



UNIVERSITY OF TARTU



Variation in a Finno-Ugric minority language: Adjective Attributes in Inari Saami

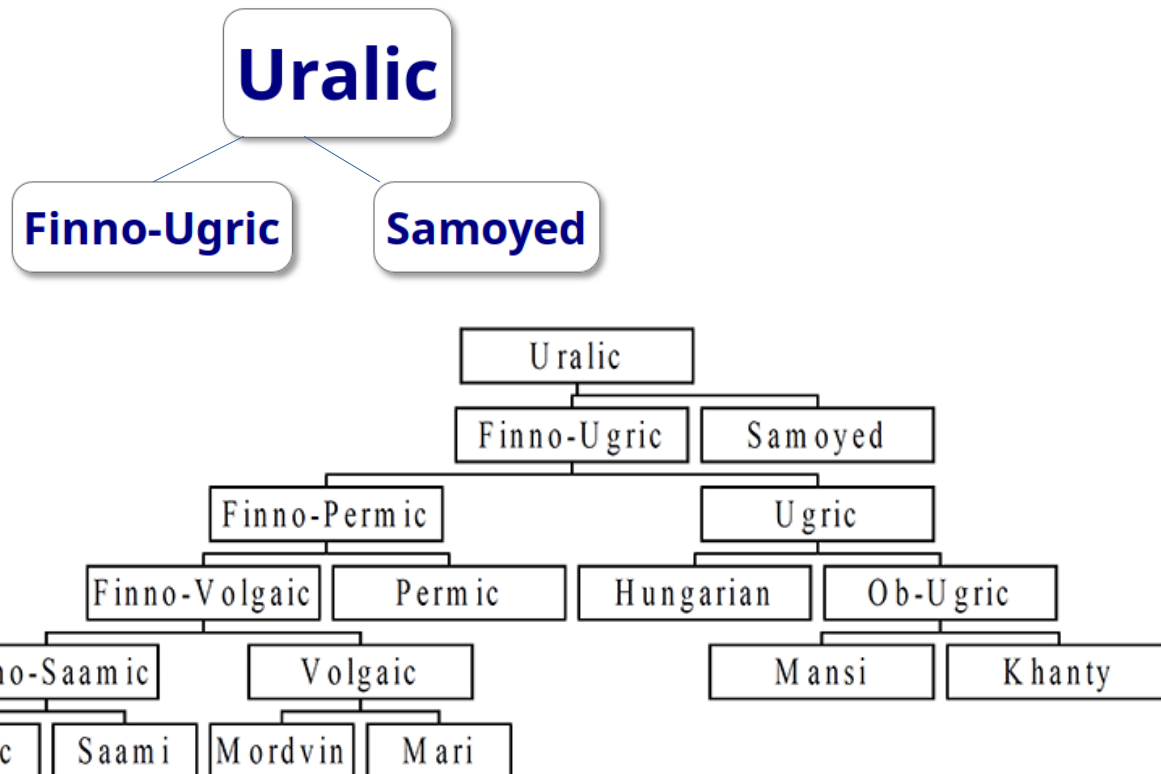
Merit Müller

University of Tartu (Estonia)

23.5.2019

Some remarks I

- “Variation in a **Finno-Ugric** minority language: ... ” ?
- Finno-Ugric \neq Uralic



Source: Kallio 2014

Every time you say “Finno-Ugric” to mean “Uralic,”
a Samoyed dog cries.



Stop this madness.



