I. The objectives of the dissertation

Research on pluralia tantum has been a very important and exciting domain in Indo-European linguistics for a long time. However, the phenomenon is still a stepchild of Finno-Ugric linguistics.

Our language family includes languages a) in which pluralia tantum do not occur at all (e.g. Votyak and Cheremis); b) that have certain fixed plural forms, but such that are very specific (as Hungarian); c) that use "regular" pluralia tantum (like Finnish, Estonian and Mordvin). Only few of the Finno-Ugric languages have been studied from this aspect: one or two papers have been published about pluralia tantum in the Hungarian, Estonian and Mordvin languages, while only the Finnish language has monographs on its pluralia tantum, owing to the work of Rune Ingo.

The pluralia tantum of the Northern Sami language have only been discussed in some shorter paragraphs of descriptive linguistic works. These writings simply refer to the fact that regarding grammatical number usage and agreement, these nouns are always used in and with the plural. However, the term "plurale tantum" is not even mentioned.

The aim of my dissertation is 1) to provide a survey of pluralia tantum in the Northern Sami language,[1] 2) to study them in detail, 3) to arrange them into a dictionary and 4) to systemize the findings so far gained about them. I have made efforts to create a paper which fills a gap in the field of Finno-Ugric linguistics and in-

---

[1] The Sami language cannot be considered a single, unified language. The issue of Sami languages (dialects) is one that is still dividing the experts of the topic. Although the Sami people consider themselves as a single ethnic group, the languages (dialects) they speak in the four different countries they live in (Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia) are so much dissimilar that their speakers cannot comprehend one another. This is why "Sami languages" is a better term from a linguistic point of view, and therefore, the present paper applies this more and more accepted approach.

cludes a systematic inventory of data in addition to the theoretical discussion of the topic.

II. The structure of the dissertation and the methods applied

The dissertation is divided into eight chapters. After the introduction, the second chapter discusses the research history of the topic: Indo-European languages treated first, Finno-Ugric languages next.

The first and most important step of every kind of research is the precise delimitation and definition of the subject. This is especially true to this dissertation. My position is that the term currently in use *(plurale tantum)* is insufficient. This position is supported with facts in the third chapter, then a possible substitute term is proposed instead *(plurative),* and a revision of the term's current definition is suggested. The same chapter also mentions possible ways of treatment of pluralia tantum and problems emerging in connection with deficient number paradigms in the course of certain linguistic researches.

This is followed by the chapter titled "Language-specific number usage in the Finno-Ugric languages" (Chapter 4) which describes the language-specific rules of singular number : plural number usage through Finnish, Mordvin, Hungarian and Sami examples.

The fifth chapter intends to draw attention on the fact that pluralia tantum form syntactically well-separable grammatical categories, since they show significant differences in comparison to the plural number, cf. *vihtta* [NomSg] *beatnaga* [Gen/AccSg] 'five dogs'; *viđat* [NomPl] *heajat* [NomPl] 'five weddings'.

This study of pluratives follows the methodology of earlier works: the 1036 Northern Sami pluratives collected are analyzed with morphosemantic and semantic methods. The studies are conducted in a contrastive framework, with attention on the symmet-

ricity of the paper's structure. In each of the cases, Indo-European data is treated first, Finno-Ugric (Finnish, Estonian, Mordvin and Hungarian) data next and Northern Sami data last.

The sixth chapter provides the morphosemantic study of Finno-Ugric languages. The current studies can be considered as the continuation of Rune Ingo's work in the topic, concentrating on compulsory and optional plural forms, and the problematic aspects of the expression of the part–whole relationship. The Sami system of plurals is complemented with the so-called correlative pluratives, the analysis of which appears in Chapter 7.

As pluralia tantum form well-defined semantic fields, the larger part of their study involved their semantic classification. I also considered it necessary to compare the semantic studies of pluralia tantum in the Indo-European and the Finno-Ugric languages. This comparative study is contained by Chapter 8. After this description of possible classification methods, as a result of a contrastive analysis, it was easily definable which semantic groups are "prototypical" and which are language-specific.

