

Degrammaticalization drift in North Saami

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The paper discusses a little-studied morphological phenomenon in North Saami. North Saami is a suffixing language, but at the same time one of the most fusional within the Uralic family, with remarkable variation and irregularity in and across the inflectional paradigms and derivational processes. The focus is on occasional instances in which bound morphemes show looseness in phrases where two representatives of the same inflectional or derivational form are coordinated: Word pairs like the negative converbs *bora-keahttá ja juga-keahttá* [eat-NEG.CVB and drink-NEG.CVB] ‘without eating and (without) drinking’ may be replaced by phrases like *bora- ja juga-keahttá* [eat and drink-NEG.CVB] where the first member of the phrase undergoes conjunction reduction usually reserved for compounded words. It is shown that almost twenty inflectional and derivational disyllabic suffixes are able to behave in a similar way. It is proposed that the “degrammaticalization drift” in the language can be explained by the fact that in a relatively fusional language, the remaining non-fusional disyllabic suffixes are prone to be perceived as word-like morphemes rather than as bound morphemes. Nearly all of them have long suffixal roots in Saami, and the debonding phenomena can thus be regarded as extraordinary counterevidence to the unidirectionality hypothesis.

1. Introduction

This article provides a brief overview of a little-studied morphological phenomenon in North Saami, an indigenous Uralic language of the northernmost parts of Norway, Sweden and Finland. The focus is on partial, but multiple, debonding of originally bound morphemes, and the extraordinary range of the phenomena discussed makes it possible to state that North Saami is experiencing a wholesale “degrammaticalization drift” that can be best explained with regard to the general morphological makeup of the language.

North Saami has a relatively fusional inflectional morphology, and its derivational morphology is quite fusional as well. However, there are also a number of disyllabic suffixes that are by definition much less fusional, and as a whole, the morphology is quite variegated. From a diachronic perspective, the language – along with other Saami languages – is considered to belong to the most fusional representatives of Uralic, although the reconstructed Proto-Saami is generally depicted as a somewhat agglutinative language (Sammallahti 1998: 61–94, 203–225; Koponen 2022: 107–111). Even when the bound grammatical suffixes have been preserved, multiple sound changes and occasional analogical restructurings have resulted in remarkable variation and asymmetry in and across the inflectional paradigms and derivational processes. As a result, the fusional features of North Saami are intertwined with a high degree of irregularity and counterintuitive form–meaning relations, as witness verb forms like *juhke* (infinitive, citation form *juhkat* ‘drink’), which may mean both drink.PRS.1DU and drink.PST.3PL and *juhket*, which means drink.PRS.3PL, drink.PST.2SG and drink.IMP.2PL, whereas *jugat* stands for not only drink.PRS.2SG but also for the IMP.2SG and so-called connegative forms of both the causative verb *jukahit* ‘make drink’ and the frequentative derivation *jugadit* ‘tipple; drink (alcohol, repeatedly)’. When the inflectional suffixes are less fusional, there is considerable allomorphy such as in the forms *juhka-*

beahhti [drink-PRS.2DU] but *juga-h-eahppi* [drink-CAUS-PRS.2DU], or *juhka-behtet* [drink-PRS.2PL] but *juga-h-ehpet* [drink-CAUS-PRS.2PL].¹

In addition to the fusionality and heavy allomorphy depicted above, North Saami does also have suffixes of more regular nature. For example, the simultaneous converb suffix *-(d)ettiin* yields verb forms like *jugadettiin* for drink.CVB.SIM and tipple.CVB.SIM, and *jukahettiin* for drink.CAUS.CVB.SIM, and the negative converb in *-keahtá* is used to create forms like *jugakeahtá* [drink.CVB.NEG] and *jugatkeahtá* [tipple.CVB.NEG] and [drink.CAUS.CVB.NEG]. This article focuses on the latter type of morphemes and their position within the overall system of North Saami morphology. More precisely, the focus is on the occasional instances in which bound morphemes like *-keahtá* appear as less bound, when instead of a coordinated phrase like *borakeahtá ja jugakeahtá* for ‘without eating and (without) drinking’ it is possible to attest phrases like *bora- ja jugakeahtá* where the first member of the phrase undergoes a similar conjunction reduction that is usually reserved only for compound words such as in *borran- ja juhkanbáikkít* [eat.AN and drink.AN.place.PL] ‘eating and drinking places’, i.e. ‘restaurants and bars’.

- (1) *Fástu, bora-keahtái-vuohta lea oskku vierru ahte eallit*
 fasting eat-CVB.NEG-hood be.3SG faith.GA practice COMP live.INF
veahá bottu bora- ja juga-keahtá.
 little while.GA eat and drink-CVB.NEG

‘Fasting, abstaining from food [i.e., “uneatenness”] is a religious practice of going a little while without eating and drinking.’ (*Odda Testamenta*, p. 669)

Following Norde (2009), the degrammaticalization phenomena in question are characterized as debonding.

After a brief introduction to the background and the state of research in Section 2, Section 3 provides data and observations about the debonding phenomena that can be attested in nearly twenty North Saami inflectional and derivational suffixes. Section 4 draws the individual observations together and provides a general discussion and further remarks on the topic. Unless otherwise specified, the data presented in this study comes from texts made available by the SIKOR corpus at UiT The Arctic University of Norway. Additional examples stem from various other texts and observations from daily communication with native speakers. Most of my examples come from newspapers and fiction originally written in North Saami, except for (4), (16) and (21), which are translations from Norwegian, which has nevertheless not triggered the use of the debonding phenomena illustrated by these examples.

Although the main bulk of this article concentrates on the concrete observations on a previously little studied phenomenon and the main aim is to provide authentic (exclusively literary) data for further theoretical research on degrammaticalization, it is tentatively proposed that we are witnessing a typologically extraordinary development: Nearly all of the morphemes in question have long suffixal roots in Saami and other Uralic languages, and the debonding phenomena can be therefore regarded as counterevidence to the so-called grammaticalization theory and

¹ As indirectly remarked by an anonymous reviewer, the traditional concepts of *agglutination* and *fusionality* have been rightfully criticized and many alternative approaches to morphological typology do exist (see, e.g., Bickel & Nichols 2005; Haspelmath 2009), but they remain widely understood and seldom need to be explained outside introductory linguistic textbooks in which they still belong (e.g., Haspelmath & Sims 2010). However, in the present paper I will use these terms only with reference to scholars who consider these terms still unproblematic (§4.2).

unidirectionality hypothesis. The most remarkable point of view provided by North Saami is that the same phenomenon is repeatedly observed in a variety of so-called bound morphemes. As a result, it is claimed that this state of affairs makes it possible to label the situation as a “degrammaticalization drift” in the sense of Sapir (1921: 166) who characterizes a drift as a developmental tendency in a language “constituted by the unconscious selection on the part of its speakers of those individual variations that are cumulative in some special direction”. Further, it is proposed that the most obvious reason for the degrammaticalization drift may lie in the fact that in a predominantly fusional language like North Saami, non-fusional disyllabic morphemes like the converb markers *-keahtá* and *-dettiin* are prone to be perceived as word-like morphemes rather than as bound morphemes.

2. Background and state of research

The background of this article is twofold. It appears that phrases such as *bora- ja jugakeahtá* ‘without eating and drinking’ mentioned above were first discussed in Ylikoski (2009: 123) where such constructions are compared with a number of newly emerged non-finite verb forms exhibiting similar behavior that can, however, be explained as the inheritance of the earlier adpositional origin of the non-finite suffixes. Further, similar examples of conjunction reduction have long been observed in the use of the plural comitative case marker *-iguin* that likewise goes back to a postposition (**guoimmi* ‘with’) attached to its complement (plural genitive in **-i*).

There is thus a major diachronic difference between *bora- ja jugakeahtá* (1) and phrases like the plural comitative *bissui- ja sáitti-iguin* [gun-PL(.OBL) and spear-PL.COM] ‘with guns and spears’: Whereas the latter example can be regarded as a remnant of earlier postpositional phrases that have quite recently grammaticalized in a cross-linguistically common way, *bora- ja jugakeahtá* is an instance of unexpected debonding of descendant of the Proto-Saami negative converb (Sammallahti 1998: 222; see §3.2 below). Other examples of the *-iguin* type of recently emerged suffixes that may undergo similar conjunction reduction include certain converbs (Ylikoski 2009: 116ff.) and a case-like “prolative” in *-ráigge*, as seen in *geaidno- ja šalderáigge* [road and bridge.PROL] ‘along the road and (across) the bridge’ (Ylikoski 2014: 66). The element *-ráigge* is originally the genitive-accusative form of *ráigi* ‘hole’.