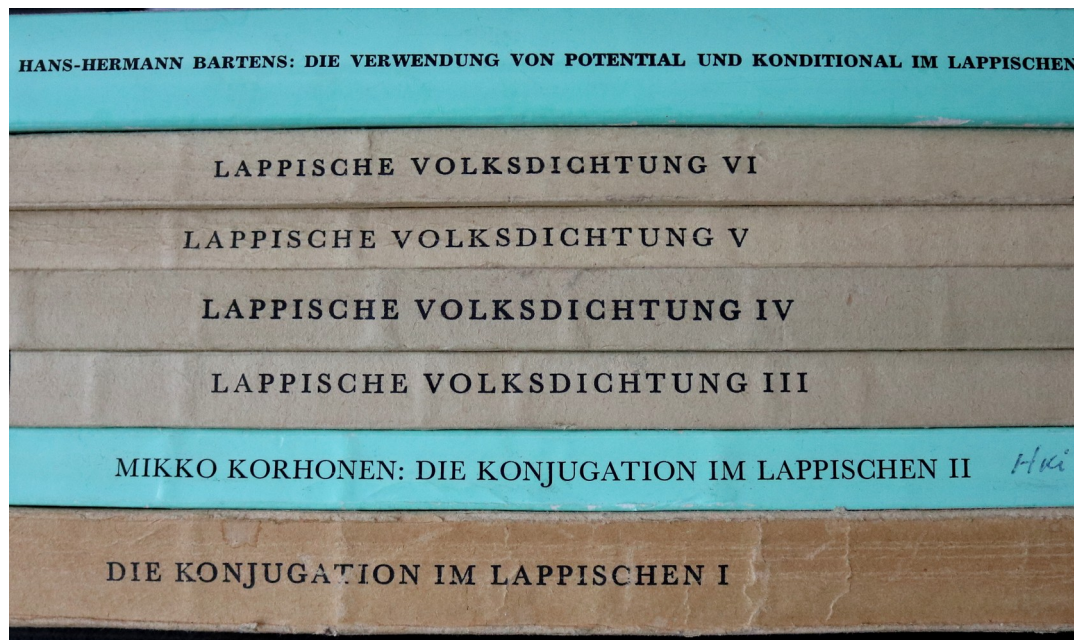
Source: Etymology Memes for Reconstructed Phonemes

Some remarks II

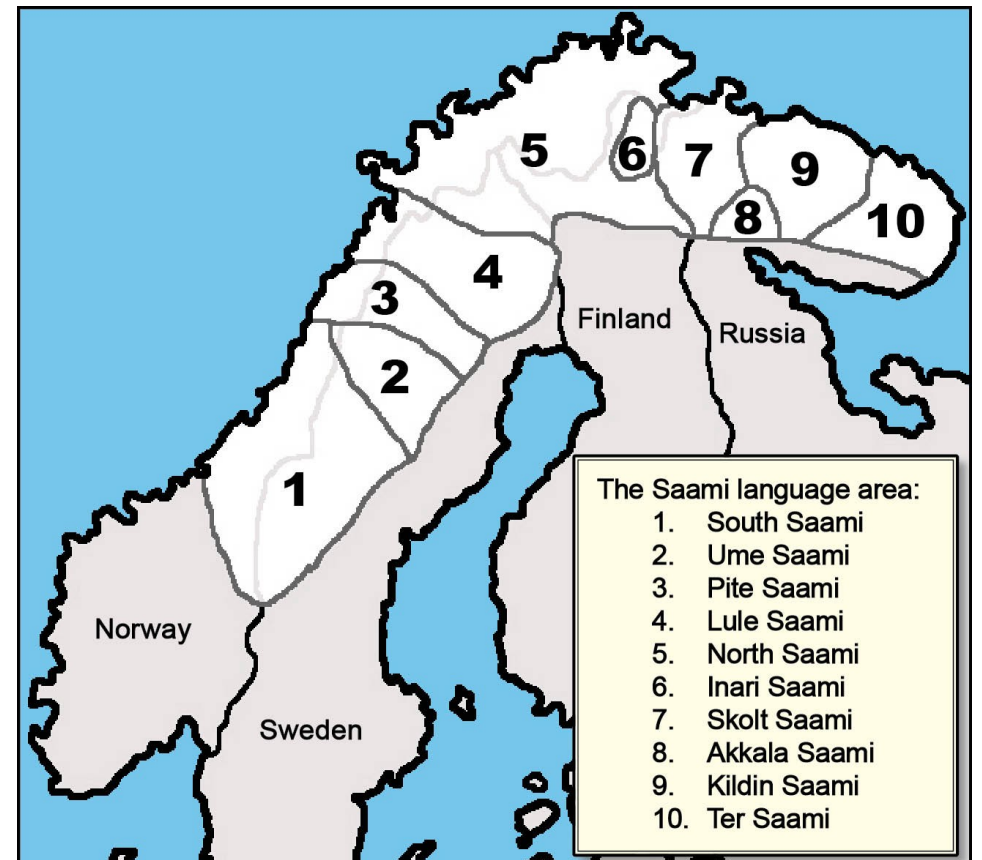
“... Adjective Attributes in **Inari Saami**” ?

