

Epenthetic vowels in Ume Saami gradation

1. Ume Saami – delimiting a language area

The Ume Saami language area has traditionally been regarded as extending down to the Ume River. The basic – almost exclusive – criterion is then that this river also constitutes the southern border of gradation in Saami. Lack of gradation has been regarded as one of the most important characteristics of the South Saami language. Hasselbrink, for example, defines South Saami as “the dialects without gradation” (SLW, 21; my translation L-GL). Due to their lack of gradation, the Saami varieties of Southern Tärna and Ullisjaure, earlier spoken south of River Umeälven, are also considered to be parts of South Saami (on the position of Ume Saami in the Saami chain of languages see, e.g., Korhonen 1981, 19; Sköld 1961, 68; Sammal-lahti 1998, 7; cf. Larsson 2012, 146; Siegl 2012, 215; Rydving 2013, 144).

There are, however, several linguistic criteria that can balance or even question this traditional opinion and that would unite Southern Tärna and Ullisjaure with Ume Saami. In the sound system, for example, one can note that the consonant combination *-jv-* is preserved in Ullisjaure¹ (Larsson 2012, 101). As for morphology, one could mention that in the Southern Tärna and Ullisjaure varieties the ending in the illative singular of bisyllabic stems is based on *-je*, not on *-se* as in South Saami (see Larsson 2010; 2012, e.g. 101, 131). Therefore, Hasselbrink has to separate a subgroup within South Saami, namely “the northernmost dialects of the northern main dialect”, and that subgroup consists of the varieties of Southern Tärna and Ullisjaure (for the latter one Hasselbrink uses the name Stensele). Nevertheless, there are criteria uniting Southern Tärna and Ullisjaure with – what I call – the rest of the Ume Saami varieties². One of the most important characteristics of Ume Saami is the representation of **i* in the first syllable, which has developed into an *a* in Arjeplog and Lule Saami as well as further to the north, but has remained a closed vowel in South Saami. In Ume Saami, however, the representation depends on the vowel in the second syllable, cf. *nammə* ‘name’ vs. *viššē* ‘hatred’ (Larsson 2012, 110, Tab. 27).

1. South Saami has *-jj-*, cf., e.g., saS *biejjie* ‘day; sun’. Southern Tärna agrees with South Saami, and even in Northern Tärna there is influence from South Saami (cf. NT *biejwie* ‘day; sun’ but *biejjie* ‘sun’). In Ullisjaure, there is just one form, *peäivvē* (Larsson 2012, 101–102).

2. To the question of borderlines cf. also the very important arguments of Hultblad (1968, 77).

So, there are obviously different ways of delimiting the Ume Saami language area and there are borderlines crossing this area in different ways. Furthermore, it must be noted that apart from the usual division of Saami along a north-south axis, there is in Ume Saami a very clear border running from north to south thereby dividing Ume Saami into a western and an eastern dialect. This reflects the division into a mountain Saami and a forest Saami culture; the old forest Saami culture is best preserved in this part of Sápmi (Manker 1968, 22, note 2; Larsson 2012, 29).

Gradation is one of many features that present a regional variation in Ume Saami; not only is it absent in Southern Tärna and Ullisjaure, but it also varies from west to east. According to Moosberg (STS, 45; L-GL) the gradation in the variety of Northern Tärna is “extremely unclear”, even “in a very advanced state of dissolution” (cf. Larsson 2012, 130). In the eastern dialect, however, gradation is very much more regular (Calleberg ULMA 31196, cf., however, Schlachter 1991).

2. Gradation and epenthetic vowels

In this article I will deal only with one particular aspect of gradation, namely how different Ume Saami varieties use epenthetic vowels in the gradation of the YZ- and XZ-series. Here, YZ stands for every combination of a semi-vowel + a consonant in the centre of a word, and XZ stands for the combination of two different consonants; saSorsM *àim̄iε* ‘needle with three edges’ is an example of the YZ-series, and saMsk *pǎlv̄ə* ‘cloud’ one of the XZ-series (cf., e.g., Collinder 1949, 129–132; Korhonen 1981, 135–188; Sammallahti 1998, 47–55).