Additional background for the present study is provided by the study of degrammaticalization in North Saami. In general typological linguistics, the best known grammatical morpheme of the language is *haga* ‘without’. From a synchronic perspective, *haga* is an ordinary postposition that is also occasionally used as a preposition, as many of the North Saami adpositions function as ambipositions (see Antonsen et al. 2012). Moreover, *haga* also functions as a free adverb, e.g. *Báhcen haga* [remain.PST.1SG without] ‘I was left without [X]’. From a diachronic perspective, the morpheme has been extensively studied as a comparatively rare example of degrammaticalization, as the ultimate origin of the adposition is the Proto-Saami abessive case marker *-ptākek* or **-ptāken*, with even deeper roots in Proto-Uralic **-ktA(k)*. This phenomenon was first understood and described by Wiklund (1902: 57–59) and later made known to the general linguistic public by Nevis (1986). (See also, for example, Campbell 2001: 127; Joseph 2003: 485; Haspelmath 2004: 29; Norde 2009: 207–209 et passim; 2010: 142–144; Ylikoski 2016: 119–129.)

The most recent discussion on degrammaticalization in North Saami is Ylikoski’s (2016) study on the history of *(-)naga*, a denominal derivational suffix that goes back to the Proto-Saami essive case marker (ultimately the Proto-Uralic locative case marker) **-nA* that has been augmented with an unknown element (*-ga*). Although nearly all earlier descriptions of denominal *-naga* forms have

characterized them as adverbs, only about half of the corpus occurrences of these forms are used in a predicative function (e.g., *báidi lea varranaga* [shirt be.3SG blood.naga] ‘the shirt was stained with blood’), whereas the other half are adnominal modifiers (*varranaga báidi* [blood.naga shirt] ‘a shirt stained with blood’), which makes them look very much like adjectives, although comparative and superlative forms seem to be absent, and unlike nearly all regular adjectives, *-naga* lacks plural forms in contexts where a plural would be otherwise expected. In any case, the morpheme *-naga* has traditionally had no features typical of nouns or other parts of speech, and is thus to be understood as a derivational suffix. Moreover, especially the predicative functions of the suffix can be seen as near-synonyms to some of the marginal functions of the essive case (e.g., *varra-n* [blood-ESS] ‘stained with blood’), as also witnessed by the intermediate forms such as *varrana id.* (Ylikoski 2016: 129–139; 2017: 233–236). Bergsland (1961: 46) even regards *-naga* as an augmented form of the essive in *-n*.²

However, the entire suffix *-naga* ‘stained with’ has later been reanalyzed as a noun for ‘stain; trace’ in the Guovdageaidnu dialect located in the heart of the North Saami language area, whereas the original derivational functions are still retained all over the speaking area. One of the intermediate stages of the degrammaticalization appears to be manifested in phrases like *varra- ja guomo-naga* [blood and chyme-stained] ‘stained with blood and chyme’, although it could be replaced with unreduced *varranaga ja guomonaga*, just like the postpositional phrase *áhči ja Issáha haga* [father.GA and Issát.GA without] ‘without father and (without) Issát’ could be replaced with a more original, yet nowadays less common phrase type *áhči haga ja Issáha haga* [father.GA without and Issát.GA without] ‘without father and (without) Issát’ (Norde 2009: 207).

Ylikoski (2009) has paid attention to a number of similar instances of conjunction reduction, and some of these observations are developed further in Ylikoski’s (2016) discussion on the degrammaticalization of *naga* ‘stain; trace’ and its near-namesake *haga* ‘without’. However, it has been proven difficult to establish clear criteria for what counts as “degrammaticalization”, a concept still categorically denied by many linguists. The next section consists of a brief definition of a subtype of degrammaticalization, “debonding”, followed by a systematic presentation of the individual types of North Saami morphemes that may undergo such debonding.

3. Observations

In the only major monograph on degrammaticalization to date, Norde (2009) differentiates between three subtypes of degrammaticalization: “degrammation”, “deinflectionalization” and “debonding”. According to her definition of the latter, “[d]ebonding is a composite change whereby a bound morpheme in a specific linguistic context becomes a free morpheme” (*id.* 186).

It must be emphasized from the very beginning that most of the morphemes discussed in the present study do not meet Norde’s definition in the strict sense. As a matter of fact, it is possible that the words *haga* ‘without’ and *naga* ‘stain; trace’ may be the only truly free debonded morphemes in North Saami; one more candidate will be mentioned in §3.16.

However, Norde and almost all historical linguists certainly understand that linguistic change is usually gradual, and this applies to debonding as well. In short, I wish to reformulate Norde’s words by emphasizing that the following examples can be characterized as debonding in the sense that my

² As pointed out by an anonymous reviewer, it may be difficult for the unacquainted reader to relate to *-naga* as a bound grammatical morpheme with the meaning of ‘stained with’. However, other Saami languages generally use their essive or genitive cases in this function, and the neighboring Finnish its inessive case (see Ylikoski 2016: 139).

data provides plenty of evidence about situations in which “a bound morpheme in a specific linguistic context becomes a freer morpheme”. By becoming freer I am simply referring to cases in which bound morphemes of various inflected and derived verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs are able to undergo conjunction reduction in expressions where two or more coordinated word forms are connected with the coordinating conjunction *ja* ‘and’ or, more seldom, with *dahje/dehe* ‘or’. Unlike with newly agglutinated suffixes such as plural comitative *-iguin* and prolative *-ráigge* mentioned above, the following subsections provide examples of debonding among a number of truly bound morphemes whose earlier phases or cognates in other languages have not been attested as showing similar behavior. The following subsections focus on morphological issues. The semantic properties of the morphemes in question are indeed of lesser importance, but semantic issues will also be addressed in §4.

3.1. Abessive case to adposition (*haga* ‘without’), adverbial derivative to noun (*naga* ‘stain; trace’)

For the sake of coherence, it is reminded that the morphemes *haga* ‘without’ and *naga* ‘stain; trace’ were shortly described already in §2. Their full degrammaticalization into truly free words has been discussed at length in the earlier literature mentioned above, and their significance to the present study will be discussed in §4.

3.2. Negative converb (and abessive marker) in *-keahtta*

The history of the negative converb marker *-keahtta* may be somewhat unclear, but it is obvious that it consists of the abessive case marker (*-htta* ~ present-day adposition *haga* ‘without’) that has originally attached to a derivational or stem-final element **(k)kV* (cf. Korhonen 1974: 171ff.; 1981: 295; Sammallahti 1998: 87). Although possibly none of the more than six thousand occurrences of *-keahtta* in the 28.4M word corpus of North Saami (SIKOR) exhibit debonding, I have come across the *hapax legomenon* seen in (1). As mentioned above, the expected variant of the debonded phrase *bora- ja jugakeahtta* would be *borakeahtta ja jugakeahtta* ‘without eating and (without) drinking’. Moreover, certain western dialects of North Saami use *keahtta* (~ *keahttai*) also as a case-like element that is often written as a separate word and may be better analyzed as a postposition, in analogy to the abessive marker *haga* ‘without’ discussed above (see Korhonen 1974: 181–182; Ylikoski 2009: 101–102):

- (2) -- *sieidi ja ulddat* -- *ledje dan dihte goddán su*
 sieidi and gnome.PL be.PST.3PL that.GA because kill.PST.PTCP 3SG.GA
bohcco ja dáhtton nuvt váldit iešválddálaččat alcceseaset
 reindeer.GA and want.PST.PTCP thus take.INF headstrongly REFL.ILL.POSS.3PL
oaffara almmá su dáhtu- ja lobi-keahttai.
 sacrifice.GA without 3SG.GA wish.GA and permission.GA-without/ABE
 ‘-- *sieidi* (Saami idol or sacrificial place) and gnomes had therefore killed his reindeer and thus headstrongly wanted to take themselves a sacrifice without his wish or permission.’
 (Hætta 2019: 52–53)

The standard North Saami alternative for the phrase *almmá su dáhtu- ja lobikeahtái* would be the postpositional phrase *almmá su dáhtu ja lobi haga* [without 3SG.GA will.GA and permission.GA without] ‘without his will and permission’.

