

Typological evolution of Northern Sami: spatial cognition and Information Structuring

1. Oral languages and contextualization

Oral languages, known to reveal significant properties of human language, also shed an interesting light on the relations between language and cognition. The necessary contextualization of oral languages can be the starting point for a demonstration which relies upon two pairs of linguistic and cognitive operations, localizing/thematizing vs. identifying/categorizing, to show how a speaker selects and organizes reference points in discourse. The two main intentional uses of space in speech (how to naturalize and argument one's discourse) are also related to the typology of languages and contexts. The Samic languages, in their northernmost variety, are taken here as prototypes of orality. Some specific features of the language system clearly have an oral motivation: a rich spatio-temporal deixis ("mental maps" of reindeer breeders vs. fishermen) can be considered to be a trace of a basically interlocutory situation. Northern Sami even affords an additional point of interest: the hypothesis of "orality motivation" is partially verified through the linguistic changes that occur today when the language becomes written.¹ The recent accession of Sami to a literary form implies a new relationship between the speakers and their language and identity: while indigenous anthroponyms and toponyms are resurrected (Helander 1999), one can already observe a gradual disappearance of some of the oral features. My concern here will be to look at the evolution of three of them: spatial deixis, discourse particles and detachment constructions. These three categories will be analyzed in a frame of textual theory centered on Information Structuring.

¹ A second strong hypothesis which this research supports is the following: "experience is the reality that we construe for ourselves by means of language" (Halliday & Mathiessen 2006 [1999]: 3).

2. Spatial cognition and oral tradition in Sami

2.1. Deictic markers

Deixis, especially spatial deixis, is rich in the Uralic languages, morphologically richer in the Finnic than in the Samic languages thanks to their large number of case suffixes (among which 3 internal and 3 external local cases). Finnish and Estonian can thus be called “spatial languages by structure”. But space is omnipresent in Sami culture, traditionally a culture of nomads. A poem by Nils-Aslak Valkeapää, aiming at a difficult dialog with the “white man” about land ownership and dwelling, can serve as a symbolic quotation:

*Don dieđát dan viellja
Don ipmirdat oabbá*

*Muhto go dat jerret gos lea du ruoktu
Dajatgo don ahte dát visot
Skuolfedievás mii lávostalaimet
giđđajohtolatáigge
Čáppavuomis mis lei goahti ragatáigge
Min geasseorohat lea Ittunjárga
Ja dálvet min bovccot leat Dálvadasa guovlluin*

*Don dieđát dan oabbá
Don ipmirdat viellja*

Toi tu sais mon frère
toi tu comprends ma soeur

Mais lorsqu'ils demandent où est ta demeure
peux-tu dire que c'est tout cela
Sur les pentes de Skuolfedieva
nous plantions notre tente
à l'époque de la migration de printemps
Dans le fjord de Čáppavuopmi nous avions notre goahti à la saison du rut
L'été nous le passons sur la presqu'île d'Ittunjárga
et l'hiver nos rennes sont dans la contrée de Dálvadas

Toi tu sais ma soeur
toi tu comprends mon frère

(Valkeapää 1985; 2008)²

² From the second part, “Lávillo vizar biellocizás” (Fr. “Chante gazouille Grelot l’Oiselet”); Valkeapää’s book has no page numbers. Although an English translation is also available, I allow myself to quote Valkeapää’s poems in their French version, of which I happen to have better knowledge, thanks to my double function of French-speaking linguist and translator.

The expression of spatio-temporal deixis is in oral Northern Sami (henceforth “Sami”) quite complex: although there are only two local suffixes (after the elative and inessive have been amalgated), there are also prepositions, postpositions, lexemes (with varying degrees of grammaticalization), and numerous adverbs. This richness is deeply anchored in the environment: localization, which plays an essential role in traditional society can even be the sole criterion for individual identification. Observe how a reindeer breeder distinguishes two categories of nomads:³

- (1) *Já dat mii dáppe jođii / muhto dot leai doppe gáissájohtti.*
 ‘Oh yes **the one** who was nomading **here** / but **that one** was **there**
away a summit nomad.’
 [‘Yes, the one who wandered around here, but that other one was
 a highland nomad there.’]
 (personal database, Fernandez-Vest 1982)

On the one hand, we have the nomad represented precisely by “here” (*dáppe*), and he is distinguished from the other, who is a “very remote” (*dot*) referent. The other is defined by his correlation with the very distant place of activity (indicated by the adverb *doppe* “there far away”) and by his functions as a “summit nomad” (*johtt-i*, agent on the verb *johtit*). If this characterization is accompanied by a precise topographic term (*gáissá* “summit”), it expresses primarily the topological dimension on which it is based: a **vertical** dimension, that draws a border-line between the “above (upper) people” (*badjeolbmot*), that is, the reindeer breeders⁴, and the “people down here”, that is, living in the river valley. This complexity is manifested in dialog by the concurrent values of endophoric and exophoric deictic markers. The semantic variations are mostly induced by the functional character of localizing. For reindeer breeders, the vertical dimension will thus be unmarked, for fishermen it will be a horizontal axis. A comparison of Sami impromptu dialogs enlightens the primary role played, as in other oral cultures, by a strategy of pointing at (“monstration”) associated with rhythm and acoustic punctuation (Hagège 1975; Jousse 1981 [1925]), that is, linguistically, the interplay of deictic markers and discourse particles.

