

# Syntax in transition: Emergence of differential argument marking in Aanaar Saami

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## Abstract

This paper is an investigation of a language contact phenomenon currently taking place in Aanaar (Inari) Saami, an indigenous minority language of Finland. Aanaar Saami people have been in contact with Finnish speakers for centuries, so much so that the language community has become bilingual. This has resulted in the borrowing of both numerous Finnish loanwords and even some syntactic constructions into Aanaar Saami and seems to herald a larger change in the language. The present study focuses on a type of syntactic change called *differential argument marking*, which is examined in three Aanaar Saami clause types: transitive clauses, existential clauses, and passive verb clauses. Finnish exhibits complex argument marking, characterized by a total–partial distinction, whereas traditional Aanaar Saami does not have differential argument marking in subjects or objects. However, new Aanaar Saami shows multiple emergent types of differential argument marking that vary between individual speakers and, while clearly influenced by Finnish, do not always mirror their Finnish equivalents one-to-one. This, and the observation that differential argument marking is non-existent in older language materials, suggests that the phenomenon is recent Finnish influence.

**Keywords:** Aanaar Saami, Finnish, differential argument marking, pattern replication, syntax, language contact

## 1 Introduction

The syntactic object in many Uralic languages is known for having a distinction between the marked and unmarked object. This is reflected in case marking so that marked objects are assigned the accusative case and unmarked ones the nominative. By and large, the motivation for whether an object is marked or unmarked can be said to lie in definiteness or, in the case of the Finnic

subgroup, partiality vs. totality (Havas 2008). At the same time, Finnic languages exhibit similarly conditioned variation also in subject marking, where the distinction between totality and partiality motivates the selection of either the nominative or non-nominative subject in some clause types. Together, the fluctuation of object and subject marking under certain conditions is labelled *differential argument marking* (DAM).

In this paper,<sup>1</sup> I examine the emergence of DAM as an instance of contact-induced language change in contemporary Aanaar Saami, an indigenous minority language spoken by an estimated 400 people mainly around lake Aanaar (Finnish *Inari*) in Northern Finland. The aim is to show that modern Aanaar Saami is in a stage of syntactic restructuring, whereby it is developing a new grammatical feature.

Saami languages constitute a subgroup within the Uralic languages, and their speakers are spread across four states: Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia. Saami languages are not majority languages in any of the areas where they are spoken, and virtually every member of the Saami speech community also masters their respective majority and state language (Aikio et al. 2015). The effects of intense contact with the majority languages are widely recognized among Saami language researchers, teachers, and other language workers, but systematic descriptions of results, especially ones concerning grammatical influence, are still mostly lacking (Mettovaara & Ylikoski forthcoming), save for some single studies, such as Rießler (2007) who investigates grammatical borrowings from Russian into Kildin Saami.

The impetus for this study came from my personal observations as a learner and teacher of Aanaar Saami as well as discussions with other language teachers and researchers who have noticed that L2 learners and younger L1 speakers of Aanaar Saami and North Saami frequently exhibit contact-induced changes in their language. One of these changes is the variation in argument marking that appears to follow the model of the complex Finnish system of argument marking (e.g. R. Magga & Pulska 2019).

This paper answers the following questions:

1. What types of DAM are attested in new Aanaar Saami?
2. What conditions appear to trigger the non-canonical argument marking?
3. What is the syntactic pivot in Finnish after which the new Aanaar Saami DAM is modelled?

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The structure of the paper is as follows: after the introduction, § 2 presents the sociological and linguistic context wherein Aanaar Saami exists, as well as a short comparison of Aanaar Saami and Finnish. § 3 outlines the theoretical framework, namely argument marking and pattern replication. § 4 describes the data used in this study. § 5 investigates DAM as found in three clause types in new Aanaar Saami: a) transitive clauses, b) existential clauses, and c) passive verb clauses. In § 6, the features of DAM observed in the preceding section will be summarized and motivations for its emergence in Aanaar Saami will be discussed. The main results of this study are that new Aanaar Saami is beginning to show clear signs of Finnish influence in the way syntactic arguments are marked, in an attempt to reproduce the Finnish totality vs. partiality distinction in subjects and objects.

## 2 Background

The purpose of this section is to describe the nature of Aanaar Saami–Finnish language contacts and illustrate the significant degree of grammatical similarity that already exists between the languages which facilitates further convergence. I provide some background information on Aanaar Saami and its sociological context as well as a short comparison of Aanaar Saami and Finnish grammatical systems and nominal morphosyntax.

### 2.1 The sociolinguistic situation of Aanaar Saami

Based on a handful of phonetic and morphosyntactic criteria, Aanaar Saami has been traditionally classified as the westernmost member of the eastern Saami subgroup (Korhonen 1964; Sammallahti 1998). The bifurcate division has become the *de facto* standard, even though it has been called into question and criticized since its introduction. The problematique especially concerns Aanaar Saami, since based on lexical criteria, it could be included in the western group or even form its own dialect group (Rydvig 2013; Tillinger 2014).

All Saami languages have been in contact of varying intensity with their neighbouring languages – Norwegian and Swedish in (north)western Fennoscandia, Finnish in the north, and Russian and Karelian in the east – for a long time (Laakso 2010: 600–601; Kittilä & Ylikoski 2018: 470). As a result, the different Saami languages have become dissimilar from each other in terms of vocabulary and, to an extent, grammatical structures. At the same time, they have also grown closer to their respective majority languages. The

closing of the borders between Norway, Sweden, and the then Grand Duchy of Finland in the 19th century and Finland's independence from Soviet Russia in 1917 shaped the geopolitical reality where the Saami live to this day. North Saami is a prime example of this divide, its traditional dialectal differences partly replaced by topolects of three regions, that is, those of the Finnish, Swedish, and Norwegian sides of the border (Aikio et al. 2015).

Aanaar Saami speakers have had long-standing contacts with both North and Skolt Saami speakers and Finns, and they have reportedly already spoken Finnish well by 1830s (Lehtola 2012: 41). Aanaar Saami is spoken only in Finland, and virtually all speakers are bilingual in Finnish, another Uralic language but genealogically originating in the Finnic subgroup, so it is natural that Finnish is the main source of loanwords and grammatical influence. This is evident already in the earliest attestations of Aanaar Saami. Due to large-scale societal changes and an intense language shift to Finnish in the latter part of the 20th century, the influence of Finnish became even more prominent. The situation was most dire in 1997, when there were only four or five speakers under 30 years old and the language domains had become very limited, prompting concern that Aanaar Saami would likely not be passed on to another generation (M. Morottaja 1996). However, successful revitalization efforts starting from the 1980s managed to halt the language shift and later even reverse it (Olthuis et al. 2013; Pasanen 2015).

The different types of Finnish grammatical and lexical transfer are often viewed as characteristic of learner language in Aanaar Saami and something to be corrected. For example, in his manual of Aanaar Saami, M. Morottaja (2007: 32, 34, 40–50) highlights some features he considers to be a result of Finnish influence in Aanaar Saami, such as confusing the cases of subjects and objects, difficulties in distinguishing close synonyms in cases where Finnish only has one corresponding translation and using predicative and attributive adjective forms interchangeably.<sup>2</sup>

In 2020, the number of Aanaar Saami speakers was estimated at 450, and the speaker community is even expected to grow. There are around 20 families with children who speak Aanaar Saami as the main language at home and many more where it is one of the languages spoken. There are 25 children

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<sup>2</sup> The distinction between the predicative and attributive forms of adjectives is common to all Saami languages (Rießler 2016). However, even before the modern-day Finnish influence, there seems to have been language-internal variation that has been simply left out of the current standardized norm (Müller 2017). It is therefore debatable to what extent the apparent confusion between forms stems from Finnish.

in language nests, an immersion-based form of day-care, and around 80 children in total have participated in language nests since they were founded in 1997. Some of these participants now have children of their own to whom they speak Aanaar Saami. The language is taught in primary and secondary schools, where it is used as the language of instruction in some subjects, as well as at the University of Oulu (Pasanen 2020).

