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Transitivity in Eastern Mansi

An Information Structural Approach

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Abstract

This academic dissertation consists of four articles published in peer-reviewed linguistic journals and an introduction. The aim of the study is to provide a description of the formal means of expressing semantic transitivity in the Eastern dialects of the Mansi language, as well as the variation between the different means. Two of the four articles are about the marking of direct objects (DOs) in Eastern Mansi (EM), one outlines the function of noun marking in the DO marking system and one concerns the variation between three-participant constructions. The study is connected to Uralic studies and functional-linguistic typology.

Mansi is a Uralic language spoken in Western Siberia. Unfortunately, its Eastern dialects died out some decades ago, but there are still approximately 2700 speakers of Northern Mansi. Because it is no longer possible to access any live data on EM, the study is based on written folkloric materials gathered by Artturi Kannisto about 100 years ago. From the typological point of view, Mansi is an agglutinative language with many inflectional and derivational suffixes.

The study is based on information structural analysis, particularly the terminology and definitions by Lambrecht (1994). The approach is based on three main pragmatic functions, *primary topic*, *secondary topic* and *focus*, how they correlate with syntactic functions and how their morphological markedness or unmarkedness is due to information structural factors. Later, the notion of topicality is connected to the concept of Differential Object Marking (DOM) and the observations of Iemmolo (2010/2011). According to the data of this study, DOM is based on topicality in EM. Further, the analysis will be expanded to include variation between the active voice and the passive voice and variation in three-participant constructions.

The topic of this study can be divided into three different sub-topics: 1) marking of the DO, 2) variation in three-participant constructions and 3) variation between the active voice and the passive voice. The aim of investigating these sub-topics together is to show how the whole system of expressing semantic transitivity in EM can be described using the same principles. These three sub-topics are connected to one another and even partly overlap.

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II ARTICLES

Article 1

[Pragmatic direct object marking in Eastern Mansi](#)

Article 2

[Informaatorakenteen vaikutus suoran objektin merkintään mansin itämurteissa](#)

Article 3

[Contextual function of noun marking in the direct object marking system of Eastern Mansi](#)

Article 4

[Variation in three-participant constructions in Eastern Mansi](#)

I INTRODUCTION

Preface

The question of whether endangered languages should be revitalized or allowed to die out as a consequence of natural development is a very current issue. In modern international society, people are willing to speak and write those languages used by the majority of the world's population in order to make communication easier. However, at the same time, they forget the value of individual languages as valuable species. During the last century, many minority languages in Russia—among them several Uralic languages—have fought against the political violence aiming to restrict the use of languages other than the official language of the state. When there is no possibility for literary culture, education and professional training in minority languages, the result is a monolingual society.

In this study, I look at Eastern Mansi (EM), one of the language variants that did not survive, and some of its features. Mansis are an indigenous people living in Western Siberia in the autonomous district of Khanty-Mansia. The number of Mansi speakers has been declining at an alarming rate over the last decades. Today, there are only approximately 2700 speakers of Northern Mansi, the Eastern dialects having died out decades ago. This academic doctoral thesis consists of four articles about transitivity expressions of EM from the point of view of modern linguistics. The results are evidence of the importance of individual languages, even the most minor, as interesting, original and logical systems of communication.

Many people and institutions have contributed to the success of my work. First, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my pre-examiners, Professor Marianne Bakró-Nagy and Professor Gerson Klumpp, for their valuable feedback on the manuscript. Their criticisms were extremely helpful when finalizing the dissertation. I am also grateful to Professor Gerson Klumpp for accepting the task of acting as opponent at the public defence of the dissertation. I wish to thank my supervisors, Professor Ulla-Maija Forsberg and Senior Lecturer Seppo Kittilä, for their advice, encouragement and support. Ulla-Maija helped me to find my way to Ob-Ugric linguistics and to choose a suitable and less researched—but still very interesting—topic for my study. Seppo encouraged me to become familiar with the most contemporary tendencies of functional linguistics and taught me the basics of successful scientific work and international networking. In

addition to my official supervisors, I also wish to thank Dr Maria Vilkuna, who read and commented on my manuscript and provided much appreciated advice.

I also wish to thank the European Science Foundation for coordinating the EuroBABEL program and the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters for financing my work for more than two years during the period 2009–2011. Big thanks go to the whole Ob-BABEL project team and especially to Professor Elena Skribnik for their cooperation, advice, support and all the great moments we spent together during the project. Thanks also to many other colleagues who have helped me during this process; the discussions with Professor Riho Grünthal, Dr Janne Saarikivi, Professor Márta Csepregi, Dr Kirsti Siitonen, Ilona Rauhala and many others have been invaluable.

I would like to thank my former colleagues and students at the University of Szeged, the University of Helsinki and Aalto University, as well as my current colleagues and students at the University of Debrecen. Both in Szeged and in Debrecen I have not only been allowed to do my own research in addition to my work as a lecturer of Finnish language but have been supported and encouraged by the whole department. Working as a teacher has been a very important part of growing into a scientist. Only by giving advice and supervising my own students have I learnt how important it is to give and receive constructive criticism. This type of critique is one of the most important ways to develop. Last but not least, I wish to thank my family: my parents Mirjami and Pekka, my five brothers, my husband Timo and my dear daughters, Aura and Aino. Thanks also to all my friends for all the love, friendship, support, encouragement and joy they have provided. This book is dedicated to my daughters, who have been beside me during this long process, sharing the moments of everyday life and giving me so much joy and happiness. Thank you!

1. General Remarks

1.1. Mansi language

Mansi belongs to the Ob-Ugric branch of the Uralic language family and is spoken in Western Siberia in the autonomous district of Khanty-Mansia. Mansi and Khanty make up the Ob-Ugric branch, and together with their nearest relative, Hungarian, they belong

to the Ugric division¹ of the Uralic language family. There used to be four main dialects of Mansi: Northern, Eastern, Southern and Western. The Eastern dialects are not spoken anymore, but there are still approximately 2700 speakers of the Northern dialect. The Eastern dialect was spoken in the Konda River area. There were three Eastern dialects—Upper Konda, Middle Konda and Lower Konda—carrying the name of the river and one representing the tributary of the Konda, called Yukonda. The differences between the Eastern dialects are relatively small and concern mainly phonology (see, for example, Kulonen 2007: 17). My data represent the Middle Konda dialect (KM), although, considering the nature of the research topic, the results of this study are generalizable to relate to all Eastern dialects.