³ The literal translation, essential for the analysis of the IS strategies used by the speaker, is followed in square brackets by a “fluent” translation in standard English.

⁴ See the productivity of *badje-* ‘of above’, *badjeeana* ‘the upper earth’, *badjeduottar* ‘topmountain (often treeless)’, *badjeolmmái* ‘upper man, i.e. reindeer Sami’, *badjereanga* ‘reindeer servant’.

2.2. Discourse Particles (DIPs) and spatial representation

2.2.1. DIPs between semantics and pragmatics

The role of Discourse Particles (DIPs) for the processing of discourse has been well documented during the last two decades, quite systematically in Indo-European languages, more tentatively in several others (Östman 1982; Schifffrin 1987; Wierzbicka 2004; Fischer 2006). My thorough study of these particles in oral corpora, French, English and several interlanguages, besides Sami and Finnish—see Section 3 below) allows me to sketch out some of the universal tendencies of DIPs.

Particles show the concomitance of elaboration and production, the primary characteristics of oral discourse. With these particles the syntactic units are built into a spoken chain of rhythmic units: a way for the speaker to scan the progress of his thought. Sami dialogs display numerous examples of a segmentation punctuated by DIPs, a pattern which can be compared to the “empty” syllables of the traditional northern yoik.

Consequently, the structuring role of the particles is decisive: if the answer-utterance does not contain any particle, or contains a limited number of particles of a standard nature (such as ‘yes / of course / indeed’), the sequence will most often be modelled upon that of the question. On the other hand, the presence of numerous particles causes a redistribution of the rhythmic units, that is, of the order of constituents.

DIPs lack individual meaning, although the most common of these are characterized by a semantic invariant. Their information value in interlocution (complicity, connivance, hierarchical differences between partners,...), in the modalization of the utterance, and even in the subtle question of affectivity within language (the speaker suggests an implication, refutes a presupposition, manifests his attitude or his judgement without explicitly verbalizing), emerges clearly from the confrontation of varied speech situations (Fernandez-Vest 1984; 1994: 173–219).

2.2.2. DIPs and deictics in traditional Sami

In short, information strategies shaped by orality are prominent at the pragmatic level: numerous DIPs, a paratactic subordination. Word order serves mainly pragmatic aims: Information Structuring and emphasis. The neutral word order (SVO) is found in assertive utterances, but any word can be fronted, even a pro-form. Emphasis is signaled by an intensity stress and/or by DIPs. These DIPs give

rhythm to the utterance and modalize it; along with prosody they connect utterances. Some DIPs articulate the dialog; others topicalize the first element, often with a syntactic specialization (Fernandez-Vest 1997: 80–89; 2005: 565–570). An excerpt from a dialog between two elderly Sami informants—with a competence totally untouched by schooling—can be presented in illustration.⁵

- (2) (A) a. *Man GUHKKI dás dáppe dohko du báikái Bádošii / dieđátgo olu / dáppe girkobáikkas?*
 (B) b. *Goal mo bat dal dat lea? Galhan dat lea vissa beannot miilla vai gal dat guokte miilla lea gal.*
 c. *Eambbo dat gal lea.*
 d. *Gal dat liikká lea eambbo gal.*
 e. *Ammal .. ammal jo VIHTTA miilla gal lea dáikko Deatnorái.*
 f. *Ii LEATban nu .. Ii DAT leat nu. Go ii leat vihtta miilla na Gal dat dohko .. dal dohko Nuvvosii gal lea vihtta.*
 g. *Já. (...)*
- (A) a. **How far** from here exactly here to there to your home in Bádoš / **do you know how much** / from here from the market-place?
 [‘How far is it exactly from here to there, your home in Bádoš / from here, the market place?’]
- (B) b. **How much** could it **actually** be? **Yes indeed** it is **surely** one and a half miles⁶ **or what** **yes two miles there is** [there are two miles] **yes**.
 c. More it is **for sure**.
 [‘There is more for sure.’]
 d. Yes it is **though** more **yes**.
 e. **Maybe** .. **maybe even** FIVE miles **yes** from here along the Deatnu.
 f. It IS NOT so **oh no** .. **NO** it is not so. Since there are not five miles **well** **Oh yes** up to there .. **now** up to there to Nuvvos **yes** there are five.
 g. **Well**.
 (...) (Extensive text transcribed in Fernandez-Vest 1987: 585–589)

⁵ Two types of pauses are indicated: .. less than 5 seconds (mostly self-correction); more than 5 seconds (mostly hesitation).