An interesting characteristic of Aanaar Saami revitalization in the realm of language revitalization programmes has been the principle of inclusion or ethnic neutrality. From the start, the Aanaar Saami language society *Anarâškielâ servi* has aimed the language nests not only at ethnic Aanaar Saami but also at children of any background; motivation to learn the language and willingness to commit to the language community have been considered more important than ethnicity. This has led to a situation where a considerable number of Aanaar Saami speakers are people who have learned the language in adulthood (*new speakers*) and people who have learned the revitalized language in childhood, typically in a language nest (*neospeakers*)<sup>3</sup> (Pasanen 2015: 315 ff., 341–342).

## 2.2 General morphosyntactic properties of Aanaar Saami and Finnish

Genealogically, the Finnic and Saami languages are classified as “distantly related” to each other, but in typological terms they are closest to one another within the Uralic language family. They share many morphological features, such as consonant gradation, primarily suffixal morphology, inflectional categories (person, tense, and mood system in verbs; cases and number in nouns), and a propensity to use derivation as a means to generate new lexemes. They share many syntactic features as well, such as the basic constituent order SVO<sup>4</sup> and clause combining strategies (Koponen 2022: 111). The most notable differences in morphology are the existence of the dual in most varieties of Saami and the average number of productive nominal cases: 6–9 in Saami vs. 8–18 in Finnic languages. In syntax, one of the main points of divergence is the marking of subjects and objects. This will be discussed in detail in § 3.1.

Finnic and Saami nominals are inflected in cases that can be roughly

<sup>3</sup> On the typology of speakers of endangered languages, see Grinevald & Bert (2011: 49–52).

<sup>4</sup> Some Saami languages exhibit SOV or vacillate between SVO and SOV (Ylikoski 2022b: 143). Nevertheless, based on personal knowledge, I agree with Valtonen et al. (2022: 192) and P. Morotaja & Toivonen (in preparation) that the basic word order in Aanaar Saami is SVO, even though there are no systematic corpus studies to support this statement.

grouped into four classes: 1) core grammatical cases (cases of subject, object, and possessor); 2) concrete and abstract local cases; 3) other cases that denote concomitance, lack, or means, and the like; and 4) other cases, including marginal and non-productive case forms, some of which could be classified as adverbial suffixes. An example of a noun paradigm in Aanaar Saami and Finnish is shown in Table 1.<sup>5</sup> Both language groups have one to three sets of three local cases that prototypically denote motion to(wards), motion (away) from, and residing in a location or state. Saami languages have only one set of all-around local cases, whereas Finnic languages commonly have two: inner (inessive, elative, illative) and outer (adessive, ablative, allative). In North Saami and other Saami languages to the east, the local cases denoting motion from and residing in have merged into one case called locative: Aanaar Saami *kuátá-n* [hut-ILL] ‘to the hut’ : *kuádi-st* [hut-LOC] ‘in/from the hut’ vs. South Saami *gáata-n* [hut-ILL] ‘to the hut’ : *gáete-ste* [hut-ELA] ‘from the hut’ : *gáete-sne* [hut-INE] ‘in/at the hut’.

There are some remarks to be made here. Firstly, despite sharing the same name, Aanaar Saami and Finnish partitives have very different functions. The Finnish partitive is a core grammatical case used to mark syntactic objects and subjects and nouns in quantifier phrases with numerals higher than ‘two’. It is also used to indicate the complement of certain adpositions. In contrast, the Aanaar Saami partitive is a marginal case: its most common use is to mark nouns in quantifier phrases with numerals higher than 6, and even in this function it has begun to lose ground to the genitive case. Secondly, the Aanaar Saami comitative and abessive are common cases used to mark concomitance and the lack thereof respectively, whereas their Finnish namesakes are marginal cases that are mostly replaced by adpositional phrases.

To summarize, Aanaar Saami and Finnish share several structural features, which is of great help to learners of one language who already have command of the other. Often the number of similarities also enables the use of “morpheme-for-morpheme” translation when operating between languages: just replacing the units of lexical and grammatical substance in a Finnish sentence with their Aanaar Saami equivalents is likely to produce a perfectly acceptable Aanaar Saami sentence.

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<sup>5</sup> Note that the order of Finnish cases does not follow the standard used in most grammars, as the table aims to illustrate the rough functional equivalences between cases.

Table 1. Example paradigms of the Aanaar Saami and Finnish words for ‘hut’

	Aanaar Saami		Finnish	
	singular	plural	singular	plural
Nominative	<i>kuáđi</i>	<i>kuáđih</i>	Nominative	<i>kota</i>
Genitive	<i>kuáđi</i>	<i>koodij</i>	Genitive	<i>kodan</i>
Accusative	<i>kuáđi</i>	<i>koodjja</i>		
Illative (‘to’)	<i>kuátán</i>	<i>koodjja</i>	Illative (‘into’)	<i>kotaan</i>
Locative (‘in, at; from’)	<i>kuáđist</i>	<i>koodijn</i>	Allative (‘to, onto’)	<i>kodalle</i>
			Inessive (‘in’)	<i>kodassa</i>
			Elative (‘from’)	<i>kodasta</i>
			Adessive (‘on, at’)	<i>kodalla</i>
			Ablative (‘from’)	<i>kodalta</i>
Comitative (‘with’)	<i>koodijn</i>	<i>kodijguin</i>	Comitative (‘accompanied by’)	<i>kotine- + poss. suffix</i>
			Instructive (‘by means of’)	<i>- kodin</i>
Abessive (‘without’)	<i>kuáđitiáá</i>	<i>kodjitiáá</i>	Abessive (‘without’)	<i>kodatta</i>
Essive (‘as’)		<i>kuáđitin</i>	Essive (‘as’)	<i>kotana</i>
Partitive		<i>kuáđitid</i>	Translative (‘[turn] into’)	<i>kodaksi</i>
			Partitive	<i>kotaa</i>

### 3 Defining the phenomena

This section delineates the main topics of this paper, namely argument marking and contact-induced pattern replication. Both Finnic and traditional Saami argument marking systems are described succinctly, and the older system is used as a baseline to which the DAM in new Aanaar Saami is compared later in § 5. In this paper, *traditional Aanaar Saami* is understood to be a form of the language as described in earlier (prescriptive) grammars and grammar sketches such as those by P. Morottaja & Olthuis (2022), Valtonen et al. (2022), and – as far as case syntax is concerned – Bartens (1972). As of yet, there are no comprehensive descriptive grammars of Aanaar Saami.

#### 3.1 Argument marking in Finnic and Saami languages

In languages with case marking, the marking of core arguments A(gent of a transitive verb), S(ubject of an intransitive verb), and P(atient/object of a transitive verb) can be motivated by not only syntactic factors but also semantic and pragmatic considerations. For example, the canonical case of S/A in nominative-accusative languages is the nominative, but in some languages S/A may be encoded by another case, as determined by factors such as agentivity, volitionality, and information structure (Malchukov & Spencer 2008; Seržant 2016: 137–138).

The alignment of case marking in both Finnic and Saami languages is nominative-accusative: canonically, the nominative encodes both transitive and intransitive subjects, whereas the accusative encodes objects of transitive verbs. This system is muddled in Finnic languages by the complex DAM system, where the main parameter of alternation in objects is between the total and partial object, and in subjects between the nominative and non-nominative subject. DAM in Finnish subsumes both *differential subject* and *object marking* (DSM and DOM), whose characteristics partly overlap.