It is no longer possible to access new live material on EM because the Eastern dialects have already vanished. In addition, written sources are scarce because such material has only been provided by linguists studying these dialects. This is why my research data are based on a folkloric collection gathered by Kannisto in 1901–1906 that was published by Liimola some decades later. *Wogulische Volksdichtung* (WV) consists of six text parts (I–VI) and a commentary/vocabulary and is a vast database representing different text genres. In addition, Bernát Munkácsi published a folkloric collection of Mansi in the 19th century (Munkácsi 1892, 1892, 1893, 1896). However, this collection includes so few texts in EM that I ultimately chose the Kannisto collection as my major source of data.

My corpus comprises approximately 1200 entries, each of which includes an active or passive semantically transitive clause, that is, a clause where the patient is affected by the agent. The data is collected from parts I, II, III and IV of the Kannisto collection. The texts were originally written using the Finno-Ugric transcription system (FUT) and were later converted to a simplified phoneme-based transcription developed by Ulla-Maija Forsberg especially to meet the requirements of EM that was introduced in her work on EM grammar (for more details, see Kulonen 2007: 13–24). Having chosen this transcription, I will follow the principles of the coherent research tradition and tightly connect my study to the most remarkable recent publications on EM.

¹ The existence of the Ugric division has sometimes been questioned, but based on the most common views and the historical linguistic studies, I agree about its relevancy.

Different parts of the corpus are used in the articles discussed in the study, depending on the requirements of each one. In articles 1 and 2, the emphasis is on data, including direct objects (DOs). In article 3, the emphasis is on the nominal components expressing the DO. In article 4, the emphasis is on the three-participant clauses appearing in the data. The data are classified according to two different criteria. First, the entries are classified according to the morphological devices and syntactic structures used to express transitivity (a more detailed description is given in article 2). Second, the arguments of each single entry are classified according to their information structural functions. In articles 2 and 4, exact quotations are presented after the data examples. This does not occur in articles 1 and 3, but all data is from the folkloric collection mentioned above. Sufficient information about the larger contexts of data examples is provided by descriptions of the preceding narrative discourse.

Typologically, Mansi is an agglutinative language. As in all Uralic languages, word forms are often long and consist of several elements. Grammatical relations are expressed with suffixes, and there is also a complex derivation system. Regarding verb inflection, there are two verb conjugation categories but only one past tense form. There are three number categories: singular, dual and plural. There is no linguistic gender. Depending on the dialect, there are only six or seven noun cases and among them only one paradigm of local cases. Possessive relationships are expressed with possessive suffixes, as in almost all Uralic languages. In EM, the possessive suffixes also contribute to the marking of DOs. A more comprehensive outline of the typological features of EM is given in Section 3.

1.2. Aims of this study

The aim of my study is to provide a description of the formal means of expressing semantic transitivity in the Eastern dialects of Mansi, as well as the variation between the different means—verb agreement in the active voice, accusative case inflection and the use of the passive voice. My study is based on a semantic description of transitivity (see Section 2.1; Hopper & Thompson 1980). This makes it possible to include more formal categories in the survey than those that would be permitted by syntactic definitions based only on the presence of two arguments. This way, I will show how the whole system of expressing semantic transitivity—including both active and passive constructions—can be described using the same principles. I will argue that the system of expressing

transitivity is based on topicality and that the variation between different morphological devices is due to the correlation between pragmatic and syntactic functions. Nikolaeva, Kovgan and Koškarëva (1993) have presented very similar results concerning different dialects of Khanty. For the communicative (pragmatic) roles, they use the terms *permanent topic*, *temporary topic* and *focus*, and their description is based on their assumption that the distribution of semantic roles in syntactic positions depends on communicative factors (Nikolaeva, Kovgan & Koškarëva 1993: 125, 164).

Moreover, topicality is connected to the concept of Differential Object Marking (DOM). DOM languages are those that mark some DOs but not others (see, e.g. Aissen 2003). Referring to Iemmolo (2010, 2011), I will argue that DOM is based on topicality in EM; the topical DOs are overtly marked whilst the focal ones are not. Further, I will expand my analysis to cover two other aspects of expressing transitivity: variation between the active and passive voices and variation between different three-participant constructions—the active Primary Object/Secondary Object (PO/SO) construction, the active Direct Object/Indirect Object (DO/IO) construction and the passive three-participant construction. These three aspects can be connected to each other by means of topicality and are bound by the same basic principles. To sum up, the topic of my study can be divided into three different sub-topics: 1) marking of DOs, 2) variation in three-participant constructions and 3) variation between the active voice and the passive voice (Figure 1). The latter two in particular overlap each other.

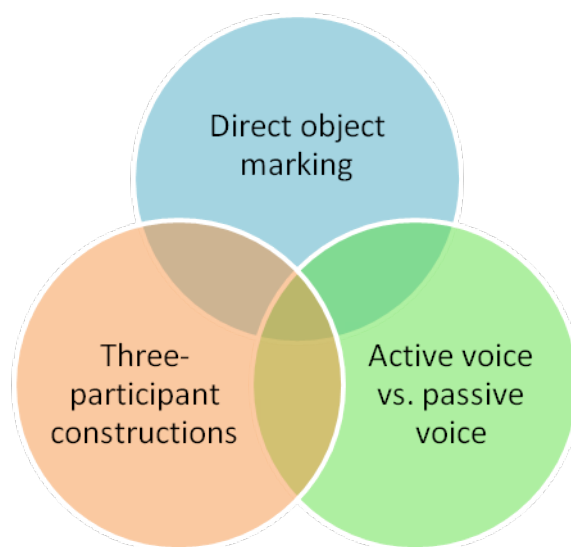


Figure 1: Three sub-topics of the study

My aim is to provide a clear overview of how information structure ties all three grammatical sub-topics together. These three sub-topics interact with one another; each of them is in variation with the two other ones, and they partly overlap. Based on my data, I have provided a description where the three sub-topics make up a complex system of information structural variation. The same principles affect variation within and between the sub-topics. The structure of the following sections is as follows. I will first present the system of marking the DO, followed by the two types of syntactic variation—the variation between the active voice and the passive voice and the variation in three-participant constructions. The connection and interaction between the sub-topics is described.