The appendix of the dissertation contains the dictionary of Northern Sami pluratives. Its novelty lies in the fact that, according to my present knowledge, no other language has had a dictionary of pluralia tantum as yet. For this, I processed all the data of the Northern Sami dictionaries presently available for me (Nielsen 1932–1962; Lagercrantz 1939; Sammallahti 1989, 1993; Kåven et al. 1995; Sammallahti–Nickel 2006).[2] The 1036 pluratives thus collected have been classified according to structure, type and and meaning. The cross-references appearing at the end of the entries provide opportunity to study words with similar structure.

---

[2] It is important to emphasise that this paper did not aim to study real language usage, only dictionary material. The data collected in this study cannot be the basis of overall conclusions concerning the real usage and frequency of the phenomenon observed.

III. Findings of the study

1. The term *plurative*

The currently accepted linguistic term plurale tantum has been criticized in very early monographs already (cf. Braun 1930). The Latin plurale tantum 'plural only' expression is too rigid, covering only a small set of words, even though the phenomenon applies to much larger number of expressions. Since the word type under study can have a complete number declension paradigm in certain cases, the exclusiveness represented by 'tantum' is incorrect. Taking this as a starting point, I considered it necessary to find a new term for the given phenomenon. This decision, however, was not at all arbitrary: the substitute is a term already used in the related Finnish and Sami literature (Fi. *Pluratiivi,* S. *pluratiiva*). For the sake of transparency, the new term *plurative* is only used in the Sami section of the dissertation, while plurale tantum is kept in the course of the literature review.

Instead of the "one-sentence" definitions of the Indo-European and Finno-Ugric linguistic works, I find it necessary to give a more detailed and exact definition of the phenomenon, which is as follows: In my interpretation, the *plurative* is a linguistic phenomenon through which a singular or collective meaning is, or may be represented in a plural form.

In a wider sense, I consider any word a *plurative* if it:
– does not have singular declension;
– has singular declension, but the singular and plural forms are different in meaning to a lesser or greater extent;
– has singular declension, and the singular and plural forms do not seem to differ in meaning.

2. The syntactic structure of the Northern Sami pluratives

One of the critiques often emerging in connection with pluratives is that they cannot be separated sharply from regular plurals; therefore it is pointless to classify them into a separate grammatical category. However, syntactic studies have shown the falseness of this statement. It is clear from the studies conducted in Finno-Ugric languages that pluratives behave differently in syntactic structures compared to regular plurals. A Northern Sami quantifier construction differs in the following way in the case of the two categories:

'More than one thing'	Plurative
Mu vihtta [NomSg] *beatnaga* [Gen/AccSg] *lea boaris.*	*Viđat* [NomPl] *heajat* [NomPl] *ledje somát.*
'The five dogs of mine are sick.'	'The five weddings were nice.' [= *fives weddings]

3. The results of the morphosemantic studies

For the classification of Sami pluratives, the present morphosemantic studies took the system worked out by Rune Ingo as a basis, but with some modifications (absolute pluratives, partial pluratives, optional pluratives, potential pluratives, correlative pluratives).

The term *absolute plurative* refers to a plural form that does not have singular declension. Words like this constitute the class of pluralia tantum in the classic sense. E.g. *áibmǫglásat ~ -klásat ~ -lásat ~ -láset* 'sunglasses'; *beas'sážat* 'Easter'; *heajat* 'wedding'; *juovllat* 'Christmas'; *vuoigŋašat* 'brain'.

The group of *partial pluratives* contains lexemes that have both plural and singular declension paradigms, but the plural and singular forms are somewhat different in meaning. In the case of this type of words, no unambiguous information is available about

grammatical number. That is, the word *jor'ri* means 'wheel', while *jor'rit* may mean 'wheels', 'a vehicle', or 'more vehicles'. Further examples: *báhppa* 'priest, minister' > *báhpat* 'clergy'; *glássa ~ klássa ~ lássa ~ lásse* 'glass' > *glásat ~ klásat ~ lásat ~ láset* 'glasses'; *bátnẹruovdi* 'nail-claw' > *bátnẹruovddit* 'braces'.

Potential pluratives are nouns that have both singular and plural forms, but the latter is a collective noun, the individual parts of which are not referred to, i.e. the parts are named with the singular/plural forms of the same words: *gáma* 'shoe' ~ *gápmagat* 'shoes', 'a pair of shoes', 'more pairs of shoes', 'a lot of shoes'.