In an investigation into the distribution of the epenthetic vowel in Lule Saami (Larsson 1991) I showed that in Lule Saami and adjacent dialects there are different ways of marking the strong grade (=grade III) of the YZ- and XZ-series and that these ways have different regional distribution. This can be illustrated by the word SaaN *áibmi* ‘triangular needle (for sewing leather or furs)’, which shows the following variation in the varieties examined: SaaKt³ NSg. *àibm̄i* : ASg. *àim̄i* (KN), SaaNG NSg. *àim̄ē* : NPl. *àim̄ēh* ~ *āim̄ēh* ‘id.’ (HG), SaaJ *âĩm̄ē* : ASg. *āim̄ēy* (HG) and SaaMsk *ǎip̄m̄è* : *ǎĩm̄ēh* (ULMA 22480:1:18). In such contexts the strong grade is expressed by different means in different varieties: by an occlusive element in North Saami and Maskaure, by a pure variation in quantity in Girjes/Girjjiis and by a conspicuous epenthetic vowel in central Lule Saami⁴.

An element regarded as characteristic of a certain variety must of course have its borders. That is obviously the case with epenthetic vowels: in central Lule Saami varieties the epenthetic vowel is a sign of the strong grade (grade III), whereas it seems to be a sign of the weak grade (grade II) in the eastern Ume

3. Here I use the traditional abbreviations for Guovdageaidnu and Girjes/Girjjiis.

4. Harald Grundström’s Lule Saami dictionary (HG) was my main source for that study. The question of whether the variety of Girjes/Girjjiis should be regarded as belonging to North or Lule Saami can be left out of the discussion here (see Wickman 1980; Larsson 1991, 195; Sammallahti 1998, 19; Rydving 2013, 148 ff.).

Saami varieties of Maskaure and Malmesjaure (Larsson 1991, 187–188). In Lule Saami, the epenthetic vowel does not, however, occur in the XZ-series, when the consonants X and Z are homorganic. In the modern Lule Saami orthography an epenthetic vowel is marked by a double second consonant (i.e., Z), e.g., *galggat* [kal^akat] ‘will’, whereas a double first consonant (i.e., X) marks the absence of such a vowel, e.g., *álldo* [al:tū] ‘female reindeer’.

However, I did not consider the question whether there could be a variation *within* Ume Saami. My examples were taken rather at random from Calleberg’s lexical collections from the eastern Ume Saami area. A closer examination of the Ume Saami material has confirmed my results as to the systematic difference between central Lule Saami and eastern Ume Saami. However, the analysis of material from the western part of the Ume Saami area suggested that in that part of the language area an epenthetic vowel is used in the *strong* grade instead, in a way reminding of the system of central Lule Saami.

Here, I will present examples that support the idea that the epenthetic vowel is used in two diametrically opposite ways in Ume Saami gradation. It seems that the borderline between the two systems runs between the western mountain dialect and the eastern forest dialect, i.e., the same dialect border attested in many other cases as well (Larsson 2012, 180–182). Given the limited amount of material and the limited space of this article, it is not possible to give any detailed analysis of the distribution of the epenthetic vowel, and I have to restrict myself to giving some typical instances illustrating the tendencies.

3. Available sources

The dominant source of general information about Ume Saami has been for a very long time Wolfgang Schlachter’s dictionary of Malå Saami (Schlachter 1958). Schlachter’s informant was Lars Sjulsson in Setsele outside Malå, a village in the south-eastern part of the Ume Saami language area. On the same material Schlachter also based another, very extensive investigation into the variation in Malå Saami gradation (Schlachter 1991) and also an extensive article on the epenthesis in Malå Saami (Schlachter 1976) that is, of course, essential for this paper. No wonder then, that to researchers the language of this particular individual has become equal to the Ume Saami standard. Such a dominating position of one south-eastern idiolect was most certainly not what Schlachter aimed at when publishing his works. On the contrary, that is a consequence of the fact that researchers have overlooked for a long time the rich Ume Saami archive-material.

