

Passive constructions in Uralic: a special case of contact-induced development

Daria Zhornik, Lomonosov Moscow State University

Some Uralic languages exhibit passive constructions formed with finite passive derivatives (see the summary in [Salo 2015]). In such derivatives, we find passive markers originating from one of the following sources: the Proto-Uralic (P-U) stative marker **w*, the P-U reflexive **j* and various causative markers (for a more detailed description of these affixes see [Collinder 1965]).

In Ob-Ugric and Northern Samoyedic languages, we find widespread use of surprisingly uniform “pragmatic” passive constructions, although formal expression of voice markers is different. In my talk, I will briefly discuss the origin and use of passive markers in Ob-Ugric and Northern Samoyedic. Afterwards, I will describe the features that are common for passive constructions in these languages and consider possible reasons for such development.

In Mansi (<Ob-Ugric), passive derivatives are formed with the marker *-we-* <**w*, see example (1) from Upper Lozva Mansi. In Khanty (<Ob-Ugric), which is the closest relative of Mansi, there are virtually no reflexes of **w* (see [Kulonen 1989] for discussion). In Samoyedic, reflexes of **w* are only found in some intransitive stems, for example, Enets *toro-* ‘close’ vs. *toru-* ‘be closed’ (see [Gusev 2010]).

The Khanty passive suffix (see example (2) from Obdorsk Khanty) originates from P-U reflexive **j*, [Kulonen 1989] states that the Proto-Khanty suffix had the form **aj*. In Mansi, we only find traces of **j* in non-finite forms, while in Samoyedic the reflexive conjugation seems to employ the same marker (see [Helimski 1982]).

In Northern Samoyedic, we find affixes with passive/causative polysemy (e.g. Nganasan *-ru* < Proto-Samoyedic **rǎ*, see [Helimski 1982]). In Enets (see example (4) from Forest Enets) and Nganasan (see example (3)), their development results in the same passive constructions as in Ob-Ugric (see [Siegl 2014], [Leisiö 2009]). Nenets attests a few examples of passive uses of the same marker (see [Salminen 1998]), although this construction seems not to be productively used anymore. Passive/causative polysemy is common around the Northern Samoyedic area as well (see [Nedjalkov 1993] and [Robbeets 2007] for Tungusic and Turkic examples).

Passive constructions in these languages share many common features. First, Ob-Ugric and Northern Samoyedic languages employ finite derivatives in passive constructions (in contrast to participial passives). Moreover, almost all¹ the languages in question exhibit lative marking of the Agent (see examples (1), (3), (4)). In these languages, both transitive and intransitive verbs may be freely passivized and virtually any constituent may be promoted to the subject position (Patient, Location, Recipient etc.). Even discourse functions of such passive constructions seem almost identical (the choice of voice depends mainly on the topicality of the Agent).

We argue that this development is a result of areal influence. Although the main contacts in this

¹ In Khanty, we find the innovative use of the locative case in such constructions (for details see [Filchenko 2006])

area are Khanty/Mansi and Khanty/Nenets, a broader Ugric-Samoyedic mutual influence is plausible (see [Helimski 2003]). Most probably, the development of passive constructions occurred in all Ob-Ugric and Northern Samoyedic languages as a contact-induced phenomenon (see [Aikhenvald 2011] on such areal influence). However, later the wide use of pragmatic voice drastically decreased in Nenets. This explains why extraordinarily similar constructions are now attested in areas with no direct contact with each other (Mansi&Khanty vs. Nganasan&Enets).

Examples

- (1) *ti xāp anum-n wār-we-s*
 this boat I-LAT make-PASS-PST[3SG]
 ‘This boat was made by me’. (author’s own fieldwork data)
- (2) *kul'-na jox-t-s-a*
 devil-LOC come-PST-PASS[3SG]
 ‘A devil came to him’. [Nikolaeva 1999]
- (3) *d'ü-t'enï-nə kəmə-ru-h" ađə-nə ŋul'ađə-ndə*
 dream-LOC-POSS.1SG take-PASS-EVID-1REFL wolf-LAT
 ‘In my dream, I was taken by a wolf’. [Tereshenko 1979]
- (4) *bunki-d sakra-r-ii?*
 dog-LAT.SG bite-PASS-1SG
 ‘I was bitten by a dog’. [Siegl 2014]

References

- Aikhenvald, A. Areal features and linguistic areas: contact-induced change and geographical typology. In: O. Hieda, Ch. König, and H. Nakagawa (eds.). Geographical typology and linguistic areas: with special reference to Africa. Tokyo University of Foreign Studies: studies in linguistics , 2 (2). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2011.
- Collinder B. An Introduction to the Uralic languages. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1965.
- Filchenko A. The Eastern Khanty locative-agent constructions: a functional discourse-pragmatic perspective. In: B. Lyngfeldt, T. Solstad (eds.) Demoting the Agent: passive, middle and other voice phenomena (Linguistik Aktuell / Linguistics Today 96). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2006.
- Gusev V. Stativy i dekauzativy na *-w v samodijskikh jazykah. In: S. Burkova (ed.) Materials of the 3rd International Conference on Samoyedology. Novosibirsk: Lyubava, 54-65, 2010.
- Helimski E. Drevnejshije vengersko-samodijskije jazykovye paralleli. Moscow: Nauka, 1982.
- Helimski E. *Areal groupings (Sprachbünde) within and across the borders of the Uralic language family: a survey*. Nyelvtudományi Közlemények. 100, 156–167, 2003.
- Kulonen U.-M. The passive in Ob-Ugric. Helsinki: Suomalais-Ugrilainen Seura, 1989.
- Leisiö L. Passive in Nganasan. In: W. Abraham, L. Leisiö (eds.) Passivization and Typology: Form and Function. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 213-231,

2009.

Nedjalkov, I. Causative-passive polysemy of the Manchu-Tungusic -bu/-v(u). *Linguistica Antverpiensa* 27:193-202, 1993.

Nikolaeva I. Ostyak. Muenchen, Newcastle: Lincom Europa, 1999.

Robbeets M. The causative-passive in Trans-Eurasian languages. *Turkic Languages*. 11,2: 235- 278, 2007.

Salminen T. Nenets. In: D. Abondolo (ed.) *The Uralic Languages*, London, Routledge, 1998.

Salo M. Passive and reflexive categories in the languages of the Volga region: an areal typological study. Doctoral thesis. The Department of Finnish, Finno-Ugrian and Scandinavian Studies. University of Helsinki, 2015.

Siegl F. *Materials on Forest Enets, an Indigenous Language of Northern Siberia*. Helsinki: Suomalais-Ugrilainen Seura, 2014.

Tereshenko N. *Nganasanskij jazyk*. Leningrad: Nauka, 1979.