3.3. Simultaneous converb in *-dettiin*

The origin of the simultaneous converb marker *-dettiin* is analogous to *-keahtá* seen above: According to the prevailing view, the suffix goes back to a deverbal derivational suffix **-nta* followed by the plural locative (**-j-na*) or the singular comitative (**-jna*) marker (Korhonen 1974: 145ff.; 1981: 291–293, 315; Sammallahti 1998: 86, 222). As a rule, *-dettiin* is a bound suffix that does not undergo debonding, but it is nevertheless possible to encounter occasional phrases like *boade- dahje manadettiin* instead of the expected *boadedettiin dahje manadettiin* ‘when coming or going’:

- (3) *Báiki lea 20 min eret olgoriikka girdinšilju ahte doppe gánneha*
 place be.3SG 20 min off foreign.country.GA airport.GA COMP there pay.off.3SG
fitnat jogo boade- dahje mana-dettiin luvvemin dehkiid.
 visit.INF either come or go-CVB.SIM loosen.PROG muscle.PL.GA
 ‘The place is 20 minutes from the international airport, so that it is worthwhile to visit the place and get a massage either on arrival or departure.’

For another example, *hála- ja čále-dettiin* [speak and write-CVB.SIM] ‘when speaking and writing’ in an authentic sentence, see Ylikoski (2009: 123–124).

3.4. Negative participle in *-keahtes*

The negative participle in *-keahtes* is mostly, although not entirely unambiguously, an attributive counterpart of the negative converb in *-keahtá* (§3.2). Minor synchronic inconsistencies aside (see Ylikoski 2009: 173–174), it is unquestionable that the two suffixes have parallel origins. As a consequence, it is not surprising to observe debonding of *-keahtes* (4) in analogy to *-keahtá* (1):

- (4) *Jagiin manjil 1850 ledje=ge olu čujut- ja mávsse-keahtes*
 year.PL.LOC after 1850(.GA) be.PST.3PL=DPT many plead and pay-PTCP.NEG
sierradivadiid murrenráנגgáštusáššit, – –
 separate.fee.PL.GA wood.chopping.lawsuit.PL
 ‘In the years after 1850, there were indeed many lawsuits concerning special fees on felling trees and chopping wood that had not been paid or argued against [i.e., no pleas were offered in defense] – –’ (NAČ 1993:34: 198)

Again, the far more expected variant of the debonded construction above would be *čujutkeahtes ja mávssekeahtes* ‘unpleaded and unpaid’.

3.5. Negative adjective in *-keahtes*

The suffix *-keahtes* can be added to virtually all verb stems and regarded as a participle marker that has the invariable meaning ‘un-V-ed’. However, the same element can also be added to many nouns, resulting in denominal caritive adjectives with the meaning ‘N-less’. According to prescriptive grammar rules (Nickel & Sammallahti 2011: 640), only a minor part of nouns – a class with consonant-final stems – are able to turn to adjectives such as (*sohkar* ‘sugar’ →) *sohkarkeahtes* ‘sugarless’, whereas other nouns take the suffix *-heapme* : *-his* instead. However, in non-standard language, *-keahtes* is also common with various stem types, and besides forms like *alkoholaheapme* (predicative form) and *alkoholahis* (attributive form) ‘alcohol-free’, synonymous adjectives like *alkoholakeahtes* also occur.

Given the debonding possibility of participial *-keahtes* forms (4), it may not come as a surprise that the denominal *-keahtes* forms may also undergo conjunction reduction:

- (5) *Unjárgga nuoraidráđđi ja Sletta klubba (Unjárgga nuoraidklubba) lágídit*
 Unjárgga.GA youth.council and Sletta club Unjárgga.GA youth.club arrange.3PL
ovttas Unjárgga nuoraide álkohola- ja gárrenmirk[k]o-keahtes doaluid
 together Unjárgga.GA youngster.PL.ILL alcohol and narcotic-less party.PL.GA
 May.GA 16th day.GA
miessemánu 16. beaivvi.
 ‘The Unjárga Youth Council and Sletta club (an Unjárga youth club) will arrange an alcohol- and drug-free party for the youth in Unjárga on May 16th.’

For an analogous example, *reant[t]o- ja divatkeahtes loatna* [interest and fee-less loan] ‘interest-free and fee-free loan’, see Ylikoski (2009: 121).

3.6. Negative adjective in *-heapme* : *-his*

Most of the North Saami nouns – especially those with vowel-final stems – can be turned into caritive adjectives (and sometimes nouns) by adding the suffix *-heapme* (predicative) : *-his* (attributive) to the oblique stem. For example, *áhčči* ‘father’ yields *áhčeheapme* (predicative) : *áhčehis* (attributive) ‘fatherless’ and *eadni* ‘mother’ yields *eatneheapme* (predicative) : *eatnehis* (attributive) ‘motherless’, and the predicative forms can be further inflected in case and number just like most adjectives in the language.

In comparison to most other suffixes discussed in this article, *-heapme* : *-his* is a morpheme that experiences conjunction reduction relatively often. Ylikoski (2009: 120–121) mentions the examples *áhče- ja eatneheapme* ‘fatherless and motherless’ and *tuollo- ja divathis* ‘duty-free and fee-free’ (instead of *tuollohis ja divathis*), and it is possible to present at least four other examples such as the following:

- (6) *Earret dábálaš groava láibi, oidno maid láhččojuvvon beavdái*
 besides ordinary coarse bread be.seen.3SG also spread.out.PST.PTCP table.ILL
gluten- ja laktose-his ja spelt nammasaš jáffot láibi.
 gluten and lactose-less.ATTR and spelt name.ADJ flour.ADJ bread
 ‘In addition to ordinary coarse bread, there is also gluten- and lactose-free bread on the table, as well as bread made of the flour called *spelt*.’

It is noteworthy that unlike any of the disyllabic suffixes discussed this far, and most of those to be presented below, the attributive variant *-his* in *tuollo- ja divathis* and *gluten- ja laktosehis* consists of one syllable only. The predicative variant of the suffix has cognates in many Uralic languages and consists of **-ktA-mA*, the former part being identical to the Proto-Uralic abessive in **-ktA(k)*, also present in the North Saami *haga* ‘without’ and the suffix pair *-keahtá* and *-keahtes* seen above (§3.4 and §3.5).

3.7. Negative deverbal adjective in *-meahttun*

In addition to the negative converb, the negative participle and two kinds of denominal caritive suffixes seen above, there is one more negative suffix that behaves in a similar way. Except for a handful of denominal adjectives such as (*ipmil* ‘god’ →) *ipmilmeahttun* ‘godless’, the suffix *-meahttun* is usually attached to verb stems. Due to lesser productivity, irregular semantics and the lack of typical morphosyntactic features of verbs, deverbal adjectival derivations in *-meahttun* are better seen as such, instead of as non-finite verb forms such as participles (Ylikoski 2009: 164–167). As regards conjunction reduction, however, the suffix is able to behave just like the morphemes seen above:

- (7) *Vaikko dilli lei áibbas čilget- ja ipmir-meahttun,*
 although situation be.PST.3SG totally explain and understand-NEG.ADJ
de olbmot ain ferteje dahkat hommáid mat galget
 then person.PL still must.PST.3PL do.INF undertaking.PL.GA REL.PL shall.3PL
doallat sin badjin.
 keep.INF 3PL.GA up
 ‘Although the situation was totally unexplainable and incomprehensible, the people still had to take care of their undertakings that were to keep them going.’

Historically, *-meahttun* is a loan suffix from Finnish *-mAtOn*, ultimately originating in Proto-Uralic, as evidenced by the cognates of adjectives like *dovdameahttun* ‘unknown’ in Finnish (*tuntematon* id.) and Tundra Nenets (*tumtəw^ədawej^ə* ‘unrecognized’) (Korhonen 1981: 326; Sammallahti 1998: 91; Aikio 2022: 19).

3.8. Denominal adjectives and nouns in *-laš* : *-lačča-*

The derivational suffix *-laš* turns the same noun stem to a positive, almost possessive nominal that may function as an adjective or a noun: For example, *gielalaš* may mean ‘language-related; linguistic’ and *guovdageaidnulaš* may mean ‘related to the municipality of Guovdageaidnu’ or ‘person from Guovdageaidnu’. Historically, *-laš* is a loan suffix from Finnic, but synchronically it is possible to distinguish between two *-laš* suffixes: one of them is attached to a weak stem of a noun (e.g., *giella* : *giela-*, sometimes accompanied by vowel mutations), but especially toponyms take the suffix in the strong stem (nominative, e.g. *Guovdageaidnu*) (Nickel & Sammallahti 2011: 629, 640–641). Both types are able to experience conjunction reduction. The following examples do not contain either *gielalaš* or *guovdageaidnulaš*, but instead, the derivational suffix occurs in the latter parts of the coordinated phrases only:

- (8) *Giela- ja árbeviro-lačča-t gullet sii nuortasámeálbmogii ja*
 language and tradition-ADJ-ADV belong.3PL 3PL Eastern.Saami.people.ILL and
leat ortodoksalaš.
 be.3PL Orthodox

‘Linguistically and culturally, they belong to the Eastern Saami and they are Orthodox.’