At the beginning of the 20th century the issue of the age of the gradation in Uralic languages was regarded as one of the most important in Uralistics. Therefore, it is quite natural that the researchers of Saami in Sweden at that time took a special interest in that particular Saami language, which was known as forming the south-western border of the – presumably – Uralic gradation. Such an interest is all the more to be expected, when considering that K. B. Wiklund,

who in all respects was the foremost Finno-Ugric scholar in Sweden at that time, had Saami as his special field of research. As a matter of fact, he was the one who initiated much of the field work among the Ume Saami which resulted in the rich archive material used here.

In 1900, Wiklund himself worked with two informants in Malå, and some twenty-five years later his students Nils Moosberg and Axel Calleberg diligently recorded material from seven more Ume Saami varieties. Finally, around the middle of the 20th century Tryggve Sköld worked in Mausjaure outside Arvidsjaur. Already Wiklund's lexical field notes were as extensive as Schlachter's dictionary (1958). Altogether the available lexical material from Ume Saami amounts to almost 50.000 words from nine Ume Saami varieties, which can be compared to the 5.000 words of Schlachter's dictionary taken down after one single informant (Larsson 2012, 48 Table 14). Furthermore, there are descriptions of the morphology of three varieties as well as two investigations into Ume Saami gradation (STS; ULMA 31196), which are of great interest for this investigation – as they would certainly have been to Schlachter, had he been informed about their existence.

This material, which is stored in the SOFI-archives in Uppsala and Umeå in Sweden, enables us to create a more complete picture of the variation in the – today almost extinct – Ume Saami language. As in any language, there was a considerable regional variation.⁵

4. Material from western Ume Saami

Five of the documented varieties represent the eastern dialect of Ume Saami, namely the forest variety of Sorsele⁶, Maskaure, Malmesjaure, Arvidsjaur and Malå. The western Ume Saami dialect area consists of four documented varieties: Southern Tärna, Ullisjaure, Northern Tärna and the mountain variety of Sorsele. Out of these four western varieties, the first two have no gradation at all, which reduces the material that could illustrate gradation and epenthetic vowels in western Ume Saami by half; only the varieties of Northern Tärna and the mountain variety of Sorsele remain. However, Nils Moosberg in his study on Ume Saami gradation (STS, 45; L-GL) arrived at the conclusion that gradation in the variety of Northern Tärna is “extremely unclear and confused” and he considered it a language feature “in a very advanced state of dissolution”. As a consequence of this, only one out of the four western Ume Saami varieties can be regarded as reliable for an investigation into gradation, namely the mountain variety of Sorsele (cf. STS, 46). The material from that variety alone must be the starting-point for an investigation into the gradation in western Ume Saami.

Thanks to Calleberg's documentation (ULMA 22480, ULMA 2139, II; 2784), the Ullisjaure variety can be regarded as the Ume Saami variety that is

5. For a detailed presentation of the material see Larsson (2012, 41–80).

6. Moosberg distinguishes between “the mountain dialect of Sorsele” and “the forest dialect of Sorsele”. I term both of them varieties.

best documented in all respects. As far as quantity is concerned, the opposite is true about the mountain variety of Sorsele. There are all in all three sources documenting this variety. The primary source is Nils Moosberg's vocabulary from Sorsele (ULMA 16777), where the words from the first half of the alphabet (from *a-* to *pi-*) are recorded from two informants who spoke the mountain variety; the remaining part presents words from the forest variety. The lion's share of the approximately 1500 mountain variety words were given by one single informant. Although this collection of words is not very extensive, it turned out to suffice for achieving convincing results in my larger study on Ume Saami (Larsson 2012, 165). The second source is Moosberg's licentiate thesis (STS), where examples from the mountain variety of Sorsele can frequently be found. The third source can be found among K. B. Wiklund's manuscripts at Uppsala University library. It is a short seminar paper, by Einar Spjut on the declension in the mountain variety of Sorsele (UUB: K. B. Wiklund 77:25).

