

# North Saami

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## 10.1 Background and current situation of North Saami

North Saami (*sámegiella* or *davvisámegiella*), in some older references erroneously called “Norwegian Lapp”, is traditionally spoken in the northernmost parts of Norway, Sweden, and Finland (see Map 10.1). Today, due to modern mobility and urbanization, a considerable number of its speakers live outside the traditional speaking area, especially in urban centres such as the regions around the capitals of the three countries. North Saami is numerically the strongest Saami variety; estimates of the number of its speakers range from under 20,000 to over 30,000. In the south-west North Saami is bordered by Lule Saami, a closely related sister variety; the boundary between North Saami and its eastern sisters Aanaar Saami (Inari Saami) and Skolt Saami is much more abrupt.

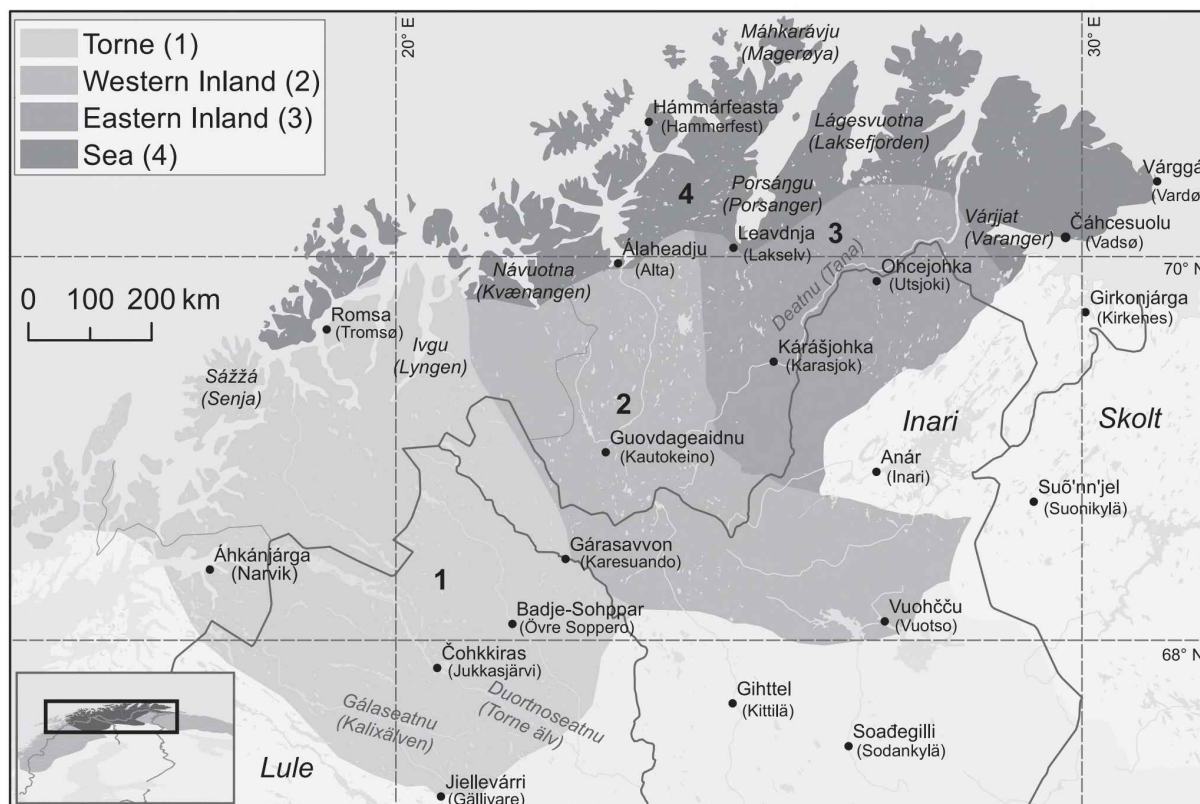
In dialectological terms, North Saami consists of four main dialect groups, as shown in Map 10.1: the Western Inland dialects (WI), the Eastern Inland dialects (EI), the Torne dialects (T), and the Sea dialects (S). The WI and EI dialects are often bundled together in literature and somewhat misleadingly named “Finnmark dialects”. The differences between the traditional regional dialects are most pronounced in phonology, but also concern the shapes of certain morphological endings and traditional vocabulary.

There is also dialectal variation of more recent origin which reflects the geopolitically unusual position of North Saami on the border of three states. Most parts of the speech community have been bilingual for a considerable period of time, and in some local communities trilingualism (in Saami, Swedish/Norwegian, and Finnish/Meänkieli/Kven) has been common (see, e.g., Helander-Renvall 1984). At present, practically all speakers are bilingual in the dominant state language, and the simultaneous influence of three different majority and state languages—Norwegian, Swedish, and Finnish—on different parts of the speaking area has led to the emergence of “new” dialect boundaries that coincide with state borders. The new dialectal differences mainly

involve features of phonetics and intonation, syntax, and vocabulary for modern concepts, and thus differ markedly from the features distinguishing the traditional regional dialects (Aikio et al. 2015: 246–8).

The written use of North Saami began during the eighteenth century, while the orthographic tradition applying special characters was initiated by Rasmus Rask and Nils Vibe Stockfleth in the early nineteenth century (see 6.2). The current standard orthography was officially implemented in 1979. Until then, different orthographies had been used in different countries, whereas linguistic references mostly used the orthography which Konrad Nielsen had created and applied in his grammar (1926–29) and dictionary (1932–62). Nielsen’s orthography is therefore not only used by many twentieth-century works of comparative Uralic linguistics, but also features in international linguistic literature where these data are quoted and circulated. It differs from the current standard orthography quite visibly in numerous features, some of which are purely notational whereas others reflect dialectal differences or archaic features obsolete in modern language. The complicated correspondences between the current orthography and various others used prior to 1979 are summarized by Korhonen (1981: 59–62).

As a result of the strengthening of ethnolinguistic emancipation since the second half of the twentieth century, North Saami now enjoys probably stronger legal and institutional support than any other “minor” Uralic language: it is used in media, in the education system also as a medium of education, in written literature, and in various cultural activities, and in all three countries it has co-official status in the traditional Saami area. However, there are still problems with the efficiency, quality, and coverage of support measures, especially as concerns the numerous North Saami speakers living outside those very few areas where they form a local linguistic majority; despite many successes in revitalization and the restoration of language transmission in many families and local communities, North Saami remains a definitely endangered language.



Map 10.1 The traditional speaking areas and main dialect groups of North Saami

## 10.2 Phonology

Two factors make North Saami phonology difficult to describe in the context of a grammar sketch. First, the phonology of the language is extremely complex, and features quantitative and qualitative oppositions that are typologically unusual and open to alternative phonological analyses. Second, there are immense phonological differences between dialects, and no “basic” or “standard” pronunciation exists that could be chosen as an object of description. The orthography of the language can be characterized as a somewhat abstract compromise between the main dialects; the correspondences between writing and the varying dialectal forms are generally regular but complicated, and moreover, some important phonological phenomena remain hidden by the writing system, which does not mark all quantitative contrasts. Only the main features of phonology of the WI and EI dialects are discussed in the following brief sketch, which is heavily based on Sammallahti’s (2019) thorough analysis of the phonological systems of North Saami dialects.

### 10.2.1 Vowels

In terms of qualitative contrasts, the vowel inventories of North Saami dialects consist of both monophthongs and opening diphthongs. A typologically quite remarkable feature is that both monophthongs and diphthongs can contrast by length (short vs long) as well as by stress placement within the vowel (initially stressed vs finally stressed). There are, however, major dialectal differences regarding to what extent these contrasts are made use of, and how exactly they are realized. The orthography does not indicate vowel quantity and stress placement at all except for certain dialectal oppositions between short and long [a].

In native Saami vocabulary (i.e. recent loanwords excluded), the WI dialects have five contrastive qualities of monophthongs, whereas the EI dialects have seven; the latter show a qualitative contrast between three low vowels, whereas the former possess only one low vowel (see Table 10.1). The EI vowel /b/ is usually realized with a very slight lip rounding and it is pronounced slightly more back than /a/, but in some subdialects or idiolects it is instead an open-mid unrounded back vowel ( $\approx$  IPA [ʌ]).

**Table 10.1** Phonologically contrastive qualities of monophthongs in North Saami

WI dialects			EI dialects		
front unrounded	back unrounded	back rounded	front unrounded	back unrounded	back rounded
i		u	i		u
e		o	e		o
	a		æ	a	ɒ

In addition to the ones in Table 10.1, there are marginal vowel phonemes that occur in recent loanwords. The best-established of them is /y/, which is found in a number of loanwords and internationalisms such as *fylka* ‘(Norwegian) county’ (< Norwegian *fylke*) and *myhta* ‘myth’. There are also a couple of Scandinavian and Finnish borrowings with the vowel /ø/, which can be orthographically represented by either ⟨ø⟩ (as in Norwegian) or ⟨ö⟩ (as in Swedish and Finnish), e.g. ⟨børsa⟩ ~ ⟨börsa⟩ ‘stock exchange’ (< Norwegian *børs*/Swedish *börs*). Speakers bilingual in Norwegian or Swedish also tend to maintain the foreign vowel phoneme /ʉ/ (for orthographic ⟨u⟩) in recent loans such as *busse* ‘bus’ and *musihkka* ‘music’.

All dialects contrast short and long monophthongs. However, the specific occurrence of the quantities varies between dialects, so that WI short vowels often correspond to EI long vowels, and sometimes vice versa. Long monophthongs can show a further contrast between initial stress (/V·V/) and final stress (/VV·/). Allophonically, there is also a concomitant difference in quantity: in most environments /VV·/ is slightly shorter than a /V·V/, but nevertheless markedly longer than a short monophthong /V/. In WI dialects this three-way contrast occurs only in the case of /a/, but in EI it applies to all vowel qualities. Cf. the following minimal triplet:

short monophthong: EI /pɔste/ ⟨baste⟩ spoon.NOM  
 initially stressed long monophthong: EI /pɔ·ste/ ⟨bastte⟩ spoon.GENACC  
 finally stressed long monophthong: EI /pɔst·e/ ⟨bastte⟩ be.sharp.CNG

As for diphthongs, WI dialects contrast between initially and finally stressed diphthongs (Table 10.2); allophonically

they differ also by quantity, the former being longer than the latter. EI dialects have more complex diphthong systems, but the details vary greatly between subdialects. A general EI feature is the quantity contrast between short and long diphthongs, in addition to which diphthongs also contrast by stress placement. All EI subdialects contrast stress placement in long diphthongs, and some do that even in short diphthongs. A relatively simple example of an EI diphthong system is provided by the author’s (Aikio) own idiolect of the Ohcejohka subdialect (Table 10.3). However, much more complex systems have been presented as well, the most extreme example being the system as documented by Sammallahti (2019) from elderly speakers of the Veahčat subdialect (Table 10.4).

**Table 10.2** Phonologically contrastive diphthongs in the WI dialects

initially stressed		finally stressed	
ie	u·o	ie·	uo·
e·æ	o·a	eæ·	oa·

**Table 10.3** Phonologically contrastive diphthongs in the EI dialects (Ohcejohka subdialect)

short	initially stressed long	finally stressed long
ĩě    ũě	ie        u·o	ie·    ue·
ě·æ    õ·ä    õ·ä	i·æ    u·æ    u·a	eæ·    oæ·    oa·

**Table 10.4** Phonologically contrastive diphthongs in the EI dialects (Veahčat subdialect)

initially stressed short		finally stressed short		initially stressed long		finally stressed long			
ĩě	ũě	ĩě·	ũě·	ie	ue	uo	ie·    ue·    uo·		
ě·æ	ẽ·ä	õ·ä	õ·ä	ě·æ	ẽ·ä	õ·ä	õ·ä	i·æ    i·a    u·æ    u·a	iæ·    ia·    uæ·    ua·
	ě·ř		õ·ř		ě·ř		õ·ř		

The standard orthography uses ⟨*a á e i o u y*⟩ for monophthongs (the last one for the marginal vowel /y/), and the combinations ⟨*ea ie oa uo*⟩ for diphthongs. The relationship between the vowel system and the orthography is complicated, and a full understanding of it requires profound knowledge of Saami morphophonology.

In the WI dialects the relationship between the vowel system and orthography is fairly straightforward as far as quality is concerned: ⟨*i*⟩ = /i/, ⟨*e*⟩ = /e/, ⟨*u*⟩ = /u/, ⟨*o*⟩ = /o/, ⟨*a*⟩ and ⟨*á*⟩ = /a/. The quantity of vowels is not indicated, with one exception: ⟨*a*⟩ mostly corresponds to short /a/ (as in *mannu* = WI /mannu/ ‘going; errand’), while ⟨*á*⟩ mostly corresponds to long /a:/ or /aa:/ (as in *mánnu* = WI /ma:nnu/ ‘moon’). There are exceptions to this rule, though.

In the EI dialects the relationship between the vowel system and orthography is more complicated. The vowels spelled with ⟨*a*⟩ and ⟨*á*⟩ differ by quality, not by quantity as in WI dialects. The letter ⟨*a*⟩ stands for /v/ in stressed syllables (as in ⟨*mannu* /mʷɔnnu/ ~ /mɔnnu/ ‘going; errand’), but for /a/ in unstressed ones (as in ⟨*maat* /mʷɔnnʌh/ ~ /mɔnnʌh/ ‘to go’). The letter ⟨*á*⟩, in contrast, stands for /a/ in stressed syllables if the next syllable has a back vowel (as in ⟨*mánnu* /ma:nnu/ ~ /mannu/ ‘moon’), but for /æ/ elsewhere, including unstressed syllables (as in ⟨*mámmá* /mæ:ænnæ/ ~ /mænnæ/ ‘child’). Thus, in stressed syllables /a/ and /æ/ are mostly in complementary distribution, but a phonological contrast can still be established on the basis of certain exceptional forms (e.g. ⟨*gápmagiid* /ka:qpmij/ ~ /ka:qpmɑ.ij/ ‘shoe’ PL.GENACC ).

The phonotactic distribution of vowels is strongly dependent on word prosody. The maximal system of vowel contrasts is applied only in stressed syllables (in the so-called ‘vowel centre’) in contrast to which unstressed syllables (the so-called ‘latus’ and ‘vowel margin’; see 7.2.3) show a much more limited set of oppositions. In general, diphthongs occur only in stressed syllables (with the exception of Torne dialects which have evolved the unstressed diphthongs /ie/ and /uo/ from earlier monophthongs under certain conditions). Further, quantity contrasts are extremely limited in unstressed syllables: nowadays most dialects contrast only between /a/ and /aa/ in the latus, but in some varieties (especially more archaic idiolectal ones) a marginal contrast between latus /i/ : /ii/ and /u/ : /uu/ occurs also. The vowel margin can contain only the short vowels /i e a u/. Self-evidently, contrasts based on stress placement within the vowel do not apply in unstressed syllables.

## 10.2.2 Consonants

The system of consonant phonemes in the EI and WI dialects is shown in Table 10.5. For some consonants, their typical orthographic representations are also given; note especially the use of ⟨*c č z ž*⟩ for affricates and the digraphs ⟨*dj*⟩, ⟨*lj*⟩, ⟨*nj*⟩ for alveolopalatal consonants. Some further issues of orthography and pronunciation are explained below.

**Table 10.5** Consonant phonemes of EI and WI dialects

	labial	dental / alveolar	alveolopalatal	palatal	velar	glottal
voiceless stops	p	t	*tʃ ⟨ <i>dj</i> ⟩		k	
voiced stops	b	d	*dʃ ⟨ <i>ddj</i> ⟩		g	
aspirated stops	*p <sup>h</sup>	*t <sup>h</sup>			*k <sup>h</sup>	
voiceless affricates		t͡s ⟨ <i>c z</i> ⟩	t͡ʃ ⟨ <i>č ž</i> ⟩			
voiced affricates		d͡z ⟨ <i>z</i> ⟩	d͡ʒ ⟨ <i>ž</i> ⟩			
sibilants		s	ʃ ⟨ <i>š</i> ⟩			
voiced nasals	m	n	nʲ ⟨ <i>nj</i> ⟩		*ŋ ⟨ <i>ŋ</i> ⟩	
voiceless nasals	*m̥ ⟨ <i>hm</i> ⟩	*n̥ ⟨ <i>hn</i> ⟩				
voiced fricatives	v	ð ⟨ <i>d̥</i> ⟩		j ʝ, ⟨ <i>i</i> ⟩		
voiceless fricatives	f	*θ ⟨ <i>t</i> ⟩		ʝ ⟨ <i>hj</i> ⟩		h
voiced laterals		l	lʲ ⟨ <i>lj</i> ⟩			
voiceless lateral		*l̥ ⟨ <i>hl</i> ⟩				
voiced tremulant		r				
voiceless tremulant		*r̥ ⟨ <i>hr</i> ⟩				

The phonemes marked with the symbol \* do not occur in all varieties of these dialects.

In addition to the consonants in Table 10.5, some loan phonemes tend to occur in partially assimilated loanwords among speakers bilingual in Norwegian or Swedish. The most notable of them is the retroflex sibilant /ʂ/ in words such as *gursa* ~ *kursa* (/kur<sup>r</sup>sa/ ~ /k<sup>h</sup>u<sup>ʂ</sup>s<sup>ʂ</sup>a/ ~ /k<sup>h</sup>u<sup>ʂ</sup>a/) ‘course’ (< Norwegian/Swedish *kurs*).

