

Person-number asymmetry: Agreement of passive miratives in Kazym Khanty*

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Agreement paradigms are widely attested to show splits. Frequent conditions for a split, most widely discussed for accusative / ergative alignment, are verbal categories, such as aspect or tense, and properties of an agreeing noun, such as a position on person or animacy hierarchies (Comrie 1978; Dixon 1994). In this talk we will discuss an uncommon pattern of split in Kazym Khanty mirative agreement.

Kazym Khanty (< Ob-Ugric < Uralic) has a set of verbal forms with a separate morphological paradigm, which can function as a root predicate with mirative or evidential semantics (1a) or be a sentential argument of verbs of perception or speech (1b). In terms of agreement two usages do not differ and we will use the term *mirative* referring to the discussed paradigm.

- (1) a. *ma waśaj-en jina juχət-t-aλ*
I Vasya-POSS.2SG indeed come-NFIN.NPST-POSS.3SG
'(Apparently,) Vasya is indeed coming.'
- b. *ma waśaj-en jina juχət-t-aλ χəλλ-əs-em*
I Vasya-POSS.2SG indeed come-NFIN.NPST-POSS.3SG hear-PST-1SG>SG
'I heard that Vasya is indeed coming.'

The person-number agreement of mirative forms is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Mirative agreement

	Active			Passive		
	SG	DU	PL	SG	DU	PL
1	- <i>em</i>	- <i>emən</i>	- <i>ew</i>	- <i>em</i>	- <i>emən</i>	- <i>ew</i>
2	- <i>en</i>	- <i>an</i>	- <i>an</i>	- <i>en</i>	- <i>an</i>	- <i>an</i>
3	- <i>aλ</i>	- <i>an</i>	- <i>eλ</i>	- <i>∅</i>	- <i>aηən</i>	-(<i>ə</i>) <i>t</i>

Crucially, agreement in active and passive voices of miratives differ: in the former 3rd person is marked (except for dual forms), while in the latter 3rd only number is expressed (sf. nominal number marking: -*∅* SG, -*ηən* DU, -*ət* PL). The example of passive mirative is presented in (2), where passivation results in locative marking of the agent and is not overtly marked on the verb.

- (2) *pet'aj-en χuʃat-ən woš-ən want-əm* / **want-m-aλ*
Peter-POSS.2SG somebody-LOC town-LOC see-NFIN.NPST[3SG] see-NFIN.NPST-POSS.3SG
'(Apparently,) somebody saw Peter in the town (lit. Peter was seen by smb.).'

Examples like (2) have been discussed before by Nikolaeva (1999) for Obdorsk Khanty, but Nikolaeva points out that only passive miratives of 3rd person are attested in this variety.

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Neither active nor passive paradigm of miratives directly matches finite verbal agreement (Table 2), which stays the same for active and passive voices. Additionally, unlike finite verbs, miratives do not have an object agreement paradigm.

Table 2. Finite agreement

	Subject agreement		
	SG	DU	PL
1	<i>-əṃ</i>	<i>-əṃən</i>	<i>-əṃ</i>
2	<i>-ən</i>	<i>-ətən</i>	<i>-əti</i>
3	<i>-Ø</i>	<i>-əṃən</i>	<i>-ət</i>

Table 3. Possessive markers

	Nouns		
	SG	DU	PL
1	<i>-εṃ</i>	<i>-εṃən</i>	<i>-ew</i>
2	<i>-en</i>	<i>-ən</i>	<i>-ən</i>
3	<i>-əλ</i>	<i>-ən</i>	<i>-eλ</i>

Mirative active agreement highly resembles nominal possessive paradigm (Table 3), up to replacement of initial *-ə-* by *-a-*, including syncretism of 2DU, 3DU and 2PL. This state of affairs is not unexpected, provided that morphemes forming miratives formally correspond to markers of highly polyfunctional Khanty non-finite forms, which generally show possessive-like agreement with subjects.

Thus, Kazym Khanty demonstrates a peculiar agreement split, which is attested in the mirative and is conditioned by voice. Active agreement clearly relates to possessive marking, while passive agreement partially repeats possessive paradigm and partially nominal number or finite 3rd person agreement.

List of abbreviations

1, 2, 3 – 1, 2, 3 person, LOC – locative, NFIN – non-finite form, NPST – non-past, O – object agreement marker, PASS – passive, PL – plural, POSS – possessive, PST – past, SG – singular

References

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