So, the five varieties of the eastern forest dialect are extensively documented by five scholars. There are collections of words from the forest variety of Sorsele (Calleberg and Moosberg), from Maskaure and Malmesjaure (Calleberg), from Arvidsjaur (Sköld), and from Malå (Wiklund and Schlachter), and the grammar of Malmesjaure and Maskaure was described by Calleberg (ULMA 2996; 2860). There is also a manuscript concerning gradation in eastern Ume Saami by Axel Calleberg (ULMA 31196:1; cf. Larsson 2012, 41 ff.), probably the preliminary work for a thesis for the degree of licentiate. Then there is, of course, Schlachter's very extensive monograph on disturbances in the gradation of the Malå variety, and even an article dedicated especially to the epenthetic vowel in Malå Saami (Schlachter 1976). The mountain variety of Sorsele, the only western Ume Saami variety with – what seems to be – a regular gradation, is documented only in three sources, all limited in some way. Spjut's paper presents only a couple of words relevant to the present investigation. Moosberg's licentiate thesis does, in fact, bring relevant examples from gradation in the mountain variety of Sorsele, but he tends to give an example either from Northern Tärna or one from the mountain variety of Sorsele, whereas he generally presents example words from Southern Tärna and the forest variety of Sorsele. Examples from the mountain variety would have been of much greater interest; examples from Southern Tärna can hardly contribute to the question of gradation.

There are still more problems connected with the material from the Sorsele varieties. One has to deal with an irritating lack of information, in regards to verb forms. As for nouns, Calleberg's collection generally presents the full forms in the nominative singular and the nominative plural, and Moosberg gives the forms in the nominative singular and the genitive singular; in other words, we get the forms of both the strong grade and the weak grade. When it comes to verbs, however, Calleberg generally gives only the infinitive (= strong grade form of a bisyllabic verb) and Moosberg all too often gives an abbreviated weak grade form along with the infinitive, e.g., "*gilljoæt* : *-juóB*". Therefore noun forms dominate in my material, and it cannot be taken for granted

that the results are valid for verbs as well. However, I do not see any reason to assume that the distribution pattern of the epenthetic vowel should be restricted to nouns.

As for the eastern dialect, the use of the monograph by Schlachter (1991) also presents difficulties. Due to its extremely detailed description of the variation in a Malå idiolect it is of limited use for comparative work.

Schlachter's Malå material represents, as mentioned above, the language of one particular individual. That means that his varying forms are quite similar to Moosberg's material, which also presents the language of one individual, and where variation as to epenthetic vowel is illustrated by means of parentheses, e.g., NT GSg. *nål^(e)mien* 'mouth'.⁷ Here one could observe a comment by K. B. Wiklund in Moosberg's wordlist from the mountain variety of Sorsele. For 'stone' Moosberg (ULMA 16777, 66) had written "*giärr^(e)k̄ ie, giärgien*". Wiklund added above the strong grade nominative: "*rrk̄ - l. [or] r^ek̄ -*". In other words he regarded the epenthetic vowel in this variety as an alternative way of expressing the strong grade, which is the same variation as Schlachter (1991, 131) registered in the Malå variety.

For practical reasons, I have made some simplifications in the transcription of the examples in this article. In the example words in table 1 as well as in the text I have, i.a., written long consonants with double letters, removed markings of a palatalised pronunciation of consonants, replaced the velarised <ɲ> with <ɺ> and standardized the pronunciation variants of second syllable reduced vowels into <ə>. This is done, since the accuracy of the transcription seems to vary from source to source. Moosberg, e.g., uses the velarised <ɲ> in his field notes from Northern Tärna, but not elsewhere. Consistently, however, I render the quantity of the consonant centre and surrounding vowels exactly as it is in the sources. Even if every word constitutes a unity, quantity is what is fundamental in this connection.

There may also be some uncertainty as to the registering of epenthetic vowels. It is not impossible that some scholars have regarded such vowels as unimportant and left them out, while others have noted them consistently. Wiklund's field notes from Malå (UUB: KBW 25–26), that constitute the starting point for Calleberg's vocabulary collection (ULMA 22480; cf. Larsson 2012, 57 f.), seem to contain fewer epenthetic vowels in grade II than Calleberg's own field notes from Malmesjaure, Maskaure and the forest variety of Sorsele, in spite of the fact that these varieties are very close to each other (Larsson 2012, 158 with figure 43). It is hard to tell whether this depends on the character of the Malå variety or on the researcher (cf. Schlachter 1991, 131; Larsson 1996, 193). On the other hand, Calleberg in his preliminary notes for a licentiate thesis (ULMA 31196, 1) seems to regard the epenthetic vowel as a more or less regular marker of the weak grade of some contexts and to mark it accordingly. Such problems are balanced by the fact that we have at our disposal field notes by several researchers, often from one and the same variety, e.g., both Moosberg and Calleberg for the forest variety of Sorsele.