Finnish assigns cases to its arguments in too intricate a way to be described fully here; suffice to say that the major parameter in Finnic DAM is based on meaning: both subject and object arguments in the partitive can be characterized in broad terms as indefinite, atelic, unbounded in quantity and aspect, and less prominent on a discourse-pragmatic level than arguments in the nominative/accusative (Kiparsky 2001; Huumo 2003). Within DOM, verb semantics or certain syntactic environments mandate the use of either the total or partial object and, within non-pronominal total objects, the selection of either the

**Table 2.** Object cases in Finnish

		Total			Partial
SG	NOM	<i>Syö voileipä!</i> eat.IMP.2SG sandwich 'Eat the sandwich!'	PTV	<i>Syö voileipä-ä!</i> eat.IMP.2SG sandwich-PTV 'Eat some sandwich!'	
	GEN	<i>Syöt voileivä-n.</i> eat.2SG sandwich-GEN 'You will eat the sandwich.'		<i>Et syö voileipä-ä.</i> NEG.2SG eat.CNG sandwich-PTV 'You don't eat ~ aren't eating a ~ the sandwich.'	
PL	NOM	<i>Syötkö voileivä-t?</i> eat.2SG.Q sandwich-PL.NOM 'Will you eat the sandwiches?'	PTV	<i>Syötkö voileip-i-ä?</i> eat.2SG.Q sandwich-PL-PTV 'Are you eating (the) sandwiches?'	
PRON	ACC	<i>Näet minu-t.</i> see.2SG 1SG-ACC 'You see me.'	PTV	<i>Etkö näe minu-a?</i> NEG.2SG.Q see.CNG 1SG-PTV 'Don't you see me?'	

nominative or genitive, also titled *0-accusative* and *n-accusative*, respectively (Vainikka & Brattico 2011). For instance, negated verbs generally only accept partial objects, and the use of the total object would be ungrammatical even if the object was intended as definite. 1st and 2nd person imperatives can accept both total and partial objects, but a total object must be in the nominative.

The cases of singular and plural total and partial objects in Finnish are summarized in Table 2. Personal pronouns are set apart from other nouns because they behave differently in terms of case assignment, in that they have a special total object suffix *-t*, for example *minu-t* [1SG-ACC].<sup>6</sup>

The situation is similar within DSM, in that the clausal subject can be in either the nominative or partitive. However, the domains of partitive subjects are more limited, as they generally appear only in intransitive clauses. Partitive subjects in transitive clauses are uncommon or atypical (A. Hakulinen et al. 2004: § 916, § 919). In a subtype of the intransitive clause, the *existen-*

<sup>6</sup> In Finnish grammar tradition, the case in question is frequently referred to as the “accusative”, which can at other times be used as a catch-all nomenclature for all non-partitive object cases (e.g. L. Hakulinen 1961: 342). Therefore, because of its ambiguity, the term is problematic both in the context of this paper and in Finnish grammar. Furthermore, in Saami languages, personal pronouns do not differ from other nominals in this respect, and “accusative” refers to the object case form of all nouns.

**Table 3.** Subject cases in Finnish

		Nominative			Non-nominative
SG	NOM	<i>Vesi on lasissa.</i> water be.3SG glass.INE 'The water is in the glass.'	PTV	<i>Vet-tä on lasissa.</i> water-PTV be.3SG glass.INE 'There's some water in the glass.'	
		<i>Poika lähtee.</i> boy leave.3SG 'The boy leaves ~ is leaving.'	GEN	<i>Poja-n täytyy lähteä.</i> boy-GEN must.3SG leave.INF 'The boy must leave.'	
PL	NOM	<i>Koira-t juoksevat ulkona.</i> dog-PL.NOM run.3PL outside 'The dogs are running outside.'	PTV	<i>Koir-i-a juoksee ulkona.</i> dog-PL-PTV run.3SG outside 'There are dogs running outside.'	
		<i>Poja-t lähtevät.</i> boy-PL.NOM leave.3PL 'The boys leave ~ are leaving.'	GEN	<i>Poik-i-en täytyy lähteä.</i> boy-PL-GEN must.3SG leave.INF 'The boys must leave.'	
PRON	NOM	<i>Onneksi minulla on talo.</i> luckily 1SG.ADE be.3SG house 'Luckily I have a house.'	ACC	<i>Onneksi minulla on sinu-t.</i> luckily 1SG.ADE be.3SG 2SG-ACC 'Luckily I have you.'	

*tial clause* (see § 5.2.1), the subject is most often assigned the partitive in the presence of negation, similarly to negated objects in transitive clauses. Finnish genitive subjects are restricted to a few special clause types, and their equivalents in Aanaar Saami are mostly left outside the scope of this paper. The cases of singular and plural subjects in Finnish are summarized in Table 3.

Saami languages at large do not exhibit DAM (Beronka 1940: 134 ff.; Bartens 1972: 19, 30).<sup>7</sup> In fact, they serve as a conspicuously pure example of a prototypical nominative-accusative language (Kittilä & Ylikoski 2018: 458–461). For example, traditional Aanaar Saami (*vis-à-vis* new Aanaar Saami) employs straightforward argument marking and agreement: nominal subjects are in the nominative case, nominal objects are in the accusative case, and the verb agrees with the subject in number (singular, dual, plural) and in person.

<sup>7</sup> The only exception among the Saami languages is South Saami, where DOM conditioned on definiteness is attested in nominal plural objects: definite objects appear in the accusative and indefinite ones in the nominative, for example *Læjsa aahk-ide damta* [PN grandmother-PL.ACC know.3SG] 'Lisa knows the grandmothers (that we just mentioned)' vs. *Læjsa aahka-h damta* [PN grandmother-PL.NOM know.3SG] 'Lisa knows grandmothers' (Kroik 2016).

Subject NPs prototypically employ the nominative plural suffix *-h* to denote non-singular number; there are no distinct dual case suffixes.

Predicate verbs generally agree with the subject NP in number and person in both Finnish and Saami. However, there are a few caveats. First of all, Finnish non-nominative subjects do not trigger agreement, which causes the verb to appear in default agreement, that is, the 3rd person singular (Huomo 2003: 462), as can be seen in Table 3. In traditional Aanaar Saami, the subject NPs, despite appearing in the nominative case, may trigger only partial verbal agreement. This refers to a type of agreement whereby the verb appears in the 3rd person singular form with singular subjects and in the 3rd person plural form with dual and plural subjects. The boundary appears to lie between animate and inanimate subjects, so that animate subjects, particularly with specific human referents, trigger full agreement, whereas inanimate subjects generally trigger partial agreement, as in example (1a). Subject NPs denoting animals, sometimes even humans, accept both full and partial agreement, as seen in (1b) (Toivonen 2007):

- (1) a. *Riddoost láá kyehti keedgi.*  
beach.LOC be.3PL two rock.GEN

‘On the beach are two rocks.’

- b. *Táálust lava ~ láá kyehti ulmuu.*  
house.LOC be.3DU ~ be.3PL two person.GEN

‘There are two people in the house.’ (Toivonen 2007: 230–231)

### 3.2 DAM as pattern replication

In this paper, the emerging DAM in Aanaar Saami is examined in the framework of contact-induced structural replication, specifically *pattern replication* or *PAT*. PAT refers to the replication of language structures from a model language to a replica language so that the replica language’s internal grammatical structures are reorganized without the replication or borrowing of *phonological matter* or *MAT* (e.g. Matras & Sakel 2007; Sakel 2007).

In other words, the contact-induced changes in Saami argument marking do not involve borrowing the shape of the Finnish genitive (*-n*) or partitive case morphemes (*-A*, *-lA*) but merely the abstract pattern of DAM, which is then mapped onto existing Aanaar Saami structures. Employing Matras &

Sakel's (2007) concept of *pivot-matching*, I examine the data from new Aanaar Saami and identify the syntactic pivot structure in Finnish that is used in the replication of DAM in Aanaar Saami.

Considering that Finnic DAM is very complex and typologically quite unique, the transfer of such a system to another language may seem unlikely. However, it turns out that contact-induced DAM systems are attested around the world, for example in Arawakan and Basque (Mardale & Karatsareas 2020). In fact, pattern replication in general has been observed to be rather unconstrained: all domains of language structures and use can be affected, which can lead to a high degree of interlingual structural convergence (Heine & Kuteva 2005: 261).

## 4 Data

The data is a convenience sample and comprises a little under 300 sentences, in which I have detected a deviation from the canonical Aanaar Saami syntax rules governing the subject and the object.<sup>8</sup> It has been collected from different sources, mostly from younger language users approximately 20–30 years old, and it includes both spoken and written language.