- (9) *Duhát vuosttaš nama almmuhuvvojit juo beaivvi ovdal,*
 thousand first name.GA publish.PASS.3PL already day.GA before
vai guovdageaidnu- ja loabát-lačča-t besset ráhkkanit vuolgit
 in.order.that Guovdageaidnu and Loabát-ADJ-PL can.3PL prepare.INF leave.INF
Áltái válljet oaggunsaji ja jándora goas bivdá.
 Áltá.ILL choose.INF fishing.spot.GA and day.GA when fish.3SG

‘The first thousand names are made public already the day before, so that those from Guovdageaidnu and Loabát are able to make themselves ready to leave for Áltá to choose their fishing spots and days.’³

Neither of the examples contain the monosyllabic *-laš* as such, but the derivations are further turned to adverbs (8) or inflected in number (9), and the suffixal element undergoing conjunction reduction is thus the disyllabic *-laččat*. Case forms are also possible, e.g. *guovdageaidnu- ja kárášjohka-lačča-in* [Guovdageaidnu and Kárášjohka-ADJ-PL.LOC] ‘about persons from Guovdageaidnu and Kárášjohka’, and even more examples could be presented, but for morphologically complex disyllabic suffixes only.

3.9. Denominal adjectives in *-saš* : *-sačča-*

The use of the denominal adjectival suffix *-saš* : *-sačča-* ‘-ly’ is formally and even functionally quite similar to *-laš* : *-lačča-* in the previous examples. Albeit a hapax only, it is notable that again, the attested instance is an example of a combined disyllabic suffix:

- (10) *Dattetge gullen sámegiela mánno- dahje vahkko-sačča-t go*
 anyhow hear.PST.1SG Saami.language.GA month or week-ADJ-ADV when
boarráset fuolkkit sámástedje, ja áhku luhtte Deanus
 old.CMPV relative.PL speak.Saami.PST.3PL and grandmother.GA at Deatnu.LOC
gos mánát maid sámástedje.
 where child.PL also speak.Saami.PST.3PL

‘Anyhow, I used to hear Saami monthly or weekly when my older relatives spoke it, and at grandma’s in Deatnu where children spoke Saami, too.’

The suffix *-saš* : *-sačča-* goes back to the Pre-Proto-Saami era and is cognate to Finnic adjectives in *-(h)inen* (Sammallahti 1998: 91).

³ As a side note, the writer of the newspaper article may have mistaken the municipality of *Loabát* (Norwegian *Lavangen*) for *Láhppi* (*Loppa*).

3.10. Denominal reciprocal nouns in *-žaga-*

The suffix *-žaga-* is used within the relatively closed set of kinship terms and for some other similar terms to create reciprocal derivatives that usually refer to symmetric relationships such as (*viellja* ‘brother’ →) *vieljažagat* ‘brothers (to each other)’. The pan-Saami suffix may have a cognate in Finnic (Korhonen 1981: 321). In the following example, written by a Saami translator on a Saami language mailing list as a reply to a query on the North Saami word for Norwegian *helsøsken* ‘full siblings’, the suffix occurs only in the latter part of the coordinated phrase:

- (11) *Ii=bat leat “olles vielja- ja oappá-žagat”,*
 NEG.3SG=DPT be.CNG full brother and sister-REC(.PL)
go halvsøsken lea “viellja- ja oabbá-beležat”
 as *halvsøsken* be.3SG brother and sister-half.REC(.PL)
 ‘I guess it [Norwegian *helsøsken* ‘full siblings’] is *olles vielja- ja oappážagat* [“full brothers and sisters to each other” in North Saami], as *halvsøsken* [‘half-siblings’] is *viellja- ja oabbá-beležat?*’ (Email message on the Giella mailing list (giella@list.uit.no), 25 January 2013)

In the latter part of the sentence, the element *-beležat* is used in a similar position instead of the full phrase *vielljabeležat ja oabbábeležat* [half.brother.REC(.PL) and half.sister.REC(.PL)], but *-beležat* can be regarded as a part of compound nouns; the etymological stem of *-beležat* is the noun *bealli* ‘half’.

3.11. Inchoative verbs in *-(iš)goahtit*

All the bound-cum-debonded suffixes discussed above turn nominals (nouns or adjectives) into new nominals or to non-finite verb forms with adjectival or adverbial functions. In what follows, our attention is directed to verb derivation.

The suffix *-(iš)goahti-* is one of the most productive aspectual derivational suffixes in the language. The most common variant is *-goahti-* (e.g., *hábmet* ‘shape’ → *hábme-goahtit* ‘begin to shape’), but the variant *-išgoahti-* is used especially for verbs with trisyllabic stems (e.g., *jorgalit* ‘turn; translate’ → *jorgališgoahtit* ‘begin to turn, begin to translate’). The origin of the morpheme is not entirely clear, but in any case it functions as a bound suffix throughout the Saami languages (see Kuokkala 2019). However, this suffix is not entirely bound either:

- (12) *Dieđu maŋná gohpa- ja hábme-gohten daid dáiddan.*
 news.GA after carve and shape-INCH.PST.1SG that.PL.GA art.ESS
 ‘After the news I began carving and shape those into art.’

Not unlike with negative adjectives in *-heapme*: *-his* (§3.6), debonding in verbs in *-(iš)goahtit* is not restricted to a *hapax legomenon*, as I am aware of five cases in various texts. Interestingly, the oldest occurrence – *hállan-iš- ja šleangas-išgoahtá* [lean-iš- and rock-INCH.3SG] ‘(the sledge) begins to lean and rock’ – dates back to the 19th century, and the first part of the compounded phrase contains the initial element *-iš-* of the debonded suffix instead of consisting of the verb stem *hállan-* ‘lean’ only (see Ylikoski 2009: 124 for the full sentence).

In addition to the two occurrences just mentioned, the text corpus also includes sentences with predicates like *dovda- ja geavah-išgoahtá* [know and use-INCH.3SG] ‘begins to know and use’ and

tekste- ja jorgal-išgohtet [subtitle and translate-INCH.3PL] ‘(they) begin to subtitle and translate’. (The allomorphs *-goahti-* and *-išgoahti-* will be returned to in §4.1.)

3.12. Denominal transformative verbs in *-iduhttit*

The morpheme *-iduhtti-* is a relatively unproductive means to create denominal transformative verbs such as (*ráfi* ‘peace’ →) *ráfáiduhttit* ‘pacify, tranquilize’. Among the most frequent ones in North Saami texts are verbs pertaining to the colonialist practices of nation-states. In the following example, the action nominalization in the genitive-accusative case (*-ma*) consists of the verbs (*dárru* ‘Norwegian’ →) *dáruiduhttit* ‘Norwegianize’ and (*suopma* ‘Finn; Finnish’ →) *suomaiduhttit* ‘Finnicize’, but in the first part, only a fragment of the suffix (*-i-*, phonologically /-j-/) is seen:

- (13) *Son lei earret eará njunnožis nannet iešdovddu*
 3SG be.PST.3SG among other things forefront.LOC strengthen.INF self-esteem.GA
erenoamážit nuorain go Sápmi gillái stuorámus
 especially youth.PL.LOC when Sápmi suffer.PST.3SG big.SUP
dáru-i- ja suoma-iduhtti-m-a.
 Norwegian-*i* and Finnish-TRANSF-AN-GA
 ‘Among other things, he was in the forefront strengthening the self-esteem especially among the youth at the time when Sápmi was experiencing the harshest Norwegianization and Finnicization.’

Again, a more expected full variant of the compounded phrase would be *dáruiduhttima ja suomaiduhttima*. For another, similar example, see Ylikoski (2009: 124–125) and §4.

3.13. Denominal frequentative-essive verbs in *-stallat*

Another denominal verb suffix that is able to undergo conjunction reduction is *-stalla-*. The suffix is rather productive and results in verbs whose exact meaning often depends on the meaning of the noun stem. The noun *ávki* ‘use; advantage’ yields *ávkkástallat* ‘make use of; exploit’, and *leaika* ‘play’ yields *leaikkástallat* ‘joke; play around’, for example. Etymologically, the element goes back to a combination of two ancient suffixes (Korhonen 1981: 334, 337; Sammallahti 1998: 92–93). The disyllabic morpheme is able to undergo conjunction reduction:

- (14) *Go bargu gárvána, galget olbmot maid gávdnat vuogas*
 when work get.finished.3SG shall.3PL person.PL also find.INF convenient
báikkiin govddiid gos sii sáhttet káfe- ja ija-stalla-t.
 place.PL.LOC shelter.PL.GA where 3PL can.3PL coffee and night-FREQESS-INF
 ‘When the work is finished, people will also find shelters in nice places where they can stop to make coffee or stay overnight.’