~~Lapp, Lappisch~~ → Saami

- The denotation *Lapp* (German *Lappisch*) is common in older literature, but is nowadays considered pejorative



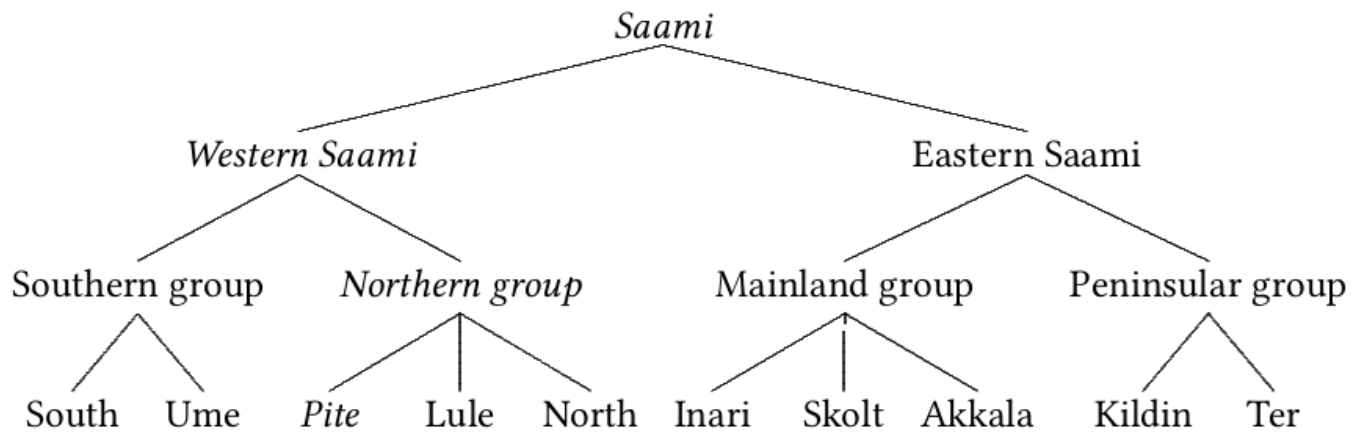
~~dialects~~ → languages



Source: DOBES

Inari Saami

- Spoken in the municipality of Inari (Finland)
- Nowadays 300-350 speakers
- Belongs to the Eastern branch of the Saami languages



Source: Wilbur 2014



Map source: freeworldmaps.net

Adjective Attributes in the Uralic languages

- Juxtaposition

e.g. Hungarian (1) *Az erdő-k nagy-ok.*
DEF forest-PL big-PL
'The forests are big.'

(2) *A nagy erdő-k-ben*
DEF **big** forest-PL-INESS
'In the big forests'

- Head-driven agreement

- Finnic (3) Est. *Metsa-d on suure-d.*
Fin. *Metsä-t ovat iso-ja.*
forest-PL be.3PL big-PL(.PART)

(4) Est. *Suur-te-s metsa-de-s*
Fin. *Iso-i-ssa mets-i-ssä*
big-PL-INESS forest-PL-INESS

Adjective Attributes in the Saami languages

- Sammallahti 1998, Rießler 2006:
Adjectives in the Saami languages usually have two morphologically distinct forms, used depending on the adjective's position (predicative or attributive)
- Inari Saami:

(5) *Táálu* *lii* ***styeres.***
house be.3SG **big.PRED**
'The house is big.'

(6) *Mun* *aasâ-m* ***sturrâ*** *táálu-st.*
I live-1SG **big.ATTR** house-LOK
'I live in a big house.'

→ in dictionaries marked as *styeres*, ATTR *sturrâ* 'big'

But it's not that simple...