Nouns belonging to the class of *optional pluratives* have a complete declension paradigm, and the singular and plural forms do not differ in meaning whatsoever; speakers can freely choose between the forms: *alin* > *alimat* 'hip, waist'; *bilda* > *bilddat* 'tscaffolding'.

Correlative pluratives are specific to the Sami language, having been created with the *-š* correlative suffix meaning 'group of people': *guoibmi* 'friend' > *gūimeš* 'fellows, comrades, companions' > *gūimmežat* 'fellows, comrades, companions'; *lávvi* 'friend' > *lāveš-* 'friends, companions' > *lávežat* 'friends, companions'.

The existence of these groups shows that the prototype theory used in cognitive linguistics is applicable for the specification of pluratives as well, given that the notion of the PLURATIVE is also organized around prototypes. The prototype (i.e. the most typical member of the group) in our case is the group of absolute pluratives (words that are *in fact* only used in the plural), and the "less central" members (partial, optional and potential pluratives) gradually move away from this prototype. The prototype (i.e. the absolute plurative) stands at one end-point of the scale thus created, while the other end-point is the class of words with a complete declension paradigm.

4. The results of the semantic studies

The most preferred method applied in the study of pluratives in the international literature is the semantic approach, since the categories thus created are well-defined. I established 26 possible semantic classes among Northern Sami pluratives. These are the following:

1. people: *áhčežat* 'father and son, father and daughter'; *alla-olbmot* 'aristocracy'; *bálvvát* 'staff'; *bērošteaddjit* 'public, audience'; *gierrásaččat* 'the lovers, loving couple'; *vieljažagat ~ vieljažat* 'brothers (with each other)';

2. animals: *biebmǫlottit* 'poultry'; *botkkahasat* 'insects (Insecta)'; *buovjagat* ' Monodontidae family'; *oamit* 'cattle'; *soajálaččat* 'poultry'; *šlieddaeal'lit* 'molluscs';

3. plants: *ajerássęšattut* 'Papaveraceae (plant) family'; *buđet-gilvagat* 'seed potato'; *dálvęfuođđarat* 'winter fodder'; *gortnit* 'cereals'; *juopmǫšattut* 'Polygonaceae (plant) family'; *spiinnęlas-tašattut* 'Chenopodiaceae (plant) family';

4. other organisms: *baktearat ~ baktērat* 'bacteria (Bacteria)'; *eallagat* 'organism'; *orgánat* 'organism';

5. parts of the body, organs: *sohkabeallęealánat* 'genitals'; *sohkarávssát* 'genitals'; *vuoigŋamat* 'brain'; *vuosat* 'placenta'; *vuovttat* 'hair';

6. holidays, events, programs: *ávvǫmállásat* 'feast'; *beas'sá-žat* 'Easter'; *čuoigamat* 'skiing competition'; *hellodagat* 'Pentecost'; *juovllat* 'Christmas'; *heajat* 'wedding'; *meašttirvuođagilvvo-hallamat* 'championship'; *ristejaččat* 'christening'; *soagŋut* 'engagement';

7. activities: *beaivęnahkárat* 'having a nap'; *čierrát* 'crying' *il-lučuorvasat* 'exultation'; *girkǫbiellut* 'chiming'; *olggut* 'work in the fields';

8. bodily processes, diseases: *boalddáhagat* 'pain'; *čáh-cęguolggat* 'trachoma <eye disease>'; *čáhcęruoppit* 'chicken-pox';

durvát 'scabies, psoriasis'; *jorggáldatjagit* 'climax'; *mánọdávddat* 'menstruation';

9. circumstances, relationships: *ássandilálašvuođat* 'housing conditions'; *bargọdilit* 'working conditions'; *bearašgaskavuođat* 'family relations'; *dálkẹdilit* 'weather conditions'; *gávpẹoaktavuo-đat* 'business relations'; *vistẹdilálašvuođat* 'housing conditions';

10. states, conditions: *dáiddut* 'skill'; *dávggut* 'tiredness'; *gár-rẹmat* 'drunkenness'; *luondduattáldagat* 'talent'; *mearridannávc-cat* 'resolution, commitment'; *vuoiŋŋanávccat* 'talent';