The upper-case code in parentheses is used in the example sentences to indicate the source type. The spoken language portion of the data consists of interviews from a field trip to Aanaar in February 2020 (INTER) and broadcasts of Yle Sápmi, the Finnish Broadcasting Company's Saami-language radio and television (YLE). The data from written sources includes sentences from manuscripts of both literary prose (LIT) and scientific/scholarly texts (SCI), Aanaar Saami Wikipedia articles (WIKI), and the International Sámi corpus (SIKOR). Any examples found from other studies focusing on Finnish influence on Aanaar Saami are indicated by a standard citation.

The examples in this paper have been pseudonymized and/or slightly edited if the original sentence contains personal names or other details that might reveal the person's identity. The Aanaar Saami community is very small, and even little details may be enough to divulge this information. The intention here is not to draw attention to any individual speaker but to examine an ongoing process of language change on a systemic level.

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<sup>8</sup> In some types of Aanaar Saami odd-syllable noun stems (for example *puttâl* 'bottle'), the genitive/accusative singular is syncretic with the nominative singular. I have excluded such cases, since it is impossible to determine which form is the intended one.

## 5 DAM in new Aanaar Saami

As discussed above in § 2.2, Aanaar Saami and Finnish resemble each other morphosyntactically to a great extent. Since there exist no in-depth treatises of Aanaar Saami syntax beyond some (preliminary) grammar sketches, it is therefore practical to adopt the description of Finnish clause types as the starting point. Another solution would be to apply existing analyses of North Saami syntax to Aanaar Saami (e.g. O. H. Magga 1978; Sammallahti 2005), but since we are already dealing with two languages throughout the paper, introducing grammatical analyses of a third seems superfluous.

### 5.1 Transitive clauses

Transitive clauses in both Finnish and Aanaar Saami are divalent and with the unmarked word order SVO, meaning the sentence-initial position is occupied by the syntactic subject. The basic order can vary for syntactic and information structural reasons – for example, the syntactic object may be fronted to the sentence-initial position – but usually the case marking of nominal clausal elements differentiates the parts of speech, such as *Matti syö kalaa* [PN eat.3SG fish.PTV] ‘Matti eats fish’ (neutral) vs. *Kalaa Matti syö* [fish.PTV PN eat.3SG] ‘It’s fish that Matti eats’ (fronted object) vs. *Syökö Matti kalaa?* [eat.3SG.Q PN fish.PTV] ‘Does Matti eat fish?’ (interrogative clause) in Finnish.

The parameters of Finnish DOM were discussed earlier in § 3.1. In traditional Aanaar Saami, DOM is not attested, and therefore factors such as definiteness, boundedness, or telicity had no bearing on the case of the object, which was always accusative, as in (2a). In the Finnish translation in (2b), both nominative and partitive objects are possible, although in this instance the nominative seems more probable, because the number of tickets is more reasonably understood as bounded rather than indeterminate:

- (2) a. *Karttâvetted̄ uástid̄ udd̄â liipuid̄.*  
 end\_up.2PL buy.INF new.ATTR ticket.PL.ACC  
 ‘You will have to buy new tickets.’ [SIKOR]

- b. *Joudutte ostamaan uudet liput ~ uusia*  
 end\_up.2PL buy.INF new.PL.NOM ticket.PL.NOM ~ new.PL.PTV  
*lippuja.*  
 ticket.PL.PTV

‘You will have to buy new tickets ~ some new tickets.’

Based on the observations of Olthuis (2018), it was to be expected that at least one type of non-canonical object, total objects in the nominative plural, appears in the data. Even though my data lends itself primarily to qualitative analysis, it does seem that these types of non-canonical objects are most common. Most of the occurrences of nominative plural objects can be characterized as telic or bounded. The boundedness can be intrinsic to the meaning of the verb, as in example (5), or a property of the entire clause, as in (6). Sometimes the boundedness of the situation is further reinforced by an adverbial phrase that denotes the endpoint of the movement or the resulting state, such as *ucce pinon* in (3) and *oovtâ sajan* in (4):

- (3) *N lâi čokkim M reeivâ-h ucce pinon.*  
 PN be.PST.3SG gather.PST.PTCP PN.GEN letter-PL.NOM small stack.ILL  
 ‘N had gathered [all of] M’s letters in a small stack.’ [LIT]

- (4) *Stuárráamus ulmen lii nuurrâđ nomâttâsa-h oovtâ sajan.*  
 big.sprl purpose.ess be.3sg collect.inf name-pl.nom one.gen  
 place.ill

‘The main purpose is to collect [all] the names in one place.’ [SCI]

- (5) *Kidduv kyeddim ääigi niñálâsah [...] hilgoh*  
 in.spring calving.GEN time.GEN female.PL.NOM [...] abandon.3PL  
*oovdeb ive vyesi-h.*  
 previous year.GEN calf-PL.NOM

‘In the spring at calving time cows [...] abandon the previous year’s calves.’ [WIKI]

- (6) *Suoi laidijn pyerá-h šalde paijeeln.*  
 3DU lead.PST.3DU bicycle-PL.NOM bridge.GEN over

‘The two of them walked the bicycles over the bridge.’ [LIT]

Total objects are not restricted to semantically telic situations but are also used with atelic verbs denoting static states, such as *uáiniđ* ‘see’, *tubdáđ* ‘know, be familiar with; feel’ and *mušteđ* ‘remember’, as in examples (7–9). Since such verbs in Finnish also take total objects and have thus been called *quasi-resultative* (e.g. Huumo 2001; Kiparsky 2001: 19, 31), this provides support to the hypothesis that the emerging system of DOM in Aanaar Saami is being copied more or less wholesale from Finnish.

- (7) *Mut jooskái ko ooinij M tuodálii muádu-h.*  
 but stop.PST.3SG when see.PST.3SG PN.GEN serious.GEN face-PL.NOM

‘But [s/he] stopped when [s/he] saw M’s serious face.’ [LIT]

- (8) *Nubeh tobdeh pocuu-h peljimeerhá keežild.*  
 other.PL.NOM know.3PL reindeer-PL.NOM earmark.GEN because.of

‘Others know the reindeers based on the earmark.’ [SCI]

- (9) *Tun kuittâg muštáh jieijâs pocuu-h.*  
 2SG however remember.2SG own reindeer-PL.NOM

‘However, you remember your own reindeer.’ [SCI]

DOM in the new Aanaar Saami data is prevalent in plural objects but less so in singular ones. The reason for this is likely morphological: as illustrated earlier in Table 1, the Aanaar Saami genitive and accusative are identical in form in the singular.<sup>9</sup> Thus, functionally both the Finnish genitive and partitive can correspond to the Aanaar Saami genitive-accusative case, which means that by default, DOM may not be possible in Aanaar Saami in environments where the choice in the Finnish equivalent sentence is between the genitive and partitive, as exemplified in (10).

<sup>9</sup> The only words where SG. GEN ≠ SG. ACC are the interrogative pronoun *kii* ‘who’ and the demonstrative pronouns such as *taat* ‘this’: *kiä-n* [who-GEN], *taa-n* [this-GEN] : *kiä-m* [who-ACC], *taa-m* [this-ACC]. However, there are only a few pronominal objects in the data in such syntactic environments where this type of DOM could appear and, contrary to expectation, some of them appear in the nominative singular. I have attributed these to slips of the tongue.