A total of twelve consonant phonemes, marked with \* in Table 10.5, do not occur uniformly in the WI and EI dialects. These can be divided into five types of cases:

- a) The aspirated stops /p<sup>h</sup> t<sup>h</sup> k<sup>h</sup>/ only occur in word-initial position, mostly in loanwords such as *boasta* ~ *poasta* ‘mail; post office’, *deaksta* ~ *teaksta* ‘text’, and *geallir* ~ *keallir* ‘cellar’. They do not occur uniformly in the WI dialects (to some degree in Norway, but not at all in Finland), as indicated also by the variation in the spelling of such words (*boasta* ~ *poasta* etc.).
- b) In many parts of the WI dialect area the alveopalatal stops /tʃ/ and /dʃ/ are merging with the corresponding alveopalatal affricates /t͡ʃ/ and /d͡ʒ/, their affricate pronunciation being increasingly common in younger generations.
- c) The voiceless dental fricative /θ/ is most consistently present in the EI dialects, whereas WI dialects show much subdialectal and idiolectal variation, /θ/ having often been replaced by /s/, /h/, or /t/ (partly depending on phonological environment).
- d) The voiced velar nasal /ŋ/ has changed to /ɲ/ in WI dialects, thus obliterating the phonological contrast between orthographic ⟨ŋ⟩ and ⟨nj⟩: cf. *manjis* LOC ‘behind’ : *manjis* LOC ‘daughter-in-law’, a minimal pair in EI dialects (/mɔːŋjis/ : /mɔːɲjis/), but an instance of homonymy in WI (both /manʲis/). Note that before a velar stop [ŋ] remains phonetically intact in WI, but in this environment it can be interpreted as an allophone of /n/ because it does not contrast with other nasals (cf. *mánja* ‘many’ = WI [maːŋːga] /maːan<sup>n</sup>ka/).
- e) There are extremely few lexical items that contain the voiceless sonorants /ɲ ɳ j ʃ ʂ/ written with the digraphs ⟨hm hn hj hl hr⟩. Moreover, their occurrence in individual lexemes shows much dialectal and idiolectal variation, the voiceless sonorants having frequently been replaced by corresponding voiced sonorants or reanalysed as sequences of /h/ and a voiced sonorant: e.g. *uvlu* ~ *uvhlu* ‘bumblebee’ (= EI /uvlu/ ~ /uv<sup>h</sup>u/ ~ /uvhlu/), *váhnemat* ~ *vánhemat* ‘parents’ (= EI /væːæhnemah/ ~ /væːænhemah/ ~ /væːænhemah/ ~ /væːænemah/). There is a further complication, however: at least on the phonetic level, many dialects possess frequent instances of voiceless sonorants as a result of the morphophonological process of consonant gradation (see 10.2.4.1).

They occur in those weak grade clusters whose strong grade counterparts contain a phonetic sequence of a voiced sonorant, an overshort nonsyllabic vowel, the glottal fricative [h], and a stop or affricate: e.g. (strong grade) *bálká* : (weak grade) GENACC *báلكká* ‘salary’ (= EI [pæ<sup>l</sup>ɛhkæː] : [pæ<sup>l</sup>ɛkæː] ~ [pæːɛ<sup>l</sup>kæː]). Sammallahti (2019) interprets the (partially) voiceless sonorant in the weak grade as a phonetic realization of a voiced sonorant phoneme followed by the glottal fricative /h/ (i.e. [ɛ<sup>h</sup>] = /lh/), the actually contrasting feature then being the placement of the syllable boundary (e.g. EI /pæ<sup>l</sup>.hkæ/ : GENACC /pæ<sup>l</sup>h.kæ/ ~ /pæːæ<sup>l</sup>h.kæ/). However, one can also think of alternative phonologizations (EI /pæ<sup>l</sup>hkæ/ : GENACC /pæ<sup>l</sup>kæ/ ~ /pæːæ<sup>l</sup>kæ/), which would make the voiceless sonorants considerably less marginal members of the phonological system.

Further problems for phonological analysis are posed by the fact that some consonants show an extremely restricted phonotactic distribution, contrasting with other consonants only when they appear as geminates in intervocalic position:

- a) The alveopalatal lateral /lʲ/ occurs as a long and a short geminate, alternating by consonant gradation, as in *vallji* : GENACC *valji* ‘abundance, plenty’ (= WI /va<sup>l</sup>l<sup>ʲ</sup>i/ : /va<sup>l</sup>l<sup>ʲ</sup>i/). It does contrast phonologically with a cluster of /l/ and /j/, which is however very rare; one of the few examples is *solju* : GENACC *soljju* ‘brooch’ (= WI /sol<sup>l</sup>ju/ : /soljju/). A sound phonetically equivalent to /lʲ/ can also occur before the alveopalatal affricate /t͡ʃ/ (e.g. *buolža* ‘ridge’ = EI /pü<sup>l</sup>ɛ<sup>l</sup>t͡ʃa/ ~ /pü<sup>l</sup>ɛ<sup>l</sup>t͡ʃa/), but in this context there is no phonological contrast between /l/ and /lʲ/.
- b) In native vocabulary of the EI dialects, the voiced stops /b d g/ occur only in partially voiced geminate stops, which alternate morphophonologically with (but contrast phonologically with) voiceless geminate stops: e.g. *čibbi* : GENACC *čippi* ‘knee’, *loddi* : GENACC *lotti* ‘bird’, *bággu* : GENACC *bákku* ‘necessity’ (= EI /t͡ʃibpi/ : /t͡ʃippi/ ~ /t͡ʃi<sup>h</sup>ippi/, /lodti/ : /lotti/ ~ /lo<sup>h</sup>ottii/, /pagku/ : /pakku/ ~ /pa<sup>h</sup>akku/). In addition to this, in some WI subdialects the voiced stops /b/ and /d/ also occur in clusters phonetically realized as postnasalized voiced stops (e.g. *gobmi* ‘ghost’ = WI /kob<sup>h</sup>mi/), although in other subdialects these clusters are realized as circumnasalized stops where the stop part is voiceless (= WI /kom<sup>m</sup>p<sup>m</sup>i/). Some speakers also use word-initial voiced stops in partially adapted recent loanwords like *busse* ‘bus’, but the phenomenon is not consistent on a dialectal level.

- c) The phonological status of the “voiced affricates” /d͡z d͡ʒ/ is even more problematic than that of voiced stops. The assumption of these phonemes is based only on the occurrence of partially voiced geminate affricates, which alternate morphophonologically with (but contrast phonologically with) voiceless geminate affricates: e.g. *bázz* : GENACC *bácc* ‘pillar, statue’ (= EI [pæd͡ʒtsiː] : [pætsːiː] ~ [pæʔtsːiː]), *čízz* : GENACC *čičč* ‘(woman’s) breast’ (= EI [t͡ʃid͡ʒt͡ʃiː] : [t͡ʃiːt͡ʃiː]). In phonological terms, one could also think of analysing them as clusters of a voiced stop and a voiceless affricate (e.g. EI /pæd͡ʒtsiː/, /t͡ʃid͡ʒt͡ʃiː/) in order to avoid postulating two additional consonant phonemes.
- d) The alveopalatal stops /d͡j/ and /t͡j/ (except with those WI dialect speakers who merge them with affricates) contrast with other consonants only as intervocalic geminates. These geminates alternate morphophonologically in the same way as the other geminate stops and affricates described here: e.g. *áddj* : GENACC *ádj* ‘grandfather’ (= EI /æd͡t͡ʃæ/ : /æʔt͡ʃæ/ ~ /ææʔt͡ʃæ/); in addition, the voiceless geminate /t͡ʃ/ can also alternate with single /j/, as in *sadj* : GENACC *saji* ‘place, space’ (= EI /sɔʔt͡ʃi/ ~ /sɔʔt͡ʃi/ : /sɔʔji/). One could think of analysing the partially voiced geminate phonologically as /d͡t͡ʃ/ in order to avoid postulating a separate phoneme /d͡j/, which occurs in no other context. Note, however, that one cannot analyse the voiceless geminate stop as a phonetic realization of a geminate /jj/ in spite of its morphophonological alternation with single /j/: a contrast can be established on the basis of occasional semiminimal pairs like *ádj* ‘grandfather’ GENACC (= EI /æʔt͡ʃæ/) vs *Májj* (a personal name) (= EI /mæjjæ/). One can add that /t͡ʃ/ also occurs as the first member of the cluster written <tnj> (and in WI also <knj>, which has merged with the former), as in *latnja* ‘room’ = WI /lat͡ʃnʲaa/, EI /lɔʔt͡ʃnʲaa/. Moreover, those WI subdialects that have clusters realized as voiced postnasalized stops (see b) show a sound phonetically equivalent to /d͡j/ in the clusters written <dnj gŋ>, as in *čegnet* ‘squat’ = WI /t͡ʃed͡nʲeh/. However, in prenasal position stops do not contrast by place of articulation.

The spelling of stops and affricates is not entirely straightforward. In most contexts the letters <b d g> mark the voiceless stops /p t k/, and <z ž> stand for the voiceless affricates /t͡s t͡ʃ/. The orthographic distinction between <b d g z ž> and <p t k c č> is used, among other things, to mark the presence or absence of the phoneme /h/ following a sonorant or the approximant /j/: cf. *bárgu* 3SG ‘cry’ (= WI /paʔarˈku/, EI /parku/) vs *bárku* ‘bark (of conifer trees)’ (= WI /paʔarˈhku/,

EI /par.hku/). However, as explained, in intervocalic position orthographic <bb dd ddj gg zz žž> stand for partially voiced geminate stops and affricates, and in certain WI subdialects the intervocalic clusters <bm dn dnj gŋ> are realized as postnasalized voiced stops.

In the WI dialects single intervocalic <b> and <g> are pronounced as /p/ and /k/, respectively. In EI dialects, in contrast, intervocalic <b> is pronounced as /v/ after stressed syllables (but as /p/ after unstressed syllables), as in *rieban* ‘fox’ (= WI /ri-epan/, EI /ri-eva(n)/), and intervocalic <g> is realized as either /j/, /v/, or /./ (an intervocalic syllable boundary), depending on both the vocalic environment and the subdialect in question: cf. *logi* ‘ten’ (= WI /loki/, EI /lo-oji/), *viega* ‘by running’ (= WI /vi-eka/, EI /vi-eva/ ~ /vi-e.a/). Notably, the intervocalic syllable boundary corresponding to orthographic <g> can have a phonologically contrastive function, as shown by the minimal pair *gápmagat* PL : *gápmat* GENACC (shortened form) ‘shoe’ (= EI /kaʔpma.ah/ : /kaʔpmaah/).

Word-final <t> is pronounced as /h/, but before a pause the pronunciation /ht/ may occur:

- (1) *Olbmot vulget čuoigat.*  
 person.PL go.3PL ski.INF  
 WI: /olʔpmoh vullʔkeh t͡ʃuoʲjʔkah(t)/  
 EI: /olmoh vulkeh t͡ʃu̯jʔkah(t)/  
 ‘People are going skiing.’

### 10.2.3 Word-stress

Word-stress in North Saami is almost fully predictable, and has no phonologically contrastive function. The main stress always falls on the first syllable of a word, and secondary stress normally falls on each subsequent odd syllable, although never on the final syllable: e.g. *dolla* ‘fire’, *dolastit* INF ‘light a campfire’, *dolas,tallat* INF : *dolas,tallamin* PROG : *dolas,tala,dettiin* SIM.CVB ‘spend time by a campfire’. There are certain exceptions to the assignment of secondary stress, however. Clitics attached at the end of words (such as *-go*, a marker of polar questions, and *-son*, which marks questions as rhetorical) are never stressed, nor can stress be assigned to a syllable immediately preceding a clitic; thus, there is only one syllable with secondary stress in *dolas,talla-min-go-son* (spend.time.by.a.campfire-PROG=Q=RHET ‘spending time by a campfire, I wonder?’). In literary language clitics can be written either as suffixes or as free-standing words (e.g. *dolastallamingoson* ~ *dolastallamin go son*).

On the other hand, in compound words stress is assigned to the first syllable of each lexical constituent regardless of syllable count, as in *dolastan,ávnnas* ‘material for lighting a

campfire', *dolas, tallan, báiki* 'campfire site'; this even applies to irregularly shortened compounds such as *'vil, bealle* 'male cousin' (from *viellja* 'brother' + *bealli* 'half'). There are also a couple of suffixes that behave prosodically like heads of compound words, receiving secondary stress: the abstract noun suffix *-vuohhta*, the simulative adjective suffix *-láqan* (see 10.3.1.7), the purposive converb suffix *-(a)ndihte*, the simulative converb suffix *-(a)nláhkai* (see 10.3.2.4.1), and the inchoative verb suffix *-(i)šgoahti-* (see 10.3.2.5.2). Yet further exceptions to the default stress pattern occur in recent loanwords like *'stu, deanta* 'student' and *'televi, šuvdna* 'television'.

## 10.2.4 Morphophonology

North Saami has an intricate system of regular morphophonological alternations, realized in both inflectional morphology and word formation. In what follows, five types of alternations are described in more detail. In addition, stressed vowels show alternations affecting their quantity and the placement of stress within the vowel (with great dialectal differences and therefore not indicated in standard orthography), but in the present description these alternations are only briefly discussed in connection with other morphophonological phenomena.

### 10.2.4.1 Consonant gradation

Consonant gradation, i.e. the alternation between so-called strong-grade and weak-grade consonants on the border of a stressed and an unstressed syllable, affects almost all North Saami consonants and consonant clusters (cf. chapter 42). North Saami consonant gradation can be described in terms of three quantity grades: single consonants ( $Q_1$ ), geminates or consonant clusters ( $Q_2$ ), and "long" geminates or consonant clusters ( $Q_3$ ). In phonetic terms, in WI dialects  $Q_3$  generally differs from  $Q_2$  by the presence of an extra subglottal pulse preceding the syllable boundary, although in the case of many consonant clusters there are also other quantitative or qualitative features that serve to distinguish the two grades (Sammallahti 2012b). In EI dialects, however, the extra pulse has lost its phonologically contrastive function, although it survives as an allophonic feature conditioned by the phonological environment. The distinction between  $Q_3$  and  $Q_2$  has thus been lost in those cases where the extra pulse was the only feature distinguishing the grades, but in many contexts the loss has been compensated for by vowel lengthening before  $Q_2$ . The distinction between  $Q_3$  and  $Q_2$  geminates is not marked in the standard orthography, but in linguistic texts, the symbol <˘> or <˙> can be added to mark

$Q_3$ : e.g. *beas'si* 'birch-bark' (with a  $Q_3$  geminate) vs *beassi* 'nest' (with a  $Q_2$  geminate). In the present phonological transcription, the extra subglottal pulse is indicated with a superscript character corresponding to its qualitative realization: e.g. *beas'si* = WI /peæ˘s˘si/ vs *beassi* = WI /peæssi/.

Most cases of gradation fall into two types:

- (i)  $Q_3$  alternating with  $Q_2$  (as in *beas'si* : GENACC *beassi* 'birch-bark')
- (ii)  $Q_2$  alternating with  $Q_1$  (e.g. *beassi* : GENACC *beasi* 'nest')

The instances of gradation can be divided into the following subtypes:

1.  $Q_2$  geminate continuant consonants (fricatives, liquids, nasals, sibilants) alternating with  $Q_1$  (single consonants): e.g. *gidđá* : GENACC *gida* 'spring', *dolla* : GENACC *dola* 'fire', *namma* : GENACC *nama* 'name', *oassi* : GENACC *oasi* 'part'. This is a very frequent type.
2.  $Q_3$  geminate continuant consonants alternating with  $Q_2$  geminates: e.g. *gál'lu* : GENACC *gállu* 'forehead', *ci'ssa* : GENACC *cissa* 'urine'. In WI dialects the  $Q_3$  geminates feature the extra subglottal pulse (WI /kɑ˘al˘lu/ : GENACC /kɑ˘allu/; /tsi˘s˘sa/ : GENACC /tsi˘ssaa/), whereas EI has lost the opposition but the preceding vowel may display lengthening before the original  $Q_2$  (EI /kallu/ : GENACC /kallu/ ~ /kɑ˘allu/; /tsissa/ : GENACC /tsi˘issa/).
3.  $Q_2$  alveolopalatal geminate stop <dj> /tʃtʃ/ alternating with a single semivowel -j-, as in *sadjj* : GENACC *saji* 'place, space'.—Note, furthermore, that in WI dialects /tʃtʃ/ is undergoing a merger with the geminate affricate /tʃtʃ/ (see 10.2.2).
4. A  $Q_3$  cluster of *h* followed by a stop or affricate, i.e. <hp ht hk hc hč>, alternating with a single consonant <b đ g z ž>. With the exception of <đ> = /ð/ these stand for single voiceless stops or affricates in the WI dialects. In EI dialects, however, the weak grade <b> is phonologically /v/, and the weak grade <g> is either /j/, /v/, or /./ (an intervocalic syllable boundary; see 10.2.2): e.g. *suhpi* : GENACC *subi* 'aspen' (WI /supi/, EI /su˘uvi/), *jahki* : GENACC *jagi* 'year' (WI /jaki/, EI /jɑ˘ɔ˘ji/ ~ /jɑ˘ɔ˘i/), *lohku* : GENACC *logu* 'number' (WI /loku/, EI /lo˘ovu/ ~ /lo˘o˘u/).
5. A  $Q_3$  cluster of *h* followed by a stop or affricate, i.e. <hpp htt hkk hcc hčč>, alternating with a corresponding  $Q_2$  cluster <hp ht hk hc hč>: e.g. *mihttu* : GENACC *mihtu* 'measure', *fáhcca* : GENACC *fáhca* 'mitten'. Contrary to what is suggested by orthography, the stop or affricate component is not longer in the strong grade. Instead, in WI dialects the strong grade contains an extra subglottal pulse qualitatively realized as [h]: WI /miht˘tu/ : GENACC /mihtu/; /fah˘tsa/ : GENACC /fɑ˘h˘tsa/. EI dialects,

