Functioning of the Verb tăjtɨ in Kazym and Shuryshkar Dialects of Khanty

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Abstract—The article presents an overview of the functioning of the verb tăjtɨ ‘have’ used to encode possessive relations in Kazym and Shuryshkar dialects of the Khanty language. The analysis encompasses data obtained from a text corpus of 41 texts (3275 sentences) in Kazym dialect and a corpus of 26 texts (1865 sentences) in Shuryshkar dialect. In its major function as a means of encoding predicative possession in both dialects the verb tăjtɨ ‘have’ is used to express the main conceptual features of possession (permanent, abstract, physical, alienable, inalienable, inanimable). Besides, this verb forms combinations with other parts of speech (e.g. nouns, converbs) to help convey other semantics. As a part of such word combinations, the verb can be used in the forms of both the subjective and objective conjugation and passive voice.

Index Terms—Khanty language, Shuryshkar dialect, Kazym dialect, predicative possession, have-verb.

I. INTRODUCTION

Kazym and Shurashkar are northern dialects of the Khanty language that are distributed in the coastal areas of downstream of the river Ob and in the basins of its major tributaries: Poluj, Sob, Synya, Kunovat, Kazym, etc. [1]. The northern Khany settle in north-west Siberia in the Khanty-Mansi and Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Districts (the Tyumen region of the Russian Federation).

Khanty is one of the Finno-Ugric languages. Together with the Mansi and Hungarian languages, it forms the Ugric language group and together with the Mansi language – the Ob-Ugric subgroup. Nowadays nearly all the Khanty are bilingual and tend to abandon their ethnic language in favour of the Russian language that gives access to greater social mobility and economic opportunities.

Due to the vast area and sparse population, Khanty divides into numerous dialects. Currently, two main dialect clusters are distinguished: the western and the eastern dialects. A few Eastern dialects (e.g. dialect of Vasyugan Khanty) are highly endangered. Dialects belonging to the western cluster have previously been distinguished as southern and northern ones [2] and are at present used unequally. The dialects formerly classified as southern ones (e.g. Priirtysh dialect) have entirely been assimilated with only Kyshikovsk variant left [3]. The northern group comprises Priural (Obdorsk), Kazym and Shurashkar dialects, each spoken by the Khanty residing in some distant northern villages. Tegi, the language of the settlement Tegi, is considered as a transitional dialect between Kazym and Shurshkar [4] or as a variant of the Kazym dialect [3]. Two northern Khanty dialects – Kazym and Shuryshkar – are examined in the present study with the purpose to describe functional and semantic peculiarities of the verb tăjtɨ ‘have’, which has never been the focus in previous studies.

In the present study, functions of the verb tăjtɨ ‘have’ in Kazym and Shuryshkar dialects are analyzed from the perspective of the functional and typological approach. The methodology is based on the works by L. Stassen [5], B. Heine [6], H. Seiler [7] and others.

Language data in the Kazym dialect are obtained from various sources: 33 texts are from the text corpus of Western Khanty dialects edited by E. V. Kashkin (2012–2014), electronic publication is available at https://osf.io/uraqx/files/; four texts are from the text corpus “Ob-Ugric languages: conceptual structures, lexicon, constructions, categories” edited by E. Skribnik (2009–2012), available at http://www.babel.gwi.uni-muenchen.de/index.php?abfrage=KK_corpus&subnavi=corpus_pub; four text samples are from the edition “Kazym dialect of Khanty” by A. D. Kaksin [1]. In addition to that, some elicitations were obtained from I. M. Moldanova, a native speaker of the Kazym dialect. All in all, 3275 sentences from 41 texts in Kazym are examined.

The primary sources of the Shuryshkar data are twelve texts obtained from the edition “Expedition materials on the languages of the peoples of Siberia (1995–2012)” [8], eleven text samples were found in the “Ostyak Grammar and Chrestomathy” by W. Steinitz [9] and three fairy-tales were chosen from the corpus of West Khanty dialects edited by E. V. Kashkin (2012–2014). The volume of the examined corpus in Shuryshkar amounts to 1865 sentences (26 texts).