- (10) a. *Mummo luki lehde-n/lehte-ä.*  
 grandma read.PST.3SG newspaper-GEN/newspaper-PTV  
 ‘Grandma read the [whole] newspaper/Grandma was reading the newspaper.’
- b. *Äkku luuvâi loostâ.*  
 grandma read.PST.3SG newspaper.ACC  
 ‘Grandma read ~ was reading the newspaper.’ (constructed)

Furthermore, objects in the nominative singular in Finnish are restricted to syntactic environments where the verb does not fully agree with the subject, such as impersonal/passive verbs and necessive constructions,<sup>10</sup> whereas regular finite clauses have genitive total objects (Vainikka & Brattico 2011). Therefore, it stands to reason that nominative singular objects are less common overall. Aanaar Saami passive verbs, however, are not included in this category, because they are in fact derived intransitive verbs whose subject canonically corresponds to the object of the respective transitive verbs, that is, they exhibit object promotion: *Kumppi porá saavzâ* [wolf eat.3SG sheep.ACC] ‘The wolf eats a ~ the sheep’ (transitive, active) → *Savzâ porroo* [sheep eat.PASS.3SG] ‘The sheep is eaten’ (intransitive, passive). This contrasts with Finnish, where the subject is omitted with passive verbs, but the object is not promoted. This is explored in more detail in § 5.2.2.

What we do find are some examples of necessive constructions that seem to have been structured similarly to Finnish, where many such modal verbs and constructions are monopersonal: the verb is inflected in 3rd person singular only, with the semantic subject appearing in the genitive case. This Finnish influence on Saami necessive constructions may actually go back further in time, as similar use of genitive subjects has been attested in written Aanaar Saami in mid-1950s (see Bartens 1972: 55) as well as in some western dialects of North Saami (Valtonen 2017: 215). In examples (11a) and (12a), the object is in the nominative case, and the semantic subject, if it is overt, is in the genitive; compare the Finnish translations in (11b) and (12b):

<sup>10</sup> These are constructions that have a monopersonal verbal expression with a modal meaning as the predicate and the main verb in an infinitive form. The sentence-initial position may be occupied by the semantic subject in the genitive case (Jaakola 2004: 258 f.), for example *minu-n täyty-y lähte-ä* [1SG-GEN MUST-3SG leave-INF] ‘I must leave’.

- (11) a. **Suu** *koolgái* *luoihättid* **tuykki** *kuálásteijest.*  
 3SG.GEN must.PST.3SG borrow.INF jack fisherman.LOC  
 ‘S/he had to borrow a jack from the fisherman.’ (Seipiharju 2021: 21)
- b. **Hänen** *täytyi* *lainata* **tunkki** *kalastajalta.*  
 3SG.GEN must.PST.3SG borrow.INF jack fisherman.ABL  
 ‘id.’
- (12) a. *Koolgij* *ain* *väldid* **kiinii** *fáárun.*  
 must.PST.3SG always take.INF someone along.ILL  
 ‘One always had to take someone [else] along.’ [YLE]
- b. *Täytyi* *aina* *ottaa* **joku** *mukaan.*  
 must.PST.3SG always take.INF someone along.ILL  
 ‘id.’

Often the nominative singular objects in the data appear in syntactic environments where either the genitive or partitive – the default object cases – are expected even in Finnish. However, a large proportion of these seem to arise from either uncertainty about the word stem type or sometimes just a sporadic error. For example, words such as *ceelhâ* ‘sentence, clause’, *peerâ* ‘family’, and *čunoi* ‘sand’ have apparently been mistaken for regular even-syllable or odd-syllable stems and inflected as such: **\*\*celhâ** ~ *ceelhâ* : *ceelhâ*, **\*\*peerâ** : *peerâ*, and **\*\*čunoi** : *čunoi* [NOM : GEN/ACC]. In traditional Aanaar Saami, these words belong to a class of contracted noun stems that exhibit the strong consonant grade and a vowel change *-â, -oi > -uu-* in the oblique stem, such as in *ceelhâ* : *celkkuu*, *peerâ* : *perruu*, *čunoi* : *čunnuu*. At any rate, most of these cases can be attributed to confusion in morphophonology, not syntax, so they are outside the scope of this paper.

## 5.2 Intransitive clauses

Intransitive clauses in Aanaar Saami can be divided into multiple subtypes, which is why I will treat each type separately. The types of intransitive clauses examined in this paper are 1) existential clauses and 2) intransitive clauses containing a passive verb. In traditional Aanaar Saami, intransitive clauses

are monovalent and their verbs generally agree with the subject in number and person (but see the remark on full vs. partial agreement in § 3.1).

I begin by delineating the features of each clause type as they appear in existing grammars and other grammatical descriptions of traditional Aanaar Saami. After that, I will provide examples from newer data and highlight the differences.

### 5.2.1 Existential clauses

Existential clauses are defined here in the vein of Haspelmath (2021) as constructions whose purpose is to introduce new referents into the discourse. The new referent or *existent* is the subject, even though for a subject it is often non-prototypical: it does not serve as the starting point of the predication or actively participate in the situation, and it is often indefinite and unbounded. For this reason, its full subjecthood has often been questioned in analyses of Finnish, and the NP is given another label, such as *internal subject*, *e-theme*, or *e-subject*, to differentiate it from the canonical subject (Kiparsky 2001; Huomo 2003; A. Hakulinen et al. 2004: § 923).

Using Haspelmath's (2021) terminology, the prototypical existential clause construction in both Aanaar Saami and Finnish can be described as *existent-postposing*. In Aanaar Saami, the unmarked word order in existential clauses is AVS, where A is an adverbial, V is a copula, and S is the syntactic subject, for example *Kárbá-st lii kandâ* [boat-LOC be.3SG boy] 'There is a boy in the boat'. The adverbial is typically a noun in the locative case, but it may also be a locational adverb such as *olgon* 'outside' or *tääbbin* 'here', or a postpositional phrase such as *viäsu tyehin* [house.GEN behind] 'behind the house'. Contrary to typical adverbials of place in other clause types, the ones in existential clauses can be characterized as obligatory, that is, they are diagnostic members of the existential construction, although they can be omitted if inferable from context, as in (13a) and (14).

In terms of syntactic structure, possessive clauses are identical to existential clauses, but they have a possessor instead of location as the adverbial, for example *Kaandâ-st lii käärbis* [boy-LOC be.3SG boat] 'The boy has a boat'. For the purposes of this paper, possessive clauses are subsumed under existential clauses in Aanaar Saami.

Finnish existential clauses are structurally very similar to Aanaar Saami ones: The sentence-initial position is occupied by an adverbial that denotes location, either concrete or metaphorical, and the syntactic subject comes after

the copula, for example *Piha-lla on poro* [yard-ADE be.3SG reindeer] ‘There is a reindeer in the yard’. One of the peculiarities of the Finnish existential sentence is the possibility of a partitive subject when the subject is indefinite or negated. The subject does not trigger agreement in the verb, which is always in the 3rd person singular even in the presence of a nominative subject (A. Hakulinen et al. 2004: § 893–894).

Judging from the new Aanaar Saami data, the use of partitive subjects in Finnish existential clauses seems to have paved the way for the possibility of accusative subjects in Aanaar Saami. Non-canonical subjects of existential clauses alone account for about half of all non-canonical subjects and objects in the data. I have examined the clauses based on a few parameters: word order; sentence-initial position; the predicate verb’s lexeme, polarity, and number agreement; and the number and case of the e-subject and its possible adjuncts.

Since word order is one of the diagnostic criteria in discerning existential clauses from what Sammallahti (2005: 205) labels as *localizing clauses*<sup>11</sup> in North Saami, it is to be expected that most clauses in the data have the prototypical order AVS. Non-prototypical word order arises in situations such as in (13a), where the e-subject has been moved to the sentence-initial position because it is definite. However, despite the subject being definite, it still appears in the accusative. This structure has very likely been copied from Finnish, where negation usually triggers a partitive e-subject (see 13b).

- (13) a. *Mielhi ij innig lah.*  
milk.ACC NEG.3SG anymore be.CNG

‘The milk is gone’, ‘The milk is no more’ (Olthuis 2018)

- b. *Maito-a ei enää ole.*  
milk-PTV NEG.3SG anymore be.CNG

‘id.’