- on the other hand, have lost the opposition, but the preceding vowel may display lengthening before the original  $Q_{II}$ : EI /mihtu/ : GENACC /mihtu/ ~ /mi:htu/; /fahtsa/ : GENACC /fɑ:htsa/.
6. A  $Q_{II}$  cluster of a stop followed by a homorganic nasal, i.e. ⟨*pm tn tnj kj*⟩, alternating with a  $Q_I$  single nasal ⟨*m n nj ŋ*⟩: e.g. *vuotna* : GENACC *vuona* ‘fjord’, *jokja* : GENACC *jonja* ‘lingonberry’.—Note that in WI dialects ⟨*(k)ŋ*⟩ has merged with ⟨*(t)nj*⟩, and thus, *jokja* : *jonja* = WI /jotʰnʲaa/ : /jonʲaa/.
  7. A  $Q_{III}$  cluster of a stop followed by a homorganic nasal, i.e. ⟨*bm dn dnj gj*⟩, alternating with a corresponding  $Q_{II}$  cluster ⟨*pm tn tnj kj*⟩: e.g. *gobmi* : GENACC *gopmi* ‘ghost’. In WI dialects the  $Q_{III}$  clusters are realized either as postnasalized voiced stops or as circumnasalized stops, whereas  $Q_{II}$  is always a postnasalized voiceless stop: WI /kobʰmi/ ~ /komʰpmi/ : GENACC /kopmi/. In EI dialects the opposition has been lost, but there may be a lengthening of the preceding vowel before original  $Q_{II}$ : EI /kopmi/ : GENACC /kopmi/ ~ /ko:opmi/.
  8. A  $Q_{III}$  partially voiced geminate stop or affricate ⟨*bb dd ddj gg zz žž*⟩ alternating with a  $Q_{II}$  voiceless geminate ⟨*pp tt dj kk cc čč*⟩: e.g. *čibbi* : GENACC *čippi* ‘knee’, *bázzi* : GENACC *bácci* ‘pillar, statue’. The phonological features of these geminates are further discussed in 10.2.2.
  9. A  $Q_{III}$  cluster consisting of one of the sonorants ⟨*dl r m n ŋ v ð*⟩ (N.B. ⟨*ð*⟩ = /j/) followed by any of the consonants ⟨*b d g z ž s š l r f v j hl hm hn*⟩ (within the limits of phonotactic rules), alternating with a corresponding  $Q_{II}$  cluster in which the latter component is geminated: e.g. *geadgi* : GENACC *geadggi* ‘stone’, *balva* : GENACC *balvva* ‘cloud’, *mányga* : GENACC *mánygga* ‘many’, *guovža* : GENACC *guovžža* ‘bear’, *čáihni* : GENACC *čáihnni* ‘woodpecker’.
  10. A  $Q_{III}$  cluster consisting of one of the sonorants ⟨*dl v ð*⟩ (NB ⟨*ð*⟩ = /j/) and a nasal ⟨*m n nj ŋ*⟩, alternating with a corresponding  $Q_{II}$  cluster in which the nasal is geminated. WI dialects add an epenthetic stop between the consonants in the strong grade cluster ( $Q_{III}$ ), which is also indicated in the orthography, but in EI the gradation is purely quantitative (and thus similar to that in the previous category): e.g. *čalbmi* : GENACC *čalmmi* ‘eye’ = WI /t͡ʃalʰpmi/ : /t͡ʃalmmi/, EI /t͡ʃɔlmi/ : /t͡ʃɔlmmi/ ~ /t͡ʃɔvɔlmmi/.
  11. A  $Q_{III}$  cluster consisting of *r* and a nasal, alternating with a corresponding  $Q_{II}$  cluster. In EI dialects the grades are distinguished by the addition of an epenthetic stop between the consonants in the weak grade ( $Q_{II}$ ). WI dialects, in contrast, have an epenthetic stop in both grades, and the distinction between the strong and the weak grade rests on quantity and the position of the syllable boundary. Orthographically the distinction is indicated by writing the epenthetic stop as ⟨*b d g*⟩ in the strong grade but as ⟨*p t k*⟩ in the weak grade, but phonologically there is no difference of voicing: e.g. *árpmu* : GENACC *árpmu* ‘mercy’ = WI /ɑ:ɑrʰ.pmu/ : /ɑ:ɑrp.mu/, EI /armu/ : /arpmu/ ~ /ɑ:ɑrpmu/. Archaic varieties of EI dialects also have the epenthetic stop in both grades, which makes the placement of the syllable boundary a phonologically distinctive feature (/ɑr.pmu/ : GENACC /arp.mu/ ~ /ɑ:ɑrp.mu/), but this pronunciation is becoming obsolete in modern language.
  12. A  $Q_{III}$  cluster consisting of one of the sonorants ⟨*l r m n ŋ v ð*⟩ (N.B. ⟨*ð*⟩ = /j/) followed by the glottal fricative /h/ and a stop or an affricate, alternating with a corresponding  $Q_{II}$  cluster. Orthographically the presence of the phoneme /h/ is not indicated with a separate grapheme, but by the use of the “voiceless” letters ⟨*p t k c č*⟩ for stops and affricates (see 10.2.2). In the weak grade the letter standing for the stop or affricate is doubled, but phonologically the distinction is not based on the quantity of the stop or affricate component. According to Sammallahti (2019), in WI the distinction is based on the quantity of the sonorant as well as the placement of the syllable boundary, whereas in EI the latter feature is the sole distinguishing factor: e.g. *báلكá* : GENACC *báلكká* ‘salary’ (WI /pɑ:alʰ.hka/ : /pɑ:alh.kɑ/, EI /pæl.hkæ/ : /pælh.kæ/ ~ /pæ:ælh.kæ/), *ávki* : GENACC *ávkki* ‘benefit’ (WI /ɑ:ɑvʰ.hki/ : /ɑ:avh.ki/, EI /æv.hki/ : /ævh.ki/ ~ /æ:ævh.ki/). However, alternative phonological interpretations are also possible. As noted (see 10.2.2), especially in EI dialects the putative glottal fricative phoneme /h/ tends to become phonetically fused with the preceding sonorant in the weak grade, and thus the weak grade clusters could also be analysed as containing a voiceless sonorant phoneme and no /h/ at all (*báلكká* = /pæ]kæ/ ~ /pæ:æ]kæ/, *ávkki* = /æfki/ ~ /æ:æfki/), with the consequence that the position of the syllable boundary would not be a phonologically contrastive feature after all.
  13. A  $Q_{III}$  cluster ⟨*mp nt ŋk nc nč*⟩ alternating with a corresponding  $Q_{II}$  cluster ⟨*mpp ntt ŋkk ncc nčč*⟩. These clusters resemble the previous category: in phonetic terms, the final part of the nasal preceding the stop or affricate is voiceless, and Sammallahti (2019) interprets this component of the cluster as a phonetic realization of the phoneme /h/. In contrast to the previous category, however, on the phonetic level these clusters never contain the glottal fricative [h], even in the strong grade. Instead, phonetically the two grades differ by the relative quantity of the nasal component and/or by the voice offset time within the nasal consonant: e.g.

- gumpe* : GENACC *gumppe* ‘wolf’ is pronounced approximately as WI [kumːŋpe] : [kuŋŋpe], EI [kumːŋpe] : [kuːŋŋpe]. The phonological interpretation of these forms as WI /kumː.hpe/ : /kumh.pe/, EI /kum.hpe/ : /kuumh.pe/ (or the like) seems to be purely theoretical.
14. A  $Q_{III}$  cluster containing a sibilant followed by a stop, i.e. ⟨st sk šp št šk⟩, alternating with a corresponding  $Q_{II}$  cluster ⟨stt skk špp štš škk⟩: e.g. *baste* : GENACC *bastte* ‘spoon’. In orthography the stop is geminated in the weak grade, which, however, does not correspond to the phonology of most dialects. In terms of phonological quantity these instances of gradation behave identically to those in category 5: e.g. *baste* : GENACC *bastte* ‘spoon’ = WI /pasːte/ : /paste/, EI /pʰste/ : /pʰste/).
15. The  $Q_{III}$  cluster ⟨tk⟩ alternating with the  $Q_{II}$  cluster ⟨tkk⟩: e.g. *gotka* : GENACC *gotkka* ‘ant’. Despite the orthographic gemination of ⟨k⟩ in the weak grade, the phonological opposition does not involve gemination at all; in terms of quantity this cluster behaves like those in categories 5 and 14. The actual phonological value of the first consonant of the cluster shows dialectal variation between /t/, /θ/, and /s/: e.g. *gotka* : *gotkka* = WI /kotːka/ : /kotkaa/ ~ /koθːka/ : /koθkaa/ ~ /kosːka/ : /koskaa/, EI /kotka/ : /koːotka/ ~ /koθka/ : /koːoθka/.
16. A  $Q_{III}$  cluster consisting of *k* followed by another obstruent, alternating with a  $Q_{II}$  cluster in which *k* is replaced by *v* and the latter consonant is geminated: e.g. *uksa* : GENACC *uvssa* ‘door’ (WI /ukːsa/ : /uvssa/, EI /uksa/ : /uːuvssa/). As regards the clusters ⟨kt kc kč⟩, the phonetic realizations of the corresponding weak grades ⟨vtt vcc včč⟩ contain the voiceless component that is traditionally interpreted as /h/, but at least in the case of EI dialects alternatively analysable as /f/ (cf. category 12): e.g. *čakča* : GENACC *čavčča* ‘autumn’ (WI /tɛakːtɛa/ : /tɛaːavh.tɛa/, EI /tɛvktɛa/ : /tɛvːvvh.tɛa/ ~ /tɛvːvftɛa/).

There is also a secondary morphophonological process connected with consonant gradation, the so-called “strong grade strengthening”, which applies to instances of gradation between  $Q_{II}$  and  $Q_I$ . Strengthening applies to certain morphological forms, with the result that the  $Q_{II}$  strong grade changes to the corresponding  $Q_{III}$ . As a result, the paradigms of some verbs feature an alternation between three different grades, as in the following forms of the verb *boahti*- ‘come’: *boađá-t* 2SG ( $Q_I$ , weak grade) : *bohte-t* PST.2SG ( $Q_{II}$ , strong grade) : *boahtti* IMP.2DU ( $Q_{III}$ , “strengthened” strong grade). As for nouns, strong grade strengthening applies throughout the paradigms of contracting *is*-stems and mutating *u*-stems, resulting in an exceptional gradation pattern  $Q_{III}$  :  $Q_I$  instead of the default pattern  $Q_{II}$  :  $Q_I$  (see 10.3.1.2.3, 10.3.1.2.4). Furthermore, one can note that in the

WI dialects strong grade strengthening also applies in certain contexts where other dialects lack the feature. Consequently, in some cases a “strengthened” strong grade in  $Q_{III}$  in the WI dialects corresponds to a “regular” strong grade in  $Q_{II}$  in the literary language: e.g. *nohká* 3SG ‘end’ undergoes the strong grade strengthening /hk/ > /hːk/, becoming homonymous with *nohkká* 3SG ‘fall asleep’ (both = WI /nohːkaa/).

#### 10.2.4.2 Monophthongization

Under certain conditions, diphthongs become monophthongs that qualitatively correspond to the first component of the diphthong: *ea* > *e*, *ie* > *i*, *oa* > *o*, *uo* > *u*. As for quantity, these monophthongs are short before  $Q_{III}$  consonant clusters and geminates, but long before  $Q_{II}$  and  $Q_I$ . Monophthongization occurs under two main conditions:

- When the following syllable contains ⟨e⟩ or ⟨o⟩ (as in *vuolgit* INF : *vulge* 2DU ‘leave’, *čierrut* INF : *čirro* 2DU ‘cry’), with the exception of those (quite numerous) cases where ⟨e o⟩ derive from underlying ⟨i u⟩ via the morphophonological process of allegro shortening (see 10.2.4.5).
- Whenever the next syllable contains the sequence ⟨ii⟩ = /ij/ (as in *vuolgit* INF : *vulgii* PST.3SG ‘leave’), the only exception being that EI dialects and some WI subdialects do not exhibit monophthongization before ⟨ii⟩ in the paradigms of those vowel stem nouns that lack consonant gradation (see 10.3.1.2.1).

In addition, there are some exceptional cases where monophthongization occurs before ⟨ui⟩ = /uj/ in the next syllable, the most important being the illative singular forms of vowel stem nouns (e.g. *viessu* : ILL *vissui* ‘house’) and the paradigms of mutating *u*-stem nouns (see 10.3.1.2.4).

#### 10.2.4.3 Unstressed vowel alternations

In the latus (i.e. the vowel of an unstressed syllable immediately following a stressed syllable), the changes *e* > *i* and *o* > *u* occur whenever the vowel is followed by the letter ⟨i⟩ (which stands for the phoneme /j/ when it belongs to the same syllable): cf. *baste* : ILL *bastii* ‘spoon’, *diŋgo-* : PST.3SG *diŋgui* ‘subscribe’.

Alternations affecting latus *a*, *i*, and *u* are morphologically conditioned: each word-form displays a specific set of alternations affecting these vowels, as exemplified by verb forms in Table 10.6.

One should note that the alternations *i* > *e* and *u* > *o* in the last row of Table 10.6 are actually an instance of the morphophonological process of allegro shortening, which is further described in 10.2.4.5. While allegro shortening is in most

**Table 10.6** Verb forms illustrating the patterns of latus vowel alternations in North Saami

alternations:	'come'	'look'	'sew'	example form:
—	<i>boahti-t</i>	<i>geahčča-t</i>	<i>goarru-t</i>	INF
<i>i &gt; á</i>	<i>boadǎ-n</i>	<i>geahča-n</i>	<i>goaru-n</i>	1SG
<i>i, a &gt; á</i>	<i>boahtǎ</i>	<i>geahččǎ</i>	<i>goarru</i>	3SG
<i>i, a &gt; e; u &gt; o</i>	<i>bohte-n</i>	<i>gehčče-n</i>	<i>gorro-n</i>	PST.1SG
<i>i &gt; á; u &gt; o</i>	<i>boahťá-n</i>	<i>geahčča-n</i>	<i>gorro-n</i>	PST.PTCP
<i>a &gt; i</i>	<i>boahtti</i>	<i>geahčči</i>	<i>goar'ru</i>	IMP.2DU
<i>i &gt; e; u &gt; o</i>	<i>boadē</i>	<i>geahča</i>	<i>goarō</i>	CNG

environments a more or less optional process, in certain morphological forms (such as CNG forms of gradating verbs) it is obligatory, and in such instances it can also be described as a specific rule of latus vowel alternation on par with the other rules in Table 10.6.

Each of the six sets of vowel alternations in Table 10.6 regularly occurs in several different morphological categories in North Saami. Furthermore, there is an idiosyncratic set of alternations that occurs only in the illative singular of vowel-stem nominals (see 10.3.1.2.1). In addition to alternating, unstressed stem-final vowels can also be deleted if a vowel-initial suffix is added. This happens especially with derivative suffixes but also, for instance, with certain imperative suffixes (see 10.3.2.3).

#### 10.2.4.4 Stem-final consonant alternations

In the paradigms of consonant-stem nouns and verbs (see 10.3.1.2.2, 10.3.2.1), various alternations apply to stem-final consonants when they end up in word-final position (i.e. when no suffix is added). These alternations are mostly connected with phonotactic constraints, as consonant clusters and certain consonants such as ⟨*b d g h m ž*⟩ do not occur in word-final position.

Word-final ⟨*t*⟩ = /h(t)/ can correspond to various underlying stem-final consonants: ⟨*ǎ*⟩ = /ð/ (e.g. *eahket*: GENACC *eahked-a* 'evening'), ⟨*b*⟩ = /p/ (especially in comparatives: e.g. *stuorát*: GENACC *stuorábu* 'bigger'), ⟨*g*⟩ = WI /k/, EI /./ (intervocalic syllable boundary) (e.g. *gávpot*: GENACC *gávpog-a* 'city'), or ⟨*h*⟩ = WI /h/, EI /h/ ~ /ht/ ~ /hk/ (e.g. *varit*: GENACC *varih-a* 'reindeer bull'). Other common alternations are ⟨*n*⟩: ⟨*m*⟩ (especially in deverbal nouns: e.g. *eallin*: GENACC *eallim-a* 'life' ← *ealli-* 'live') and -š: -ž (especially in diminutives: e.g. *nieiddaš* 'little girl': GENACC *nieiddaž-a* ← *nieida* 'girl'). Verbs can also have stem-final consonant clusters, which are

simplified word-finally: e.g. *gopmird-it* INF: *gopmir* CNG 'bow', *berošt-it* INF: *beroš* CNG 'care'. These alternations also take place before certain disyllabic verb suffixes that begin with a consonant: e.g. *beroš-keahttá* CVB.NEG 'without caring', *beroš-meahttun* 'indifferent, careless'. On the other hand, in gradating consonant-stem nouns the stem-final consonant can be deleted word-finally, producing the frequent alternation Ø: -g- (e.g. *beana*: GENACC *beatnag-a* 'dog') as well as the rarer alternations Ø: -m- (e.g. *bavssa*: GENACC *baksam-a* 'lip') and Ø: -n- (e.g. *luomi*: GENACC *luopmán-a* 'cloudberry').