- Adjective attributive forms formed in different ways
- Sometimes there are multiple possible forms
- Sometimes the predicative form is used in attributive position instead of the morphologically marked attributive form
→ trait of the Eastern dialect of Inari Saami?
(cf. M. Morottaja 2007)
- If the predicative form is used, it might also agree with the head noun

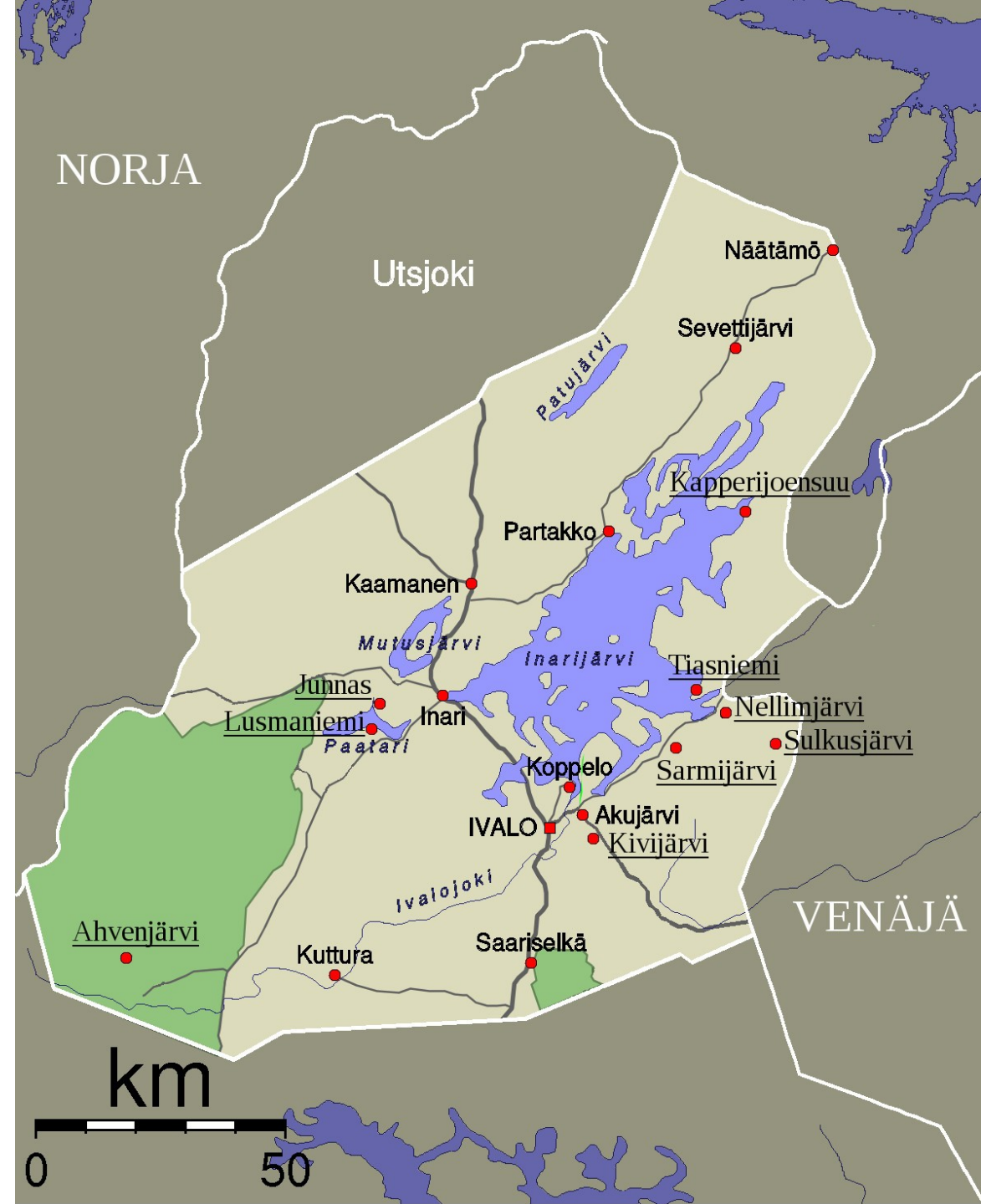
My Bachelor's thesis: research questions

- What are the ways of forming attributive forms of adjectives and are there variations?
- Can the usage of predicative forms instead of a morphologically distinct attributive forms be explained by dialectal variation?
- Which adjective attributes agree with the head noun?
- What kind of adjective forms are used in elliptic constructions, where the head of the noun phrase is omitted, but clearly implied by the context?