In section 2 of the present article, primary function of the verb tăjtɨ ‘have’ will be described. An analysis of other functional and semantic characteristics of the verb tăjtɨ ‘have’ in the two Khanty dialects will be presented in Section 3. All examples will be given following the pattern: line (a) – a source dialect name. The text title is in brackets followed by the number of the sentence in the text; line (b) – a text example in the orthography accepted in the corresponding corpus; line (c) – glossing of the example using the Leipzig Glossing Rules; line (d) – translation of the example into English. Examples are numbered from one (1) onwards throughout the article. For morpheme boundaries we follow glossing traditions of other authors.

II. PRIMARY FUNCTION OF THE VERB TĂJTÎ ‘HAVE’

As it is observed in other Khanty dialects, the verb tăjtɨ ‘have’ functions as a major means to encode possessive
relations in both the Kazym and Shuryshkar dialects [10]. To this end, the verb is used in a predication construction known as the transitive one. Schematically, this construction can be represented as:

| Possessor | - | Possessed | - |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |

Modal 1. Predicative possessive construction

The conspicuous feature of the transitive construction is the presence of the semi-transitive have-verb [5]. While expressing the possessive meaning, the verb *tăji* ‘have’ functions as a bivalent verb, its subject is the possessor and its direct object is the possessed. As an element of the possessive predicative construction, the verb *tăji* ‘have’ may be marked only by the suffixes of the subjective conjugation. The possessee never takes the possessive suffixes in this construction. The examples illustrating the use of the predicative possessive construction with the verb *tăji* ‘have’ in the Kazym and Shuryshkar dialects are:

1. Kazym (Khujtunkistan 7)
in *ike*-n ṣhələłəc jəŋ laraş
  this man-POSS.2SG also ten chest
  have-NPST.3SG.S

2. Shuryshkar (Mouse 183)
*ma* in ar *lūxas tăj-l-em.
  1SG now many friend have-NPST.1SG.S
This man has also ten chests.

3. Kazym (Fieldwork 2018)
Amp-ən həjə kēp tăj-əŋ.
dog-POSS.2SG four leg have-NPST.3SG.S
A dog has four legs.

4. Shuryshkar (The tale of the she-bear 17)
ləŋkə-əl pa xir tăj-əl.
shoulder-POSS.3SG-LOC but sack have-NPST.3SG.S
(He) has a sack on the shoulder.

5. Kazym (Eagle 208)
mołtə pıș ki ànt tăj-l-ən təta ʃi
  any cunning if NEG have-NPST.2SG here FOC
  joxət-ə-a-ʃ-m.
come-NPST-PAS-1DU.S
If you do not have any cunning, he will catch up with us now.

It should be noted that the possessor in this construction can denote both an animate (as in examples 1–5) and inanimate object (example 6–7).

6. Kazym (River Earth Man and Ob Earth Man 96)
ʃi xorasəp wən naxə-at
  this appearance-ADJ big pine.nut-PL
  have-NPST.3SG.S

It (cedar) has such big pine-nuts.

7. Tegi (Winged creature 17)
ʃəta jekar lət məʃə nurom lət
  there lowlund place what swamp place
  tăj-əs
  have-PST.3SG.S
There was a lowland, a swamp.

The possessee, in its turn, can be either animate (2) or inanimate (1), abstract (5) or concrete (4).

The predicative possessive construction with the verb *tăji* may allow a structural variant in which the possessor can be expressed implicitly. See example 4–5, 7 for illustrations.

Thus, it can be concluded that the possessive predicative construction (PR – PE – tăj-3.SPM) is commonly and widely used for coding possession in Kazym and Shuryshkar dialects.

III. FUNCTIONAL AND SEMANTIC VARIANTS OF THE VERB *TĂJI*

Along with encoding possession, the verb *tăji* in both dialects can be involved in conveying other semantics as well. In such cases, according to the obtained data, the verb *tăji* displays its polysemous nature and may be used in the forms of both subjective and objective conjugation [11]-[13]. The semantics of the verb itself is highly dependent on the word it is combined with and its grammatical behavior.

IV. THE VERB *TĂJI* IN THE FORMS OF THE SUBJECTIVE CONJUGATION

Let us now consider examples in which the verb *tăji* ‘have’ is used in the forms of the subjective conjugation in both dialects to help convey meanings other than possessive. All in all, examples of this kind encompass 15 % out of all selected samples.

One of the meanings conveyed by the verb *tăji* is ‘to keep, to hold’. The idea of keeping something and holding something or somebody expressed in combination with an object and a localizator indicating the location of the object (see example 8).