11. behaviour, customs, traditions: *álbmotvierut* 'folklore'; *árbẹvierut* 'tradition'; *beavdẹvierut* 'eating habits'; *boradanvierut* 'table manners'; *dilálašvuođat* 'behaviour';

12. organizations, institutions: *aviissat* 'the press'; *áššáskuht-tineiseválddit* 'public prosecutor's offices'; *bargomárkanat* 'work-force market'; *gearrẹgat* 'district court'; *mearrafámut* 'the navy, naval forces'; *stáhtaruovdẹgeainnut* 'state railways'; *vearjọfámut* 'armed forces';

13. orders, regulations, measures: *bargọsuodjẹ mearrádusat* 'workers'protection legislation'; *láhkamearrádusat* 'decree'; *tuol'lọmearrádusat* 'customs regulations'; *vuođđọvuoigatvuođat* 'basic human rights';

14. words related to communication: *bustávat* 'writing'; *dearvvahansánit* 'words of welcome'; *iđitođđasat* 'morning news'; *lihkusávaldagat* 'congratulations'; *ruhkosat* 'prayer';

15. knowledge, studies: *ávnnaslohkamat* 'professional studies'; *fágadieđut* 'professional knowledge'; *ovdadieđut* 'rudiments'; *ov-dadutkkalmasat* 'examination'; *vuođđọdieđut* 'fundamentals';

16. buildings, rooms: *badjẹoasat* 'superstructure'; *duolvačáh-cẹkanálat* 'drainage system'; *stohkat* 'dockyard'; *válgalanjat* 'polling booth';

17. clothing: *álbmotbiktasat* 'folk costume'; *bassalusat* 'laundry'; *buksadoalanat* 'braces'; *lášmmohallanbuvssat* 'gym shorts'; *suohkkọbuvssat* 'tights';

18. objects: *basttat* 'pincers'; *brillat ~ rillat* 'glasses'; *buokčan-biergasat* 'diving equipment'; *giehtaruovddit* 'shackles'; *heastta-biergasat* 'harness'; *láhkkit* 'chain'; *njálbmẹruovddit* 'bit, snaffle'; *skierat* 'scissors'; *tril'labōrat* 'wheelbarrow';

19. materials, food, commodities: *gáfet ~ káfet* 'coffee'; *gár-venat ~ kárvenat* 'caraway'; *kōkossmáhkut* 'kókuszreszelék shred-ded coconut'; *lastarievnnat ~ -rievnnit* 'cornflakes'; *makarōnat* 'macaroni'; *náhkkẹgálvvut* 'leather goods'; *panērenjáfut* 'bread-crumbs'; *sohkkarat* 'sugar'; *teadjagáhkut* 'teacakes, biscuits';

20. leftovers, by-products, trash: *botnit* 'coffee grounds'; *lám-borat* 'junk, odds and ends'; *luonit* 'waste'; *muhkkit* 'dung, manu-re'; *ruskaruovddit* 'scrap-iron'; *sahájáf'fut* 'sawdust';

21. financial matters: *ássangolut* 'housing expenses'; *divvun-golut* 'cost of repairs and maintenance'; *árvọbáhpárat ~ -báhpirat* 'securities, bonds'; *bargọdienasdieđut* 'tax return'; *lotnásat* 'ran-som'; *seastọruđat* 'savings';

22. physical phenomena: *alfasuotnjarat* 'alpha rays'; *áhpit* 'power'; *gaskabárut* 'medium wave'; *röntgensuotnjarat* 'X-rays'; *ūō-bárut* 'ultra-short wave'; *vuoimmit* 'energy';

23. words related to nature: *báhkat* 'heatwave'; *báktẹsul'lot* 'archipelago'; *buollašat* 'long, hard frost'; *buorádaggat* 'a long spell of good weather'; *guovssahasat* 'polar lights'; *idjagálut* 'cold nights (late int he summer); *lájut* 'hayfield';

24. words related to time: *áiggit* 'long time'; *guoktẹlohjagit* 'the twenties'; *mihcamárat* 'the summer solstice';

25. proper names: *Álppat* 'the Alps'; *Amerihká Ovttastahtton stáhtat* 'United States of America'; *Várggát* Vardø; *Dávggát* 'the Great Bear <constellation>'; *Gállábártnit* 'Orion < constellation>'; *Gievdnẹguoddit* 'Pleiades <constellation>'; *Roavggut* 'Pleiades <constellation>'; *Ruos'sanásttit* 'Swan <constellation>';

26.other: *bálddalasčiegat* 'adjacent angle'; *dovddut* 'mood, spirit'; *ruhtaoažžumat* 'outstanding debt'; *ruos'salassánit* 'cross-word'; *veahkkẹvárit* 'resources'.