The data

- Erkki Itkonen:
Aanarkielâ čájttužeh.
Inarinsaamelaisia
kielinäytteitä (1992)
- Inari Saami language samples that were collected in the 1950s
- 12 informants from different parts of the Inari municipality

Map source: <https://fi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiedosto:Inari.png>



Adjective attributive forms

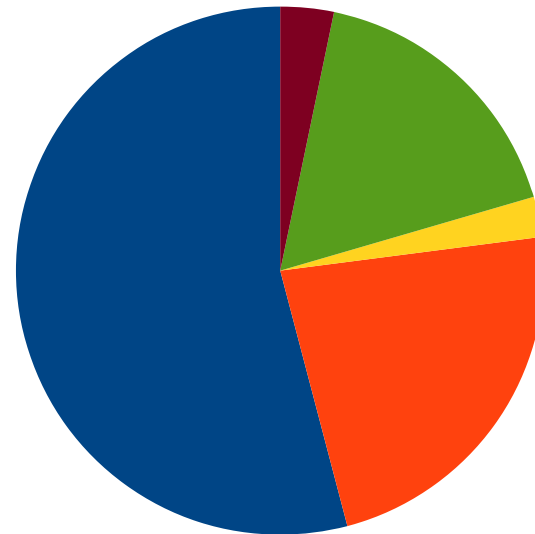
- In total, there were 734 occurrences of attributive adjectives in the data (positive: 691, comparative: 28, superlative 15)
- 120 different adjectives occurred in the positive degree

távâlâš, ATTR *távâlâš*
'usual'

hyeni, ATTR *hyenes*
'bad'

räähis, ATTR *rähis*
'dear'

olluv, ATTR *ollâ*
'high'