Again, a non-debonded pair of full verbs – *káfestallat ja ijastallat* [have.a.coffee.break.INF and spend.night.INF] – would be possible and more expected. The stem *káfe-* alone does not refer to any kind of action, but to coffee as a substance only.

3.14. Denominal translative-causative verbs in *-mahttit*

Deadjectival verbs in *-mahttit* are not very productive and frequent, but when needed, many adjectives may be turned to verbs in which the derivational element is a combination of the derivational suffix *-m-* and the causative suffix *-ahtti-*. For example, the adjective *čielggas* ‘clear’ yields the verb *čielggasmit* (~ *čielggasmuvvat*) ‘become clearer’, labeled as a so-called translative verb in the Finno-Saami grammatical tradition (Nickel & Sammallahti 2011: 606). This in turn may be causativized to *čielggasmahttit* ‘clarify’. In the same vein, *nanus* ‘firm’ leads to *nanosmit* ‘become firm’ and further to *nanosmahttit* ‘strengthen’, and *ođas* ‘new’ leads to *ođasmit* ‘become new’ and *ođasmahttit* ‘make new; renew’. However, when coordinated, the verb pair *nanosmahttit ja ođasmahttit* can be reduced to *nanos- ja ođasmahttit*:

- (15) *Norgga museaid nanos- ja ođas-m-ahtti-n olis*
 Norway.GA museum.PL.GA firm and new-TRANSL-CAUS-AN(.GA) in.connection.with
ovttastuvvojedje olu museat ovtta hálldahusa vuollái,
 unite.PASS.PST.3PL many museum.PL one.GA administration.GA under
maiddái sámi museat.
 also Saami museum.PL
 ‘When the Norwegian museum system was strengthened and renewed, many museums were placed under a common administration, Saami museums included.’

Again, also these derivational elements have purely suffixal cognates in other Saami languages and beyond (Korhonen 1981: 335, 339–340).

3.15. Factitive-cum-passive verbs in *-(i)d-uvvot*, translative(-cum-passive) verbs in *-(i)d-uvvot*

The following two examples represent two different types of derivations, but are similar enough to be examined together. Consider the first one:

- (16) *Logut leat baji- dehe vuoli-d-uvvo-n lagamus olles tonnii.*
 number.PL be.3PL “up” or “down”-FACT-PASS-PST.PTCP near.SUP full ton.ILL
 ‘The figures have been rounded up or down to the nearest ton.’

Example (16) contains the periphrastic perfect predicate *leat baji- dehe vuoliduvvon* instead of a fuller variant *leat bajiduvvon dehe vuoliduvvon*; their meaning without a specific context is ‘have been raised or lowered’. The past participles *bajiduvvon* and *vuoliduvvon* are based on the passive derivations which in turn are based on the active verbs *bajidit* ‘raise’ and *vuolidit* ‘lower’, characterized as factitive verbs by Nickel and Sammallahti (2011: 608). Ultimately, all these verbs are based on the spatial nominal stems *badji-* “up” and *vuolli-* “down”, but it looks like the underlying verb *bajiduvvon* has been cut on the syllable border.

The second example is a bit more problematic, although the sentence is quite understandable in itself:

- (17) *Hætta oainnu mielde čájeha dat dušše ahte*
 Hætta.GA opinion.GA according.to show.3SG that only COMP
Sámedikkis leat njulgestaga «inkompetenta idiotat» (čuorbbes
 Saami.Parliament.LOC be.3PL downright incompetent idiot.PL incompetent
jallas) gávpot- ja dáru-iduvv-o-n sápmelaččat, geat
 idiotic.ATTR city and Norwegian-TRANSL-PASS-PST.PTCP Saami.PL who.PL
eai ádde maide ge dálu sámiid meahcásteamis.
 NEG.3PL understand.CNG anything.ACC farm.GA Saami.PL.GA hunting.LOC
 ‘In Hætta’s opinion, this only reveals that the Saami Parliament consists of downright incompetent idiots, urbanized and Norwegianized Saamis who don’t understand anything about the hunting culture of the farming (non-nomadic) Saami.’

The coordinated participial phrase *gávpot- ja dáruiduvvon* seems rather anomalous and at best non-standard as regards morphology. While it is clear that the sentence tells about Saamis who have become urbanized and Norwegianized, it is unclear what would be the unshortened variant of the participial phrase. The closest estimate would probably be the so-called translative verbs *gávpotluvvan ja dáruiduvvan* [city-TRANSL-PST.PTCP and Norwegian-TRANSL-PST.PTCP], but the vowel *o* in *dáruiduvvon* makes the word look like a passive verb (cf. *vuoliduvvon* in 16). The standard passive form for a word meaning ‘Norwegianized’ would be *dáruiduhtton* (from *dáruiduhttit* ‘Norwegianize’ seen in 13 above; *dáruiduvvat* ‘become Norwegian(ized)’ is an intransitive verb).

However, as it is not unusual to encounter forms like *dáruiduvvon* in contexts where the passive meaning ‘one who has been Norwegianized’ is not any more natural than that of the translative verb form *dáruiduvvan* ‘one who has become Norwegian(ized)’, I am inclined to interpret *dáruiduvvon* as a translative verb in a non-standard form.⁴ In light of this interpretation, *gávpot-* of (17) most likely stands for the standard *gávpotluvvan*, even though the form *gávpoguvvan* can also be attested. Be that as may, *gávpot- ja dáruiduvvon* exhibits non-standard morphology not only because of the conjunction reduction, but also in respect to the vowel of the last syllable. On the other hand, the construction is definitely semantically understandable and morphologically in line with all the examples presented in the previous sections. As with most derivational suffixes discussed above, the translative derivational suffix has suffixal cognates in other Saami languages and at least the neighboring Finnic (Korhonen 1981: 341; Sammallahti 1998: 93).

⁴ In the 28.4M word corpus of North Saami (SIKOR), there are 98 occurrences of *dáruiduvvat* ‘become Norwegian(ized)’ and as many as 31 occurrences of the non-standard *dáruiduvvot*.

3.16. Denominal (compound) nouns in *-sássa* ‘prospective relative’

To turn back to denominal nouns, consider (18) from a birthday greeting in a newspaper:

- (18) *Váimmolaš dearvuodat isidis, 9 mánáin, 20 áhkkubiin,*
 wholehearted greeting.PL husband.LOC 9 child.PL.LOC 20 woman’s.grandchild.PL.LOC
vivain, manjis,
 son.in.law.PL.LOC daughter.in.law.LOC
mannje- ja vivva-sása-in
 daughter.in.law and son.in.law-future.relative-PL.LOC
 ‘Wholehearted congratulations from your husband, 9 children, 20 grandchildren, sons-in-law,
 daughter-in-law, and the prospective daughters-in-law and sons-in-law’

The element *-sássa* refers to prospective relatives such as *mannjesássa* ‘prospective daughter-in-law’ and *vivvasássa* ‘prospective son-in-law’. Again, full-form coordination like *mannjesásain ja vivvasásain* ‘from the prospective daughters-in-law and sons-in-law’ could be expected. However, what is more interesting is that *sássa* also occurs as an independent word:

- (19) *Dearvuodat mánáin, áhkkubiin, manjis ja*
 greeting.PL child.PL.LOC woman’s.grandchild.PL.LOC daughter.in.law.LOC and
sása-in.
 future.relative-PL.LOC
 ‘Congratulations from your children, grandchildren, daughter-in-law, and the prospective relatives.’

As mentioned in Ylikoski (2009: 119–120), grammarians and lexicographers have been ambivalent about the status of the morpheme *-sássa*. For example, Nielsen (1932–1962 s.v. *sāssā*) has a dictionary entry for the noun *sássa*, but despite an example of a free-standing *sássa* like the one seen in (19), he adds that the element is generally used as the last part of compounds. In his grammar of the language, Nielsen (1926: 56–57) describes *-sássa* as a derivational suffix that comes close to compounds. According to his dictionary, the use of *-sássa* translates as ‘future bridegroom or bride, father-in-law or mother-in-law, son-in-law or daughter-in-law, brother-in-law or sister-in-law’. Accordingly, the plural comitative *sásain* is presumably to be understood as referring to the prospective daughters- and sons-in-law of a person who is already a grandmother. However, in light of the text corpus (SIKOR), Nielsen’s list can be amended by a number of expressions like *ipmesássa* and *lážasássa*, referring to the prospective relatives under the labels *ipmi* ‘wife of uncle or of father’s or mother’s male cousin’ and *láža* ‘son’s or daughter’s father-in-law or mother-in-law’, respectively.