I base my study on information structural analysis, especially the terminology and definitions by Lambrecht (1994). I base my approach on three main pragmatic functions—primary topic, secondary topic and focus—and on correlation with syntactic functions. I will show how each of these pragmatic functions correlates with one syntactic function and also how their morphological markedness or unmarkedness is due to information structural factors. The results of the study will not only provide new information on the Mansi language but will also contribute to the typological discourse on DOM and information structure, as well as their realization in different languages.

1.3. Articles included in the study

This study consists of four articles published in peer-reviewed linguistic journals and an overview. Two of the four articles are about the marking of DOs in general, one outlines the function of noun marking in the DO marking system and one concerns the variation between three-participant constructions. Article 1, *Pragmatic direct object marking in Eastern Mansi* (Linguistics 52(2), 2014), mainly concerns the differences in the marking of topical and focal DOs and EM being realized as a topicality-based DOM language. Article 2, *Informaatorakenteen vaikutus suoran objektin merkintään mansin itämuerteissa* [The effect of information structure on the marking of direct objects in the Eastern dialects of Mansi] (JSFOu 94, 2013), is a more comprehensive survey on the same theme, concentrating not only on the marking of DOs but also on syntactic functions appearing as DOs and on the concept of transitivity as a whole. Article 2 has a deeper perspective on information structural analysis.

In article 3, *Conceptual function of noun marking in the direct object marking system in Eastern Mansi* (Uralisztikai tanulmányok 20, 2013), I discuss one part of DO marking, specifically the role of noun marking, and observe its different functions. Article 4, *Three-participant constructions in Eastern Mansi* (Linguistica Uralica 2012: 2), is about the variation in three-participant constructions and the effect of information structure on their variations. The third sub-topic of my study, the variation between the active voice and the passive voice, is discussed in Section 4.5 of article 2 and briefly in Section 6.3 of article 4.

Articles 1–3 mainly contribute to the same topic, DO marking, and include similar content. However, each has a different point of view on the theme, and each provides information not found in the others. The minor lack of coherence of the articles is because they were originally not meant to be included in an article-based dissertation. I came up with the idea of writing an article-based dissertation instead of a monograph just after publishing three of the four articles included in this study.

1.4. Terminological remarks

In the articles introduced in Section 1.3, as well as in the following sections, the semantic, syntactic and pragmatic functions are distinguished from each other by terminological choices. First, I use the terms *agent*, *patient* and *R-argument* to express the semantic functions. Agent refers to the instigator of the action or the actor. The term patient refers to the target or the goal of the action; it refers to the participant that is affected by the action itself and by the agent. R-argument refers to the functions of both the recipient and the beneficiary.

Second, the terms subject, DO and oblique are used to express the syntactic functions—the arguments of the syntactic structure. The subject is a zero-case marked argument that the predicate verb agrees with in both person and number. The object or DO is a nominal or pronominal argument accompanied by an active two- or three-place verb not agreeing with the predicate verb in person. In EM, the DO is either in the nominative case or is inflected in the accusative case, and in certain situations the predicate verb agrees with it in number. A more detailed definition of the DO is given in article 2 and in Section 4. The oblique is a constituent inflected in cases other than the nominative or accusative, giving information about location, direction, time or mood. Third, the pragmatic

functions of *primary topic*, *secondary topic* and *focus* are used to express the information structural roles of arguments and will be discussed in detail in Section 2.2.

The organization of the paper is as follows. In Section 2, I will discuss the theoretical frameworks of this study. The most important typological features of EM are presented in Section 3. The data analysis concerning DO marking is discussed in Section 4, and the analysis of variation between the active voice and the passive voice and the variation between the different three-participant constructions are discussed in Section 5. The conclusions are presented in Section 6.

2. Theoretical frameworks

In this section, I will discuss the main theories applied in this study. The notion of transitivity in previous studies and my own definition of transitivity are discussed in Section 2.1. The main principles of information structural analysis will be discussed in Section 2.2, and the concept of DOM will be discussed in Section 2.3.

2.1. The notion of transitivity

2.1.1. Previous studies

There are several definitions of transitivity. The recent definitions are the formal, semantic and discourse-based ones. Different definitions lead to different restrictions concerning the target group, and different approaches may be useful for different aims. In many Uralic languages, transitivity is expressed with case inflection (accusative), but this does not mean that the whole notion is bound to morphological criteria. The formal definitions are based on morphological or syntactic criteria, referring to the valence of the predicate verb of an active clause. The issue has often been approached through the opposition between transitive and intransitive verbs (see, e.g. Payne 1997: 171).

However, in the very first definitions, transitivity was a question of semantics; the lexeme *transitive* originates from the Latin word *trans* ('across') and has been used since ancient times. Regarding the semantic definitions, Hopper and Thompson have defined transitivity as a situation where the action is transferred from agent to patient (Hopper & Thompson 1980: 251). Rice (1987: 8) has stated that transitivity is a phenomenon where two entities are involved in some activity and there is contact between them; the second entity is affected by the contact. She also refers to the cognitive nature of the

phenomenon: ‘Transitivity emerges as a conceptual phenomenon that serves as a linguistic device employed by a speaker to organize the actions of entities in order to convey a certain attitude about an event to a hearer’ (Rice 1987: xi).