⁶ *Miila* (< No. *mil*), Norwegian mile = 10 km.

This dialog was initiated by a Question about the evaluation of a distance, “How far is it from (...) to (...)?” (a), presented as the product of knowledge (“do you know?”), and followed by precise indications about the points of departure and arrival of the intended itinerary (“there-to”, a deictic adverb in the directive case, the referent of which is identified by a possessive-marked lexeme (“your home”) then by a toponym (*Báđoš*)). The addressee delivers several numeric evaluations, in a growing order (b), but the questioner, A, finds them insufficient: he suggests an augmentation (c), accepted by the addressee (d). A introduces his own evaluation, two and a half times higher: in order to justify the difference, he offers further exact information about the point of arrival (“from here precisely”, deictic adverb *dákko*...), and about alternative itineraries available (“over (*badjel*) the mountain”, a straighter route than *Deatnoráigge* ‘along the Deatnu’ (e), but one has to climb *duokko* ‘exactly from there [the mouth of the river]’, or from *diekko* ‘from there (less remote)’ (l)), before he asks a second question, accommodated to the new itinerary proposed by the addressee (n).

Later on, a more precise question gives the dialog a new start: “How far is it from there on foot (walking)?” (m).

Once these variables have been defined in common (points of departure and arrival, itinerary, means of transportation, *vázzit* ‘walk’ rather than *mannat* ‘go’), the addressee answers: he makes his own use of the deictic adverb originally proposed by his interlocutor (*dohko*), gives an approximate evaluation (*miilla badjel* ‘more than one mile’) and, on the approval of the questioner, calculates and delivers a result, ‘one mile and a half’, that is, higher than his previous estimate, but identical to his first answer.

This type of negotiation illustrates the *construction of a referent model* and the shifting of the deictic center, here operated by a combining of deictic markers and an intrusion of all-invading discourse particles. In this dialog, the questions and answers seldom take a specific shape: they appear as variants of assertive utterances, thanks to the structuring role played by the DIPs, 44 DIPs for 16 turns.

The idea according to which conceptualization is anchored in our physical experience (spatial in particular), which guarantees some landmarks to interpersonal and intercultural communication, can thus directly benefit from the study of orality features, among which DIPs. This is all the more striking in the Finnic and Samic languages as the deictic origin of discourse markers seems to be inscribed in a process in which our mental universe is metaphorically structured: see Fi. *tuota* ‘that one’ > DIP *tuota* ‘well’; Sami *dat* ‘this, that one’, homonymous with the thematic DIP *dat* ‘as we know, for sure’. This homonymous *dat* is precisely the perfect candidate for the third grammaticalization chain which I have proposed to add to those two (see 1 and 2 below) already defined by theoretic-

cians of grammaticalization as having resulted from the interaction between cognitive and pragmatic operations, that is:

1. concrete localization > possessive / existential clause
2. demonstrative > personal pronoun > definite article
(Heine 1992)
3. demonstrative > personal pronoun > nuclear discourse particle
(Fernandez-Vest 2000)

This proposition, based on the analysis of a newly written language, corroborates some of the latest developments in grammaticalization theories (e.g. Traugott 1995; 2004).

The basic meaning of dialog (2), aimed at the evaluation of a distance, could hardly filter through, in spite of a multitude of deictic adverbs, without being framed in and conveyed by the DIPs. The richness of a language in particles of that type (as is the case with Sami, in which many of these particles are grammaticalized) can be considered to be the corollary of a long oral tradition. A comparison of the DIPs in the autochthonous languages spoken in Finland, Samic, Finnish and Swedish, makes it evident that Samic is the most flexible of the three. The DIPs are criteria for evaluating the degree of orality of these three languages, and not only because of their quantitative superiority: it is definitely the qualitative difference between the DIPs in Samic opposed to those in Finnish and Swedish which is the main trace left in synchrony by a diachronically codified oral expression (Fernandez-Vest 1987: 599–603).