Unlike the partly debonded morphemes seen in §3.2–§3.15 above, *sássa* resembles *haga* ‘with’ and the noun *naga* ‘stain; trace’ (§2 and §3.1) in particular in that a former derivational suffix seems to have degrammaticalized into an entirely free-standing noun. However, to my knowledge the origin of *-sássa* has never been discussed and neither is it possible to delve into the details of this question in the confines of the present paper. In any case, *-sássa* has suffixal counterparts throughout the Saami languages, and there may be good reasons to relate the morpheme to the many descendants of the Proto-Uralic suffix **-ksi*. For further discussion and examples similar to (18–19), see Ylikoski (2009: 119–120).

3.17. Denominal and deadjectival nouns in *-vuohta* ‘-ness’

The next to last element to be discussed is *-vuohta*, a suffix that largely corresponds to English *-ness*, *-hood* and *-ship*: Attached to adjectives like *garas* ‘hard’ and nouns like *mánná* ‘child’ and *olmmái* ‘friend’, *-vuohta* yields abstract nouns with meanings like ‘state/quality of being A’ (*garasvuohta* ‘hardness’) or ‘state of being N’ (*mánnávuohta* ‘childhood’, *olmmáivuohta* ‘friendship’). In Ylikoski (2009: 119ff.), *-vuohta* is shortly discussed because of its ability to undergo conjunction reduction as follows:

- (20) *Mikkela jietna lei áibbas earalágan go lávii skuvllas,*
 Mikkel.GA voice be.PST.3SG totally different as use.to.PST.3SG school.LOC
ii lean dat sihkkar- ja garas-vuohta.
 NEG.3SG be.PST.CNG that sure and hard-ness
 ‘Mikkel’s voice was totally different from what it used to be at school; the sureness and hardness were missing.’

Again, *sihkkar- ja garasvuohta* is a reduced variant of *sihkkarvuohta ja garasvuohta* ‘sureness and hardness’. It is remarkable that of all morphemes presented in this section, *-vuohta* is especially prone to conjunction reduction – my main corpus (SIKOR) and other texts contain dozens of occurrences analogous to (20). Examples include among others *áŋgir- ja viššal-vuohta* [keen and industrious-ness] ‘keenness and industriousness’, *fuolke- ja olmmáivuohta* [kin and friend-ship] ‘kinship and friendship’ and *mánná- ja nuorravuohta* [child- and youth-hood] ‘childhood and youthhood’, and such noun phrases are further inflected in case and number just like ordinary nouns.

The morpheme *-vuohta* also differs from the other suffixes discussed above in that it is generally regarded as originating in a free noun. According to the traditional view, it originates in Proto-Saami-Finnic **vōti* ‘year’ (Korhonen 1981: 322; Sammallahti 1998: 90), but Aikio (2012: 234) has recently disputed this etymology on both phonological and semantic grounds and suggested that the Saami suffix could be cognate with East Khanty *ot* ‘matter’. From a semantic perspective, Aikio doubts that a noun for ‘year’ could have acquired its abstract meaning already as an independent word, as suggested by South Saami *voete* ‘manner, way’ seen in (21):

South Saami

- (21) *Saemien soptsestimmievuekieh, vuelieh, laavlomh jih saalmh, vuekieh,*
 Saami.GEN narration.tradition.PL *vuelie*.PL song.PL and hymn.PL tradition.PL
voeth jih diejvesh Leah jarngesne.
 manner.PL and saying.PL be.3PL center.INE
 ‘The main focus is on traditional Saami story-telling, *vuelie* (South Saami songs), songs and hymns, and traditions, manners and sayings.’

Although the origins of North Saami *-vuohta* and South Saami *(-)voete* may lie in a prehistoric noun, the morpheme has been a suffix for a considerable time, as all present-day Saami languages know it as a suffix. Also in South Saami, the independent *voete* seen above is a relatively uncommon word that is outnumbered by hundreds of derivational (or compounded) *-voete* nouns such as (*gieries* ‘dear’ → *gieriesvoete* ‘love (deariness)’ and (*guektiengielen* ‘bilingual’ → *guektiengielenvoete* ‘bilingualism’). In fact, in light of the data presented in this study it is not

unimaginable that South Saami *voete* ‘manner, way’ is a new, degrammaticalized noun originating in the derivational suffix *-voete*, no matter what the ultimate origin of the element is. From this perspective, the origin of *-vuohta/-voete* may still remain unknown, and the element is therefore worth remembering along with the many derivational suffixes discussed above.⁵

3.18. Third person plural possessive suffix *-easet*

Finally, the very last potentially relevant element in this connection is *-easet*, one of the many possible forms of possessive suffixes in North Saami. Although the following example could be understood as simply having a non-possessive-suffixed noun in free variation with possessive suffixed forms such as *áhku-id-easet* [grandmother-PL.GA-3PL], it is notable that the possessive suffix is omitted in a context where the expression *áhkut ja ádját* (grandmother.PL and grandfather.PL) is used as the normal phrase for ‘grandparents’ in coordination with *vánhemat* ‘parents’, as the language lacks a gender-neutral or collective word for ‘grandparent(s)’:

- (22) -- *olbmot leat dál dan dilis ahte eai máhte*
 person.PL be.3PL now that.GA situation.LOC COMP NEG.3PL can.CNG
vánhemiiddiset dahje áhkuid ja ádjáid-easet
 parent.PL.GA.POSS.3PL or grandmother.PL.GA and grandfather.PL.GA-POSS.3PL
giela.
 language.GA
 ‘-- people are now in a situation where they do not know the language of their parents or grandparents.’

In other words, in light of all the examples of the unambiguous conjunction reduction seen in previous sections, it is also possible to see the absence of the possessive suffix *-easet* in *áhkuid* as one more manifestation of conjunction reduction in North Saami.⁶

4. Discussion

The concrete instances of the conjunction reduction described here are, admittedly, quite rare and marginal in North Saami: For many of the examples discussed above, we are dealing with *hapax legomena* among hundreds of unreduced word pairs. However, most of my examples are written by professional and highly qualified native-speaking writers, and it is very unlikely that even mediocre authors would resort to a typologically extraordinary conjunction reduction if it was not in harmony with the language system itself. Although the absolute number of the occurrences depicted above remains quite small, the most impressive feature of the phenomenon in North Saami is that the conjunction reduction phenomena can be observed in a number of semantically and diachronically unrelated morphemes – inflectional and derivational suffixes alike. Despite its marginality, there is obviously a tendency for these kinds of phenomena in the language, thus making it possible to

⁵ Note that this paper discusses only suffixes that do not obviously go back to previously independent words (e.g. the plural comitative in *-iguin* and prolative in *-ráigge* mentioned in §2). For the same reason, North Saami *-vuohta* is different from suffixes like English *-hood* or German *-schaft* whose ability to occur in phrases like *mother- and fatherhood* and *Mutter- und Vaterschaft* may well go back to their well-known nominal origins.

⁶ Johanna Johansen Ijäs has kindly made me aware of the fact that expressions analogous to these are somewhat common in the 19th-century texts composed by Lars Hætta (1834–1896) from Guovdageaidnu (Hætta 2019).

regard the situation as a drift as characterized by Sapir (1921: 166): “The drift of a language is constituted by the unconscious selection on the part of its speakers of those individual variations that are cumulative in some special direction.”

What is the special direction of North Saami, then? The conjunction reduction phenomena can be viewed from two main perspectives – functional and formal. It appears that the latter perspective is the most fruitful one, whereas the functional perspective has relatively little to say: The morphemes discussed above belong to the realm of inflection and derivation alike; within derivation, many suffixes modify the meaning of the stem without changing the word-class (§3.8–3.11 and 3.16–3.17), but various word-class-changing morphemes behave in the same way, as shown by deverbal adjectives in *-meahttun* ‘un-V-able’ (§3.7) and deadjectival verbs in *-mahttit* ‘A-ify’ (§3.14), for example. Furthermore, it appears that there is no obvious semantic gain from the conjunction reduction – the only gain seems to be the omission of two unneeded syllables.

4.1. Suffixes that look like words

From a morphophonological perspective, the attributive forms of the denominal adjectives in *-heapme* : *-his* constitute the sole exception in my data, as the two attested phrases – *gluten- ja laktosehis* ‘gluten- and lactose-free’ and *tuollo- ja divathis* ‘duty-free and fee-free’ (§3.6) – are the only known instances in which the debonded suffix consists of only one syllable. While the denominal adjectives and nouns in *-laš* as well as the denominal adjectives in *-saš* have monosyllabic suffixes in the nominative singular, the attested debonding phenomena are limited to their disyllabic allomorphs triggered by either inflection (9) or further derivation (10).