7. On the reliability of the data of the informants, see Larsson (2012, 179–180).

5. The epenthetic vowel in gradation

Both Collinder (1938) and Schlachter (1976) have studied the epenthetic vowel in Saami, Collinder in Lule Saami and Schlachter in Malå Saami. Both of them regard it from a phonetic point of view: the epenthetic vowel is caused by what they regard as difficulties in articulation. Later, Schlachter (1991, 3) connected it, however, to more general prosodic factors. It is highly probable that such difficulties have caused the emergence of this vowel sound (so, explicitly, Schlachter 1976, 431; cf. Hall 2011, 1576–1577). However, Engstrand & Angéus-Kuoljok (1982, 14; Larsson 1991, 189) demonstrated that there is, in fact, an epenthetic vowel also in the weak grade forms of central Lule Saami. Nevertheless, the characteristic epenthetic vowel of that language is used as a marker of the strong grade (Larsson 1991, 195). Obviously, it's more than just phonetics that we are dealing with here.

Collinder (1938, 72) arrives at the conclusion that the epenthetic vowel is a marker of the strong grade in Lule Saami, whereas Schlachter (1976, 427) concludes that that is not the case in Malå Saami. So, even if the origin of the epenthetic vowel is found in phonetics, its function lies outside articulation difficulties. The use of an epenthetic vowel to distinguish the strong grade from the weak grade seems to be characteristic of some Saami languages; nothing of its kind can be found, e.g., in the work of Hall (2011). Articulation difficulties could explain an overshort vowel sound – like the one found in the weak grade forms of Lule Saami by Engstrand & Angéus-Kuoljok – but they could never explain the different *functions* of epenthetic vowels in Lule Saami and Ume Saami. The sound has developed for some – phonetic or prosodic – reason, but may later on have acquired some specific function. After its functional importance has grown, as in central Lule Saami, it is no longer an over-short vowel sound (Larsson 1991, 189). In Ume Saami, south of the Lule Saami area, the circumstances are not that clear or stabilized⁸, but there are distinct tendencies that can be shown.

The examples in table 1 are taken from the field notes of four different scholars. They differ in phonetic accuracy. Sköld is the most scrupulous, but also Moosberg's and Calleberg's broader transcription gives plenty of information about the actual pronunciation. It must also be underlined that their field notes have been scrutinized by their teacher, K. B. Wiklund (Larsson 2012, 66). In case a western dialect form in table 1 is not taken from the mountain variety of Sorsele but from Northern Tärna, that form is marked with "NT".

The western dialect is here represented almost exclusively by Moosberg's field notes from the mountain variety of Sorsele (ULMA 16777). They contain information from two informants, even if one of them, Ludvig Grahm, has contributed with no more than 200 words. In spite of the rather sparse material (Larsson 2012, 48), one gets the impression that there are some differences between the pronunciations of the two informants. To obtain a clear picture of Grahm's use of the epenthetic vowel one would need more examples of XZ- and YZ-contexts with complete strong-grade and weak-grade forms. The description of the mountain variety of Sorsele is generally based on the language of Brita-Stina Larsdotter, the informant who has provided most of the material.