3. Detachment constructions and Information Structuring (IS)

3.1. Information Structuring: Theme—Rheme—Mneme

Research centered on orality, crossed with pragmatic situations and language typology, cannot be unaware of the natural segmentation of spoken language, which is manifested by pre- or post-rhematic detached constructions. The terminology is still heterogeneous and the theoretical frames of analysis are not yet unified, but one can notice in recent studies of detachment constructions a fair amount of convergence, for instance, through the priority given to information criteria, referential accessibility, and cognitive relevance (see Lambrecht 2000; Gundel 2002; Neveu 2003; Fernandez-Vest 2009). The process of Information Structuring, previously restricted to a pragmatic vision of word order,

has become established as a fundament of semantic dynamics. Specialists tend to agree that meaning, as linguistically analysable, results essentially from a co-determination by enunciative factors (with universal tendencies) and morpho-syntactic factors (typological). This analysis of enunciative constituents meets the principle of triple organization of the utterance recognized by several language theoreticians (Peirce 1934; Daneš 1974; Hagège 1980, 1990). The choice of a textual and interactional definition of Theme/Topic (“what is spoken about”) and Rheme/Focus (“what is said about it”), implies the recognition of a 3rd element, the Mneme, characterized by formal properties (a post-Rheme marked by flat intonation) and semantic ones (supposedly shared knowledge, affective modulation, etc.; Fernandez-Vest 1994: 197–200). Already spotted in several non-IE languages, variably labelled in the literature, this final detachment is also similar to two independently elaborated notions: the “tail” of Functional grammar (Dik 1997), and the “Antitopic” launched by Construction grammars (Chafe 1976; Lambrecht 1981). My personal conception meets the definition of Lambrecht’s (1994: 184–191) Antitopic in general terms, but differs as to the frame of analysis (text) and the level of assignment (enunciative/pragmatic).⁷

The two basic information strategies, originally inspired by my studies of a genuine oral language (Northern Sami) have been later tested in diverse corpora. My method of analysis has thus for long been based on twice 3 elements—3 different levels (pragmatic, morphosyntactic, semantic) and, at the pragmatic level, 3 constituents (Theme, Th; Rheme, Rh; Mneme, Mn), with 2 basic strategies available: the binary strategy 1 (Theme — Rheme), with the 1st element frequently detached (Initial Detachment, ID), and the binary strategy 2 (Rheme — Mneme), wherein the 2nd constituent is detached (Final Detachment, FD), a typical construction for Impromptu Speech, mostly absent in written style.

- (3) *moi l'air en conserve, je n'aime pas ça!*
 ‘but me, **canned air** (ID), I don’t like that!’
- (4) *Ça n'arrive qu'à moi, des choses pareilles!*
 ‘This happens only to me, **such things** (FD)!’ (Hergé 1976)

⁷ I keep using the European terminology *Theme–Rheme*, although the Anglo-American *Topic–Focus* is more fashionable. As a textualist, I feel directly indebted to the Prague School (Daneš 1974; Firbas 2006 [1992]), and different readings have made me aware of the complexity of the relationship between the European and American functionalisms (see, for instance, Newmeyer 2001). As for “dislocation” (instead of “detachment”), this was difficult to avoid as long as TGG was dominant, although not so any more: detached constructions are **not** the result of a dislocation, they reflect the progress of thought and speech relying upon basic multimodal (e.g. perception, memory) cognitive structures.

This third constituent is a fundament of oral strategies in a textual perspective. The Mneme achieves a cohesion pattern frequent in impromptu speech: the circular cohesion (see also Fernandez-Vest 2004a, 2004b).

- (5) [From a corpus of South-western French]
 [– Didn’t you tell me a stepladder story?]
*OUI! Alors il est tombé / un jour il a voulu monter **sur un escabeau***
 (Rh) / *et pis il avait pas vu que **l’escabeau** (ID) il avait pas la*
corde! Tu sais / on met une ficelle (– Ah!) pour pas que ça s’ouvre /
***l’escabeau** (FD)!*
 ‘YES! You see he fell / one day he wanted to climb **up a stepladder**
 (Rh) / and then he had not seen that **the stepladder** (ID) did not have
 its rope! You know / they’d put a string (– Oh!) so that it doesn’t open
 / **the stepladder** (FD)!’
 (personal database, Fernandez-Vest 1995)

The detached Theme has drawn much more attention from researchers (e.g. Barnes 1985; Hagège 2001), due both to the rarity of FD and to some persistent confusion about a Theme which would alternately be located before or after the Rheme—a notion which has been rejected by many of us, with several arguments that I shall not discuss here (Gómez-González 2001; Lambrecht 1994: 199–205; 2004). Among the subdomains that have been studied in typologically diverse languages, the following may be mentioned: hanging topics, first described as characteristic of “topic-prominent” languages, but later shown to occur in the colloquial register of many other oral languages (Li 1975; Lambrecht 2001; Maslova & Bernini 2006); correlated clauses, two types of relative clauses, syntactically specific of some languages (e.g. Bengali, Bambara, Hindi), but more generally compared to the two juxtaposed clauses of informal speech (Comrie 1981; Miller & Fernandez-Vest 2006).