Furthermore, vowel-stem nouns with a quadrisyllabic stem ending in -a- lose their final vowel in the unmarked nominative singular, and the preceding consonants are simplified as they end up in word-final position: e.g. *sápmelaš*: GENACC *sápmelačča*: ESS *sápmelažža-n* 'Saami person', *gosahaš*: GENACC *gosahaga*: ESS *gosahahka-n* 'cough'. Otherwise such nouns behave like the rest of the vowel-stem nouns, also participating in consonant gradation (žž: čč, hk: g, etc.).

#### 10.2.4.5 Allegro shortening

Word-forms with the vowels ⟨*i u á*⟩ in the second syllable may have alternative "allegro forms" that have undergone a specific set of vowel changes, in contrast to the unchanged "largo form". In allegro forms the second-syllable ⟨*i u á*⟩ change to ⟨*e o a*⟩ respectively, the latter being phonetically realized as shorter than the former; also note that such second-syllable ⟨*e o*⟩ do not trigger monophthongization (cf. 10.2.4.2). In addition, if the first-syllable vowel is a long monophthong or a diphthong, it acquires final stress instead of initial stress (/V·V/ > /VV·/). In WI dialects consonant quantity may be affected as well: Q<sub>III</sub> consonant clusters lose their extra subglottal pulse, thus becoming quantitatively similar to Q<sub>II</sub>. In EI dialects, in contrast, allegro forms cannot be created from word-forms containing a Q<sub>III</sub> cluster or geminate (with the exception of modifiers of compound words, in which case consonant quantity remains unaffected). The process is illustrated by selected verb forms in Table 10.7.

Early descriptions connected allegro shortening with rapid speech, as suggested by the terms "allegro" and "largo". However, the phenomenon is actually conditioned by a multitude of factors across different levels of language. Lexical frequency may be a more important factor than speech tempo: e.g. in WI dialects the allegro form /poahta/ (for largo /poahtaa/ ⟨*boahtá*⟩ come.3SG) 'comes' is extremely common, in contrast to which the allegro form ?/soahta/ (for largo /soahtaa/ ⟨*soahťá*⟩ fight.a.war.3SG) 'fights (in a war), wages war' is very rare at best, and at least for some speakers seems to be purely theoretical. Moreover, there are notable dialectal differences: the EI dialects show an

**Table 10.7** North Saami verb forms illustrating the phonological effects of allegro shortening in the WI and EI dialects

orthography	WI largo	WI allegro	EI largo	EI allegro	gloss
<i>boahtá</i>	/poːahta/	/poaːhta/	/puːæhtæ/ ~ /puːohtæ/	/poaːhta/	come.3SG
<i>boahtit</i>	/poːahtih/	/poaːhteh/	/puːæhtih/ ~ /puːohtih/	/poaːhteh/	come.1PL
<i>áiggun</i>	/aːajkkun/	/aaːjkkon/	/aːajkkun/ ~ /ajkkun/	/aaːjkkon/ ~ /ajkkon/	intend.1SG
<i>bargá</i>	/parːkaa/	/parka/	/pørkæ/	—	work.3SG

increasing tendency towards the use of allegro variants of most (or even all) verb-forms for which such exist. In standard literary language, on the other hand, the use of allegro variants of largo verb-forms is generally discouraged.

In contrast to verbs, the use of allegro variants of noun forms is largely conditioned by syntactic factors. For example, allegro forms are commonly found as complements of some postpositions, especially in prototypical phrases such as *beavdde nalde* (table.GENACC on) ‘on the table’ and *ealo luhtte* (herd.GENACC at) ‘at the reindeer herd’ (for largo *beavddi nalde* and *ealu luhtte*). On the other hand, noun phrases consisting of a single uncompound noun cannot occur in an allegro form (2), whereas the corresponding noun with a modifier can undergo allegro shortening (3):

- (2) *Dat leat sajis* (~ \**sajes*).  
it.PL be.3PL place.LOC  
‘They are in place.’

- (3) *Dat leat juohke sajis* ~ *sajes*.  
it.PL be.3PL every place.LOC  
‘They are everywhere.’

Furthermore, there are certain word-forms in which allegro shortening is a compulsory morphophonological process, for example the IMP.2SG and CNG forms of gradating verbs: e.g. *vázzi*- ‘walk’ > IMP.2SG and CNG *vácce* (see 10.2.4.3). The theoretical largo counterpart \**vácci* is not possible in contemporary language, although such forms have been documented by Nielsen (1926–29) and they still occurred as archaisms among some elderly speakers a few decades ago; note, moreover, that there is a formally corresponding deverbal adverb *vácci* ‘on foot’, which in turn does not have an allegro variant of the type \**vácce*. As another example, modifiers of compound nouns are a category where allegro forms are almost exclusively favoured, as in *beavdeliidni* ‘tablecloth’ (*beavdi* ‘table’ + *liidni* ‘cloth’), *biergomálli* ‘meat soup’ (*biergu* ‘meat’ + *málli* ‘soup’). Notably, in EI dialects modifiers of compounds occur in allegro form even when

they contain a  $Q_m$  consonant cluster (as in *beavde-*, *biergo-*) or geminate, even though in other contexts allegro shortening cannot affect such forms in these dialects.

## 10.3 Morphology

### 10.3.1 Nominal morphology

North Saami nouns, pronouns, and adjectives, as well as certain quantifiers, form the word-class of nominals which can be inflected for case and number. Nouns can also be marked for possessor person with a possessive suffix.

The nominal inflection shows a fully developed distinction between two number categories, the unmarked singular and the plural. Nouns also have a functionally restricted dual that is only used in connection with definite persons (see 10.4.3). Nominal dual can be expressed by transparent yet fully grammaticalized compound-like forms: *nieidda-guovttos* girl.GENACC-DU ‘the two girls’, with the dual marker *-guovttos* derived from the numeral *quokte* ‘two’.

#### 10.3.1.1 Case

The North Saami case system, as shown in Table 10.8, consists of six cases: the unmarked nominative, the genitive-accusative, two local cases (locative and illative), the comitative, and the essive. The full merger of originally distinct genitive and accusative cases is a quite recent development that within Saami occurred in North Saami only. Distinct plural genitive (-*i*) and accusative (-*id*) forms were recognized in Nielsen’s orthography in the early twentieth century, and they occurred among some elderly speakers still a couple of decades ago. Even modern grammars postulate separate genitive and accusative cases, even though only some morphosyntactic traces of this opposition remain in, e.g., certain numeral constructions (see 10.4.2).

Plural case forms are mostly distinguished from singular ones by the use of a different set of case suffixes; historically these plural suffixes are bimorphemic and contain a plural marker *\*j*. The essive case is an exception, as it shows no number distinction. The comitative plural has been grammaticalized from a postposition, and this is also reflected in the possessive declension (see 10.3.1.4). Moreover, each case suffix has two allomorphs, and the choice of allomorph depends on the type of stem it is attached to: stems ending in a vowel take one set of suffixes, and stems ending in a consonant take another set. For more details on the inflectional types, see 10.3.1.2.

**Table 10.8** Case suffixes in North Saami

	vowel stems		consonant stems	
	SG	PL	SG	PL
NOM	∅	-t	∅	-at
GENACC	∅	-id	-a	-iid
LOC	-s	-in	-is	-iin
ILL	-i	-ide	-ii	-iidda
COM	-in	-iguin	-iin	-iiguin
ESS	-n		-in	

In the standard written language PL.LOC and SG.COM are homonymous. In EI dialects, however, PL.LOC is homonymous with PL.COM instead: both have the suffix *-(i)iguin* (which in EI dialects is pronounced */(i)jon/*), and this feature is becoming increasingly common in WI dialects, too. There are also a few dialectal differences in the form of individual case suffixes, the most striking of which is the SG.LOC suffix *-(i)n* (instead of *-(i)s*) in the Torne dialects.

#### 10.3.1.1.1 Nominative

The unmarked nominative is the case of the grammatical subject of all types of finite verbs, also passive ones as in example (5). It is also the case of the subject or theme NP in existential and possessive clauses (cf. chapter 51), as in (6a–b).

(4) *Iŋgá gazzá biergomáli.*  
*Iŋgá(.NOM) eat.with.spoon.3SG meat.soup.GENACC*  
 ‘Iŋgá is eating meat soup.’

(5) *Biergomáli gazzojuvvui visot.*  
*meat.soup(.NOM) eat.with.spoon.PASS.PST.3SG all*  
 ‘All the meat soup was eaten.’

(6) a. *Šiljus lea biila.*  
*yard.LOC be.3SG car(.NOM)*  
 ‘There is a car in the yard.’

b. *Mus lea biila.*  
*1SG.LOC be.3SG car(.NOM)*  
 ‘I have a car.’

Furthermore, the nominative is the case of nominal predicates as in example (7), with the exception of those which express possession (see 10.3.1.1.2), location (see 10.3.1.1.3), or temporary or contingent state (see 10.3.1.1.6).

(7) *Soai leaba oahpaheaddjit.*  
*3DU be.3DU teacher.PL(.NOM)*  
 ‘They (two) are teachers.’

#### 10.3.1.1.2 Genitive-accusative

The genitive-accusative is used for adnominal modifiers. Such modifiers prototypically express “possession” in the broad sense (8a–c), but they can also have a great variety of other semantic functions, including location (9a), time (9b), or measure (9c).

(8) a. *Máhte biila*  
*Máhtte.GENACC car*  
 ‘Máhtte’s car’

b. *mánáid skuvlabeaivi*  
*child.PL.GENACC school.day*  
 ‘the school-day of the children’

c. *riikka rádjá*  
*state.GENACC border*  
 ‘state border’

(9) a. *Gáivuona festivála*  
*Gáivuotna.GENACC festival*  
 ‘the festival at Gáivuotna’

b. *maŋŋebárgga áviisa*  
*Tuesday.GENACC newspaper*  
 ‘Tuesday’s newspaper’

c. *viđa lihttara kastrul’la*  
*five.GENACC litre.GENACC kettle*  
 ‘a five-litre kettle’

The genitive-accusative is also used in possessive predicate nouns:

(10) *Diet biila lea Máhte.*  
*that(.NOM) car(.NOM) be.3SG Máhtte.GENACC*  
 ‘That car belongs to Máhtte.’

Objects of transitive verbs are in the genitive-accusative (with the exception of most numerals and certain other quantifiers; see 10.4.2).

- (11) *Mun oidnen Inggá.*  
1SG see.PST.1SG Inggá.GENACC  
'I saw Inggá.'

The genitive-accusative case can be used to mark the subject of certain non-finite verb forms:

- (12) *Inggá dagai dan min dieđekeahtta.*  
Inggá do.PST.3SG it.GENACC 1PL.GENACC know.NEG.CVB  
'Inggá did it without us knowing.'

Almost all complements of postpositions (*beavdde nalde* [table.GENACC on] 'on the table') and prepositions (*miehtá máilmmi* [all.over world.GENACC] 'all over the world') are in the genitive-accusative. The genitive-accusative is also (rarely) used in certain comparative constructions (see 10.3.1.6).

#### 10.3.1.1.3 Locative

The North Saami locative is one of the two local cases, alongside the illative (see 10.3.1.1.4). It has arisen from the merger of two earlier local cases (still distinct in more western Saami languages; see 8.3.1 and 9.3.1), the inessive (Location) and the elative (Source), and it continues to express both semantic functions, as shown by examples (13–15). To disambiguate between the two functions or to emphasize the dynamic (Source) interpretation, the adverb *eret* 'away' can be used.

- (13) *Máhtte lea gávppis ~ Anáris.*  
Máhtte be.3SG shop.LOC Anár.LOC  
'Máhtte is at the grocery store ~ in Anár.'
- (14) *Máhtte bođii gávppis ~ Anáris.*  
Máhtte come.PST.3SG shop.LOC Anár.LOC  
'Máhtte came from the grocery store ~ from Anár.'
- (15) *Máhtte lea eret Anáris.*  
Máhtte be.3SG away Anár.LOC  
'Máhtte is from Anár.'

The locative is the case of the possessor in predicative possession and also expresses the source of transferred possession:

- (16) *Inggás lea dat girji.*  
Inggá.LOC be.3SG that book  
'Inggá has that book.'
- (17) *Mun ožžon dan girjji Inggás.*  
1SG get.PST.1SG that.GENACC book.GENACC Inggá.LOC  
'I got that book from Inggá.'

Locative adverbials can be used to express the roles of an experiencer (18) and an involuntary agent (19); such constructions often, though not always, have a malefactive reading.

- (18) *Máhtes bulii dállu.*  
Máhtte.LOC burn.PST.3SG house  
'Máhtte's house burned down on him.'
- (19) *Máhtes gahčai lássa láhttaí.*  
Máhtte.LOC fall.PST.3SG glass floor.ILL  
'Máhtte (inadvertently) dropped a glass on the floor.'

#### 10.3.1.1.4 Illative

The illative encodes the goal or end point of movement, also a virtual or metaphoric one (as in expressions of temporal duration).

- (20) *Inggá manná gávppái.*  
Inggá go.3SG shop.ILL  
'Inggá is going to the grocery store.'
- (21) *Mun gohčen iđitidjii.*  
1SG be.awake.PST.1SG morning.night.ILL  
'I stayed awake until the small hours.'

The illative also expresses the role of recipient (22), and by extension, also the more abstract role of beneficiary of an action (23).

- (22) *Inggá attii dan girjji Máhttii.*  
Inggá give.PST.3SG that.GENACC book.GENACC Máhtte.ILL  
'Inggá gave the book to Máhtte.'
- (23) *Inggá leahkastii uvssa Máhttii.*  
Inggá open.PST.3SG door.GENACC Máhtte.ILL  
'Inggá opened the door for Máhtte.'

#### 10.3.1.1.5 Comitative

The comitative has two main uses, instrumental (24) and sociative (25).

- (24) *Mun manan gávppái biillain.*  
1SG go.1SG shop.ILL car.COM  
'I'm going to the grocery store by car.'
- (25) *Mun manan gávppái Máhtiin.*  
1SG go.1SG shop.ILL Máhtte.COM  
'I'm going to the grocery store with Máhtte.'

The comitative case can also be used together with the dual personal pronouns *moai* 'we two' and *doai* 'you two' to

encode the second person involved (26). It is also used in specific constructions involving the nominal dual marker *guovttos* (see 10.3.1), which function as associative duals that specify both persons involved (27):

- (26) *Boahtibeahhti=go doai Inggáin fárrui?*  
 come.2DU=Q 2DU Inggá.COM along  
 ‘Are you two, Inggá and you, coming along?’
- (27) *Máhte guovttos Inggáin mannaba gávpái.*  
 Máhte.GENACC DU Inggá.COM go.PST.3DU store.ILL  
 ‘Máhte and Inggá are going to the grocery store.’

#### 10.3.1.1.6 Essive

The essive is the case of predicate nouns and semantically related adverbials expressing the (often temporary or contingent) state of the subject (28), or the state the subject is changing or being transformed into (29). Moreover, it may also refer to cessation of such a state (30).

- (28) *Inggá bargá doavttirin.*  
 Inggá work.3SG doctor.ESS  
 ‘Inggá works as a doctor.’
- (29) *Inggá studere doavttirin.*  
 Inggá study.3SG doctor.ESS  
 ‘Inggá is studying to become a doctor.’
- (30) *Inggá heittii doavttirin.*  
 Inggá stop.PST.3SG doctor.ESS  
 ‘Inggá quit (working) as a doctor.’

In transitive clauses, the essive expresses the function or state that the object is assumed or asserted to have (31), or changed into (32).

- (31) *Mun gádden dan Máhte biilan.*  
 1SG assume.PST.1SG it.GENACC Máhte.GENACC car.ESS  
 ‘I thought it was Máhte’s car (but it wasn’t).’
- (32) *Inggá málii dálu ruoksadin.*  
 Inggá paint.PST.3SG house.GENACC red.ESS  
 ‘Inggá painted the house red.’

Essive adverbials can express the quality with which the subject is viewed (33) or the time period in which the activity or state was experienced (34):

- (33) *Oahpaheaddjin son lei hui čeahppi.*  
 teacher.ESS 3SG be.PST.3SG very skilful  
 ‘As a teacher s/he was very skilled.’
- (34) *Dan mun lean jo mánnán oahppan.*  
 it.GENACC 1SG be.1SG already child.ESS learn.PST.PTCP  
 ‘That I’ve learned already as a child.’

Adverbials describing weather or certain other natural conditions can also be in the essive:

- (35) *It=go duostta seavdnjadin vuolgit olggos?*  
 NEG.2SG=Q dare.CNG dark.ESS leave.INF out  
 ‘Don’t you dare to go out at dark?’

It is worth noting that when compared to the neighbouring language, Finnish, with a formal distinction between the “stative” essive and the “dynamic” translative cases, the North Saami essive combines the main functions of both cases and is actually most often used in the “translative” functions instead of those of its Finnish namesake (Ylikoski 2017b: 236–7).

#### 10.3.1.2 Nominal stem types and their case inflection

North Saami nominals can be divided into five regular inflectional types, in addition to which there are two common irregular nouns: *olmmoš* ‘human being, person’ and (WI) *olmmái* ‘friend’, (EI) *almmái* ‘man’. The inflectional types are further described in the following subsections, and Table 10.9 presents an example paradigm of each type, as well as the paradigm of the irregular noun *olmmoš*. The vowel-stem and consonant-stem allomorphs of the case endings are presented in Table 10.8.