In semantic definitions, transitivity is usually not regarded as the polar opposite of intransitivity but as a continuously increasing scale. De Mattia-Vivies emphasizes that transitivity is a semantic continuum with different degrees (De Mattia-Vivies 2009: 101). Hopper and Thompson (1980) have provided a *transitivity scale*, with the concept of *affectedness* as one of the key parameters. Kittilä (2002) and Næss (2007) also base their definitions on affectedness; one of the participants is more or less affected by the other. Both Næss (2007) and Kittilä (2002) also emphasize the role of agentivity; the agent is the voluntary instigator of the action and is not affected by the action itself. For example, in the action described in the sentence *Mary cut the grass*, Mary instigates the action voluntarily, and only the grass is affected by it. Næss describes the syntactic roles of subject and object as the double opposition of two properties, control and affectedness; the subject is voluntarily controlling and is not affected, while the object is affected and non-controlling (Næss 2004: 1205–1207).

The passive voice is not usually considered a transitive construction, but the connection between transitivity and the passive voice has recently been widely discussed. For example, Rice considers it a criterion for transitivity that a sentence can be passivized (Rice 1987: xi–xii). Jaeggli (1986) has correlated affectedness with passivization and reflexivization. Siewierska questions the more traditional sentiment of taking the intransitivity of the passive voice for granted (Siewierska 1984: 8, 44–47). De Mattia-Vivies (2009) has discussed the question of passivizing active transitive sentences, and she emphasizes the importance of the semantic notion of transitivity. She presents a volume of English transitive verbs that can be passivized (break, cut, write, prepare...), those transitive ones that cannot be passivized (receive, fit, benefit...) and intransitive ones that can be passivized (sleep [through], live [in]...). Finally, she notes that the system of passivization cannot be understood without a semantic definition of transitivity (De Mattia-Vivies 2009: 105). She also states that ‘Semantic transitivity does not always presuppose syntactic transitivity (the presence of an object), and syntactic transitivity does not necessarily trigger the transitive meaning’ (De Mattia-Vivies 2009: 101). In

other words, she distinguishes between the semantic property of transitivity and the conventional use of constructions that are traditionally considered transitive.

2.1.2. Transitivity in this study

This approach is based on a semantic–functional description of transitivity; as seen in article 2, transitivity is defined as an action between two participants, the agent and the patient, and the patient is affected by the agent. This definition allows us to include passive clauses in the study as well, which is not possible with formal definitions. Different from many other studies, my definition covers both active and passive constructions because the passive voice has a remarkable role in expressing transitivity in EM (see, e.g. Kulonen 2007: 165, 1989: 286–288). In article 2 in particular, apart from the question of how the DOs of active clauses are marked, there is the question of when an active transitive clause is used and when a passive clause is used instead. The passive voice and its contribution to transitivity expressions are also discussed in article 4 from the point of view of three-participant constructions.

The definition of transitivity in this study is very similar to that in the approach of De Mattia-Vivies mentioned in Section 2.1.1. Although transitivity is connected to certain syntactic or morphological forms, it is a semantic phenomenon and should be defined by semantic factors; one of the participants is affected by the other without necessarily being affected him/herself. Active transitive sentences have a semantic and functional connection to the passive; not all active transitive sentences can be passivized, but whenever passivization is possible, the two different devices may refer semantically to the same action. The difference between the active and passive sentences describing the same transitive action is more pragmatic than semantic. Analysing the passive constructions as well gives us the possibility of expanding the analysis of active constructions and the information structural variation. There is a distinct entity, an interesting complicated network, that also includes the passive voice and that is bound by information structure.

Kulonen (1989) and Nikolaeva (1999) have questioned the whole concept of transitivity in the Ob-Ugric languages. In the Ob-Ugric languages, not only the agent and the patient can be promoted to subject or object but so can the R-arguments (recipient, beneficiary) and even spatial expressions (Kulonen 1989: 72, 152–158). From my point of view, it is

not a question of lack of transitivity in an individual language but rather of the definition of transitivity and its interpretation. In this study (see Section 5.1), I also discuss the typologically quite interesting construction possibility of intransitive predications appearing as transitive; passive alignment may also be chosen to promote a locative or directional argument to the syntactic role of subject (See Skribnik 2001, Kulonen 1989).

To summarize, transitivity should be regarded primarily as a semantic concept that is only connected to formal categories, even though it is always realized as a certain linguistic form. The variation between the different structures in EM is foremost a pragmatic phenomenon. For these reasons, in the following sections I will avoid the traditional notions of intransitivity, transitivity and ditransitivity when talking about the semantic properties of individual verbs. The phenomenon of transitivity itself is not exclusively based on the valence of the verb, and that is why I rather use the terms one-place verb, two-place verb or three-place verb, referring to the number of possible arguments of the verb.

2.2. Information structure and topicality

Information structure has a remarkable role in this study. Concerning the DO marking, it is connected to the phenomenon of DOM (see Section 2.3); EM is a DOM language where the most important referential factor is topicality. I mainly rely on the definitions and terminology of Lambrecht (1994). According to Lambrecht, information structure is

that component of sentence grammar in which propositions and conceptual representations of states of affairs are paired with lexico-grammatical structure in accordance with the mental states of interlocutors who use and interpret these structures as units of information in given discourse context (Lambrecht 1994: 5).

In other words, information structural analysis is a device for observing how the lexico-grammatical structure of a language is affected by a speaker's assumptions about a hearer's state of knowledge and awareness.

Lambrecht bases his approach first on the notions of presupposition and assertion, second on the degree of identifiability and activation and third on the opposition between topic and focus (Lambrecht 1994: 36). The opposition between presupposition and assertion means what the speaker expects the hearer already knows, and what not. The 'old'

information is what we call presupposition, and the ‘new’ information is the assertion (Lambrecht 1994: 52). In addition, identifiability and activation (see Section 2.2.1) are connected to the question of whether the referent has been already mentioned or is already known. They are used to measure how easily the speaker expects the hearer to identify the referent.

My starting point is the opposition between the topical and focal entities, and the analysis is based on how three pragmatic functions—*primary topic*, *secondary topic* and *focus* (see Section 2.2.2–2.2.3)—correlate with syntactic functions. To refine and focus my analysis, I use Lambrecht’s accessibility scale to observe the differences in the degree of topicality and Lambrecht’s identifiability scale to describe the relationship between identifiability and topicality (see Sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2).