8. Here I leave Arjeplog Saami out of the discussion.

	Western mountain dialect	Eastern forest dialect
XZ	<i>nâl^lk iε</i> : <i>nâlgien</i> ‘delicious’	SorsF. <i>ollk iε</i> : <i>olk iεn</i> ‘shoulder’
	<i>âlkū</i> : <i>âlgūæn</i> ‘beginning’	Msk. <i>âlkū</i> : <i>âl^lkūæstə</i>
	<i>nâl^lm iε</i> : <i>nâl^(e)m iεn</i> ‘mouth’	SorsF. <i>kâl^lmäs</i> : <i>kâl^lp mæ</i> ‘cold’
	NT. <i>al^lm iε</i> : <i>al^(e)m iεn</i> ~ <i>allm iεn</i> ‘heaven’	SorsF. <i>al^(a)ppm iε</i> : <i>al^lm iεn</i>
	<i>gal^lmât</i> : <i>ī gal^lm iεh</i> ‘freeze’	Msk. <i>čâl^lp mē</i> : <i>čâl^lm ēn</i> ‘eye’ ⁹
	<i>hel^(e)m iε</i> : <i>hielm iεn</i> ‘tail, flap’	Mlm. <i>kuol^lmäs</i> : <i>kuol^lp masan</i> ‘bark [noun]’
	<i>güellppie</i> ~ <i>güellpie</i> : <i>güelp iεn</i> ‘floor’	Msk. <i>kuölpē</i> : <i>küölp^(e)pēh</i>
	<i>hul^(u)wōt</i> : <i>ī hul^(u)wu</i> ‘howl’	Msk. <i>hül^lvōt</i> : <i>hül^lvōv</i>
	NT. <i>ban^awə</i> : <i>-n</i> ‘cloud’	Msk. <i>päl^lvə</i> : <i>päl^lvah</i>
	<i>nuor^ljū</i> : <i>nüörj iεn</i> ‘seal’	Msk. <i>kīrjē</i> : <i>kīr^ljēh</i> ‘book, letter’ ¹⁰
	–	Arv. <i>geδ^lge^l</i> : <i>geδ^lgē</i> ¹¹ ‘stone’
	<i>heer^(e)k iε</i> : <i>hierg iεn</i> ‘(draught)reindeer’	SorsF. <i>biärrkū</i> : <i>biär^lk ūen</i> ‘meat’
	<i>guorrkə</i> : <i>güörkæn</i> ‘crane’	Msk. <i>küörkə</i> : <i>küör^lk</i> ¹²
	<i>süor^(a)mā</i> : <i>suormān</i> ‘finger’	SorsF. <i>suorrbmā</i> : <i>süor^(a)b mēn</i> ; Msk. <i>süörp mæ</i> : <i>süör^lp mæh</i> ¹³
	<i>ärñie</i> : <i>ärñ iεn</i> ~ <i>ärñ iεn</i> ‘fireplace in a hut’	Msk. <i>pärñē</i> : <i>pär^lñēh</i> ‘boy; son’
	<i>guorrpə</i> : <i>güörbæn</i> ‘burnt forest-area’	Msk. <i>küörpə</i> : <i>kuor^lp</i>
	<i>büerr iε</i> : <i>büer^(e)t iεn</i> ‘table’	Msk. <i>püör tē</i> : <i>püör^ltēh</i>
<i>heär^lwa</i> : <i>heärwan</i> ‘fair, beautiful’	SorsF. <i>arrvət</i> : <i>är^lvəb</i> ‘get on well’	
<i>g^lorr və</i> : <i>güörvæn</i> ~ <i>güörvæn</i> ‘sausage’	Msk. <i>kuörvə</i> : <i>kuör^lvəh</i>	
<i>gòrv iε</i> : <i>görv iεn</i> ‘rowlock’	Arv. <i>bärvee</i> : <i>bärveeh</i> ‘frame for smoking fish’	
YZ	<i>äik^{lE}</i> : <i>äig iεn</i> ‘time’	Msk. <i>äikē</i> : <i>äi^lkēu</i>
	<i>äim iε</i> : <i>äim iεn</i> ‘needle with three edges’	Msk. <i>äip mē</i> : <i>äi^lmēh</i>
	NT. <i>gäi^lnüə</i> : <i>gäinüæn</i> ‘osier rope’ ¹⁴	SorsF. <i>sväinēs</i> : <i>sväithässen</i> ‘farm- hand’
	<i>gäip iε</i> : <i>gäip iεn</i> ‘chin’	Mlm. <i>käippä</i> : <i>käi^lp(äh)</i>
	NT. <i>väipät</i> : <i>[väi]pät</i> ‘get tired’	Msk. <i>väipöt</i> : <i>väi^lpäv</i> ¹⁵
	<i>häukə</i> : <i>häukæn</i> ~ <i>häukæn</i>	Msk. <i>häi^lvkə</i> : <i>häi^lvk</i>
	<i>nau^l iε</i> : <i>näul iεn</i> ‘mud’	Arv. <i>lüöüvē</i> : <i>lüöü^lvē</i> ‘float of a seine’
	<i>guovllat</i> : <i>guoulob</i> ‘look (down)’	Mlm. <i>kuoullät</i> : <i>küöi^lvlau</i>