8. Kazym (The boy from the side where the sun rises and the girl from the side where the sun sets 43)
toxtəł prə-a əŋkərt-əs sawnr
  thither to-DAT take.a.look-PST.3SG magpie
  ʃələłəc-ən mołtə wərə pɔxsə-ʃje
  beak-3SG-LOC something red big.thing-DIM
  tăj-əl.
  have-NPST.3SG.S
He looked there: a magpie holds something red in his beak.

When used in the forms of the subjective conjugation, the verb *tăji* can help express the idea of giving birth to somebody or bringing somebody up. In such cases, the object is expressed by the words denoting relatives or off-springs, e.g. ewi ‘daughter’, pöyə ‘son’, nəurəm ‘child’, poşə ‘cub, nestlings’ etc. Examples 9–10 illustrate this idea.

9. Shuryshkar (Beautiful crown-woman 12)
Помəх-ʃ-ən tăj-ə, nən yə-də.
  nestling-Pl-POSS.2SG have-IMP 2SG be-IMP
Brings up nestlings, live by yourself.

10. Kazym (Eagle 140)
xwə wə-s-ʃ-ən wən wə-s-ʃ-ən
  long live-PST-3DU short live-PST-3DU.S
  pöy tăj-s-əməŋə.
  son have-PST-2DU.S
Whether they long lived or short lived, they gave birth to a son.

The dependence of the verb semantics on that of an
The verb *tajiti* marked by the subjective suffixes can participate in conveying the meaning of managing something (see example 16).

16. Kazym (Khujuktanist 73)
šoroskimāl-a joxt-əs i xq
sea edge-DAT come-PST.S3G one person
rt-əs xopl-t PIT xptarka
go.out-PST.S3G three black female.deer

taj-it-

have-NPST.3SG.S

He came to the sea and saw: someone is riding, running
by three black female deer.

In summation, the examples presented in this section point to the fact that the verb *tajiti* ‘have’ can form a sort of analytical combination with various nouns, like ‘to have a swim / smoke / chat’ in English, to verbalize different semantics.

V. THE VERB TAJITI IN THE FORMS OF THE OBJECTIVE CONJUGATION OR PASSIVE VOICE

The verb *tajiti* may be marked by the suffixes of the objective conjugation or passive voice. In the examined corpus of texts, the number of examples of this type is around 20 %. It should be noted that the verb *tajiti* in the forms of the objective conjugation or passive voice can occur as an independent element or in combination with the verb form of another notional verb.

First, let us consider sentences with the notional verb *tajiti* used independently. In such examples, it tends to combine with an animate or inanimate object to express the meaning of keeping or preserving something or treating somebody (see example 17–18). The indication of the localization of the object is obligatory. Examples 17, 19 illustrate the verb *tajiti* in the forms of the objective conjugation, example 18 – in the form of the passive voice.

17. Shuryshkar (Nephew of a woman 8)

The verb *tajiti* combines with the object *wer* ‘affair’ and the postpositive element *šoša* ‘by, at’ or *keš* ‘for’, its semantics is close to ‘deal with somebody’ (see example 15).

15. Kazym (Resourceful servant 8)

When the verb *tajiti* combines with the object *wer* ‘affair’ and the postpositive element *šoša* ‘by, at’ or *keš* ‘for’, its semantics is close to ‘deal with somebody’ (see example 15).

15. Kazym (Resourceful servant 8)

He thinks that Balda will beat him.

14. Kazym (A woman with children left in an empty camping-ground 85)

in nawrəm-ət, want-ti, ān
now child-DAT look-IMP.2PL NEG

noun-ti *nawrəm-ət* moj potart-ti

remember-IPFV.PTCP child-PPL whatsay-IPFV.PTCP

wus taj-it-

hole uś ordered-NPST-3PL.S

And children in fact, you see, at the age of nothing remembering children and cannot speak.

13. Shuryshkar (The tale of the priest and of his workman Balda 41)

sek-ti oli-moli nomas taj-ət.

beat-IPFV.PTCP fool thought have-NPST.3SG.S

He thinks that Balda will beat him.

12. Kazym (My dog 7)

luw porsənt-ti *wer* taj-ət.

3SG bite-IPFV.PTCP matter have-NPST.3SG.S

It gets used to biting.