##### 10.3.1.2.1 Vowel-stem nominals

Vowel-stem nominals have a stem ending in a vowel, most commonly *a*, *i*, or *u*. The stem normally has an even number of syllables, although exceptions are found mostly among recent loanwords. Most vowel-stem nominals (with a few lexically conditioned exceptions) show consonant gradation, with SG.NOM, SG.ILL, and SG.ESS in the strong grade, all other forms in the weak grade. They also participate in certain unstressed vowel alternations (see 10.2.4).

##### 10.3.1.2.2 Gradating and non-gradating consonant-stem nominals

Consonant-stem nominals have stems which end in a consonant. They can be further divided into two subtypes: those showing consonant gradation and those lacking it. Gradating consonant-stem nominals have the strong grade throughout the paradigm except for SG.NOM and ESS. They usually also show the unstressed vowel alternations *i ~ á* and *u ~ o* (see 10.2.4.3), as in *boaris* : GENACC *boarrása* ‘old’, *boadus* : GENACC *bohtosa* ‘result’ (note also the monophthongization triggered by second-syllable *o*; see 10.2.4.2), and their stem-final consonant may be deleted in word-final position, as in *beana* : GENACC *beatnaga* ‘dog’. Consonant-stem nominals without gradation, in contrast, have no vowel alternations and they display only qualitative alternations of stem-final consonants: e.g. *varit* : GENACC *variha* ‘reindeer

bull', *gorut* : GENACC *goruda* 'carcass, body'. For further information on stem-final consonant alternations, see 10.2.4.4.

### 10.3.1.2.3 Contracting *is*-stem nominals

Contracting *is*-stem nominals are an unproductive declensional class containing some forty to fifty lexical items. They exhibit a morphophonological alternation between a consonant stem ending in *-is* (which only occurs in the SG NOM and ESS forms) and a vowel stem ending in *-á* (which occurs in the rest of the paradigm). These stems also show consonant gradation and undergo strong-grade strengthening where applicable (see 10.2.4.1), as in *stuoris* : GENACC *stuor'rá* 'big'. Some individual lexical items in this class have dialectally shifted to the productive class of gradating consonant-stem nominals (of the type *boaris* : GENACC *boarrása* 'old').

### 10.3.1.2.4 Mutating *u*-stem nouns

Mutating *u*-stem nouns are likewise an unproductive declensional class of some thirty to forty lexical items. Their consonant gradation pattern is identical to that of contracting

*is*-stem nominals, and they exhibit monophthongization exceptionally triggered also by second-syllable *<ui>* (see 10.2.4.2). Some individual lexical items in this class have dialectally shifted to the productive class of vowel-stem nominals.

### 10.3.1.3 Pronouns

Many pronouns differ from all other nominal stems in that their stem consists of one syllable only, and the declension of such pronouns is highly irregular. Some pronouns, however, are declined like regular vowel-stem or consonant-stem nominals.

Table 10.10 shows the set of North Saami personal pronouns and their inflection as traditionally described in grammars (minor dialectal variation in the shape of certain forms has been ignored here). This received view calls for a correction, however: in normal spoken language the default third person pronouns are not *son*, *soai*, and *sii*, but instead the "demonstrative" (non-spatial anaphoric) pronoun *dat* ('it', see Table 10.11) also largely covers the functions of the

**Table 10.9** Inflectional paradigms of North Saami nouns

Example nouns: *guolli* 'fish' (vowel stem), *beana* 'dog' (gradating consonant stem), *njoammil* 'hare' (non-gradating consonant stem), *fális* 'whale' (contracting *is*-stem), *boazu* 'reindeer' (mutating *u*-stem), and *olmmoš* 'human being, person' (irregular)

	'fish'		'dog'		'hare'	
	SG	PL	SG	PL	SG	PL
NOM	<i>guolli</i>	<i>guolit</i>	<i>beana</i>	<i>beatnagat</i>	<i>njoammil</i>	<i>njoammilat</i>
GENACC	<i>guoli</i>	<i>guliid</i>	<i>beatnaga</i>	<i>beatnagiid</i>	<i>njoammila</i>	<i>njoammiliid</i>
LOC	<i>guolis</i>	<i>guliin</i>	<i>beatnagis</i>	<i>beatnagiin</i>	<i>njoammilis</i>	<i>njoammiliin</i>
ILL	<i>guollái</i>	<i>guliide</i>	<i>beatnagii</i>	<i>beatnagiidda</i>	<i>njoammilii</i>	<i>njoammiliidda</i>
COM	<i>guliin</i>	<i>guliiguin</i>	<i>beatnagiin</i>	<i>beatnagiiguin</i>	<i>njoammiliin</i>	<i>njoammiliiguin</i>
ESS	<i>guollin</i>		<i>beanan</i>		<i>njoammilin</i>	
	'whale'		'reindeer'		'human being, person'	
	SG	PL	SG	PL	SG	PL
NOM	<i>fális</i>	<i>fál'lát</i>	<i>boazu</i>	<i>bohccot</i>	<i>olmmoš</i>	<i>olbmot</i>
GENACC	<i>fál'lá</i>	<i>fál'láid</i>	<i>bohcco</i>	<i>bohccuid</i>	<i>olbmo</i>	<i>olbmuid</i>
LOC	<i>fál'lás</i>	<i>fál'láin</i>	<i>bohccos</i>	<i>bohccuin</i>	<i>olbmos</i>	<i>olbmuin</i>
ILL	<i>fál'lái</i>	<i>fál'láide</i>	<i>bohccui</i>	<i>bohccuide</i>	<i>olbmui</i>	<i>olbmuide</i>
COM	<i>fál'láin</i>	<i>fál'láiguin</i>	<i>bohccuin</i>	<i>bohccuiguin</i>	<i>olbmuin</i>	<i>olbmuiguin</i>
ESS	<i>fálisin</i>		<i>boazun</i>		<i>olmmožin</i>	



## 10.3.1.4 Possessive declension

Nouns can take possessive suffixes (encoding the person and number of the possessor), but such forms have a very low frequency, in spoken language especially. Moreover, the system is in a state of change: at present there is remarkable areal and idiolectal variation in both shape and use of possessive forms. This variation has not been comprehensively studied (see, however, Janda and Antonsen 2016), and hence the following description only addresses the standardized use of possessive forms in literary language, which in turn is largely based on earlier descriptive grammars (see 10.6).

Case suffixes have somewhat different allomorphs when accompanied by a possessive suffix, and the possessive suffix may also trigger stem-final vowel alternation. Note also that the PL.COM form is exceptional because the case suffix consists of two parts between which the possessive suffix is inserted (*-id-POSS-guin*). Cf., e.g., the following forms of the noun *bárdni* ‘son’:

<i>bárdni</i> NOM	<i>bárdná-n</i> NOM.POSS.1SG
<i>bártni-s</i> LOC	<i>bártni-st-an</i> LOC.POSS.1SG
<i>bárdná-i</i> ILL	<i>bárdná-s-an</i> ILL.POSS.1SG
<i>bártni-iguin</i> PL.COM	<i>bártni-id-an-guin</i> PL.COM.POSS.1SG

Table 10.13 shows the case suffixes of the possessive declension; forms marked with a dash do not occur.

Table 10.13 Case suffixes in possessive declension

	vowel stems		consonant stems	
	SG	PL	SG	PL
NOM	∅	—	∅	—
GENACC	∅	<i>-id-</i>	∅	<i>-iiddá-/iiddi-</i>
LOC	<i>-st-</i>	<i>-in-</i>	<i>-isttá-/istti-</i>	<i>-iinná-/iinni-</i>
ILL	<i>-s-</i>	<i>-idasa-</i>	<i>-asa-</i>	<i>-iiddás-</i>
COM	<i>-in-</i>	<i>-id-POSS-guin</i>	<i>-iinná-/iinni-</i>	<i>-iiddá-/iiddi-POSS-guin</i>
ESS	<i>-n-</i>		—	

Like the case endings, the possessive suffixes come in two sets, as shown in Table 10.14. Vowel-stem possessive suffixes are used after case suffixes that end in a vowel (e.g. *vielja-idasa-s* brother-PL.ILL-POSS.3SG ‘to his/her brothers’), and consonant-stem possessive suffixes are used after case suffixes ending in a consonant (e.g. *viellja-s-is* brother-SG.ILL-POSS.3SG ‘to his/her brother’).

Possessive suffixes are typically used only to express so-called reflexive possession, i.e. the possessor is the grammatical subject, as in (38), or the subject of a subordinate

Table 10.14 The possessive suffixes

	vowel stems			consonant stems		
	SG	DU	PL	SG	DU	PL
1	<i>-n</i>	<i>-me</i>	<i>-met</i>	<i>-an</i>	<i>-eame</i>	<i>-eamet</i>
2	<i>-t</i>	<i>-de</i>	<i>-det</i>	<i>-at</i>	<i>-eatte</i>	<i>-eattet</i>
3	<i>-s</i>	<i>-ska</i>	<i>-set</i>	<i>-is</i>	<i>-easkka</i>	<i>-easet</i>

non-finite, as in (39). However, kinship terms are normally excepted from these limitations, as in (40); see also 10.4.2.

(38) *Son muitala ná preassadieđáhusastis.*  
3SG tell.3SG like.this press.release.LOC.POSS.3SG  
‘This is what s/he states in his/her press release.’

(39) *Mun gohččon sin dárkkistit*  
1SG order.PST.1SG 3PL.GENACC check.INF  
*preassadieđáhusaset.*  
press.release.GENACC.POSS.3PL  
‘I told them to check their press release.’

(40) *Mun ožžon preassadieđáhusa*  
1SG get.PST.1SG press.release.GENACC  
*áhčistan ~ áhčistat.*  
father.LOC.POSS.1SG ~ 2SG  
‘I got the press release from my father ~ your father.’

## 10.3.1.5 Attributive forms of adjectives

Many adjectives have distinct attributive forms that are used as prenominal modifiers (cf. 41a–b), whereas other adjectives take the morphologically unmarked SG.NOM when in this function (cf. 42a–b).

(41) a. *Mátki lea guhkki.*  
trip be.3SG long  
‘The trip/distance is long.’

b. *Dat lea guhkes mátki.*  
it be.3SG long.ATTR trip  
‘It’s a long trip/distance.’

(42) a. *Máhtte lea nuorra.*  
Máhtte be.3SG young(.SG.NOM)  
‘Máhtte is young.’

b. *Máhtte lea nuorra almmái.*  
Máhtte be.3SG young(.ATTR) man  
‘Máhtte is a young man.’

Prenominal adjectives do not agree with their head nouns, with the partial exception of *buorre* ‘good’, which in many dialects shows agreement analogous with demonstrative modifiers (see Table 10.23).

Attributive forms of adjectives constitute the only morphological category in North Saami where irregular forms are common. By phonological and morphological criteria most adjectives can be divided into four types:

1. Adjectives without a separate attributive form. These include, e.g., almost all adjectives with a trisyllabic SG.NOM ending in *-aš* or *-as* (e.g. *dábálaš* ‘common, usual’, *issoras* ‘terrible’), and all comparative and superlative adjectives (see 10.3.1.6).
2. The attributive form is marked with the suffix *-s/-es/-is* (and, often, concomitant morphophonological alternations). This group includes most bisyllabic vowel-stem adjectives (e.g. *čeahppi* : ATTR *čeahpes* ‘skilled’), most consonant-stem adjectives that lack consonant gradation (e.g. *bastil* : ATTR *bastilis* ‘sharp’, *ruoksat* : ATTR *rukses* ‘red’), and caritive adjectives in *-heapme* (*jierpmeheapme* : ATTR *jierpmehis* ‘senseless’).
3. The attributive form lacks the *-s* present in other forms. To this group belong most (but not all) adjectives with a disyllabic SG.NOM in *-as* (e.g. *ođas* : ATTR *ođda* ‘new’).
4. The attributive form is a so-called allegro form (10.2.4.5) of the SG.NOM, and thus shows a change *i > e* or *u > o* in the second syllable. This group includes most consonant-stem adjectives in *-is* and *-us* (e.g. *boaris* : ATTR *boares* ‘old’; *guorus* : ATTR *guoros* ‘empty’).

Outside these types, numerous irregular cases remain: adjectives lacking a distinct attributive form even if it was expected (e.g. *nuorra* ‘young’, *alit* ‘blue’), adjectives with a distinct attributive form where no such is expected (e.g. *oanehaš* : ATTR *oanehis* ‘short’), and adjectives with an irregularly formed attributive form (e.g. *stuoris* : ATTR *stuorra* ~ *stuora* ‘big’, *govdat* : ATTR *govda* ‘broad’).

### 10.3.1.6 Comparison of adjectives

Both comparatives and superlatives are formed with a suffix, each suffix having two variants, depending on stem type. Moreover, the shapes of suffix allomorphs show extensive dialectal variation; only the most common variants are presented here.

Comparatives are formed from vowel stems with the suffix *-t* (: *-bu-*), and from consonant stems with the suffix *-eabbo* ~ *-it* (in WI dialects) or *-ut* (in EI dialects). The declension of comparatives formed from vowel stems is morphophonologically peculiar: unlike all other words in the language, they are inflected as trisyllabic vowel stems ending in *u* (e.g. *nuorat* : GENACC *nuorabu* : ILL *nuorabui* ‘younger’). Comparatives formed from consonant stems vary between dialects: WI dialects inflect them as quadrisyllabic vowel stem nouns with regular consonant gradation *-bb-* : *-pp-* in the comparative suffix (e.g. *ođdaseabbo* ~ *ođdasit* : GENACC

*ođdaseappo* : ILL *ođdasebbui* ‘newer’), but their EI dialect counterparts lack consonant gradation and also differ in their vowels (e.g. *ođdasut* : GENACC *ođdasabbo* : ILL *ođdasabbui*).

Superlatives are formed from vowel stems with the suffix allomorph *-mus*, and inflected as quadrisyllabic vowel stems with consonant gradation *-ss-* : *-s-* in the suffix (e.g. *nuoramus* : GENACC *nuoramusa* : ILL *nuoramussii* ‘youngest’). For consonant stems the allomorph is the gradating *-eamos* : *-epmos-* in WI dialects, but the non-gradating *-amos(-)* in EI dialects (e.g. WI *ođdaseamos* : GENACC *ođdasepmosa*, EI *ođdasamos* : GENACC *ođdasamosa* ‘newest’).

Some derived adjective types (see 10.3.1.7) exhibit idiosyncratic morphophonological alternations, the most notable of which is the deletion of final *-aš* in comparative and superlative forms in most dialects: cf. *ávkkálaš* (: GENACC *ávkkálačča*) ‘useful’ : CPR (WI) *ávkkáleabbo* ~ *ávkkálit* ~ *ávkkálaččat*, (EI) *ávkkálut* ‘more useful’ : SUP (WI) *ávkkáleamos* ~ *ávkkálaččamus*, (EI) *ávkkálamos* ‘most useful’. Moreover, a few adjectives have irregular comparative and superlative forms: e.g. *árrat* (: GENACC *árrada*) ‘early’ : CPR *árat* : SUP *áramus*; *govdat* (: GENACC *govdaga*) ‘broad’ : CPR *govddit* : SUP *govddimus* (but also regular variants occur, e.g. (EI) CPR *govdagut* : SUP *govdagamos*).

The basic comparative construction is formed with the particle *go*, as in (43a). There are also alternative constructions with the standard of comparison in the genitive-accusative or the locative case (43b), but they are quite infrequent.

- (43) a. *Máhtte lea guhkit go mun.*  
           *Máhtte be.3SG long.CPR than 1SG*
- b. *Máhtte lea mu ~ mus guhkit.*  
           *Máhtte be.3SG 1SG.GENACC ~ 1SG.LOC long.CPR*  
           ‘Máhtte is taller than me.’

Periphrastic comparative and superlative constructions can be formed with the adverbs *eanet* ~ *eambo* ‘more’ and *eanemus* ‘most’, respectively. These are used as alternatives to synthetic forms, especially with recent loans and morphologically more complex derivatives, as in *eanet teorehtalaš* (~ *teorehtaleabbo* ~ *teorehtalut*) ‘more theoretical’.

### 10.3.1.7 Nominal derivation

North Saami has a rich set of nominal derivative suffixes; the following list contains examples of the most common ones.