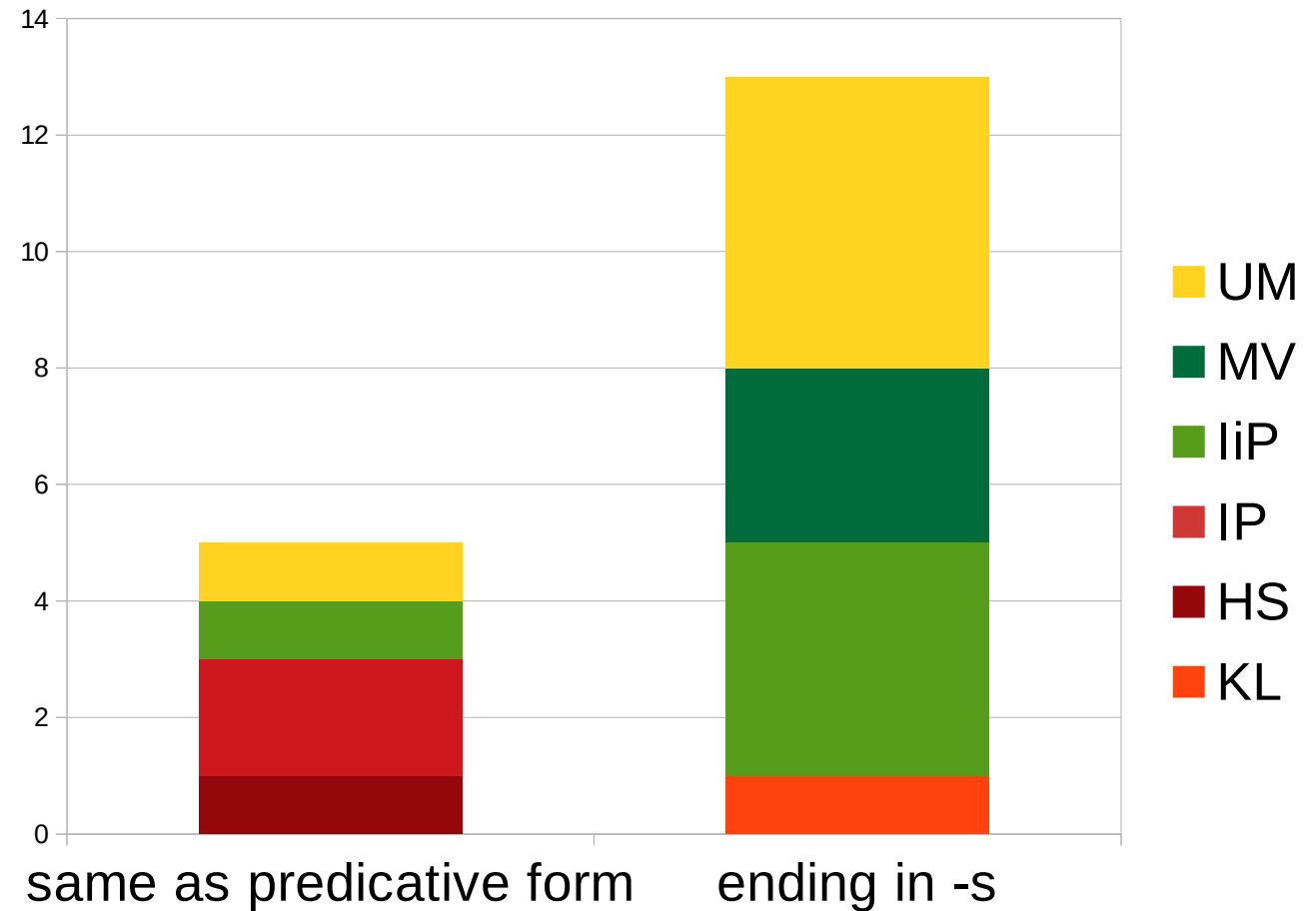


- same as predicative form
- ending in -s
- shortened vowel in the first syllable
- ending in a vowel
- other

Distribution of the 120 different adjectives in the positive degree (by their attributive form)

Dialectal variation?

- Subject to variation:
 - *styerer*, ATTR *stuorrâ* 'big'
 - *nievri*, ATTR *nievris* 'bad'
 - *kukke*, ATTR *kuhes* 'long'
 - *ucce*, ATTR *uccâ~uces* 'small'
- Dialectal differences rather small



Usage of different attributive forms of *kukke*, ATTR *kuhes* 'long' by six informants

Head-driven agreement

- Types of adjectives that always agree with the head noun:
 - Adjectives with contracted stems
 - Adjectives in the superlative
- Types of adjectives that show optional agreement:
 - The adjective *pyeri* 'good'
 - Proadjectives, e.g. *taggaar* 'this kind of'
 - Adjectives in the comparative

(7) *poarrásu-b olgi-in-is*
old-COMP son-COM-Px3SG
'with the older son'

(8) *poarásu-bboo-in viljáá-in*
old-COMP.COM brother.COM
'with the older brother'

Elliptic noun phrases

- In elliptic constructions, the predicative form can be found...

(9) *nuu seegi-ijd ko vain ožžu-u*
so fine-PL.AKK as only get-3PL
'as fine (ones) as they could get'

- ... as well as the attributive form:

(10) A. *Peezzi-st.*
pine.LOK
'From pinewood.'

B. *Koške vâi njuoskâ?*
dry.ATTR or fresh.ATTR
'Dry one or fresh one?'

Conclusion

- The adjective attribute system in Inari Saami is rather complex
- The different attributive forms can be split into four main groups:
 - same as predicative form
 - ending in an -s
 - ending in a vowel
 - shortened vowel in first syllable
- There is variation in the attributive forms, their agreement with the head noun and the use of adjectives in elliptic constructions

References

Itkonen, Erkki 1992. *Aanarkielâ čájttužeh. Inarinsaamelaisia kielennäytteitä*. Helsinki: Suomalais-Ugrilainen Seura.

Kallio, Petri 2014. *The Diversification of Proto-Finnic*.

Morottaja, Matti 2007. *Anarâškielâ ravvuuh*. Helsinki: Kotimaisten kielten tutkimuskeskus.

Müller, Merit 2017. *Adjektiiviattribuutin vaihtelu Erkki Itkosen "Inarinsaamelaisissa kielinäytteissä"*. Tartu: Tartu Ülikool

Rießler, Michael 2006. On samiskans attributiva adjektivform. Amft, Andrea & Svonni, Mikael (ed.) *Sápmi Y1K — Livet i samernas bosättningsområde för ett tusen år sedan*. 135–150. Umeå: Umeå Universitet.

Sammallahti, Pekka 1998. *The Saami languages: an introduction*. Kárášjohka: Davvi Girji.

Wilbur, Joshua 2014. *A grammar of Pite Saami*. Studies in Diversity Linguistics 5. Berlin: Language Science Press.

Picture sources

DOBES. (referred 22.5.19)

Etymology Memes for Reconstructed Phonemes. (referred 22.5.19)

freeworldmaps.net (referred 21.5.19)

<https://fi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiedosto:Inari.png> (referred 21.5.19)



Takkâ huámmášuumeest!