3.2. Detachment in North-western Uralic languages

3.2.1. Finnish

Of the Finnic languages, Finnish is the only one in which the subject of Word order was tackled early. Detachment constructions were already present (as “dislocations”, *lohkeamat*) in the Finnish Syntax of Hakulinen and Karlsson (1979), connected with the problem of grammaticalization of processual sentences. These constructions are given a thoroughful treatment in the impressive volu-

minous “Great Grammar of Finnish” (ISK, 2004). The ID, the first part of which is named a “syntactic omen” (*syntaktinen etiäinen*) is described as a stabilized construction, the main function of which is to lighten the information load. Most remarkable is the official recognition of a status for the FD: *lohkeama eteenpäin* (“a dislocation forward”), a stabilized construction, a grammaticalized addition of a syntagmatic type. Examples:

- (6) NP1 + (ni) + **se1** + V + x:
Toi meidän äiti [ID] *ni se on tosi hauska.* (ISK 972)
 ‘**That (our) mother** you know **she** is truly nice.’
 [‘That mother of ours is really nice, you know.’]
- (7) *Se1* + V + x [se NP]:
Se osui oikeaan se puhe [FD]. (ISK 1013)
 ‘It hit the right point **that speech**.’
- (8) [*siinä*]1 + V + n (*ni*) [*siinä* NP:ssä]:
Siinä oli paljon hyvääki, ni siinä alustuksessa [FD].
 (ISK 1013)
 ‘In it there was much good in fact you know **in that outline**.’
 [‘Much of it was good, you know, in the outline.’]

ISK is based on a large and sociologically rich corpus, and I share most of the authors’ points of view on the two types of Detachments. But there are also some differences. I would formulate the main difference as follows. I insist on applying the model to the clausal-members of the utterance(/sentence), in one and the same utterance/sentence, so that I distinguish thematic and mnemonic clausal constituents, but, further, also to sequences of sentences grouped in a paragraph (narrative period or microdialog). Why? Not just because I consider it fundamental to have a textual perspective in all stages of the analysis, but also because the impact of the type of text and the text strategy on the quantitative evaluation of detachments thus comes to light. Comparing, for instance, dialogs of standard spoken Finnish (with a few local variations)—excerpts from the project “The transformation of contemporary spoken Finnish” *Nyky-suomalaisen puhekielen murros*), transcribed here using my own method—one notices that the IDs seem to be much more frequent than the FDs (more than 50%, up to 70% in the narrative sections). But the proportion of the FDs increases, if the analysis is limited to the dialogical sections, and the strategic importance grows, if the contribution of the FDs to the thematic progression is taken into account (see 4.1.1. below). Two remarks:

1) The morphological difference between the IDs and FDs. The detached NP of the ID is often in nominative (more than 90% of occurrences), but the pronominal resumption adopts the case of its function:

- (9) *Siis **nää ihmiset** (nom.) jotka nytte / KASVAA / **nämü näi** siis mulla ..
lapseni / **niil** (adess.) / **niil** on niin paljon parempi ravinto*
‘You know **these people** (nom.) who are now, GROWING, **these**
these you know I have .. my children, **they** (adess.), **they** have
[lit. them-at is] a much better diet.’

Conversely, the FD has no syntactic function of its own: it adopts the case of its announcing pronoun.

2) The difference in the relationship between the ID/FD and the information triad: the detached Theme must be followed by a Rheme, whereas the Mnome can, in the linearity of the narrative text, refer to a Rheme as well as a Theme, ex.

- (10) ***Nämü lasinsirut** jotka siis ikkunasta / tuli sisälle **SILLÄ** puolella /
niin ne / **ne** jäi seiniin kiinni / **se** oli / **se** oli ihan täys / lasia / **seinät***
‘**These glass splinters** that you know from the window, came in
ON THAT side, **well they**, **they** stuck to the walls, **it** was, **it** was all
packed with, glass, **the walls**.
[‘Those splinters of glass that, you know, came in from the window
on that side, well they got stuck in the wall, it was, it was cram-full
of glass, the walls.’]

This difference is also an argument in favor of the informational independence of the Mnome.

3.2.2. Northern Sami and Sami Finnish

For me, Northern Sami has been an initial source for reflecting upon the domain of information structuring and detachment constructions, Sami and also the contact language I recorded in the 1970s in Ohcejohka (Utsjoki), the northernmost parish of Finnish Samiland: Finnish spoken by bilingual Sami.

Sami Finnish (Fernandez-Vest 1982 [1977])

[Discussing the translation of Sami vocabulary. Quotations are in Sami.]

- (11) **“Nierra”** [ID] / *sehän on tämä...* [shows his cheek] (– *Poski?*)
“Nierra” [ID] / *se on kyllä poski.*
 ‘*Nierra*, **it**+DIP is this... (– The cheek?) *Nierra*, **it** is yes the cheek.’
- (12) *Joo se on halla kyllä tämä “suoldni”* [FD].
 ‘Yes **it** is frost yes **this suoldni**.’
- (13) **Sitä** *sanotaan “sávuiksi” / tämmönen hiljainen vesi* [FD].
 ‘**It** is called *sávu*, **such a quiet water**.’

