

NON-CANONICAL AGENT-MARKING IN EASTERN KHANTY. FUNCTIONAL-PRAGMATIC PERSPECTIVE.

The presentation outlines possible types of discourse-pragmatic functions and kinds of propositional-semantic content associated with the non-canonical agent-marking constructions in the Eastern Khanty - an indigenous Ugric language spoken in the North-Western Siberia. Selected methodology includes contrastive morphosyntactic and contextual analysis based on the narrative corpus and elicited tokens, attending to the information structure, in the general cognitive-functional framework.

(i) The active-direct clause marks verb transitivity, as well as definiteness of the O argument by using either subjective or objective conjugation paradigms.

(ii) The "ergative" displays the Loc-marked agent referent and Ø-marked target. Verbal morphology remains "active", demonstrating active-direct S/A-V and O-V agreement patterns. Its function is different from conventionally identified NP- or TAM-splits, and has a complex pragmatic motivation.

(iii) The agented passive illustrates the promotion of the non-agent referent to the S relation, demotion of the agent referent to a non-S relation - an oblique locative-marked argument. It exemplifies pragmatically motivated surrender of the authority/control and a shift in topicality, by altering the centrality of the referents in the proposition.

Based on discourse-narrative analysis, it is hypothesized, that a wide cognitive faculty, facilitating the structuring of information, specifying the roles and interrelation of the participants, governs the choice of non/canonical construction types, instrumentalized via grammatical resources available in the system: case, transitivity/voice, definiteness. It follows from the analysis of the host of the interrelated discourse-pragmatic, semantic and grammatical features of the non-canonical constructions that specific sets of the system's grammatical resources identify with certain set of pragmatic-functional/semantic properties. The holistic analysis of pragmatic-functional, semantic and structural properties of all the participants in their interaction in the narrative discourse, is viewed here as particularly revealing.

The non-canonical constructions in eastern Khanty appear a marginal construction type, prototypically used to mark de-transitive events where there can be more than one argument with competing topicality status, while actual specifics of the meaning of the constructions lies in the emphasis of the degree of agentivity and activeness/control/volition of the participants in the event.

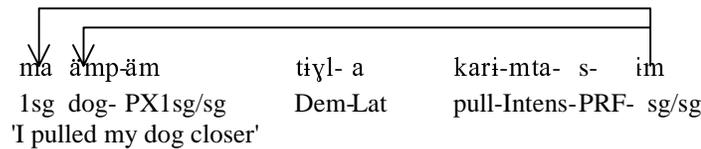
Contrasting, broadly, within the eastern Khanty system non-canonical agent marking constructions vs. canonical, the following general consistency of the Loc-marking of the agent with the particular semantic-pragmatic environments can be observed:

Canonical Agent-marking clauses	Non-canonical Agent-marking clauses
more active	more stative
(+) agentive/controlling/volitional	(-) agentive/controlling/volitional
(+/-) transitive	(-) transitive
action	event/existence in location
complete/perfective/(+)affectedness	incomplete/imperfective/(-)affectedness
realis	irrealis
Active-direct; Impersonal passive	"Ergative"; Agented passive

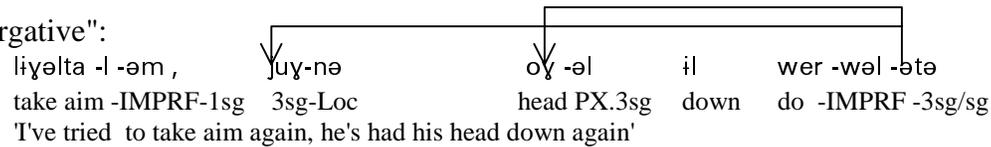
Figure: Canonical vs. non-canonical agent-marking clause features.

DATA EXAMPLES:

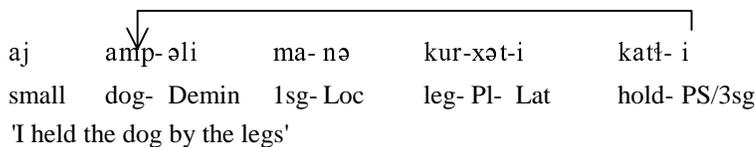
(i) Active-direct:



(ii) "Ergative":



(iii) Agented passive:



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