#### A) Deverbal nouns

- (i) *-n* (: *-m-*), *-eapmi* (action noun): e.g. *ealli-* ‘live’ → *eallin* (GENACC *eallima*) ‘life’, *golgad-* ‘fish with a dragnet’ → *golgadeapmi* ‘dragnet fishing’

- (ii) -Ø, -eaddji (agent noun): e.g. *vuodji* ‘drive’ → *vuoddji* ‘driver’, *jorgal* ‘translate’ → *jorgaleaddji* ‘translator’
- (iii) -ár (profession): *dikšu* ‘nurse (v), take care of’ → *divššár* ‘nurse (n)’.—Can also be denominal: *dáidda* ‘art’ → *dáiddár* ‘artist’
- (iv) -a (: -ag-) (action, result of action): e.g. *áiti* ‘threaten’ → *áitta* (GENACC *áitaga*) ‘threat’, *čáll-* ‘write’ → *čála* (GENACC *čállaga*) ‘text, writing’
- (v) -u (action, result of action, mental state): e.g. *bivdi* ‘hunt’ → *bivdu* ‘hunt (noun)’, *juohki* ‘divide, share’ → *juohku* ‘division’, *balla* ‘be afraid’ → *ballu* ‘fear’
- (vi) -us (: -ussa- : -usa-) (action, result of action, mental state): e.g. *bálval-* ‘serve’ → *bálvalus* ‘service, favour’, *muital-* ‘tell’ → *muitalus* ‘(true) story’, *eahpid-* ‘suspect’ → *eahpádus* ‘suspicion’
- (vii) -as (instrument; sound): e.g. *gokča-* ‘cover’ → *govččas* ‘blanket’, *gillju-* ‘scream’ → *giljas* ‘screaming’
- (viii) -hat (: -hahka- : -haga-) (place of activity): e.g. *njuovva-* ‘slaughter’ → *njuovahat* ‘slaughterhouse’
- (ix) -n (: -n-) (instrument; inclinative agent): e.g. *vuodji-* ‘drive’ → *vuoján* (GENACC *vuojána*) ‘vehicle; draught reindeer’, *doarru-* ‘fight’ → *doron* (GENACC *dorona*) ‘brawler, bully’.—These derivatives can also be used as inclinative adjectives: e.g. *doron* ‘pugnacious, eager to fight’.
- (x) -muš (: -mušša- : -muša-), -eamoš (: -epmoš-) (planned or obligatory action, or its object; mental state): e.g. *lohka-* ‘read’ → *lohkamuš* ‘reading that one has to do; something to read’, *lasih-* ‘add’ → *lasiheamoš* ‘something to add’, *áigu-* ‘intend’ → *áigumuš* ‘intention’
- B) Deverbal adjectives
- (xi) -eš (inclination): *balla-* ‘be afraid’ → *baleš* ‘timid, cowardly’
- (xii) -ahkes (inclination): *suolád-* ‘steal’ → *suoládahkes* ‘thievish’
- (xiii) -las (inclination): *jáhkki-* ‘believe’ → *jáhkkálas* ‘credulous, gullible’
- (xiv) -meahtun (incapability, impossibility): *gierda-* ‘tolerate’ → *gierdameahtun* ‘intolerable; impatient’, *jápmi-* ‘die’ → *jápmemeahtun* ‘immortal’
- (xv) -vaš (tendency, essential feature): *gierda-* ‘tolerate’ → *gierdavaš* ‘patient’, *jápmi-* ‘die’ → *jápmevaš* ‘mortal’
- (xvi) -hahtti/-ahtti (suitability): *borra-* ‘eat’ → *borahahtti* ‘edible’, *boagust-* ‘laugh’ → *boagustahhtti* ‘ridiculous’
- (xvii) -l (susceptibility): *sodja-* ‘bend (INTR)’ → *sodjil* ‘flexible, pliable’
- C) Denominal nouns
- (xviii) -š (diminutive): *nieida* ‘girl’ → *nieiddáš* ‘little girl’.—The diminutive suffix can also be added to a comparative adjective to form a moderative

adjective: e.g. *guhkit* ‘longer’ → *guhkibuš* ~ *guhkebuš* ‘slightly longer, somewhat long’.

- (xix) -vuohta (abstract concept): *mánna* ‘child’ → *mánnavuohta* ‘childhood’.—Sometimes also deadjectival (e.g. *geafi* ‘poor’ → *geafivuohta* ‘poverty’).
- (xx) -laš (person of given ethnicity or geographic origin): *Guovdageaidnu* → *guovdageidnolaš* ‘person from the town of Guovdageaidnu’, *Sápmi* ‘Lapland, Saami homeland’ → *sápmelaš* ‘Saami person’.—These derivatives can also be used as adjectives: e.g. *sápmelaš kultuvra* ‘Saami culture’.
- (xxi) -(á)dat (weather, topographic feature): *davvi* ‘north’ → *davádat* ‘north wind’, *gieddi* ‘meadow’ → *giettádat* ‘meadow-like place’.—Sometimes also deverbal: e.g. *vuohhti-* ‘find tracks’ → *vuoh-tádat* ‘weather conditions suitable for tracking’.

## D) Deadjectival noun

- (xxii) -odat (property): *jal’la* ‘crazy’ → *jal’lodat* ‘madness’, *stuoris* ‘big’ → *sturodat* ‘size’

## E) Denominal adjectives

- (xxiii) -i (abundance): *guolli* ‘fish’ → *guol’lá* ‘rich in fish’
- (xxiv) -heapme (lack): *guolli* ‘fish’ → *guoleheapme* ‘fishless, without fish’
- (xxv) -laš (characteristic): *mánna* ‘child’ → *mánnálaš* ‘childish’, *árbevierru* ‘tradition’ → *árbeviroláš* ‘traditional’.—Note that this is not the same suffix as -laš (xx), because the two formations apply different morphophonological rules.
- (xxvi) -at (: -ag-) (characteristic; forms compound adjectives): *juolgi* ‘leg; foot’ → *guhkesjuolggat* ‘long-legged’ (cf. *guhkes* long.ATTR); *sámegiella* ‘Saami language’ → *sámegielat* ‘knowing or being able to speak Saami; written or spoken in Saami’
- (xxvii) -lágan (similative): *beana* ‘dog’ → *beatnatlágan* ~ *beanalágan* ‘dog-like’.—This suffix also attaches to attributive forms of adjectives, thus forming moderative adjectives: *ruoksat* (ATTR *rukses*) ‘red’ → *ruksešlágan* ‘reddish, somewhat red’.

## 10.3.2 Verb morphology

## 10.3.2.1 Verb stem types

North Saami verbs, with the exception of the copula *lea-* ‘be’ and the negative auxiliary, fall into three types which can be unambiguously distinguished by their infinitive forms (which is also the dictionary form):

1. Gradating verbs, the infinitives of which end in -at, -it, or -ut, and nearly always have an even number of syllables: e.g. *geahččat* (stem *geahčča-* ‘look, watch’), *oastit*

- (stem *oasti-*) ‘buy’, *rehkenastit* (stem *rehkenasti-*) ‘calculate’, *goarrut* (stem *goarru-*) ‘sew’.
2. Consonant-stem verbs, which lack consonant gradation and have infinitives with an odd number of syllables ending in *-it*: e.g. *sámástit* (stem *sámást-*) ‘speak Saami’, *rehkenastalit* (stem *rehkenastal-*) ‘try to calculate’.
  3. J-stem verbs, the infinitives of which end in *-át*, *-et*, or *-ot*, and nearly always have an even number of syllables. These verbs have both a vowel stem and a consonant stem in *-j-*, and they lack consonant gradation: e.g. *čilget* (stem *čilge-* : *čilgej-*) ‘explain’.

Verb suffixes, like nominal suffixes, typically have two allomorphs: one for vowel stems (these usually begin with a consonant) and another for consonant stems (these usually begin with a vowel). In some cases the shapes of the two allomorphs are remarkably different. In the paradigms of J-stem verbs, certain forms are based on the vowel stem, whereas others are based on the consonant stem ending in *-j-* (see Table 10.15).

**Table 10.15** Examples of suffix allomorphy between conjugational classes in North Saami verbs

	‘buy’	‘speak Saami’	‘explain’
1DU	<i>oste(-Ø)</i>	<i>sámást-etne</i>	<i>čilgej-etne</i>
2DU	<i>oasti-beahtti</i>	<i>sámást-eahppi</i>	<i>čilge-beahtti</i>
3DU	<i>oasti-ba</i>	<i>sámást-eaba</i>	<i>čilge-ba</i>

### 10.3.2.2 Tense and person

North Saami has two morphological tenses, the present (non-past, also used for future reference) and the past tense.

Historically the past-tense forms contain reflexes of the past-tense marker *\*-j-*, but synchronically the system is best described in terms of distinct sets of person suffixes for each tense. The person suffixes of standard written language are given in Table 10.16; in EI dialects several suffixes differ from the literary standard. Two further “tenses” are also distinguished in the North Saami grammar tradition, the perfect and the pluperfect, but these are more correctly described as periphrastic tense-aspect constructions on par with categories such as progressives (see 10.3.2.4.1).

**Table 10.16** Present-tense and past-tense person suffixes in the (unmarked) indicative mood

		vowel stems			consonant stems		
		SG	DU	PL	SG	DU	PL
present	1	<i>-n</i>	<i>-Ø</i>	<i>-t</i>	<i>-an</i>	<i>-etne</i>	<i>-it</i>
	2	<i>-t</i>	<i>-beahtti</i>	<i>-behtet</i>	<i>-at</i>	<i>-eahppi</i>	<i>-ehpet</i>
	3	<i>-Ø</i>	<i>-ba</i>	<i>-t</i>	<i>-a</i>	<i>-eaba</i>	<i>-it</i>
past	1	<i>-n</i>	<i>-ime</i>	<i>-imet</i>	<i>-in</i>	<i>-eimme</i>	<i>-eimmet</i>
	2	<i>-t</i>	<i>-ide</i>	<i>-idet</i>	<i>-it</i>	<i>-eidde</i>	<i>-eiddet</i>
	3	<i>-i</i>	<i>-iga</i>	<i>-Ø</i>	<i>-ii</i>	<i>-eigga</i>	<i>-edje ~ -e</i>

Examples of present- and past-tense paradigms of the three different conjugational types are given in Table 10.17. The paradigms also illustrate the morphophonological processes of consonant gradation, unstressed vowel alternation, and monophthongization (in *oasti-* ‘buy’), and the alternation between a vowel stem and a consonant stem in *-j-* (in *čilge-* ‘explain’).

**Table 10.17** Indicative paradigms of North Saami verbs  
Example verbs *oasti-* ‘buy’, *sámást-* ‘speak Saami’ and *čilge-* ‘explain’

	‘buy’		‘speak Saami’		‘explain’	
	IND.PRS	IND.PST	IND.PRS	IND.PST	IND.PRS	IND.PST
1SG	<i>oasttán</i>	<i>osten</i>	<i>sámástan</i>	<i>sámástin</i>	<i>čilgen</i>	<i>čilgejin</i>
2SG	<i>oasttát</i>	<i>ostet</i>	<i>sámástat</i>	<i>sámástit</i>	<i>čilget</i>	<i>čilgejit</i>
3SG	<i>oastá</i>	<i>osttii</i>	<i>sámásta</i>	<i>sámástii</i>	<i>čilge</i>	<i>čilgii</i>
1DU	<i>oste</i>	<i>osttiime</i>	<i>sámástetne</i>	<i>sámásteimme</i>	<i>čilgejetne</i>	<i>čilgiime</i>
2DU	<i>oastibeahtti</i>	<i>osttiide</i>	<i>sámásteahppi</i>	<i>sámásteidde</i>	<i>čilgebeahtti</i>	<i>čilgiide</i>
3DU	<i>oastiba</i>	<i>osttiiga</i>	<i>sámásteaba</i>	<i>sámásteigga</i>	<i>čilgeba</i>	<i>čilgiiga</i>
1PL	<i>oastit</i>	<i>osttiimet</i>	<i>sámástit</i>	<i>sámásteimmet</i>	<i>čilget</i>	<i>čilgiimet</i>
2PL	<i>oastibehtet</i>	<i>osttiidet</i>	<i>sámástehpet</i>	<i>sámásteiddet</i>	<i>čilgebehtet</i>	<i>čilgiidet</i>
3PL	<i>ostet</i>	<i>oste</i>	<i>sámástit</i>	<i>sámástedje ~ sámáste</i>	<i>čilget</i>	<i>čilgejedje ~ čilgeje</i>

The paradigms of the copula *lea-* 'be' (Table 10.18) and the negative auxiliary (Table 10.19), the only monosyllabic verb stems in North Saami, are irregular.

**Table 10.18** Inflection of the verb *lea-* 'be' in present and past tense

	PRS			PST		
	SG	DU	PL	SG	DU	PL
1	<i>lean</i>	<i>letne</i>	<i>leat</i>	<i>ledjen</i>	<i>leimme</i>	<i>leimmet</i>
2	<i>leat</i>	<i>leahppi</i>	<i>lehpēt</i>	<i>ledjet</i>	<i>leidde</i>	<i>leiddet</i>
3	<i>lea</i>	<i>leaba</i>	<i>leat</i>	<i>lei</i>	<i>leigga</i>	<i>ledje</i>

**Table 10.19** Paradigm of the negative auxiliary

	SG	DU	PL
1	<i>in</i>	<i>ean</i>	<i>eat</i>
2	<i>it</i>	<i>eahppi</i>	<i>ehpēt</i>
3	<i>ii</i>	<i>eaba</i>	<i>eai</i>

Negation (cf. chapter 47) is expressed with the negative auxiliary, after which the lexical verb appears in either the present or the past connegative form: e.g. *in oastte* (NEG.1SG buy.PRS.CNG) 'I don't/won't buy', *in oastán* (NEG.1SG buy.PST.CNG) 'I didn't buy'. The present connegative form is identical with the 2SG imperative (see 10.3.2.3) and the past connegative form is identical with the past participle (see 10.3.2.4), with the sole exception of the copula *lea-*: cf. *leat* PRS.CNG (vs *leage* IMP.2SG), *lean* PST.CNG (vs *leamaš* ~ *leamašan* PST.PTCP).

### 10.3.2.3 Mood

In addition to the (historically) unmarked indicative mood, North Saami has three morphologically marked moods: imperative, conditional, and potential.

#### 10.3.2.3.1 Imperative

The imperative mood has its own set of person suffixes (Table 10.20). The 2SG form is unmarked (or, in the case of gradating verbs, marked by morphophonological alternations only) and homonymous with the present connegative form (see 10.3.2.2). The vowel-stem endings for first- and third-person forms are peculiar: they begin with a vowel, which replaces the stem vowel.

Negative imperative (prohibitive) forms apply the prohibitive auxiliary (see Table 10.21), after which the lexical verb appears in the present-tense connegative form.

**Table 10.21** The paradigm of the prohibitive (imperative negative) auxiliary

	SG	DU	PL
1	<i>(allon)</i>	<i>al'lu</i>	<i>al'lot</i>
2	<i>ale</i>	<i>al'li</i>	<i>al'let</i>
3	<i>allos</i>	<i>alloska</i>	<i>al'loset</i>

The second-person imperative forms are used in true imperative function, i.e. to express orders and adhortations, as in (44). First- and third-person forms are used as optatives, e.g. expressing wishes or suggestions (45).

- (44) *Ale dájo!*  
 PROH.2SG joke.CNG  
 'Stop joking!'

**Table 10.20** Person suffixes and example paradigms of the imperative mood

	vowel stems			consonant stems		
	SG	DU	PL	SG	DU	PL
1	<i>(-on)</i>	<i>-u</i>	<i>-ot</i>	<i>(-ehkon)</i>	<i>-eadnu</i>	<i>-ehkot ~ -eatnot</i>
2	<i>-∅</i>	<i>-∅</i>	<i>-t</i>	<i>-∅</i>	<i>-eahkki</i>	<i>-ehket</i>
3	<i>-os</i>	<i>-oska</i>	<i>-oset</i>	<i>-ehkos</i>	<i>-ehkoska</i>	<i>-ehkoset</i>
	SG	DU	PL	SG	DU	PL
1	<i>(oston)</i>	<i>oastu</i>	<i>ostot</i>	<i>(sámástehton)</i>	<i>sámásteadnu</i>	<i>sámástehtot ~ sámásteatnot</i>
2	<i>oastte</i>	<i>oasti</i>	<i>ostet</i>	<i>sámás</i>	<i>sámásteahkki</i>	<i>sámástehtet</i>
3	<i>ostos</i>	<i>ostoska</i>	<i>ostoset</i>	<i>sámástehtos</i>	<i>sámástehtoska</i>	<i>sámástehtoset</i>

1SG imperative forms (here given in brackets) are described in grammars, but they have mostly fallen out of use.

- (45) *Vuolgu filmma geahččat.*  
 leave.IMP.1DU film.GENACC look.INF  
 'Let's go and watch a movie (the two of us)'

#### 10.3.2.3.2 Conditional

The conditional suffix is placed between the verb stem and the person suffix. It has two variants: *-š-* (or, in Torne and many WI dialects, *-l-*) for vowel stems and *-ivčče-* : *-ivčči-* for consonant stems. These are followed by the same person suffixes as in the past tense (see Table 10.16). To the allomorph *-š-*/*-l-* the consonant-stem person suffixes are attached: e.g. *oasttáš-eimme* ~ *oasttá-l-eimme* buy-COND-1DU 'we two would buy'. The forms with the allomorph *-ivčče-* : *-ivčči-*, in turn, take vowel-stem person suffixes: e.g. *sámást-ivčči-ime* speak.Saami-COND-1DU 'we two would speak Saami'.

Negated conditional forms consist of the negative auxiliary and the lexical verb in the conditional connegative form with the suffix *-še* (or, alternatively, *-le* in WI) or *-ivčče*: e.g. *in oasttáše* ~ *oasttále* 'I would not buy', *in sámástivčče* 'I would not speak Saami'.

A conditional perfect can be expressed by as many as three alternative periphrastic constructions: 1) a conditional form of *lea-* 'be' (based on the stem *livčče-/livčči-*) followed by the past participle (46a); 2) an indicative past-tense form of *lea-* 'be' followed by the infinitive (46b); 3) a mixed type, with a conditional form of *lea-* 'be' followed by the infinitive (46c). These constructions are generally considered synonymous, and they seem to occur in free variation; whether some subtle semantic or pragmatic differences between them exist begs for further study.

- (46) a. *livččen oastán*  
 be.COND.1SG buy.PST.PCTP  
 b. *ledjen oastit*  
 be.PST.1SG buy.INF  
 c. *livččen oastit*  
 be.COND.1SG buy.INF  
 'I would have bought'

The conditional mood is typically used to express irrealis and counterfactual states (conditions, wishes), as in (47), and also polite requests (formally identical to questions), as in (48).

- (47) *Mun oasttášin biilla, jos mus*  
 1SG buy.COND.1SG car.GENACC if 1SG.LOC  
*livččii ruhta.*  
 be.COND.3SG money  
 'I would buy a car, if I had money.'