From the approximately 150 discourses by native Sami speakers which I recorded and later analyzed in numerous articles, I shall mention for the present purpose the reverse proportion of syntactic vs. iconic cohesion, according to the degree of written praxis of the informants, which means a significantly high proportion of FDs in the speech of the old Sami, both in simple answers and “multiple answers” (several utterances linked (=>>) by a quick tempo) as in:

Sami (Fernandez-Vest 1987: 390–580; 2005)

- (14) [And your parents’ house was made of...?]
Hirsa.... hirsavisti =>> Guđa dumá aso (Rh) **dat hirssat** (Mn-FD)
 ‘Log.... a log-hut =>> Six thumbs thick (Rh) the logs (Mn-FD).’
- (15) [Were there motorboats even then?]
Jo / dat dat gal álge dan áigge / mohtor-fatnasat gal (Mn-FD)
 ‘Yes, they then (DIP) yes began that time / motorboats yes (Mn-FD).’
 [‘Yes, then they, yes they started at that time, the motorboats, yes.’]

4. Orality features in written Sami

4.1. Deixis and discourse markers

In order to follow the evolution of Northern Sami after the orthography became officially standardized (1979–), the Sami corpus in my database was completed during the last decade by excerpts of discourses recorded in different situations (about 20 hours of transcriptions), some of these borrowed from other sources (Nordic Sami Radio, Finnish Archives). Nowadays it also includes a corpus of newspapers. Some experiments were also arranged. Example (16) is a story, first

told orally, then written down by a middle-aged Sami speaker (35 at the time of the recording), who had been provided with some schooling in his mother tongue, which has been possible since the 1980s. The anecdote is about *láttánat* (“landmen”, non-Sami people), who enjoy fishing and wandering in the mountains, but freeze to death with the first drops of rain, as they are unable to light a fire.

(16) (oral)

Muhto maid^a dat^b dákkar^c / báikegoddálaš boahdá gii lea ollu mehciid johtán^d / dathan^{ef} gal^g arvinge^h fidne dola galⁱ. Na^j ii das^k / mihkkige^l go dat^m lea dola ožžonⁿ dar^o dat^p gal^q ii jáddat / dan gal^r ii agibeavvisge^{s+} / sáhtá dohppet fárrui lubmii / doalvu máttás dan^t dola vai lea boahhte jahkáai / dolla^u / dalle^v go / bohtet^w fas deike^x Sápmái / jos lea arvejahki.

‘But **what^a then^b such a^c** / local guy arrives **who has a lot in the forest^d wandered / he^e certainly^f yes^g even^h** in rainy weather⁺ / gets a fire **yesⁱ. Well^j in this^k / nothing no^l** when **he^m has fire-gotⁿ he^o of course^p sure^q** does not put it out / **for sure^r** never^{s+} / he sticks it in his pocket / brings to the south **that^t** fire so that there is the following year / **fire^u / then^v** when / **they come^w** again **here^x** to Samiland / if it is a rainy year.’

(written)

Muhto go boahdá^a ollu mehciid johtán^d báikegoddálaš, sonhan^{e+r} gal^g fidne arvinge^h dola. Go son^m lea ožžon dolaⁿ, de⁺ láttán^o ii jáddat dan ollege^s, muhto⁺ váldá fárrui máttás vai lea boahhte jahkáige⁺ dolla^u sin boadidettiin^w fas Sápmái – jos deaivá leat arvejahki.

‘But **when arrives^a a much-in the forest-having-wandered^d** regional guy, **he^e certainly^f yes^g gets [makes] even^h** in rainy weather fire. When **he^m has got [made] fireⁿ, then⁺ the landman^o** does not put it out **at all^s, but⁺** takes it with him to the south so that there **is even⁺** the following year **fire^u as they come^w** again to Samiland – in case it is a rainy year.’

In its impromptu oral version, this discourse is characterized by 1) a prosodic structuring (intraphrasal and intraclausal segmentation, interclausal parataxis (suspensive intonation [+]); 2) a great number of deictic actualizers (c, t, x), personal pronouns replaced in the written version by substantives (o > o’); 3) a still greater number of DIPs (b, i, p, q, r,...), interactional and/or thematizing;

4) an informative word order ($n \neq n'$); 5) detachment constructions (a–d, ID; u, FD) and 6) analytic constructions, which the written form synthetizes ($d > d'$, $w > w'$). Compared to, for instance, Finnish, the oral/written contrast in Sami is specifically marked by 1) an interlocutive dimension which is omnipresent in the Sami oral discourse above—internal interrogatives (a) and self-responses (j, k, l), deleted in the written version, and 2) iconic devices for the interclausal cohesion (replaced by a logico-syntactic connection, $u > -ge u'$) (Fernandez-Vest 1987; 2000).