One note is necessary before proceeding. There are certain difficulties concerning data gathered from a historic corpus and providing information structural analysis without any live discussion corpus. Petrova and Solf (2009) have discussed these questions and dispensed with the idea of assigning the main categories of topic and focus directly (Petrova and Solf 2009: 144). However, despite this, I ended up following Lambrecht and Nikolaeva in particular and the terminology used in their studies. The aim of my study is to determine the referential factors affecting the variation in expressing transitivity. For that purpose, using the main categories of *primary topic*, *secondary topic* and *focus* (see Sections 2.2.2 and 2.2.3) gives sufficiently exact results, especially when my data shows a very clear correlation between these categories and the syntactic functions.

Section 2.2.1 is devoted to the notions of identifiability and accessibility. In Section 2.2.2, I will outline the notion of topic and its sub-variants primary topic and secondary topic. The notion of focus will be discussed in Section 2.2.3.

2.2.1. Identifiability

Referring to Chafe (1976), Lambrecht describes the difference between entities the speaker assumes to be known to the hearer and those that the speaker assumes to be new to the hearer using the cognitive category of *identifiability* (Lambrecht 1994: 77). According to Lambrecht, identifiability is a cognitive category that accounts for a presupposed proposition (Lambrecht 1994: 77), that is, a discourse referent that the speaker expects to be known to the hearer. It is not a polar opposition of two stages but a

continuum with different degrees. Identifiability differs from definiteness in that definiteness is a language-dependent formal category and identifiability is a cognitive one; for example, all entities marked with a definite article do not have the same degree of identifiability (Lambrecht 1994: 79–87). In other words, definiteness is morphologically marked identifiability, but not all languages have the category of definiteness and not all definite categories mark the same degrees of identifiability. The different degrees of identifiability are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Identifiability and activation

1. unidentifiable, brand new
2. unidentifiable anchored, brand new anchored
3. inactive, unused
4. textually accessible
5. situationally accessible
6. inferentially accessible
7. active, given

(Lambrecht 1994: 109)

When an unidentifiable or inactive entity is brought into a discussion, it can be activated and coded later on with different morphological devices, such as a pronoun (*I met a boy. **He** lives next door to us.*), or an indefinite article in the case of many Indo-European languages (*I met a man and a woman. **The woman** lives next door to us.*) (Lambrecht 1994: 94–96, 107). In articles 1 and 2, I discussed how the objective verb conjugation is used for coding the activated referents in EM (see also Section 4). Moreover, an unidentifiable referent may be unanchored or anchored to some more active referent in the discussion or text; an unanchored referent is not connected to any other referent under discussion (*I saw **a dog** in the street*), whilst an anchored one has a semantic and functional connection to a referent that has recently been mentioned (*I saw a dog in the street. **Its ears** were small, but **the eyes** were huge*).

Already known but not active discourse referents are either *inactive* or *accessible*. Lambrecht describes accessibility with the word *semi-activeness* (see also Chafe 1994: 73) and mentions that it can be considered potential for activation (Lambrecht 1994: 100–105). As shown above, Lambrecht also distinguishes between *textually accessible*, *situationally accessible* and *inferentially accessible* referents (Lambrecht 1994: 107). Textually accessible referents have been reactivated from some earlier active status in the discourse, that is, from the text-internal world (e.g. *The neighbour I told you about this morning is coming to visit us*). Situationally accessible referents are those covering a salient presence in the text-external world (e.g. *My neighbour is coming to visit us **this evening***). Inferentially accessible referents can be connected to the current discourse by lexical or semantic relationships, that is, inferences from some other active or accessible element, and they are neutral with respect to the distinction of being text-internal or text-external (e.g. *The mother of my neighbour is very ill.*) (Lambrecht 1994: 100–107.)

2.2.2. The notion of topic

The *topic* is a pragmatic notion: it is the referent the whole sentence is about (Lambrecht 1994: 118); the nature of the topic has often been defined using the word *aboutness*. For example, in the sentence *Kelly went to buy a new bicycle*, Kelly is the topic if the utterance is used to provide information about Kelly rather than, for example, who went buying a new bicycle. In the sentence *This house was built by my uncle*, ‘this house’ is the topic because the utterance provides more information about the house and not, for example, about the speaker’s uncle. The topic usually represents the old, already known information, something the speaker expects to be known by the hearer. The sentence is in practice built around the topic with the aim of giving new information about it. The definition of topic resembles the definition of subject in many ways, but these two notions must not be connected to each other automatically. The correlation between the syntactic notion of subject and the pragmatic notion of topic is a language-dependent feature (Lambrecht 1994: 118). The notion of subject is defined by formal means and is a syntactic notion, whilst topic is a cognitive category that, depending on the language, may occupy other syntactic positions as well. As will be shown in the following sections, topicality has a connection to syntactic subjecthood in EM, but it is not a universal feature.

Topicality is a property of discourse referents and not a dichotomy of topical and non-topical entities; it is a continuum of different degrees of topicality. In the case of two- or three-participant constructions, there may be more than one topical participant. Nikolaeva (2001) discusses the question of multiple topics. She argues that nothing prevents an utterance from having several topics that are of equal under discussion, and they can be ordered with respect to their pragmatic saliency (Nikolaeva 2001: 10–12). She distinguishes between two clause-internal argument topics: the *primary topic* and the *secondary topic*. The primary topic is the most topical element in the sentence, and the secondary topic is the second most topical. Nikolaeva (2001: 11) defines the secondary topic as a topical, already known element that is less continuous and less remarkable than the primary topic. For example, in the sentence *Did Bernard eat the apple?* Bernard is the primary topic because the sentence is about his action. However, the apple is topical because it is also known to the hearer(s) (which is coded by using the definite article); it is the second topical argument, the secondary topic. Nikolaeva also states that the primary topic tends to be encoded cross-linguistically as a subject, while the secondary topic tends to be encoded as a DO (Nikolaeva 2001: 11). As will be seen in the following sections, my data on EM support this kind of view.