On the other hand, disyllabicity is not the most dominating feature either, as it is also possible to observe trisyllabic elements that have undergone conjunction reduction. Example (13) presented the phrase *dáru- ja suomaiduhttima* in which the action nominals *dáruiduhttin* ‘Norwegianization’ and *suomaiduhttin* ‘Finnicization’ are in the genitive-accusative and the debonded element thus consists of three syllables (*-duht-ti-ma*). An additional example would be the analogous comitative in *suomai-, dáru-, ruotai- ja ruoššaiduhttimiin* ‘by Finnicization, Norwegianization, Swedification and Russification’ presented in Ylikoski (2009: 124–125).

As a matter of fact, the above examples take us even further away from a purely morphological point of view: It is remarkable that while the verbs *dáruiduhttit* ‘Norwegianize’, *suomaiduhttit* ‘Finnicize’, *ruotaiduhttit* ‘Swedify’ and *ruoššaiduhttit* ‘Russify’ consist of the ethnonyms *dárru*, *suopma*, *ruotta* and *ruošša* followed by the transformative verb suffix, it is not the morpheme *-iduhtti-* in its entirety that undergoes conjunction reduction but the underlying phonological word forms: Although the initial <i> /j/ of the transformative suffix is entirely meaningless *per se*, it remains in the syllable-final position in the sequences *dáru-*, *suomai-* and *ruotai-*. The inchoative suffix *-(iš)goahti-* behaves in the same way: As mentioned in §3.11, the variant *-goahti-* (with further internal morphophonological changes) is attached to disyllabic verb stems and *-išgoahti-* to trisyllabic ones, the latter resulting in verbs like (*hállanit* ‘lean’ →) *hállanišgoahtit* ‘begin to lean’ and (*šleangasit* ‘rock; swing’ →) *šleangasišgoahtit* ‘begin to rock’. However, when coordinated, debonding does not affect the inchoative suffix in its entirety, but it is split into two on the first syllable border. Again, the truncated sequence *hállaniš-* is meaningless and thus ungrammatical in itself, but in *hállan-iš- ja šleangas-išgoahtá* [lean-iš- and rock-INCH.3SG] ‘(the sledge) begins to lean and rock’ it might be the only possible sequence if the phrase is to experience conjunction reduction.

Although the data presented in this study comes from literary sources, it is worthwhile to look at the debonding phenomena from the prosodic perspective. In North Saami, virtually all autochthonous members of open word-classes – nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs as seen in the examples of conjunction reduction – have a uniform stress pattern. The primary stress is always on the first syllable. Non-compounded word forms of four (or more) syllables have two (or more) disyllabic feet, and the initial syllables of non-initial feet receive secondary stress. In other words, all odd-number syllables except for the last syllables receive primary or secondary stress.

As for inflectional and derivational suffixes, syllabic suffixes most often fall on the third or fifth syllable, and when a suffix consists of two syllables, the first of them receives secondary stress. This in turn makes such word forms resemble compound words: *loabát-lačča-t* [Loabát-ADJ-PL] ‘persons from Loabát’ has about the same stress pattern as the compound *gávpot-dáčča-t* [city-Norwegian-PL] ‘urban Norwegians’. From this perspective, it becomes more understandable to observe conjunction reduction such as in *‘guovda, geaidnu- ja ‘loabát, laččať* ‘persons from Guovdageaidnu and Loabát’ and *‘mánno- dahje ‘vahkko, saččať* ‘monthly or weekly’ – prosodically, these phrases do not considerably differ from the compound *‘gávpot- ja ‘riddo, dáččať* [city and coast-Norwegian-PL] ‘urban and coastal Norwegians’ where conjunction reduction is more of a rule than an exception (cf. Ylikoski 2016: 163).

Further, inchoative verbs in *-išgoahtit* (§3.11) and property nouns in *-vuohta* (§3.17) differ from other suffixes in having the extraordinary stress pattern in which the secondary stress is on the derivational suffix regardless of the syllable count of the word. It may also be added that *-keahtes* in words like four-syllable *‘gluten, keahtes* ‘gluten-free’ (6) and five-syllable *‘reseapta, keahtes* ‘prescription-free’ seems to behave similarly. Moreover, it has been observed already by Nielsen (1926: 56–57) that there are only a few bound morphemes with the vowel *á* (/aa/ ~ /ä(ä)/) or the diphthongs *ie*, *oa* and *uo*, and his examples include *-(iš)goahti-* (§3.11), *-sássa* (§3.16) and *-vuohta* (§3.17). He further declares that these suffixes lie on the border of compounds, though without justifying this statement (see also Korhonen 1974: 101). The examples of conjunction reduction seen above serve as a partial justification for Nielsen’s view, and in fact, the denominal adjectival derivatives in *-naga* (§3.1) have experienced reanalysis as nouns via compound nouns: For example, it has been possible to reanalyze the derivation *málanaga* ‘stained with paint’ as a compound for ‘paint stain’, and such compounds have further yielded the free noun *naga* ‘stain; trace’.⁷

Many of the word forms presented above are also examples of phonotactically unusual consonant combinations that occur at the border of two feet only in case of a morpheme border. According to Sammallahti (2019), these include /rv/ and /sv/ as seen in *sihkkarvuohta* ‘sureness’ and *garasvuohta* ‘hardness’ (20), /hl/ as seen in *loabátlaččať* ‘persons from Loabát’ (9) or possible *gávpotluvvan* (or non-standard *gávpotluvvon*) ‘urbanized’ (17), /šk/ in *šleangasišgoahtá* ‘begins to rock’ (§3.11) and /hm/ and /rm/ in *čilgetmeahttun* ‘unexplainable’ and *ipmirmeahttun* ‘incomprehensible’ in (7).

In conclusion, virtually all of the examples of conjunction reduction presented in §3 contain inflectional or derivational suffixes that are formally analogous to many free disyllabic word forms of open word-classes. Table 1 illustrates this fact by comparing the suffixes in question with examples of phonologically similar free words.

⁷ While Ylikoski (2016) was not able to present any spontaneous examples of *naga* as a free noun, I wish to thank the mother of a young child (Guovdageaidnu, Norway) for reporting me in 2017 how her child had asked the mother to come to the toilet to wipe (*sihkkut*) *daid nagaid* [that.PL.GA stain.PL.GA] ‘those stains/traces’.

Table 1: Comparison of the suffixes undergoing conjunction reduction and formally analogous free word forms

Suffix	Comparable free word	Gloss
<i>-haga, -naga</i> (§3.1)	<i>daga</i>	do.IMP.2SG
<i>-keahtá</i> (§3.2)	<i>Heahtá</i>	(name of a village)
<i>-dettiin</i> (§3.3)	<i>vettiin</i>	root.fibre.COM/root.fibre.PL.LOC
<i>-keahtes</i> (§3.4, §3.5)	<i>čeahpes</i>	skillful.ATTR
<i>-heapme ~ -heapmi : -his</i> (§3.6)	<i>epmi</i>	carpel; pistil
<i>-meahttun</i> (§3.7)	<i>leahttun</i>	speed.ESS
<i>-laš : -lačča-</i> (§3.8)	<i>dáčča</i>	Norwegian
<i>-saš : -sačča-</i> (§3.9)	<i>dáčča</i>	Norwegian
<i>-žagat</i> (§3.10)	<i>dagat</i>	do.2SG
<i>-(iš)goahtit</i> (§3.11)	<i>boahtit</i>	come.INF/come.1PL
<i>-(i)duhttit</i> (§3.12)	<i>muhttit</i>	change.INF/change.1PL
<i>-stallat</i> (§3.13)	<i>stellet</i>	arrange.INF/arrange.1PL/arrange.2SG
<i>-mahttit</i> (§3.14)	<i>muhttit</i>	change.INF/change.1PL
<i>-(i)d-uvvot</i> (§3.15)	<i>buvvot</i>	choke.INF/choke.1PL
<i>-sássa</i> (§3.16)	<i>kássa</i>	box
<i>-vuohta</i> (§3.17)	<i>duohta</i>	true
<i>-easet</i> (§3.18)	<i>geaset</i>	reindeer calf or lamb born in summer

4.2. Grammaticalization theory or conspiracy theory: How can this be possible?

Norde (2009: 1) characterizes the topic of her *Degrammaticalization* as the “ugly duckling of grammaticalization studies”, and presents a comprehensive overview of the development and reception of this relatively new concept. The concept of *degrammaticalization* has received criticism and skepticism ever since the term was coined by Lehmann (2015 [1982]) in 1982 to refer to something that was not supposed to exist; for his unshaken position, see Lehmann (2015: 193–194). While many of those who do not subscribe to the existence of degrammaticalization do not usually deny the factual language history, they often understand and define both grammaticalization and the proposed idea of degrammaticalization in their own ways that make degrammaticalization appear an impossible or at least unattested phenomenon (see Norde 2009: 67ff.; Ylikoski 2016: 117–118). For some proponents of the unidirectionality hypothesis, it seems possible to ward off potential counterexamples by labeling them as ordinary analogical changes, which easily makes them appear as harmless or even banal examples of linguistic change (see Kiparsky 2012: 20ff.).