In the present evolution of Sami, DIPs must be considered an endangered species. One of the few still frequent DIPs is the homonymous *dat*. Apart from its preferential use as a DIP for thematizing (see 2.2.2.), the pronoun/adjective *dat* ‘this, that’ is used to identify an element as previously mentioned in discourse, hinting at the emergence already described in most languages in Europe of a definite article, probably as the result of contacts (see Heine & Kuteva 2006: 97–139).

If we now turn to an emergent genre of the Sami culture, its written literature, we might expect poetry, which takes its inspiration directly from the only known form of chant (apart from a few fragments of longer epics), the Northern yoik, to be structured by enclitic particles. But even in Valkeapää’s poems, the swinging rhythm of which faithfully follows the ground patterns of the old yoik, very few particles can be found. The only recurrent one is *-han* ‘as we know, for sure’, a partial equivalent of *dat*, relatively marginal in the inventory of old particles, but very frequent in modern Sami, especially in the Finnish regions of Samiland, where it may have been influenced by the high frequency of the corresponding Finnish form *-han/-hän*:

(17) <i>Jápmín ja riegeádeapmi</i>	Mort et naissance
<i>Dathan leat olbmo</i>	Voilà bien pour l’homme
<i>deháleamos áššit</i>	l’essentiel
<i>Jus eallimis ii huma</i>	A moins de parler de la vie
<i>Ja máidba das hupmat</i>	Mais pourquoi en parler
<i>dathan lea nu árgabeaivválaš</i>	C’est si trivial le quotidien

(Nils-Aslak Valkeapää 1985; 2008)⁸

⁸ See note 2 above.

The French translation of the last strophe shows how uneasy it is to overload the verse with approximate equivalents of this nuclear DIP, that is, peripheral particles, which exist parallel as lexemes.

4.2. Detachment constructions

It has largely been accepted that the conditions for the production of oral discourse are core criteria for drawing up an inventory of the defining criteria of *Impromptu Speech*, as a prototype of natural spoken language, and several attempts have been made at establishing a correlation between grammatical categories and text types (Biber 1988; Enkvist 1982; Fernandez-Vest 1994: 117–172; Miller & Fernandez-Vest 2006: 13). As for a term-to-term comparison between the oral and written versions of a text, there are few examples, and still fewer regarding the occurrences of detachments.⁹ Here again, Finnish can help us to open up some trails of analysis: this language has had over a century to develop its written genres since it began being standardized.

4.2.1. Detachment in written Finnish

The comparison of two versions of paraliterary interviews, a corpus on “Creative processes” collected from among Finnish artists and writers and published by the Finnish Literature Society (SKS), has shown that the proportion of IDs and FDs is balanced in the oral version (my transcription), due to the long monological parts (more than 70% ID for 30% FD). Microdialogs have a reversed proportion of IDs (less than 20%), and FDs (more than 80%). In the corpus finally edited by SKS, the numbers speak for themselves: IDs are very rare (less than 5% of the Th), and FDs are non-existent.

Generally speaking, subjectivity is unbridled when the artist is trying to formulate her/his conception of creativity, and the FD is an appropriate device for avoiding possible misunderstandings:

⁹ Concentrating on the two versions of a scientific text, it can be shown that there are 100% more detachments in its oral presentation—that is, not a single one in the published paper (Fernandez-Vest 1994: 150–158).

(18) [- Doesn't the creativity process evolve with time?]

(oral)

*Kyl siin varmasti vähän eri eri eri mekanismi / mekanismi on hiukan ehkä muuttunut / **tän luovan / prosessin / mekanismi.***

‘Yes there surely a little diff different mechanism, the mechanism has slightly maybe changed, **of this creative, process, the mechanism.**’

[‘Yes, there’s definitely a different, very different, mechanism, the mechanism has perhaps changed a little, the mechanism of this creative process.’]

(written)

*Luulisin myös **luovan prosessin mekanismin** iän mukana **muuttuneen.***

‘I would also believe **that the mechanism of the creative process** along with age **has changed.**’

[‘I would also think the mechanism of the creative process would have changed with age.’]

The edited version does not seem to be concerned with disambiguation: a clear question is followed by a clear answer—a verb of opinion followed by a completive clause, a non-finite complement clause (*lauseenvastike*), generally considered typical of written style, in which the FD of the oral version is integrated.

Oral corpus:	Monological	ID ≈ 70%	FD ≈ 30%
	Dialogical	ID ≈ 20%	FD ≈ 80%
Written (edited) text (all):		ID ≈ 0.5%	FD = 0%

Table. Proportions of initial and final detachments in two corpora (Fernandez-Vest 2006: 185–191).

4.2.2. Detachment in written Sami

We already perceived in example (16) some of the reasons why the segmentation implied by detachments can hardly be maintained in the written style. The ID and FD, natural though they are within the progress of thought in oral style, are deemed automatically as integration failures, in other words, planning failures.