In the following sections, I will show how the primary and secondary topics are also marked differently and represent different syntactic functions in EM. When classifying my data according to the different degrees of topicality and identifiability, I have particularly taken into account first the appearance of the arguments in the immediately preceding sentences, second the frequency in the whole text and third the possibility of situational or inferential accessibility. Based on my classified data, I will argue that there is a correlation between the categories of primary topic, secondary topic and focus and the marking categories. The primary topic is always, both in the active voice and the passive voice, an unmarked argument, according to which the predicate verb agrees in person and number, as in examples (1), (2) and (3) below. The secondary topic is either marked with an accusative ending or is only referred to with an objective conjugation verb ending, as in (3).

In (1), the second person singular element is the most topical element in the clause as the whole clause is about him. The speaker and the hearer are usually regarded as *inherently topical* or at least as being more topical than the other elements (see, e.g. Song 2001:

170–171). The second person singular pronoun appears as the subject and is unmarked, causing only subject agreement with the verb.

- (1) *näg kon kom oos-øñ?* (Wogulische Volksdichtung (WV) II: 29B)
 2SG who man be-2SG
 ‘Who [the man] are you?’

In (2), the first person singular element takes the place of the primary topic. The speaker is talking about himself, about his own action. He says that he thought he had killed the hearer (however, the hearer is alive). The hearer is the second most topical element of the sentence (also mentioned recently but also inherently topical as a second person element). Regarding the frequencies of the participants, the referent referred to by a first person singular element in (2) appears five times in the previous six sentences, whilst the referent of the second person singular element appears three times. Based on all the information provided above, the second person singular element, which represents the patient, is classified as a secondary topic, and that is why it is only referred to by an objective conjugation verb ending.

- (2) *ässyøkee! om loåw-øm jål=ääl-øñ-løm.* (WV II: 32B)
 dear 1SG say-1SG PREF=kill-PST-SG<1SG
 ‘Oh my dear, I thought I had killed you.’

In (3), the second person singular element represents the patient, but it is realized as a subject of a passive clause because it is the primary topic of the clause. The utterance is from a discussion on whether a father will let his daughter get married. The daughter has discussed it with her father and is now discussing it with her fiancé: they are talking about her, not her father. Her fiancé knows exactly who the ‘sender’ mentioned in the clause is, but he uses passive voice and the second person singular pronoun as the subject because that is what his utterance is about.

- (3) *näg jåt keet-w-øñ ämøñ öätyi?* (WV II: 31B)
 2SG with send-PASS-2SG or NEG
 ‘So, will you be sent (to me) or not?’

In addition to the difference between topical and focal entities (the definition of focal objects appears in Section 2.2.3) and the difference between primary and secondary

topics, I apply a more detailed description device in my approach—the accessibility scale by Lambrecht. The different degrees of accessibility are listed in Table 2.

Table 2: Accessibility scale

1. Active
2. Accessible
3. Unused
4. Brand new anchored
5. Brand new unanchored

(Lambrecht 1994: 165)

It can be seen that Table 2 is an inverse and abbreviated version of the identifiability scale in Table 1; only the most unidentifiable entities are missing because they cannot appear as topics (except the anchored ones; see Lambrecht 1994: 167). The most topical entities are the active ones. Lambrecht mentions the unaccented pronominal morphemes of the preferred active ones (Lambrecht 1994: 165).

Even though there is a certain correlation between identifiability and topicality, there is also a clear distinction between these two notions. As Lambrecht states, identifiability is a mental feature that refers to the features of single referents, whilst topicality is a pragmatic feature and concerns information (Lambrecht 1994: 160). The degree of identifiability indicates how active a single referent is and how recently and how often it has been mentioned. The degree of topicality indicates if about the topic is something we will provide new information about or is new information about something already known. Lambrecht emphasizes that to be topicalized, a referent must have some activation properties (Lambrecht 1994: 162), but an active or accessible referent can also be focal (Lambrecht 1994: 164). For example, the answer to the question *Who cooked this soup?* may be: *I did*. The first person singular argument should be inherently topical (see, e.g. Song 2001: 171), but here it appears as a focus because it is new information, an answer given to the question.

In articles 1 and 2, I have approached my data from the point of view of topic–focus opposition. In the following sections, I will expand the analysis with regard to identifiability and its relationship to topicality. I will use the term *primary topic* for the most topical, most predictable argument of the sentence; it is an argument that has been mentioned in the previous sentences or that appeared frequently in several previous sentences. The primary topic is a participant that represents the active status of identifiability or accessibility, and the utterance is built up to provide more information about it. By *secondary topic*, I mean the second most topical argument, the one that is already known to the hearer but is less predictable than the primary topic and perhaps not mentioned previously. The secondary topic can appear frequently, but it is pragmatically less salient than the primary topic (see, e.g. Nikolaeva 2001: 12). I use the term focus for the new, unknown or unpredictable information that has either just been brought to the discussion and has not been mentioned in the previous sentences (see Section 2.2.3) or that has been chosen from among several already known referents. A focus may also contain a high degree of identifiability, especially if it is an argument focus (see Section 2.2.3).

Consequently, the topical DOs presented in this study represent secondary topics. Primary topics tend to occupy the syntactic role of subject in a clause, and secondary topics occur as DOs. In this study, I also use the term *narrational topic* to emphasize the role of the topic as the topic of the whole story or text, and I provide some examples.

2.2.3. The notion of focus

Focus is ‘the unpredictable or pragmatically non-recoverable element in the utterance’ (Lambrecht 1994: 207); it is the new information that has just been brought to the discussion and has not been mentioned in the previous sentences or an argument chosen from a group of identified entities (contrastive focus). For example, in the sentence *The man you asked about is a doctor*, the focal element is ‘a doctor’; the speaker expects the hearer to know what man he is talking about but not the fact that the man is a doctor. Focus has often been defined as the complement of topic, but Lambrecht gives strong arguments against such a definition. He states first that not all sentences have a topic and second that focus is rather an element added to than superimposed on the pragmatic presupposition (Lambrecht 1994: 206).