Even for those who are truly fascinated by the broad range of phenomena under the label of degrammaticalization, these phenomena have appeared as quite exceptional and difficult to generalize on. There are indeed good reasons to admit that degrammaticalization may be characterized as an ugly duckling when compared to the continuous flow of examples of mostly unidirectional grammaticalization processes that were well known already by greatest linguists of the 19th century (e.g., Whitney 1867: 57ff.; Paul 1880: 175ff.; cf. Ikonen 2005: 109–110). To be sure, the ugly duckling should be all the more interesting in this context. This is also the main reason for providing plenty of examples along with short notes on the history of the morphemes in question, although it may be anticipated that none of the data presented here is enough to convince those who

have already rejected the possibility of degrammaticalization and debonding as its subspecies (see Ylikoski 2016: 118).

While all of the above examples come from North Saami except for one reference to South Saami (§3.17), it may be added that at least Lule Saami has been documented to have the expression *bielje- ja giela-dipme* [ear- and language-less] ‘deaf-mute’ (Korhonen 2007 s.v. *bielje-*), fully in line with North Saami *bealje- ja giela-heapme*. However, in the absence of comparable text corpora for the minor languages of the Saami branch, there is little evidence that other Saami languages would have experienced “degrammaticalization drifts” similar to that in North Saami. In fact, it may be added that most if not all of the examples presented above come from texts written by North Saamis living in Norway, and according to my preliminary observations they are also best accepted by such speakers, whereas they are less accepted among the one-fourth of North Saami speakers who live in Finland and Sweden.

As for the global diversity of languages, it would be daring to claim that a debonding drift like that in North Saami is not known in any other languages, but it is not unimaginable that this could indeed be the case. In January 2018, I posted a query entitled “Languages with multiple debonding of bound morphemes?” to the Lingtyp mailing list provided by the Association for Linguistic Typology (Lingtyp 2018). I received a handful of friendly comments from various parts of the world, but nearly none of those turned out to provide information about languages comparable to North Saami. However, an interesting parallel to my findings comes from West Iranian: In his paper “Debonding of inflectional morphology in Kurdish and beyond” Haig (2019) describes a number of phenomena where the bonds between old case and number markers and their bases have been loosened. This is manifested in the way the more recently grammaticalized indefiniteness and definiteness markers “have somehow intervened between inherited morphology (case and plural) and the base, thus violating the morphological integrity of the word” (p. 119). As a result of his study, Haig concludes “that inherited inflectional morphology is not automatically doomed to erosion and loss, but may in fact extend its distributional possibilities and loosen its morphological integration with the base, a process referred to as debonding” (p. 117).

In spite of the number of Haig’s examples, his examples come from many different West Iranian languages and none of them are examples of affixes becoming independent words. Therefore, I am content to cite my earlier stance on the extraordinary nature of North Saami:

Doyle (2002: 77–78) characterizes the degrammaticalization of the Irish *muid* ‘we’ from the first person plural verb suffix *-mid* as an outcome of “a conspiracy of syntactic and phonological factors”. In light of everything that has been said about the development of North Saami *haga* ‘without’ and *(-)naga* ‘stain; trace; stained with’ in the preceding sections, it is easy to agree with Doyle’s sentiments and conclude that in contrast to the more or less unidirectional grammaticalization theory that by no means is able to explain a large part of the ordinary morphological innovations in the language [...], the histories of *haga* and *(-)naga* are better understood with the help of “conspiracy theories” consisting of extraordinary combinations of phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic circumstances that have provided for multiple unusual reanalyses of earlier suffixes. (Ylikoski 2016: 164)

Other attempts to refer to such conspiracies contain vague impressionistic wordings like “paradigmatic pressure”, “system disruption”, “a rather special kick” and “some kind of powerful innovation” (Ylikoski 2016: 160–161).

At least a part of the conspiracies that have resulted in the full degrammaticalization of *haga* and *naga* seems to account for the North Saami debonding phenomena in general. Although there are little signs of other earlier suffixes having gained full independence in the language – *sássa* ‘future relative’ (§3.16) being a potential exception – it appears that the best available explanation lies in the interplay of the relatively fusional morphology and the existence of clearly less fusional, almost word-like bound morphemes. For the almost twenty inflectional and derivational suffixes that may undergo conjunction reduction, the nearly universal common denominator for all of them is that they consist of two syllables and occur in positions where they receive secondary stress, which makes them appear very similar to the second parts of compounds.

When discussing the degrammaticalization of *haga* and *naga*, Ylikoski (2016: 161) also comments on the following claim by Viti (2015) who claims that most cases of degrammaticalization

– – are drawn from agglutinative languages or language families, such as Finno-Ugric or, more generally, from Uralic. Often quoted examples of degrammaticalization are the cliticization of suffix *-gi* in Estonian (Nevis 1984, Nevis 1988) and the formal independence of the abessive case in Saami (Nevis [1986]; Joseph and Janda 1988: 200). (Viti 2015: 405)

In Viti’s view, North Saami *haga* would be an example of such development. However, on the contrary it must be repeated that North Saami is definitely one of the least agglutinative languages within the Uralic language family. On the other hand, this forgotten fact may actually be the main key to understanding the degrammaticalization of not only *haga* and *naga*, but possibly all of the debonding phenomena discussed in this paper. To continue quoting Ylikoski (2016: 163), the following reasoning seems to apply to virtually all instances of conjunction reduction described in §3:

Moreover, it seems that instead of Viti’s (2015: 406, 411) claim that morphemes like *(-)haga* and *(-)naga* are prone to be identified and separated from their bases because of the overall agglutinativity of the language, it may be precisely the relatively high degree of fusionality that makes such untypical affixes stick out as something more than mere affixes and thus open to reanalysis in potentially ambiguous sentence contexts. On the other hand, it is true that North Saami has also been agglutinative enough to develop the agglutinative morphemes that have been able to degrammaticalize. It is probably a mere coincidence that *haga* and *naga* are formally so close to each other, but it might not be a coincidence that it has not been any of the nonsyllabic, stem-changing suffixes like the illative case marker *-i /-j/* or the derivational suffix *-i /-j/* ‘-y’ as in *varrii* [blood.ILL] ‘to blood’ or *varrái* [blood.ADJ] ‘ruddy’ that have undergone gradual debonding and finally degrammaticalized into independent words. (Ylikoski 2016: 163)

It may be added that the other Uralic language mentioned by Viti, Estonian, is far from the best representatives of agglutinative languages of the family either. Moreover, in addition to Estonian and North Saami, Norde’s (2009: 186–227) systematic case studies on debonding consist mostly of examples from languages like Dutch, English, Irish and Swedish, and none of the better-known agglutinative languages. On the other hand, another way of looking at it can be found in Haig’s (2019: 139) remark that one of the outcomes of cumulative debonding may be that a previously fusional morphology of languages like Old and Middle Iranian – or North Saami – becomes gradually more and more agglutinative.

5. Conclusion

The main point of the present study is that even though only some debonded suffixes have acquired a truly new life as new degrammaticalized words, there is a subtle tendency in North Saami to give special privileges to disyllabic morphemes whose phonological makeup is more typical of words than of non- or monosyllabic morphemes without even a secondary stress. It may be impossible to identify the first suffixes to have undergone conjunction reduction in the language, but by the 21st century the language has witnessed a wholesale debonding drift where each new instance of a debonded morpheme probably adds to the drift effect.

Abbreviations

ABE	abessive	INE	inessive
ACC	accusative	INF	infinitive
ADJ	adjective	LOC	locative
ADV	adverb	NEG	negative
AN	action nominalization	OBL	oblique stem
ATTR	attributive	PASS	passive
CAUS	causative	PL	plural
CMPV	comparative	POSS	possessive suffix
CNG	connegative	PROG	progressive
COM	comitative	PROL	prolative
COMP	complementizer	PRS	present
CVB	converb	PST	past
DPT	discourse particle	PTCP	participle
DU	dual	REC	reciprocal
ESS	essive	REFL	reflexive pronoun
FACT	factitive	REL	relative
FREQESS	frequentative-essive	SG	singular
GA	genitive-accusative	SIM	simultaneous
GEN	genitive	SUP	superlative
ILL	illative	TRANSF	transformative
IMP	imperative	TRANSL	translative (verb)
INCH	inchoative		

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