One can observe in written Sami, as a counterpart to this, the rapid development of clefts. In the last decade, frequent occurrences of these cleft constructions, probably influenced by the majority languages, Norwegian in particular,

can be recorded in the Sami press (the newspapers *Min Áigi* and *Áššu* in Norway, the periodical *Sápmelaš* in Finland)—in reported speech as well as in the narrative passages. This evolution is simultaneously increased by the decline of DIPs. Even the most vivid of the ancient DIPs, the topicalizing *dat*, is gradually being replaced by analytic construction devices.

- (19) *Leimme mun ja Ánde geat oinniime su*
 be.PST.IDU I and Ánde who.PL see.PST.IDU (s)he.ACC
Guovdageainnus.
 Guovdageaidnu.LOC

pro

- Moai Ándiin dat oinniime su*
 we.DU Ánde.COM THEMAT.DIP see.PST.IDU (s)he.ACC
Guovdageainnus.
 Guovdageaidnu.LOC
 ‘It was I and Ánde who saw him/her in Guovdageaidnu.’

An important observation is here that Scandinavian languages (Norwegian and Danish specifically) have been shown to use clefts more frequently than English, with a strong tendency to map the IS directly into the syntactic structure (Erteschik-Shir 2007: 121).

Is the Sami modern literature able to preserve detachments constructions more firmly than DIPs? If one questions the expanding contemporary prose of some of the most productive writers, one is tempted to answer positively. I shall take two examples of these constructions, excerpts from a trilogy of novels (volume III), and their published translations in Finnish and Swedish.

- (20) Sa. *Dat álget Lemet-gáccis fargga dat divvunbarggut* (Mn),
láhttestii Sire. (Vest 2005: 24)
 Fi. *Ne alkaa Leemetin porukalla kohta ne remonttityöt* (Mn), *Siiri*
totesi. (Vest 2006b: 25)
 ‘They begin at Lemet’s-folks soon **the restoration-works**
 (Mn), Sire remarked.’
 [≈ ‘Lemet’s lot will soon start the restoration work.’]
 Sw. *De ska snart börja med renoveringsjobben, Leemetis folk*
 (≠ Mn), *konstaterade Siiri.* (Vest 2006a: 25)
 ‘They will soon start the restoration work, Lemet’s folks
 (≠ Mn), Sire remarked.’

- (21) Sa. *Dat leat gusto **barggu** (Mn) moatte vahkus hirbmadit ovdánan, dajai Risten Lemehiin.* (Vest 2005: 31)
 ‘It has obviously **the work** (Mn) in a couple of weeks terribly progressed, said Risten to Lemet.’
- Fi. *Ne on näemmä kauhiasti eistyneet **ne työt** (Mn) viimeisen kahen viikon aikana, Risten sanoi sedälleen.* (Vest 2006b: 32)
 ‘They have obviously terribly progressed **the works** (Mn) over the last two weeks, said Risten to her uncle.’
 [≈ ‘The work has obviously come along very well over the last two weeks, said Risten to her uncle.’]
- Sw. *Dom här jobben har gått väldigt fort under dom senaste två veckorna vad jag kan se, sade Risten till sin farbror (Ø Mn)* (Vest 2006a: 32)
 ‘These works have gone [This work has gone] very quickly during the last two weeks what I can see, said Risten to her uncle (Ø Mn).’

In (20), the original Sami utterance is closed in (before the quotation verb) with a clear FD, which the Finnish translation renders literally without any difficulty. The Swedish translation uses the same type of construction, but with a different Mneme (due to a change of subject).

In (21), the Sami utterance uses an internal Mneme, a segmentation which the Finnish, apparently stiffer, turns into a more classical FD.¹⁰ The Swedish translation ignores the detachment: the word order of the utterance is straightforward, S+V+Adverbial, totally free of internal segmentation. We have here the difference between “discourse configurational” languages (Finno-Ugric languages in general) and “(syntax) configurational languages” (see Erteschik-Shir 2006: 80–85).

5. Temporary conclusion

I have tried to show how complex the relation between orality and some typical features such as analyticity are. Whereas oral languages are reputed to be more analytical than written ones, the influence of the neighboring IE languages seems to intensify a tendency in Sami towards some analytic constructions. The influence of IE languages is exerted nowadays on Northern Sami both directly, although moderately through standardization (lexical loans), and indi-

¹⁰ The Sami writer and the Finnish translator are one and the same person.

rectly through syntax formatting and information structure with a view to written style which completely ignores the oral typological specificity of the Samic languages. On the other hand, it has been shown that some Uralic languages have been resistant to this influence, and these have even developed their case systems further, in direct contrast to the tendency to loss in some of the contact languages (Comrie 2005). Will Sami go into this direction? One of its strengths is the Finnish model, a relatively conservative Uralic language, at the one end. Paying more attention to a change of pragmatic status of the language from an oral to a written medium will certainly be one good condition for confirming its typological personality.

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