The most common predicate verb is the generic copula *leđe*, although there are others too, such as *kavnuđ* ‘be found’, *eelliđ* ‘live’, *aassâđ* ‘reside’, and *puáttid* ‘come’, as in examples (14–16). When used existentially, these verbs

<sup>11</sup> Compare existential *Kuádist lâi ákku* [tent.LOC be.PST.3SG grandmother] ‘There was a grandmother in the tent’ vs. localizing *Ákku lâi kuádist* [grandmother be.PST.3SG tent.LOC] ‘Grandmother was in a ~ the tent’.

undergo some semantic bleaching and function like the copula: they express either existence or coming into existence.

- (14) *Kal mij tuáivup ete puátá lase párná-id teikkâ*  
indeed 1PL hope.1PL COMP come.3SG more child-PL.ACC or  
*pärni.*  
child.

‘We do hope to have more children or a child.’ [YLE]

- (15) *Kuádist kavnuí meid puáris liiti-jd.*  
tent.LOC find.PASS.PST.3SG also old.ATTR dish-PL.ACC

‘There were also old dishes in the tent.’ (Olthuis 2018)

- (16) *Jaavrijn iälá maanga-h ereslágán-eh*  
lake.PL.LOC live.3SG many-PL.NOM different-PL.NOM  
*iälán-eh.*  
organism-PL.NOM

‘There are many kinds of organisms living in the lakes.’ [WIKI]

The examples (14–16) also display another sign of Finnish influence, namely the emergence of default agreement. Following Toivonen (2007), Aanaar Saami should have no default agreement and the expected agreement type with plural non-singular subjects should be partial, that is, the verb should appear in the 3rd person plural. Nonetheless, new Aanaar Saami shows many cases of predicate verbs defaulting to the 3rd person singular even in the presence of a plural subject. Even though Aanaar Saami conjugation does include the dual number, only personal pronouns have special dual forms. Also, as remarked by P. Morottaja & Toivonen (in preparation), dual agreement in existential and possessive constructions does not sound natural, and even when it occurs, its conditions are more restricted than those of the singular and plural (see § 3.1).

However, plural agreement is also not uncommon in the new data, where the copula in the 3rd person plural co-occurs with a non-canonical subject (= accusative plural), as evidenced by examples (17–19). This combination of plural verbal agreement and non-canonical subject might be considered a hybrid between Finnish and traditional Aanaar Saami existential constructions.

- (17) *Mist láá eenâb spesiaaltábáhtusâ-id.*  
 1PL.LOC be.3PL more special.event-PL.ACC  
 ‘We have more special events.’ (Seipiharju 2022: 37)
- (18) *škoovlást láá ennuv skipár-ijd*  
 school.LOC be.3PL many friend-PL.ACC  
 ‘There are many friends at school’ [INTER]
- (19) *motomijn Laapi jaavrijn láá šaapšâ-id*  
 some.PL.LOC Lapland.GEN lake.PL.LOC be.3PL lavaret-PL.ACC  
 ‘In some of Lapland’s lakes there are lavarets (Coregonus lavaretus)’  
 [WIKI]

An inverse hybrid type can be seen in (16) and (20–23), where the 3rd person singular copula occurs with a plural e-subject in the nominative. In other words, there is no number agreement, but the e-subject appears in the canonical case. A nominative e-subject may sometimes occur with verbal negation, as in (22–23), which would not be possible in Finnish.<sup>12</sup>

- (20) *ko lii kielâpiervâlist lamaš ennuv nuora-h*  
 when be.3SG language.nest.LOC be.PST.PTCP many young-PL.NOM  
*já párnáá-h tääl*  
 and child-PL.NOM now  
 ‘When there have been many youngsters and children in the language nest now’ [INTER]
- (21) *Sust lâi segis vuohta-h.*  
 3sg.LOC be.PST.3SG thin.ATTR hair-PL.NOM  
 ‘S/he had thin hair.’ [LIT]

<sup>12</sup> Strictly speaking, Finnish does allow nominative e-subjects in negated clauses under certain conditions, whereby the focus of the negation is not the subject; its existence is not negated but instead the proposition is that it is located in a particular place or has a certain quality (A. Hakulinen et al. 2004: § 918). However, the Aanaar Saami data does not easily lend itself to such an interpretation.

- (22) *ij leh lamaš taggaar tego sárnumohtâvuoda-h*  
 NEG.3SG be.CNG be.PST.PTCP such like speaking.context-PL.NOM  
 ‘There have not been, like, such opportunities to speak [Aanaar Saami]’  
 [INTER]
- (23) *Taan uásist ij lah pennui nooma-h.*  
 this.GEN part.LOC NEG.3SG be.CNG dog.PL.GEN name-PL.NOM  
 ‘There are no dogs’ names in this section.’ (Olthuis 2018)

### 5.2.2 Passive verb clauses

In this paper, the passive in Aanaar Saami is understood in a narrow sense, encompassing only verbs formed with the derivational suffix *-u-* (: *-o-* ~ *-u-* : *-uvvo-*). This is the most productive means of turning active verbs into passive ones in Aanaar Saami, for example *puurrâ-d̄* [eat-INF] ‘to eat’ → *puurr-u-d̄* [eat-PASS-INF] ‘to be eaten’ : *porr-oo* [eat-PASS.3SG], *vuolgâtt-id̄* [send-INF] ‘to send’ → *vuolgâtt-u-d̄* [send-PASS-INF] ‘to be sent’ : *vuolgâtt-uvvo* [send-PASS.3SG]. There are other derivational suffixes that form verbs with passive or related meanings, but they are not nearly as frequent or productive and may carry a collateral meaning, such as adversative or automative. Furthermore, verbs derived with the *u-* suffix tend to act as functionally equivalent to the Finnish passive forms.

Siewierska (2013) defines a construction as passive if it fulfils the following conditions:

- i. it contrasts with another construction [sic], the active;
- ii. the subject of the active corresponds to a non-obligatory oblique phrase of the passive or is not overtly expressed;
- iii. the subject of the passive, if there is one, corresponds to the direct object of the active;
- iv. the construction is pragmatically restricted relative to the active;
- v. the construction displays some special morphological marking of the verb.

Of these properties, the traditional Aanaar Saami passive displays all: morphologically, passive verbs are always secondary vis-à-vis the active and are derived from active verbs with a derivational morpheme. The derived *u*-verbs behave inflectionally as any other verb in that they have a complete paradigm, and in terms of semantics, some of them have additional lexicalized meanings, for example *tiettud̄* ‘be known; be visible; appear’ ← *tiettiđ* ‘know’. In terms of syntax, the direct object of the active verb appears canonically as the subject of the passive, or if the active verb is intransitive, the passive is avalent. The passive verb fully agrees with its syntactic subject. The subject of the active verb is often omitted altogether, or it may appear as an adjunct in the illative or, rarely, in the locative (Bartens 1972: 22–23, 92, 127).

In terms of argument marking, the Finnish passive differs from the Aanaar Saami passive in that passivization in Finnish does not promote the direct object (P) of the active into a subject (S) but merely removes the A argument. For these reasons, the Finnish passive has also been called the *4th person* or *impersonal* (Blevins 2003; Kelomäki 2019).

Examples (24–26) illustrate the use of the *u*-passive in traditional Aanaar Saami. They show, as expected, agreement with the syntactic subject as well as omission of the semantic agent (24–25) or its inclusion as an illative oblique (26):

- (24) *teehin lii vuord-u-m rengá*  
 here.ILL be.3SG wait-PASS-PST.PTCP farmhand

‘A farmhand has been expected here.’ (Itkonen & Laitinen 1992: 149)

- (25) *Kii talle lâi pappân Anarist ko tun*  
 who then be.PST.3SG priest.ESS Aanaar.LOC when 2SG  
*vihk-øj-ih?*  
 marry-PASS-PST.2SG

‘Who was the priest in Aanaar at the time when you were married?’ (Itkonen & Laitinen 1992: 183)

- (26) *sun masa porr-oo tooid kuobžááid*  
 3SG almost eat-PASS.3SG DEM.PL.ILL bear.PL.ILL

‘He is almost eaten by the bears’ (Itkonen & Laitinen 1992: 51)

In light of the new data, Aanaar Saami *u*-passives appear as a distinctly written language form, since there is only one attestation of a spoken passive verb. This is not an expected result, so there is a need to investigate the frequency of passive verbs in spoken language more thoroughly.