11. Kazym (Fieldwork 2018)

nəŋ möj isa ōš ān taj-i-an?

2SG what always mind NEG have-NPST.2SG.S

You don’t understand, do you?

The verb combination with an abstract object *wer* ‘affair’ conveys the idea of getting used to doing something (12), with the object *nomas* ‘thought’ – the idea of thinking (13), with *wus* ‘hole’ (14) – being unable to do something.

10. Kazym (My dog 7)

The verb *tajiti* is followed by an abstract object *ōš* ‘mind’, which seems to highlight the meaning of understanding conveyed by the word combination.

9. Kazym (My dog 7)

The verb combination with an abstract object *nomas* ‘thought’ – the idea of thinking (13), with *wus* ‘hole’ (14) – being unable to do something.

8. Kazym (My dog 7)

The verb *tajiti* is followed by an abstract object *ōš* ‘mind’, which seems to highlight the meaning of understanding conveyed by the word combination.

7. Kazym (Fieldwork 2018)

naŋ möj isa ōš ān taj-i-an?

2SG what always mind NEG have-NPST.2SG.S

You don’t understand, do you?

The verb combination with an abstract object *wer* ‘affair’ conveys the idea of getting used to doing something (12), with the object *nomas* ‘thought’ – the idea of thinking (13), with *wus* ‘hole’ (14) – being unable to do something.

6. Kazym (My dog 7)

The verb *tajiti* is followed by an abstract object *ōš* ‘mind’, which seems to highlight the meaning of understanding conveyed by the word combination.
The semantics of the construction depends on the non-formal finite of the verb marked by the converb suffix. Non-finite forms of the verb are known to have no morphological category of the voice in analyzed dialects [13]. But in the construction with the verb tăjitii the verb converb form expresses a passive meaning while the verb tăjitii conveys the idea of keeping. Examples below (23–25), elicited from the text corpus, illustrate the use of the analytical construction with the verb tăjitii marked by the suffixes of the objective conjunction (23–24) and passive voice (25).

23. Kazym (The youngest daughter of the sun 56)
сăм-ăł țăj-x-t-ăł-ăŋ
hear-POSS.3SG go.away-EVID.NPST-3SG-LOC
xăj-măn țăj-l-ălle.
leave-CNV have-NPST-S.3SG:O.SG
When he went, he left his (he kept his heart left) heart at home.
24. Shuryshkar (How did the surnames appear? 48)
«йăт-мăн тăй-ă-лăм», ун
play-CNV have-IMP-S.DU:PL/O.SG old
хуи-ăлă ăлăс-ăлă-
man-POSS.3SG speech-VRBL-NPST-3SG.S
“Have fun him (keep him played)”, the older man says.
25. Shuryshkar (The tale of the fisherman and the fish 153)
пă欠缺-ăн па тăс-ăн ჯăх-ăн
boyar-PL-LOC and wealth-ADJ people-LOC
kerăt-măn țăj-l-ă.
go.round-CNV have-NPST-PAS.3SG
She is surrounded by boyars and rich people.
Examples 26–30 included in the analysis are field recordings of the speech in the Kazym dialect elicited as a result of questioning of the native speaker. They all illustrate the dependent use of the verb tăjitii in the analytical construction.

26. Kazym (Fieldwork 2018)
Щи мошăп-см шави-мăн
this present-POSS.1SG keep-CNV
tăj-ă-sm.

27. Kazym (Fieldwork 2018)
I preserved my gift (keep my gift preserved).

28. Kazym
I always wear footcloths (I keep legs wrapped).
29. Kazym (Fieldwork 2018)
While you're walking in the woods, I'm holding your house (I keep your house guarded).
30. Kazym (Fieldwork 2018)

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADJ – adjectivizer, ADV – adverbilizer, CNV – converb, DAT – dative, DIM – diminutive, DU – dual, FOC – focus, EP – epenthetic vowel, IMP – imperative, LAT – lative, LOC – locative, NEG – negative, NPST – non-past tense, O –
objective conjugation, ORD – ordinals, PAS – passive, PM – personal markers, PL – plural, IPFV.PTCP – present participle, PRTC – particle, PST – past tense, POSS – possessive suffix, SG – singular, S – subjective conjugation, VRBL – verbalizer.

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