Table 1. Examples of XZ- and YZ-series in western and eastern Ume Saami

9. Form from Calleberg’s Maskaure grammar (ULMA 2860, 14).

10. Cf. however SorsF. *sär^ljie* : *särj iεn* ‘wound’ (Moosberg in STS, 33).

11. This sound sequence too, which is missing in western Ume Saami (Larsson 2012, 105 f.), shows the same variation as the other combinations of consonants. The plural character -h is not recorded here, but the form is explicitly said to be the NPI.

12. Calleberg’s Maskaure grammar (ULMA 2860, 40).

13. Calleberg’s Maskaure grammar (ULMA 2860, 36).

14. SorsM. has *gäi^lnü(ə)* : *gäinüæn*.

15. Calleberg’s Maskaure grammar (ULMA 2860, 34).

6. Differences between west and east

It is important to remember that the following comparison is not based on equal materials. The picture of the western dialect almost exclusively rests upon one single variety, from which one individual has given most of the forms. What is said about the eastern dialect is based on several varieties and informants, and on collections of field notes from a number of researchers. In spite of this inequality, a clear tendency emanates from the material: in the eastern forest dialect the epenthetic vowel is predominantly connected to the weak grade of the XZ- and YZ-series, whereas it mainly occurs in the strong grade of these series in the western dialect.

When Moosberg puts the epenthetic vowel in parentheses, this variation sometimes seems to depend on phonetic factors, but at other times that is hardly the case. There are also instances in the material which indicate that we are dealing with a free variation, e.g., when Calleberg (ULMA 31196, 1:60) gives the forms Msk *õivē* ‘head’ and *čõivē* ‘stomach’ directly followed by the weak grade forms (NPl.) *òivēh* and *čòivēh* respectively. This is quite contrary to Calleberg’s tendency in his gradation paper (ULMA 31196, 1) to establish a pattern, where the epenthetic vowel marks the weak grade in the forest dialect.

In some Ume Saami varieties there is an occlusive element in the strong grade (Larsson 1991, 186 ff.) of the YZ- and XZ-series, whereas an epenthetic vowel frequently occurs in the weak grade, e.g., Msk NSg. *čãlpmē* ‘eye’ : NPl. *čãl^hmēh*, NSg. *ãipmē* ‘needle with three edges’: NPl. *ãr^hmēh*. The occlusive element in the strong grade of the XZ- and YZ-series has a distribution restricted to the eastern dialect of Ume Saami (Larsson 2012, 106–107). The western dialect has a pure variation in quantity (cf. STS, tab. I,9 and what was said about the Girjes/Girjjis variety above), as in the following examples from the mountain variety of Sorsele:

NSg. *gainū(ə)* ‘rope of a seine’ : GSg. *gàinùən*
 NSg. *heunie* ‘spider’ : GSg. *hèunien*
 NSg. *güellppie* ~ *güellp̃ie* ‘floor’ : GSg. *gùelpien*
 NSg. *àrnie* ‘fireplace in a hut’ : GSg. *ārniēn* ~ *àrniēn*

There is an obvious pattern – well-known from other Saami languages as well – in these forms with short vowels in front of a consonant centre in grade III, and a longer vowel before grade II. In the mountain variety of Sorsele, however, the gradation is purely quantitative after originally long vowels also in the X-series. This does not concern only /l/ and /r/ as in other Saami languages, but also /j/ and nasal consonants, e.g., *nüállat* ‘to swallow’ : *nüälav*, *jijjə* ‘night’ : *jijən* (STS, 17, 14, tab. 5); *jämmāt* ‘to die’ : *jāmāb*, *gïenies* ‘bad’ : *gännässn*, *jeŋŋə* ‘ice’ : *jeŋən* (Moosberg; ULMA 16777); *muarra* ‘tree’ : *muaran*; *sämmie* ‘Saami’ : *sāmien*, *kāmas* ‘skin on the leg of a reindeer’ : *kāmmasən* (Spjut, 4, 6 resp. 10).