Lambrecht distinguishes between three different focus structures: *predicate focus*, *argument focus* and *sentence focus* (Lambrecht 1994: 226–235). In the predicate focus structure, the predicate gives new information on the topic (e.g. *My brother has **found a new job***). Argument focus represents those situations where the focus is selected from among a limited or unlimited group of referents (e.g. *This study book is for **non-native speakers of English***). In a sentence focus structure, the whole sentence represents new information; even if there were referents already known to the hearer, the content of the sentence cannot be predicted (e.g. *What happened? **An unfamiliar man just walked into my office***)².

In this study, I pay special attention to topicality relationships between different arguments, which is why the emphasis is on argument-focus or predicate-focus structures. However, while the emphasis of the whole study is on the difference between topical and focal elements and their syntactic realizations, the differences between different types of foci are not so salient. Focus marking as an independent concept and the different focus types are definitely topics for future studies. A thorough study on the theme should be conducted using a database compiled especially for that purpose; such a study may naturally provide some new information about expressing transitivity as well.

2.3. Differential Object Marking

DOM is a phenomenon first discovered by Bossong (1985). It has since been discussed by many others, including Aissen (2003). It concerns those languages that mark some DOs but not others. The markedness is determined by certain referential factors, depending on the language in question. What the referential factors are and how they affect the variation changes from language to language. The most common factors are animacy, definiteness (Aissen 2003), affectedness (Kittilä 2008; Næss 2004), specificity and topicality (Iemmolo 2010/2011, Dalrymple & Nikolaeva 2011). My data was first classified based on the animacy degree of the DO, but I discovered that there is no correlation between animacy and the marking of DOs. Further, the classification according to the degrees of topicality revealed a clear correlation between markedness and topicality.

² For more information on sentence focus, see, for example, Lambrecht 2000.

In this section, I will discuss the more traditional aspects of DOM (Section 2.3.1) and then one—maybe the most important one—of the newer concepts, the topicality-based DOM (Section 2.3.2) that has also been applied to my data on EM and in some previous studies to some other Uralic languages.

2.3.1. Animacy- and definiteness-based DOM

Among the earlier studies, one of the dominant theories concerning DOM is the animacy- and definiteness-based DOM presented by Aissen (see, e.g. Aissen 2003). Referring to Comrie, Aissen bases her assumption on optimality theory and states that one of the basic functions of object marking is to distinguish between subject and object. Typical subjects tend to be animate and definite and typical objects tend to be inanimate and indefinite (Comrie 1989: 128). According to Aissen, this is why animate and definite objects are often marked, whereas inanimate and indefinite ones are not. Hierarchy scales can be provided for animacy and definiteness (see Table 3), and ‘the higher in prominence a direct object the more likely it is to be overtly case marked’ (Aissen 2003: 436). Her hypothesis is based on the assumption that the degree of animacy and/or definiteness affects the markedness or unmarkedness of the DO. The prominence scales for these factors are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Prominence scales for animacy and definiteness

Animacy: Non-animate > animate > human
Definiteness: Indefinite noun > indefinite specific noun > definite noun > name > personal pronoun

(Aissen 2003: 436).

According to Aissen, how these properties together affect the variation changes from language to language. Different combinations of levels of the two scales are recognized as the point from where all DOs are marked. If an object at one point on one scale is case-marked, then all objects higher in prominence on the same scale are case-marked (Aissen 2003: 436). Aissen describes the effect of animacy on object marking by mentioning several examples from individual languages; for example, in Kalkatungu no objects are marked, in Yiddish only some human objects are marked, in Sinhalese all animates are

optionally marked and in Ritharngu all human objects and some other animates are marked (Aissen 2003: 455).

However, Næss (2004) and Kittilä (2008) have questioned the relevance of animacy and definiteness as referential factors by observing that the expected effect of these properties is actually only a consequence of the effect of other factors. Næss poses the question, if definite and animate objects are marked, what are they marked with respect to (Næss 2004: 1195)? Both Næss and Kittilä refer to the high degree of affectedness of animate and definite DOs (Kittilä also refers to the same property of the recipients). They are not marked because they are animate and definite but because the animate and definite DOs are the most affected ones. Næss provides a concept of DOM based on the ‘double opposition’ of two properties—control and affectedness. Subjects are controlling and non-affected, while objects are affected and non-controlling (Næss 2004: 1187, 1205–1207). By taking into account both properties, we can provide a coherent analysis of a transitive clause also involving morphological markedness (Næss 2004: 1208).

Later, Aissen was challenged by Iemmolo (2010/2011), who explains the markedness of animate and definite objects as grammaticalizations of earlier topicality-based systems (see Section 2.3.2).

2.3.2. Topicality-based DOM

As mentioned in Section 2.3.1, animacy is not the only referential factor affecting the variation, and since Aissen’s studies, the whole perspective has undergone some changes. In the most recent studies, DOM has been strongly connected to information structure and topicality. Topicality-based DOM within individual languages has been discussed—as Escandell-Vidal (2009) has discussed concerning Balearic Catalan and Nikolaeva (2001) has discussed concerning Khanty—but it has also been discussed in a more universal and typological context (see, e.g. Iemmolo 2010/2011, Dalrymple & Nikolaeva 2011). Iemmolo has even stated that semantic properties such as animacy and definiteness as referential factors have a connection to topicality-based DOM (Iemmolo 2010/2011: 64–65, 271). He proves that those systems based on animacy or definiteness are in fact synchronic results of the grammaticalization of earlier topicality-based systems (Iemmolo 2010/2011: 3, 130–133; 269–270) and that DOM systems do not primarily

arise from the need to distinguish between subject and object (Iemmolo 2010/2011: 3, 130).

Regarding the Uralic languages, in Komi, animacy and definiteness affect the marking of DOs, but at least the appearance of the dative object proves that those two factors alone cannot explain the whole system (Klumpp 2008: 218). This is why Klumpp has created a model with a topicality-based system where the second most topical argument is realized as a DO (Klumpp 2008: 218; 2014). Klumpp also presents a theory about grammaticalized possessive accusative endings appearing as focus particles in Komi (Klumpp 2014: 438).