From the classes thus established, it is observable that the semantic classes of the Northern Sami pluratives correspond to those of the Indo-European and other Finno-Ugric languages generally speaking. As in most of the languages that have pluratives, expressions for objects (141), people (79), holidays and events (77) are very important in Northern Sami as well. These semantic classes are prototypical in the sense that they are to be found in each of the languages that have pluratives. The "words related to nature" category also contains a slightly larger number of words than the rest of the groups. This may be explained by the fact that Sami people live their lives close to nature.

5. The dictionary

The dictionary contains the pluratives of six printed Northern Sami dictionaries in a systemized way. The dictionaries are the following:

5.1. The structure of the entries

The entries are made up of three parts: the data, its analysis and references.

a) Data. The entry begins with the headword, which is followed by its meaning. The sources are given next. The headwords appear in alphabetical order, according to the Sami alphabet, in boldface. They are spelt in compliance with the rules accepted in 1978, except if the given word do not appear in more recent dictionaries anymore, e.g. *äwᵉkᴴαᴴk* Sandholmen (island) (LAG 295.) In the present study, I presume that every compound word is made up of two elements; the main constituents are divided with a || sign, and their further elements with | signs, e.g. ***máilmmi|meašttirvuođa||gilvvohallamat*** 'world championship' (SN 463).

The meanings are always given in two languages. First the meaning appearing in the newest place of occurrence is given

(which is usually the German or the Finnish one), then the Hungarian meaning comes divided with a | sign.

The abbreviations of the sources of the data (see Section 1) are given after the items, in brackets, together with the page numbers. When the dictionaries provide different information about the number usage of the given item, this fact is duly indicated: „usu. pl.", „sg. only", „sg. also", e.g. **bállját** 'lining of wooden collar | hámiga bélése' (usu. pl. NIELS I/125; only sg. SAMM[1] 31; only sg. KÅV 46; only sg. SN 56).

b) Analysis. The second part of the entry contains the structural analysis of the headword. According to this, pluratives are simple root-words, derivatives or compound words, with plural markers on them. In the case of compound words, the constituents and their meanings are given in the dictionary; the boundary between the constituents is marked by a + sign:

mōhtor|sihkkelat ~ syhkkelat 'Motorrad | motorbicikli' (SN 486)
- Compound word: *mōhtor* 'Motor | motor' + *sihkkelat ~ syhkkelat* 'Fahrrad | bicikli' (< *sihkkel ~ -syhkkel* 'Rad | kerék').

If the word studied has a singular form as well (according to either of the sources), this form is given in a separate heading, together with its meaning:

- Sg form: *mōhtorsihkkel ~ -syhkkel* 'Motorrad | motorbicikli'.

The language of origin (Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish) of the pattern adopted is quite evident in certain cases. Part of the Sami pluratives have been created with loan translation (usually as a result of Sammallahti's neologistic work), or at least the approach applied in them is identical.

ássan|dilálašvuođat 'Wohnverhältnisse | lakáskörülmények'
- Loan translation, cf. fi. *asunto|olot* [pl] 'lakásviszonyok'

After the structural analysis of the headword, the type of the plurative is given (cf. morphosemantic classes). The last element of the analytic part is the semantic classification (cf. semantic classes).

c) References. At the end of every entry, an → sign leads up further expressions structurally similar to the headword.