- (48) *Leahkastivččet=go uvssa?*  
 open.COND.2SG=Q door.GENACC  
 'Could you please open the door?'

#### 10.3.2.3.3 Potential

The potential mood has two suffix variants: *-ž-* for vowel stems and *-eažža-* : *-eačča-* for consonant stems (the suffix itself exhibits the regular consonant gradation *žž* : *čč*). To these, the present-tense person suffixes are added, with the exception of the 3SG form which has no person marker (and for phonotactic reasons, the *-ž-* suffix is realized as *-š* in word-final position; see 10.2.4.4). The potential forms are negated using the negative auxiliary and the potential connegative form marked with *-š* or *-eačča* (i.e. with the potential suffix alone).

The potential mood is the most marginal mood in North Saami. Despite its somewhat misleading name, it is most often used to express the speaker's uncertainty or doubt, and could therefore be better characterized as the dubitative mood:

- (49) *In dieđe bođeš=go Máhtte.*  
 NEG.1SG know.CNG come.POT.3SG=Q Máhtte  
 'I'm not sure if Máhtte is coming (but I doubt it).'

#### 10.3.2.4 Non-finites

North Saami also has a number of non-finite verb forms that include infinitives, participles, and converbs. Table 10.22 shows thirteen productive verb forms that can be described as the non-finites of the language.

##### 10.3.2.4.1 Past participle and progressive used in periphrastic tense-aspects

The so-called perfect and pluperfect are formed with *lea-* 'be', inflected in person and present or past tense, followed by the past participle, as in (50). They are also negated with the negative auxiliary in the appropriate person, the 'be' verb then appearing in the present or past connegative form.

- (50) *Ijgá lea ~ lei čuohppan muoraid.*  
 Ijgá be.3SG ~ be.PST.3SG cut.PST.PTCP tree.PL.GENACC  
 'Ijgá has ~ had cut (some) wood.'

Analogously, progressive aspect is expressed by a periphrastic construction consisting of the auxiliary *lea-* 'be' and the main verb in a specific progressive form, marked with *-min/-eamen* (EI) or *-me/-eame* (WI). The progressive is semantically more or less equivalent to the English progressive gerund in *-ing*, but normally only used for verbs with a high degree of agentivity, as in (51).

Table 10.22 The non-finite verb forms in North Saami

	'buy'	'speak Saami'
Infinitive	<i>oastit</i>	<i>sámástit</i>
Infinitive II	<i>oastimis</i>	<i>sámásteames</i>
Past participle	<i>oastán</i>	<i>sámástan</i>
Present participle	<i>oasti</i>	<i>sámásteaddji</i>
Past passive participle	<i>oston ~ ostojuvvon</i>	<i>sámástuvvon (~ sámástun)</i>
Agentive passive participle	<i>oastin</i>	<i>sámástan</i>
Negative participle	<i>oastekeahtes</i>	<i>sámáskeahtes</i>
Progressive ('in the act of V-ing')	<i>oastimin ~ oastime</i>	<i>sámásteame(n)</i>
Negative converb ('without V-ing')	<i>oastekeahtá</i>	<i>sámáskeahtá</i>
Simultaneous converb ('while V-ing')	<i>oasttedettiin</i>	<i>sámástettiin</i>
Instrumental converb ('by V-ing')	<i>oastimiin</i>	<i>sámástemiin</i>
Purposive converb ('in order to V')	<i>oastindihte</i>	<i>sámástandihte</i>
Similative converb ('as if V-ing')	<i>oastinláhkai</i>	<i>sámástanláhkai</i>

- (51) *Iggá lea ~ lei čuohppamin muoraid.*  
*Iggá* be.3SG ~ be.PST.3SG cut.PROG tree.PL.GENACC  
 'Iggá is ~ was cutting wood.'

#### 10.3.2.4.2 Other non-finites

##### 10.3.2.4.2.1 THE (FIRST) INFINITIVE

The first infinitive, or merely the infinitive, is the dictionary form with the suffix *-t/-it*. It is commonly used as an argument of various verbs (modal, mental, and the like, as in examples (52)–(53)) or nominals (examples (54)–(55)).

- (52) *Máhtte lohpidii boahtit.*  
*Máhtte* promise.PST.3SG come.INF  
 'Máhtte promised to come.'
- (53) *Ii dat dáaide boahtit.*  
 NEG.3SG 3SG probably.be.the.case.CNG come.INF  
 'S/he probably won't come.'
- (54) *Máhtes ii leat lohpi vuolgit.*  
*Máhtte*.LOC NEG.3SG be.CNG permission leave.INF  
 'Máhtte is not allowed ("doesn't have permission") to leave.'
- (55) *Máhtte lea čeahppi vuodjat.*  
*Máhtte* be.3SG skillful swim.INF  
 'Máhtte is a good swimmer.'

##### 10.3.2.4.2.2 THE SECOND INFINITIVE

The second infinitive, marked with *-mis/-eames*, is mostly used as an argument of verbs which signify that an action stops, ends, does not take place, is avoided, or is prevented:

- (56) *De heittii arvimis.*  
 then stop.PST.3SG rain.2INF  
 'Then it stopped raining.'
- (57) *Iggá gildii mu boahtimis.*  
*Iggá* forbid.PST.3SG 1SG.GENACC come.2INF  
 'Iggá told me I couldn't come.'

##### 10.3.2.4.2.3 THE CONVERBS

The converb of simultaneity is marked with *-dettiin/-ettiin*, optionally (but rarely) followed by a possessive suffix referring to the subject person.

- (58) *Iggá smiehtai dan váccedettiin(is).*  
*Iggá* think.PST.3SG it.GENACC walk.SIM.CVB(.POSS.3SG)  
 'Iggá thought about that while walking.'

The negative converb, marked with *-keahtá*, expresses that an action is not or has not been carried out, as in (59). The form is also used in a periphrastic construction with *lea-be*, often implying that the action ought to be carried out in future, as in (60).

(59) *Máhtte vulggii borakeahhtá.*  
 Máhtte leave.PST.3SG eat.NEG.CVB  
 ‘Máhtte left without eating (anything).’

(60) *Mus lea dát girji logakeahhtá.*  
 1SG.LOC be.3SG this book read.NEG.CVB  
 ‘I haven’t read this book yet.’

The progressive form seen in (51) is also used as a converb, often with complements of verbs of perception; the underlying subject of the converb is the object of the finite verb.

(61) *Mun gulan beatnaga ciellamin.*  
 1SG hear.1SG dog.GENACC bark.PROG  
 ‘I hear a dog barking.’

The instrumental converb (62), marked with *-miin/-emiin*, represents a fairly recent grammaticalization of the comitative case form of a deverbal noun; the form occurs predominantly among speakers bilingual in Finnish, and seems to be a calque of the functionally equivalent Finnish converb (cf. the analogous converb in Aanaar Saami, see 11.4.4).

(62) *Viššalit stuđeremiin beasat guhkás eallimis.*  
 eagerly study.INSTR.CVB get.to.2SG far life.LOC  
 ‘By studying diligently, you will accomplish a lot (“get a long way”) in life.’

The purposive converb in *-(a)ndihtē ~ -(a)ndihtii* (63), and the similative converb in *-(a)nláhkai* (64) have recently been grammaticalized from postpositional constructions containing a deverbal noun as a complement of *dihte ~ dihtii* ‘because of’ and *láhkai* ‘in the manner of’. The similative converb refers not only to similarity of action, but also to states of readiness or suitability for action, making sentences such as (64) potentially ambiguous. For further discussion of the form see Ylikoski (2017a).

(63) *Mun dadjen dan dušše bilkidandihte*  
 1SG say.PST.3SG it.GENACC only mock.PURP.CVB

*Máhte.*  
 Máhtte.GENACC  
 ‘I only said that to mock Máhtte.’

(64) *Máhtte bajidii niibbi čuggenláhkai.*  
 Máhtte raise.PST.3SG knife.GENACC stab.SIM.CVB  
 ‘Máhtte raised the knife in order to stab.’  
 ~ ‘Máhtte raised the knife as if stabbing with it.’

#### 10.3.2.4.2.4 THE PARTICIPLES

The present participle is formed from gradating verbs with morphophonological alternations only, that is, strong grade strengthening accompanied by an unstressed vowel change

*a > i* (*buohca-* ‘be sick’: PRS.PTCP *buohcci*), but from consonant-stem and *j*-stem verbs with the suffix *-eaddji* (*oahpah-* ‘teach’: PRS.PTCP *oahpaheadji*). Despite its name, the present participle seldom modifies a noun (as in *buohcci olmmoš* ‘be.sick.PRS.PTCP person ‘a sick person’); mostly such forms function as deverbal agent nouns instead (e.g. *buohcci* ‘patient’; see 10.3.1.7).

The past participle in *-n/-an* is most frequently used in the periphrastic perfect and pluperfect constructions (see 10.3.2.4.1), and much less often as a prenominal modifier (e.g. *oahppan olmmoš* ‘learn.PST.PTCP person ‘an educated person’). It is occasionally also used as an argument of modal verbs or verbs of perception, saying and thinking, referring to relative past:

(65) *Son diehtá ~ jáhká ~ gáddá Inggá*  
 3SG know.3SG believe.3SG assume.3SG Inggá.GENACC  
*vuolgán.*  
 leave.PCTP.PST  
 ‘S/he knows ~ believes ~ thinks that Inggá has left.’

The so-called agentive passive participle is used with an overt agent participant marked with the genitive-accusative case, as in *Inggá oastin biila* [Inggá.GENACC buy.PASS.AG.PTCP car] ‘the car bought by Inggá’. The form has largely fallen out of use, however, with most speakers having replaced it with either the past participle (*oastán*; mostly in Finland) or the past passive participle (*oston ~ ostojuvvon*; mostly in Norway). The negative participle in *-keahtes* is the participle counterpart of the negative converb. It is used as a prenominal modifier, as in *logakeahtes girji* ‘an unread book’.

#### 10.3.2.5 Verb derivation

##### 10.3.2.5.1 Valency-changing derivation

Passive verbs are formed from gradating verbs with the suffix *-ojuv’vo-* (plus strong grade strengthening, monophthongization, and stem vowel deletion, e.g. *oaidni-* ‘see’ → *oidnojuv’vo-* ‘be seen’), from consonant-stem verbs and *J*-stem verbs with the suffix *-uv’vo-* (e.g. *oahpah-* ‘teach’ → *oahpahuv’vo-* ‘be taught’, *čilge-* ‘explain’ → *čilgejuv’vo-* ‘be explained’).

The passive verbs are used for agent demotion: they imply the existence of a conscious agent who is acting deliberately, even though the agent is usually not overtly expressed (66). The passive derivatives of most gradating verbs also have a shorter variant in which the suffix is merely *-o-* (e.g. *čál’lojuv’vo-* ~ *čál’lo-* ‘be written’). However, for certain verbs the shorter form has a completely distinct automative passive function, implying that the action takes place “of itself” and there is no true agent, as in (67).

- (66) *Máhte stággu doddjojuv'vui.*  
 Máhtte.GENACC fishing.rod break.PASS.PST.3SG  
 'Máhtte's fishing rod was broken in two.' (i.e. someone broke it deliberately)
- (67) *Máhte stággu doddjuj.*  
 Máhtte.GENACC fishing.rod break.AUTOM.PST.3SG  
 'Máhtte's fishing rod broke in two.' (by accident)

In addition to the neutral passive in *-(oj)uv'vo-* there are separate adversative passives formed with the derivational suffix *-halla-*, referring to actions that are detrimental or undesirable for the patient. Unlike with neutral passives, the agent of adversative passives is frequently overtly present and marked with the illative case (68).

- (68) *Mánát sáhttet vieččahallat čáhcerávgi.*  
 child.PL can.3PL fetch.ADVERS.PASS.INF water.spirit.ILL  
 'Children can get taken away by the water spirit.'

Causative derivatives are formed with the suffix *-h-* (gradating verbs and *-j-* stem verbs; e.g. *čierru-* 'cry' → *čieruh-*) or *-ahtti-* (consonant-stem verbs; e.g. *ráhkad-* 'make, manufacture' → *ráhkadahtti-*). They are used in two kinds of constructions: "make somebody V", with the agent as the direct object (69), and "have something V-ed", with the patient as the direct object. In the latter type of construction the underlying agent is sometimes also overtly present and marked with the illative case (70), but this feature is rare in contemporary language and not all speakers seem to consider such agent arguments possible.

- (69) *It oaččo čieruhit unnavielja.*  
 NEG.2SG be.allowed.CNG cry.CAUS.INF little.brother.GENACC  
 'You mustn't make your little brother cry.'
- (70) *Mun dáiddán ráhkadahttit rávdái eará lohka.*  
 1SG might.1SG make.CAUS.INF smith.ILL other  
 lock.GENACC  
 'I think I will have the smith make another lock.'  
 (Lagercrantz 1959: 150)

#### 10.3.2.5.2 Aspectual derivation

A central feature of the system of aspectual derivation is the distinction between punctual and iterative-continuative aspects. Verbs for many actions come in pairs, the most frequent pattern being that the punctual verb is a J-stem verb with the stem vowel *-e-*, and the iterative-continuative verb is a gradating verb with the stem vowel *-u-*: e.g. *njuike-* 'jump (once)' : *njuiku-* 'jump (repeatedly)', *henge-* 'hang (one object)' : *heangu-* 'hang (several objects)', *čurve-* 'shout (once)' : *čorvu-* 'shout (continuously or repeatedly)'. However, the system is formally far from regular, as also

different morphological marking often occurs: e.g. *máhcst-* 'fold (one object)' : *máhccu-* 'fold (several objects)', *čorbmad-* 'punch (once)' : *čorbma-* 'punch (repeatedly), beat'.

Another central and highly productive aspectual category is the inchoative formed with the suffix *-(iš)goahti-*, as in *buolli-* 'burn' → *buolligoahti-* 'start burning', *analysere-* 'analyse' → *analyseregoahti-* 'start analysing'. There are also distinct formations for expressing a momentaneous inceptive aspect, e.g. *buolli-* 'burn' → *buol'lá-* 'catch fire, flare up'. Other derived aspectual categories include momentaneous-effortless aspect (e.g. *analysere-* 'analyse' → *analyserest-* 'analyse quickly and with little effort'), abrupt aspect (*luoiti-* 'let go' → *luoitil-* 'let go (suddenly or unexpectedly)'), durative aspect (e.g. *vuodji-* 'drive' → *vuojáš-* 'cruise, drive around'), conative aspect (*vuovdi-* 'sell' → *vuovdal-* 'try to sell'), and distributive aspect (e.g. *báhtar-* 'flee' → *báhtaradda-* 'flee one after the other').

#### 10.3.2.5.3 Denominal and deadjectival verbs

The suffix *-e-* is a highly frequent denominal verbalizer. It forms verbs with most diverse semantics, including factitives (e.g. *govva* 'picture' → *gov've-* 'photograph'), captatives (e.g. *loddi* 'bird' → *lodde-* 'hunt birds'), locatum verbs (e.g. *vearju* 'weapon' → *verje-* 'arm, provide with weapons', *sálti* 'salt (N)' → *sálte-* 'salt (V)'), privatives (e.g. *garra* 'peel, crust' → *gar're-* 'peel (e.g. vegetables)'), transformatives (e.g. *moallu* 'crumb' → *moll'le-* 'crumble, crush to crumbs'), posturals (*čurti* 'butt' → *čurte-* 'moon, show one's butt'), weather verbs (*balva* 'cloud' → *balve-* 'get cloudy'), and yet others (e.g. *geadgi* 'stone' → *gedge-* 'stone, throw stones at'; *hoavda* 'boss' → *hovde-* 'manage as a boss').

Other denominal and deadjectival verb suffixes, in contrast, show more clearly delimited semantic functions. Among the most important types are intransitive transformative verbs (e.g. *stuoris* 'big' → *stuorru-* 'grow bigger'), transitive transformative verbs (e.g. *stuoris* → *stuorid-* 'make bigger'), evaluative verbs (e.g. *stuoris* → *stuoráš-* 'consider too big'), caritive verbs (e.g. *ruhta* 'money' → *rudahuvva-* 'become penniless, go broke'), instrumental verbs (e.g. *niibi* 'knife' → *niibbást-* 'use a knife'), behavioural verbs (e.g. *jal'la* 'crazy' → *jal'loš-* 'act stupidly'), social or leisurely activity verbs (e.g. *káffe* 'coffee' → *káfestalla-* 'take a coffee break; have coffee together'), and disruptive activity verbs (e.g. *riidu* 'argument, quarrel' → *riiddásk-* 'get into an argument, cease to be in friendly terms'). Some of the categories above include several formally distinct derivational suffixes with very similar or even identical semantic functions.

## 10.4 Syntax

In its classical form, conveniently characterized as the language of traditional predominantly Saami-speaking communities and documented in the idioms of speakers born in the

nineteenth century, North Saami has had a relatively homogeneous syntax in comparison to the notable dialectal differences on the levels of the lexicon, morphology, and phonology especially. In the beginning of the twenty-first century, however, the previous uniformity often serves as an unreachable idealization of language planners striving to retain the mutual intelligibility of the language whose speakers are virtually bilingual in Norwegian, Swedish, and Finnish, which dominate in their respective nation states. As can be expected, the westernmost varieties of North Saami resemble Lule Saami—likewise increasingly affected by Scandinavian—whereas many vernaculars in Finland are largely isomorphous with Aanaar Saami, the most Finnicized of the Saami languages. In fact, the competing and divisive influences from the genealogically and typologically distinct majority languages constitute one of the most characteristic features of modern North Saami syntax.