As already mentioned, Ludvig Grahn has only contributed a couple of hundred words to the vocabulary notes from the mountain variety of Sorsele; out of those obviously only a few can represent the XZ- and YZ-series. In one case belonging to the XZ- series he has given the forms *garrvāt* : *gar^avāb* ‘make a detour’, forms that show a striking similarity with the forest Saami pattern, i.e.,

with an epenthetic vowel in the weak grade. It is impossible to determine whether this is purely accidental or represents a pattern in Grahn's idiolect. One could consider the fact that Grahn as an active reindeer herder with his winterland down in the east had regular contacts with the forest Saami (Norstedt 2011, 180). Not much is known about the whereabouts of the other informant from the mountain variety of Sorsele, Brita-Lisa Larsdotter, who was registered as a maid in Gillesnuole in the church register in 1890. This remains speculative, due to the lack of material, but an eastern form in the language of a western informant raises one's curiosity.

The examples in table 1 are representative of the patterns that I have seen in the material. The material from the mountain variety of Sorsele is not extensive, but the picture is clear. It should be noted that Moosberg often shows varying pronunciation with parentheses. In the word for 'heaven' he (STS, 35) uses parentheses both in the mountain and in the forest Saami forms: *al^εm̄iε* : *al^(ε)m̄iεn* ~ *allm̄iεn* / SorsF. *al^(ə)pp̄m̄iε* : *al^əm̄iεn*, but it must be observed that in the western form (here from Northern Tärna) the epenthetic vowel can be left out in the weak grade, whereas the same is true about the strong grade in the eastern form.

The function of the epenthetic vowel in the western dialect of Ume Saami is also apparent from a comment in Moosberg's vocabulary from Northern Tärna (16776 s.v. *vuöb^εta*; L-GL): "*wùöb^εt̄ä* : *wùöb^εin* (the nominative almost trisyllabic; the epenthetic vowel very strong with a secondary accent??: genitive the epenthetic vowel sometimes clearly audible, sometimes hardly or not at all". An epenthetic vowel rendering an "almost trisyllabic" strong grade form comes close to the system of central Lule Saami.

The use of an epenthetic vowel in the Ume Saami dialects cannot be considered a question of phonetics. That would not explain the differences in geographical distribution, where the western system – to judge from the material available – is the opposite of the eastern one. There is a clear tendency that it is a sign of the weak grade of the XZ- and YZ-series in the eastern dialect, but a sign of the strong grade in the western dialect. I have suggested (Larsson 1991, 187) that the lack of epenthetic vowels in the strong grade in eastern Ume Saami has to do with the prolongation of Z in those contexts. Only when less energy was put into the later element in XZ or YZ, could an epenthetic vowel appear between these sounds. I still regard that explanation as possible. In the western dialect, on the other hand, the gradation system is to a very high extent based on quantity, and there an epenthetic vowel seems to have been on its way to developing in the direction of the system of central Lule Saami. The western mountain dialect of Ume Saami could – in the varieties that had gradation – have become an interesting parallel to Lule Saami. One has to regret that there is not more material describing this extinct variety.

Abbreviations

Arv	Arvidsjaur variety	NPI	Nominative Pural
J	Jokkmokk variety	NSg	Nominative singular
Kt	Guovdageaidnu variety	NT	variety of Northern Tärna
M	Malå variety	Saa	Saami
Mlm	Malmesjaure variety	SaaN	North Saami
Msk	Maskaure variety	SorsF	Sorsele forest variety
NG	Girjes/Girjjiis variety	SorsM	Sorsele mountain variety

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