Thus, the structure of a complete entry looks as follows:

gumppe/***ruovvdit*** 'Wolfsfalle | farkascsapda' (SAMM[1] 197; KÅV 229; SN 331)
- Compound word: *gumpe* 'Wolf | farkas' + *ruovddit* 'Handschellen, Fangeisen | bilincs' (< *ruovdi* 'Eisen | vas').
- Absolute plurative.
- Semantic class: objects.
  → *bátnẹ*/***ruovddit,*** *čeavráruovddit, giehtaruovddit, gumpperuovvdit, ráđasruovddit, riebanruovddit, ruovddit, ruskaruovddit, seaktẹruovddit, skieltoruovddit*

IV. Summary

In conclusion, it can be established that both the quantity and the behaviour of the pluratives in the Northern Sami language justify the retention of the category of pluratives. On the basis of their study, I concluded that in Northern Sami, it is not only analogy that creates new pluratives, but pluratives also enrich Sami vocabulary as productive elements of the powerful neologistic tendencies observable in the language at present.

Publications in the topic of the dissertation

Essays published in journals:

1. Kelemen Ivett: Plurale tantumok az északi lappban. *Folia Uralica Debreceniensia* 15 [2008]: 35–48.
2. Kelemen Ivett: Az -*š* korrelatív képző funkciói az északi lappban. *Folia Uralica Debreceniensia* 16 [2009]: 47–55.
3. Kelemen Ivett: Páros testrésznevek számhasználati kérdései az obi-ugor nyelvekben. *Folia Uralica Debreceniensia* 17 [2010]: 25–32.
4. Kelemen Ivett: Pluratívák szemantikai és szintaktikai vizsgálata az északi lappban. *Folia Uralica Debreceniensia* 18 [2011]: 89–98.
5. Kelemen Ivett: Pluratívák vizsgálata az északi lapp Máté evangéliumban. *Folia Uralica Debreceniensia* 19 [2012]: 83–99.

Papers published in conference proceedings:

1. Kelemen Ivett: Pluralia tantum in the North Saami. *7th International Conference of PhD Students.* University of Miskolc, Hungary. Humanities. Miskolc: University of Miskolc, Innovation and Technology Transfer Centre, 2010, 19–24.
2. Kelemen Ivett: Examination of number-problems in the North Saami (with special regard to pluralia tantum). *Congressus Septimus Internationalis Fenno-ugristarum (CIFU) Dissertationes sectionum: Linguistica.* 11/4. Piliscsaba: Reguly Társaság, 2010, 201–214.
3. Kelemen Ivett: Páros testrésznevek számhasználati kérdései a finn és a magyar nyelvben. Szombathely: Savaria Egyetemi Központ, 2012, (megjelenés alatt)

Reviews:

1. Kelemen Ivett: Jakab László, Finn–magyar diákszótár. *Folia Uralica Debreceniensia* 14 [2007]: 178–179.
2. Kelemen Ivett: Simon Valéria, Melléknévképzők morfoszemantikai sajátosságai a magyar és a finn nyelvben. *Folia Uralica Debreceniensia* 15 [2008]: 209–211.
3. Kelemen Ivett: Kerezsi Ágnes, Az uráli népek néprajza. *Folia Uralica Debreceniensia* 16 [2009]: 210–212.
4. Kelemen Ivett: Anna Idström, Inarinsaamen käsitemetaforat. *Folia Uralica Debreceniensia* 17 [2010]: 226–229.
5. Kelemen Ivett–Gál Attila: Juhani Tähtinen & Simo Skinnari [toim.], Kasvatus- ja koulukysymys Suomessa vuosisatojen saatossa. *Educatio* 2010/I: 130–132.
6. Kelemen Ivett: Cecilia Hedlund–Lars-Gunnar Larsson: Ii dušše duoddaris! Lärobok i nordsamiska. *Folia Uralica Debreceniensia* 18 [2011]: 171–175.
7. Kelemen Ivett: Klaus Peter Nickel–Pekka Sammallahti, Duiskka–sámi sátnegirji. Deutsch–saamisches Wörterbuch. *Folia Uralica Debreceniensia* 18 [2011]: 176–178.
8. Kelemen Ivett: Hadobás Sándor (szerk.), Halász Ignác három lappföldi útja. *Folia Uralica Debreceniensia* 19 [2012]: 207–208.
9. Kelemen Ivett: Hadobás Sándor (szerk.), Hell Miksa és Sajnovics János bibliográfiája. *Folia Uralica Debreceniensia* 19 [2012]: 208–209.