At any rate, new Aanaar Saami data shows some clear instances of DSM with passive verbs which may also take the accusative case instead of the canonical nominative. This also seems to be motivated by the Finnish usage: if the sentences were translated into Finnish, partitive objects would be expected in all examples. Accusative subjects with passive verbs appear in various syntactic environments, such as in affirmative and negative clauses and both preverbally and postverbally, and the verbs often exhibit the default 3rd person singular agreement even in the presence of plural subjects (see 27–29), although this is not always the case, as shown in (31).

- (27) *já muu postáloován lii máálláj-u-m poccu-id*  
 and 1SG.GEN mailbox.ILL be.3SG paint-PASS-PTCP reindeer-PL.ACC  
 ‘And reindeer have been painted on my mailbox.’ [LIT]
- (28) *Sálttáá ja[a]vri-jd kočod-uvvoo sálttijävrin.*  
 salty.ATTR lake-PL.ACC call-PASS.3SG salt.lake.ESS  
 ‘Salty lakes are called salt lakes.’ [WIKI]
- (29) *Nomâttâsâ-id ij lah ovdil tutk-u-m.*  
 name-PL.ACC NEG.3SG be.CNG before study-PASS-PST.PTCP  
 ‘Names have not been studied before.’ [SCI]
- (30) *Ko lii saahâ sâmikielâst, ij uáivild-uu*  
 when be.3SG speech Saami.language.LOC NEG.3SG mean-PASS.CNG  
*tuše oovtâ kielâ.*  
 only one.ACC language.ACC  
 ‘When we are talking about Saami language, we do not mean just one language.’ [SIKOR]

- (31) *Algu-id*            *vuolgâtt-uvvoj-eh*    *täärhib*            *valmâštâlmân.*  
 motion-PL.ACC    send-PASS-3PL        accurate.CMPR    preparation.ILL

‘Motions are sent to a more detailed preparation.’ [SIKOR]

Unfortunately, what we do not find in the data are subjects other than the 3rd person, so it remains uncertain whether 1st and 2nd person subjects would still trigger agreement with passive verbs. It also appears that the nominative subjects in the passive have become limited to the same contexts where nominative objects are used in Finnish, that is, in bounded situations, as in (32):

- (32) *Táálu-h*            *lâi*            *huksej-u-m*        *aaibâs luodâ*        *roobdân*  
 house-PL.NOM    be.3SG    build-PASS-PTCP    just        road.GEN    edge.ILL

‘The houses were built right on the edge of the road’ [LIT]

## 6 Discussion

Above, I have described the argument marking systems of Finnish and traditional Aanaar Saami and used them as a baseline to analyse the more recently collected Aanaar Saami data. It shows that a novel, Finnish-influenced argument marking system is beginning to emerge in modern Aanaar Saami. In this section, I will firstly summarize the observations of DOM, then those of DSM, and finally I will examine the DAM system altogether.

### 6.1 DOM

Many of the conditions of DOM that can be inferred from the data are as expected. In most cases, the motivation for choosing the non-canonical nominative object instead of the canonical accusative in the plural can be readily traced back to the same conditions that apply in the model language of Finnish, namely totality and telicity: the action is carried out upon all the referents, such as in examples (3–5), or the action reaches its endpoint, such as in (6).

Morphologically speaking, the non-canonical objects mostly appear in the plural. The explanation is that this is where the maximal differentiation of the total and partial object in Aanaar Saami is possible. In Finnish, total plural objects appear in the nominative plural whereas partial objects take the partitive

plural. The functionally closest case to the Finnish partitive plural in Aanaar Saami is the accusative plural, so it is selected as its equivalent.<sup>13</sup> However, in the singular the situation differs: Finnish singular partial objects do also appear in the partitive, but by default, total objects are assigned the genitive, whereas nominative total objects are restricted to specific syntactic environments (see § 3.1). Thus, the Finnish genitive should correspond to the Aanaar Saami genitive and the Finnish partitive to the Aanaar Saami accusative, but in Aanaar Saami the genitive and accusative are always syncretic in the singular forms of nominals except for few pronouns. This leads to a situation in many clause types where the Finnish singular total and partial object case both equate to the Aanaar Saami genitive-accusative singular, making it impossible to render the total vs. partial distinction.

Unfortunately, I have not been able to find examples of 2nd person imperative verbs with semantically singular total objects. In this instance, a nominative object would be expected in Finnish (see § 3.1), so such examples might have provided a clue as to whether totality plays a role in the singular in new Aanaar Saami as well.

As explained in § 5.1, there are many singular nominative objects in the data that do not conform to the Finnish model of DOM. These cases may therefore be better interpreted as confusion in inflectional types. Aanaar Saami has a typologically complex morphophonology, but any emerging variation therein should be studied separately.

## 6.2 DSM

The conditions of DSM in the new data have certain expected features as well. Accusative subjects are especially common in existential clauses whose main purpose is to predicate the existence of a referent in a location or someone's possession. In these types of clauses, predicate verbs are often semantically void, and thus it is no surprise that the copula is the most common choice. There are a handful other verbs too, but their meanings also range from existence to coming into existence.

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<sup>13</sup> Coincidentally, the Aanaar Saami accusative plural suffix *-jɔ* and the Finnish partitive plural suffix *-i-lä* are etymological cognates, both going back to Finno-Saamic *\*-j-lä* [PL-PTV] (Sammallahiti 1998: 68). Kittilä & Ylikoski (2018: 476) suggest that the common origin may play a role in why bilingual Saami-Finnish speakers and Finnish learners of Saami “often tend to equate the Saami genitive-accusative with the Finnish partitive”.

The mapping of Finnish subjects onto Aanaar Saami results in a different configuration than in that of objects: genitive subjects appear in a very limited number of constructions and are indifferent with regard to totality vs. partiality, so the problem of case syncretism is not present here.

It is therefore somewhat puzzling as to why around 75% of all existential clauses in the data have plural e-subjects. The reason for this could be a bias in data collection or that, for some reason, singular partial subjects are not as frequent overall. When they do appear, they are usually under negation, as in (13a) or (33).

- (33) *Sust ij lamaš perruu.*  
 3SG.LOC NEG.3SG be.PST.CNG family.ACC

‘S/he did not have a family.’ (Seipiharju 2021: 29)

The subjects of Aanaar Saami passive verbs prove to be an interesting case. I have chosen to treat them as subjects based on their syntactic analysis in traditional Aanaar Saami despite the fact that, in the model language of Finnish, the NP arguments of passive verbs cannot easily be considered subjects (cf. Ylikoski 2022a). However, Finnish singular total objects of passive verbs cannot appear in the genitive but instead work syntactically in the same way as objects with 1st and 2nd person imperatives and in necessive constructions, in that they are assigned the nominative case. This means that they align better with the subjects of existential clauses in their behaviour. Nevertheless, taking semantics into account, I find there is reason to argue that it becomes unclear which syntactic role the NPs of passive verbs should be assigned in new Aanaar Saami.

Even though my focus has been on case forms, some remarks concerning verb agreement can be made as well. In Aanaar Saami, when the subject or object of a clause is a quantifier phrase of the type [cardinal numeral + noun], the numeral overrides the default syntactic case and assigns either the genitive singular or partitive to the noun being quantified: *ulmuu-h* [person-PL.NOM] ‘people’ vs. *kulmâ ulmuu* [three person.GEN] ‘three people’, *čiččâm olmož-id* [seven person-PTV] ‘seven people’. Thus, the resulting quantifier phrases are semantically non-singular but contain no overt dual/plural marker in the noun. (Nelson & Toivonen 2000.) In traditional Aanaar Saami, the predicate verb agrees with the semantic number, for example *Tobbeen láá kulmâ ulmuu* ~ *čiččâm olmožid* [there be.3PL three person.GEN ~ seven person.PTV]

‘There are three ~ seven people there’, whereas in Finnish, these types of quantifier phrases typically do not agree with the predicate verb, so the verb is inflected in the 3rd person singular. This model seems to be giving rise to similar non-agreement in new Aanaar Saami data as exemplified in (34). The non-agreement is most common in existential clauses, but it is occasionally found in other types of clauses too, even when an overt plural marker is present (35). The common colloquial Finnish usage of singular verb forms with plural subjects in the 3rd person is very likely the reason why non-agreement is spreading to other types of clauses besides existential ones.