#### 10.4.1 Word order

The neutral basic word order in North Saami is SVO/SVX in most intransitive, transitive, and copular clauses (71)–(72), except for certain clause types such as existential (73) and syntactically identical possessive (74) clauses, where the word order is the opposite:

- (71) *Mon lean okta sápmelaš, guhte lean*  
 1SG be.1SG INDEF Saami who be.1SG  
*bargan visot sámi bargguid ja*  
 work.PST.CNG all Saami.GENACC work.PL.GENACC and  
*mon dovddan visot sámi dili.*  
 1SG know.1SG all Saami.GENACC situation.GENACC  
 ‘I am a Saami who has busied myself with all manner of Saami work, and I know all about Saami life.’
- (72) *Káffe lea gievkkanis.*  
 coffee be.3SG kitchen.LOC  
 ‘The coffee is in the kitchen.’
- (73) *Gievkkanis lea káffe.*  
 kitchen.LOC be.3SG coffee  
 ‘There is coffee in the kitchen.’
- (74) *Márehis lea káffe.*  
 Máret.LOC be.3SG coffee  
 ‘Máret has (a cup of) coffee.’

Not unlike the situation in other Saami languages, innumerable deviations from the default word order are possible for focusing and contrastive functions, and in this respect North Saami resembles other Saami languages such as Lule Saami (cf. examples 7a–d in chapter 9) and Aanaar

Saami (cf. examples 10–14 in chapter 11). Moreover, a notable exception to default SVO word order can be observed in infinitival complement clauses: VO word order occurs with materially heavy object phrases (75), but there is a tendency towards OV word order in connection with known referents or those that have been mentioned in earlier discourse (76), as well as with other materially light object phrases (77).

- (75) *Mun áiggun diggot guokte hirbmat*  
 1SG intend.1SG order.INF two extremely  
*stuorra pepperonipizza.*  
 large pepperoni.pizza.GENACC  
 ‘I’m going to order two extremely large pepperoni pizzas.’
- (76) *Mun áiggun daid borrat ~ borrat*  
 1SG intend.1SG that.PL.GENACC eat.INF eat.INF  
*daid.*  
 that.PL.GENACC  
 ‘I’m going to eat them.’
- (77) *Mun áiggun pizza borrat ~ borrat*  
 1SG intend.1SG pizza.GENACC eat.INF eat.INF  
*pizza.*  
 pizza.GENACC  
 ‘I’m going to eat pizza.’

In the realm of word order, the influence of Norwegian and Swedish is observable in the increasing tendency to favour V2 word order (78a) instead of the more original SVO word order (78b).

- (78) a. *Otne áiggun mun borrat pizza.*  
 today intend.1SG 1SG eat.INF pizza.GENACC  
 b. *Otne mun áiggun borrat pizza.*  
 today 1SG intend.1SG eat.INF pizza.GENACC  
 ‘I’m going to eat pizza today.’

In content and polar questions, the interrogative pronoun (79) or the focused word accompanied by the interrogative clitic =*go* (80a, 81a) or the mirative interrogative clitic =*bat* (80b, 81b) takes the initial position in a sentence:

- (79) *Maid doai borraheahti?*  
 what.PL.GENACC 2DU eat.2DU  
 ‘What are you two eating?’
- (80) a. *Pizza=go doai borraheahti?*  
 pizza.GENACC=Q 2DU eat.2DU  
 ‘Is it pizza you two are eating?’  
 b. *Pizza=bat doai borraheahti?*  
 pizza.GENACC=MIR.Q 2DU eat.2DU  
 ‘Oh, is it pizza you two are eating?’

- (81) a. *Dáppe=go doai borrhabeahhti?*  
 here=Q 2DU eat.2DU  
 'Is it here that you two are eating?'  
 b. *Dáppe=bat doai borrhabeahhti?*  
 here=MIR.Q 2DU eat.2DU  
 'Oh, is it here that you two are eating?'

10.4.2 Phrase structure

As in all Saami languages, modifiers typically precede their heads (82) and most adpositions are postpositions (83a), although many of them are increasingly being used as prepositions as well (83b), especially under the influence of Scandinavian prepositions.

- (82) *Viečča dan du ođđa*  
 fetch.IMP.2SG that.GENACC 2SG.GENACC new.ATTR  
*telefovna!*  
 telephone.GENACC  
 'Go get that new telephone of yours!'  
 (83) a. *joga rastá geasi maŋŋá*  
 river.GENACC across summer.GENACC after  
 b. *rastá joga maŋŋá geasi*  
 across river.GENACC after summer.GENACC  
 'across the river' 'after the summer'

Adnominal adjectives do not agree with their head in case or number, but the attributive forms are often different from the predicative forms (see 10.3.1.5). As in other Saami languages, demonstratives (and numerals) do agree with their heads, but in adnominal position they are not entirely identical to those in the absolute declension (Table 10.23).

Although the genitive and accusative cases have merged in North Saami (see 10.3.1.1), the earlier distinction

between the two cases is still faintly visible on phrase level. For numerals higher than one, the genitive(-accusative) case occurs only in "genitive" functions such as possessors (82) and adpositional complements (83), whereas the object is in the nominative. However, there is still a distinction between adnominal demonstratives in the nominative and genitive-accusative (Table 10.23). As a result, NPs containing both a numeral and a demonstrative have three distinct combinations according to their syntactic functions (Table 10.24).

**Table 10.24** Nominative vs "accusative" vs "genitive" distinction in North Saami NPs with demonstratives and numerals

	'these two houses'		
NOM	<i>dát</i> this.NOM	<i>guokte</i> two.NOM	<i>viesu</i> house.GENACC
"ACC"	<i>dán</i> this.GENACC	<i>guokte</i> two.NOM	<i>viesu</i> house.GENACC
"GEN"	<i>dán</i> this.GENACC	<i>guovtti</i> two.GENACC	<i>viesu</i> house.GENACC

In concrete example sentences, the phrase-level distinction between the nominative, accusative, and genitive is as follows:

- (84) *Dát guokte viesu leat mu.*  
 this.NOM two.NOM house.GENACC be.3PL 1SG.GENACC  
 'These two houses are mine.' (NP<sub>nom</sub>)  
 (85) *Mun osten dán guokte viesu.*  
 1SG buy.PST.1SG this.GENACC two.NOM house.GENACC  
 'I bought these two houses.' (NP<sub>acc</sub>)

**Table 10.23** Inflection of North Saami demonstratives and nouns

Note the lack of full agreement in the boldfaced forms.

	'this' (SG)	'these' (PL)	'this house'	'these houses'
NOM	<i>dát</i>	<i>dát</i>	<i>dát viesu</i>	<i>dát viesut</i>
GENACC	<i>dán</i>	<i>dáid</i>	<i>dán viesu</i>	<i>dáid viesuid</i>
LOC	<i>dás</i>	<i>dáin</i>	<b><i>dán</i></b> <i>viesus</i>	<i>dáin ~ dáid viesuin</i>
ILL	<i>dása</i>	<i>dáidda</i>	<b><i>dán</i></b> <i>vissui</i>	<i>dáidda ~ dáid viesuide</i>
COM	<i>dáinna</i>	<i>dáiguin</i>	<i>dáinna viesuin</i>	<i>dáiguin ~ dáid viesuiguin</i>
ESS	<i>dánin</i>		<i>dánin ~ dán viessun</i>	

- (86) *Mun lean dán guovtti*  
 1SG be.1SG this.GENACC two.GENACC  
*viésu eaiggát.*  
 house.GENACC owner  
 'I am the owner of these two houses.' (NP<sub>gen</sub>)

The use of possessive suffixes is most common with kinship terms and other inalienables (87) rather than alienables (88), but the language is in the process of replacing the use of anaphoric possessive forms with analytic noun phrases with the preposed reflexive pronoun in the genitive-accusative, itself containing possessive suffixes (88) (Janda and Antonsen 2016). However, the original functions of the possessive suffix are in decay even here, and in colloquial language the 3SG form is often used without its original function—and often accompanied by a clarifying personal pronoun (89).

- (87) *Viečča áhčát!*  
 fetch.IMP.2SG father.GENACC.POSS.2SG  
 'Go get your father!'
- (88) *Viečča telefavnna ~*  
 fetch.IMP.2SG telephone.GENACC.POSS.2SG  
*iežat telefavnna!*  
 REFL.2SG.GENACC telephone.GENACC  
 'Go get your (own) telephone!'
- (89) *Viečča (du) iežas*  
 fetch.IMP.2SG 2SG.GENACC REFL.3SG.GENACC  
*telefavnna!*  
 telephone.GENACC  
 'Go get your (own) telephone!'

The article-like use of the demonstrative *dat* 'it; that' and the numeral *okta* 'one' has been widespread for ages, as famously seen in the opening sentence of Johan Turi's (1910) classic work *Muittalus sámid birra* in (71).

### 10.4.3 Clause structure

The clause types of North Saami are for the most part similar to those of other Saami languages as well as Finnic, especially Finnish (see chapters 9, 11, 14, 15). The subject is in the nominative and the object in the genitive-accusative. The subject and the predicate agree in number and person, with a couple of exceptions for dual referents that also serve as a tool to distinguish between clause types:

- (90) *Son boahtá.*  
 3SG come.3SG  
 'S/he is coming.'
- (91) *Soai bohtiba.*  
 3DU come.3DU  
 'They two are coming.'

- (92) *Sii bohtet.*  
 3PL come.PL  
 'They (3+) are coming.'

- (93) *Nieiddat bohtiba/bohtet.*  
 girl.PL come.3DU/come.3PL  
 'The girls (two/more than two) are coming.'

- (94) *Biillat bohtet.*  
 car.PL come.3PL  
 'Cars (two or more) are coming.'

For personal pronouns and verbs, the dual vs plural distinction is a rule. For humans (and for other individualized or agentive animates), the dual number of subject referents is indicated in verbs; noun inflection is regarded as lacking the distinction, however, and the plural stands for non-singular. When speaking of inanimates such as cars (94), the dual number is altogether absent. However, the morpheme *-guovttos* has the function of an optional marker of definite dual human referents, as seen in (95). Although the morpheme resembles an independent word and can also function as such (e.g. *dat guovttos* 'they (two)'; see 10.3.1.3), its use is better understood as that of a dual marker which, when attached to nouns, yields forms phonologically equivalent to compound words. Note that the element, like most inflectional suffixes, is attached to the oblique stem instead of the nominative; the same element is also used in the associative dual constructions mentioned in 10.3.1.1 and example (27) there.

- (95) *Nieiddaguovttos bohtiba.*  
 girl.DU come.3DU  
 'The two girls are coming.'

The dual nature of the dual is also visible in existential and possessive clauses where the verb *leat* 'be' is in the plural form even in the case of two human referents as the subject (97). But then again, *-guovttos* forms nevertheless can take their predicates in the dual number, even in a possessive clause (98).

- (96) *Mus lea okta nieida.*  
 1SG.LOC be.3SG one girl  
 'I have one/a daughter.'

- (97) *Mus leat guokte /golbma nieidda.*  
 1SG.LOC be.3PL two /three girl.GENACC  
 'I have two/three daughters.'

- (98) *Lihkus mus leaba (~ leat) mu*  
 luck.LOC 1SG.LOC be.3DU (be.3PL) 1SG.GENACC  
*nieiddaguovttos.*  
 girl.DU  
 'Luckily I have my two daughters.'

The so-called passive clauses are structurally nothing but ordinary intransitive clauses; the passive verbs are best understood as belonging to the realm of derivation rather than inflection (see 10.3.2.3). However, the ever-deepening dialect boundaries along the state borders are visible in passive clauses also. In Norway and Sweden there is a tendency to mark the agent with the locative case instead of deleting it entirely (see 54.2.6.2). The passive verbs are usually derived from transitive verbs, but intransitive stems are also possible (PASS.3SG only), especially under the influence of the Finnish impersonal passive. For contact-influenced variation in argument marking, see also 44.4.2 as well as Kittilä and Ylikoski (2018).

For interrogative clauses, see examples (79)–(81) in 10.4.1.

#### 10.4.4 Clause combining

Like all Saami languages and most of the entire Uralic family, North Saami makes use of both finite and non-finite clauses to combine clauses to form complex clauses. For clausal coordination, coordinating conjunctions such as *ja* ‘and’, *muhto* ‘but’, or mere parataxis are the main strategy. The dialects spoken in Finland have retained the distinction between the interrogative exclusive disjunctive conjunction *vai* ‘or’ and the inclusive disjunctive conjunction *dahje* ‘or’ (cf. Finnish *vai* vs *tai*), but for many speakers in Norway and Sweden, the two are nowadays synonymous (cf. Scandinavian *eller* ‘or’):

(99) *Áiggut=go káfe vai (áiggut=go) teaja?*  
intend.2SG=Q coffee.GENACC or intend.2SG=Q tea.GENACC  
‘Which would you like to have, coffee or tea?’

(100) *Áiggut=go káfe dahje (áiggut=go)*  
intend.2SG=Q coffee.GENACC or intend.2SG=Q  
*teaja?*  
tea.GENACC  
‘Would you like to have coffee or tea?’

As for subordination, the major complementizer is *ahte*, which can sometimes be omitted or replaced by *go*, otherwise a temporal-cum-causal subordinator (‘when; because’):

(101) *Árvidan (ahte) don háliidat káfe.*  
guess.1SG COMP 2SG want.2SG coffee.GENACC  
‘I suppose you want to have coffee.’

(102) *Šállošan ahte/go vajálduhtten (ahte)*  
apologize.1SG COMP forget.PST.1SG (COMP)  
*don maid boadát.*  
2SG also come.2SG  
‘I’m sorry I forgot that you are also coming.’

In addition to *go*, adverbial subordinators include *jus/jos/juos* ‘if’, *nugo/dego* ‘as if; like’, *vaikko* ‘although’, and etymo-

logically compounded conjunctions *ovdal go* ~ *ovdalgo* ‘before’ and *manjel go* ~ *manjelgo* ‘after’ (based on the adpositions *ovdal* ‘before’ and *manjel* ‘after’). Relative clauses are usually marked with relative-cum-interrogative pronouns *mii* ‘what’ and *gii* ‘who’; cf. also *guhte* ‘who’ in (71).

As for non-finite clauses, the most common non-finite complements include the infinitive in *-t*, although certain verbs take the so-called second infinitive in *-mis/-eames* (103). The progressive form is also used especially in complements to perception verbs:

(103) *Šállošan ahte/go vajálduhtten*  
apologize.1SG COMP forget.PST.1SG  
*du bovdet ~ bovdemis.*  
2SG.GENACC invite.INF invite.2INF  
‘I’m sorry I forgot to invite you.’

(104) *Oidnen ahte/go don bohtet ~*  
see.PST.1SG COMP 2SG come.PST.2SG  
*du bohtimin.*  
2SG.GENACC come.PROG  
‘I saw that you came ~ I saw you coming.’

The so-called participles occur as clause-like adnominal modifiers quite seldom, Finnish-influenced literary genres being a notable exception (e.g. *visot sámi bargguid bargan sápmelaš* [all Saami.GENACC work.PL.GENACC work.PST.PTCP Saami] ‘a Saami who has worked in all Saami occupations’, cf. example (71)). Adverbial non-finite forms, converbs, are relatively many. For example, the simultaneous converb in *-(d)ettiin* (105a) largely corresponds to temporal *go* ‘when’ clauses (105b):

(105) *Son čilgii dan munje*  
3SG explain.PST.3SG that.GENACC 1SG.ILL  
a. *easka ruoktot váccedettiin.*  
not.until back.home walk.CVB.SIM  
b. *easka go ruoktot vácciime.*  
not.until when back.home walk.PST.1DU  
‘S/he explained it to me only when we were walking home.’

In addition to ancient and morphologically opaque non-finite suffixes such as *-(d)ettiin*, a number of more recent and etymologically transparent non-finites have also emerged (Ylikoski 2009). The instrumental converb *-miin* (originally an action nominalization in the comitative case) is most common in the varieties spoken in Finland, whereas the purposive non-finite *-ndihte* is most prominent in Norway (see 10.3.2.4.2). The most ancient purposive non-finite, the so-called supine in *-žit/-žžat*, belongs to the westernmost Torne dialects only.



‘My humble admonition is directed to those who have not learned Saami.’

*Allet*            *ane*            *iežadet*  
NEG.IMP.2PL regard.CNG REFL.GENACC.POSS.2PL

*dili*  
situation.GENACC

*ággan*            *sámegiela*                            *vuostá.*  
excuse.ESS Saami.language.GENACC against

‘Do not use your own situation as an excuse against the Saami language.’

*Sámegiela*                            *vuostá*    *doibmet*    *juo*  
Saami.language.GENACC against act.3PL already

*doarvái*    *olu*            *vuostefámut.*  
enough many counterforce.PL

‘There are already enough opposing forces working against the Saami language.’

## 10.6 Further reading

The most important classical sources of North Saami are the grammar and dictionary by Konrad Nielsen (1926–1929; 1932–1962) which, however, use an orthography different from today’s standard. General references employing the modern orthography include the textbook by H. Bartens (1989; in German) and the grammar by Nickel and Sammallahti (2011; in Norwegian). As for materials in English, Sammallahti’s (1998) monograph-length introduction to Saami linguistics also discusses the main features of the synchronic structure of North Saami, and the unpublished North Saami course material by Aikio and Ylikoski (2010) is available at academia.edu; a recently published practical grammar is Valijärvi and Kahn (2017), which however suffers from a number of inaccuracies and errors. In North Saami, there are even monograph-length studies discussing the phonology (Sammallahti 2019) and the syntax (Sammallahti 2005) of the language.