- (34) *Suomâst lii ohtsis suullân 188 000 jävrid*  
 Finland.LOC be.3SG altogether around 188,000 lake.PTV

‘In Finland there are altogether around 188,000 lakes’ [WIKI]

- (35) *Masa puohah sá[á]rnui sämikielâ.*  
 almost everyone.PL.NOM speak.PST.3SG Saami\_language.ACC

‘Almost everyone spoke Saami.’ [LIT]

### 6.3 Explaining DAM in Aanaar Saami

If an Aanaar Saami speaker were to adopt both DOM and DSM from Finnish simultaneously, it begs the question of why it seems to be easier to find DSM than DOM in the new data. One of the reasons is very likely the syncretism of Aanaar Saami genitive and accusative singular described above, but I propose that this is also due to typological factors. The semantics and syntax of non-canonical subjects make them inherently non-prototypical: they are non-agentive, typically indefinite, and, with passive verbs, semantic patients or themes. Also, the default constituent order of existential clauses differs from the one in normal clauses, because the subject is positioned after the verb. On the other hand, non-canonical objects do not resemble subjects in other respects than perhaps definiteness, and transitive clauses usually already contain another, more subject-like constituent.

In sum, it appears that the emerging DAM in new Aanaar Saami can be adequately explained as pattern replication modelled after the Finnish total–partial distinction in subjects and objects. The pivotal feature of Finnish is the DAM that is then replicated in Aanaar Saami by assigning novel syntactic

	Finnish		Aanaar Saami
Total object			
singular:	genitive	→	genitive-accusative
	(nominative)	→	nominative)
plural:	nominative	→	nominative
Partial object			
singular:	partitive	→	genitive-accusative
plural:	partitive	→	accusative
Total subject			
singular/plural:	nominative	→	nominative
Partial subject			
singular:	partitive	→	genitive-accusative
plural:	partitive	→	accusative

**Figure 1.** Mapping of Finnish grammatical cases to the Aanaar Saami ones in the new data

functions to the Aanaar Saami nominative and genitive-accusative cases, thus generating a DAM system in Aanaar Saami. A summary of the mapping of Finnish grammatical cases to the Aanaar Saami ones according to data from new Aanaar Saami is presented in Figure 1.

Following Sasse (1990: 32) and Matras & Sakel (2007), I propose that the reason why a bilingual Aanaar Saami and Finnish speaker attempts to replicate Finnish DAM in Aanaar Saami is communicative: they want to express the same thoughts in both languages. Being bilingual, DAM is already a part of their communicative repertoire, so they turn to creativity to satisfy their communicative needs (Heine & Kuteva 2005: 34–35).

It is often claimed that DAM is one of the most difficult aspects of Finnish grammar for L2 learners of Finnish, and this is corroborated by experimental evidence (e.g. Sikiö 2008; Göken 2012). I am inclined to hypothesize that this works the other way round as well: the DAM system is a deeply ingrained and integral part of the mental grammar of native-level speakers of Finnish. Therefore, if the other language is structurally close enough, providing the material for the replication of a DAM system, this replication is likely to happen. However, more research on the subject is certainly needed.

Nevertheless, there is inter-speaker and even intra-speaker variation in the Aanaar Saami DAM, considering that the same speaker may use both canonical and non-canonical argument marking. This suggests that the replication process is gradual rather than abrupt and, at the present stage, Aanaar Saami DAM appears to be an incipient category (see Heine & Kuteva 2005: 71): its use is not obligatory, and it is not recognized by grammarians or language planners as a grammatical entity but instead labelled as errors or interference (M. Morottaja 2007: 34; Olthuis 2018).

## 7 Conclusion

In this paper, I have examined the emerging differential argument marking (DAM) in new Aanaar Saami and compared it to Finnish, its apparent model. As it stands, the data from new Aanaar Saami indicates that some younger members of the Aanaar Saami language community, who are at the very least bilingual in Finnish and Aanaar Saami, have begun to use “formulas of equivalence” (Keesing 1991: 327) between grammatical categories when speaking or writing Aanaar Saami. This is done by calquing grammatical structures from Finnish to Aanaar Saami by the process of pattern replication (e.g. Matras & Sakel 2007), so that the functions and meanings of existing Aanaar Saami grammatical forms are adapted to correspond to their Finnish equivalents. This appears to be more prevalent when the syntactic subject exhibits properties of non-prototypical subjects, such as being non-agentive and indefinite, which hints that certain typological tendencies concerning subjecthood may also explain the more extensive propagation of non-canonical subjects. Nevertheless, it is the replication of the Finnish structures that can be identified as the immediate cause.

Since traditional Aanaar Saami does not have DAM based on totality–partiality distinction, a new system is emerging through reorganization: nominative and accusative cases that previously corresponded more or less with the grammatical relations of *subject* and *object* respectively have spread to new domains so that the function of the accusative may also cover partial subjects in intransitive clauses, and at least the nominative plural may signal a total object in transitive clauses. The situation in the singular differs from that in the plural due to case syncretism: Aanaar Saami does not differentiate between the genitive and accusative singular in nouns, which sets a constraint on how the Finnish genitive–partitive distinction in objects as a whole can be replicated.

It is also interesting to note that while the Aanaar Saami community at large has had close contacts with Finnish speakers for around 200 years by now, the language seems to have resisted the type of major syntactic influence of Finnish as investigated in this paper up until thirty years ago: there is no variation in subjects and objects mentioned in earlier descriptions of the language, nor have I been able to find such examples in any earlier text collections or recordings.

Lastly, I will illustrate the beginning and hypothetical endpoint of the grammatical change in argument marking with an example from my data. (36) is a modified version of the actual example sentence and serves to represent the situation in traditional Aanaar Saami without DAM. The examples in (37) show the situation in new Aanaar Saami after the development of DAM: (37a) is structurally identical to (36), but the semantics of the object has changed so that the accusative case is now only used for partial objects, while (37b) is the sentence as found in the data, with the object in the nominative to signal its totality.

- (36) *N vaaldij puser-ijd fáárun*  
 PN take.PST.3SG sweater-PL.ACC along  
 ‘N took ((some or all of) the) sweaters with them’

- (37) a. *N vaaldij puser-ijd fáárun*  
 PN take.PST.3SG sweater-PL.ACC along  
 ‘N took some sweaters with them’

- b. *N vaaldij puser-eh fáárun*  
 PN take.PST.3SG sweater-PL.NOM along  
 ‘N took all of the sweaters with them’ [LIT]

Aanaar Saami has a recently stabilized written standard that is taught at educational institutions; there is no spoken standard per se, but in practice much of the older dialects has been replaced by a spoken form influenced by the current written language. When we include both spoken and written Finnish in the picture, we can imagine a complex tug-of-war of interconnected language forms, of which some can foster the emergence of DAM and others hinder it. Therefore, whether the emerging DAM, or any other Finnish grammati-

cal calque for that matter, eventually becomes a normal part of Aanaar Saami grammar remains to be seen.

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## Abbreviations

1	1st person
2	2nd person
3	3rd person
ABL	ablative
ADE	adessive
ACC	accusative
ATTR	attributive form
CMPR	comparative
CNG	connegative form
COMP	complementizer
DEM	demonstrative pronoun
DU	dual
ELA	elative
ESS	essive
GEN	genitive
ILL	illative
INE	inessive
INF	infinitive
LOC	locative
NEG	negative verb
NOM	nominative
PASS	passive
PL	plural
PN	personal name
PST	past
PTCP	participle
PTV	partitive

Q question clitic  
 SG singular  
 SPRL superlative

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