In Tundra-Nenets, the DO is always marked with the accusative case, but the verb is in some situations inflected in the subjective conjugation and in the objective conjugation in others; the verb inflection category is dependent on information structure (Dalrymple & Nikolaeva 2011: 131). Nikolaeva (see also Section 2.2.2) has concluded that in Northern Khanty, the phenomenon of object agreement is motivated by information structure and presented evidence for direct mapping between syntax and information structures and indirect mapping between syntax and semantics (Nikolaeva 2001: 39). In articles 1 and 2, I have presented similar results concerning object agreement in EM. As the traditional functions of topic and focus are not sufficient to describe object agreement in Khanty, Nikolaeva ended up using one more function, that of secondary topic (Nikolaeva 2001: 39). This fits very well my data on EM. To sum up, DOM is connected to information structure and the notion of secondary topic in at least four Uralic languages (Khanty, Mansi, Komi, Nenets). In three of them, verb agreement is involved in the marking system.

3. Central features of Eastern Mansi grammar

As with all Uralic languages, Mansi can be characterized by its agglutinativity. Mansi is rich in suffixes, but adpositions are few. Grammatical relationships and derivations are expressed with suffixes, including several derivational and inflectional suffixes, which sometimes results in very long word forms. Only a few adpositions exist in the language. Mansi has quite a complicated system of noun inflection and possessive suffixes and also a complex system of verbal derivation. There are two verb inflection paradigms in the active voice, the subjective and objective conjugation, and one in the passive voice. In

noun inflection, a single noun form may include a derivational suffix, a possessive suffix, a number suffix and a case suffix. However, there are only six or seven noun cases depending on the dialect (the average among the Uralic languages is 13–14; for example, Hungarian has 25 cases and Finnish has 14, but Northern Khanty only has three) and only one past tense category. There are three number categories: singular, dual and plural. There is no linguistic gender. In this section, I will briefly discuss the most remarkable features of EM from the point of view of expressing transitivity.

3.1. Verb conjugational categories

All dialects of Mansi have two verb inflection categories in the active voice and one in the passive. Those in active voice are called the subjective and the objective conjugation; the same system of active categories also appears in Hungarian, Khanty and both Mordvinic languages. The term objective conjugation refers to a DO; it is used with two- or three-place verbs, but not all DOs are referred to with an objective conjugation suffix. Any verb can be inflected in the subjective conjugation, but one-place verbs are inflected only in the subjective conjugation.

In the active subjective conjugation, the predicate verb agrees with the syntactic subject in person and number. In active sentences, the subject slot is always occupied by the agent and is often referred to with a verb ending only (for more detail, see Section 4).

- (4) *äj-nø=tee-nø* *wöär-s-øt.* (WV II: 6B)
 drink-GER=eat-GER make-PST-3PL
 ‘They made something to eat and drink.’

- (5) *möänk* *tok* *juw=møn-øw.* (WV II: 6B)
 1PL.STRESS PARTIC to.home=go-1PL
 ‘So, we will go home.’

The present tense subjective conjugation suffixes of the Middle Konda dialect are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Present tense subjective conjugation suffixes in the Middle Konda dialect

	1.	2.	3.
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Sg	<i>-aam, -ååm, -gøm, -øm</i>	<i>-aan, -öän, -gøn, -øn</i>	<i>-i, Ø</i>
Du	<i>-iimøm</i>	<i>-iin, -iinø, -nø</i>	<i>-öä. -gø, -aa</i>
Pl	<i>-øw, -wø, -gwø, -i iwø</i>	<i>-iinø</i>	<i>-aat, -öät, -gøt, -t</i>

(Kulonen 2007: 99)

Kulonen points out that both the *g*-marker of the present tense and the dual ending *-g* have become vocalized, except for some rather stylistic variants (Kulonen 2007: 100). The singular first and second person forms, including the present tense ending *-g* and the dual third person ending *-gø*, are quite unusual.

In the objective conjugation, the verb agrees with the number and the person of the subject and with the number of the DO as well. Different from some other Uralic languages (Mordvin, some second person forms of Hungarian), the person of the DO is not marked to the verb.

- (6) *õõw-øm öät kont-iitø* (WV I: 14B)
door-ACC NEG find-SG<3SG
‘He does not find the door.’

The present tense objective conjugation suffixes of the Middle Konda dialect are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Present tense objective conjugation suffixes of the Middle Konda dialect

	Sg	Du	Pl
1Sg	<i>-iiløm, -løm</i>	<i>-gååm</i>	<i>-gäänøm</i>
2Sg	<i>-iiløn, -løn</i>	<i>-gään</i>	<i>-gään</i>
3Sg	<i>-iitø, -tø</i>	<i>-öä, -göä</i>	<i>-gään</i>
1Du	<i>-iiläämøn, -läämøn</i>	<i>-goåmøn</i>	<i>-gønäämøn</i>
2Du	<i>-iilään</i>	<i>-gään</i>	<i>-gään</i>

3Du	<i>-iitøñ</i>	<i>-gään</i>	<i>-gään</i>
1Pl	<i>-iiløw, -iilwø</i>	<i>-oåw, -gønøw</i>	<i>-løgnøw, -øgnøw, -gønøw</i>
2Pl	<i>-iilään</i>	<i>-gään, gønään</i>	<i>-gønään</i>
3Pl	<i>-äänøł, -gäänøł</i>	<i>-gäänøł</i>	<i>-gään, -gäänøł</i>

(Kulonen 2007: 112)

Traditionally, the objective conjugation has been considered the ‘definite’ conjugation, marking the definiteness of the object (see, e.g. Kálmán 1989: 60, Kulonen 2007: 137; 111). As already presented in articles 1 and 2, in the following sections I will provide an outline of the use of the objective conjugation based not on definiteness but on topicality. In articles 1 and 2, I have observed that objective conjugation appears together with those DOs classified as secondary topics in my data. The objective conjugation is the primary device for marking the topicality of the DO and also the marker of the secondary topic.

There are two different types of passive voice, the personal and the impersonal. In the personal passive (see, e.g. Kulonen 1989, Siewierska 1984: 34–37), the predicate verb is inflected according to the number and person of the subject, which always represents some constituent other than the agent. In (7), the first person singular element that represents the semantic patient appears as the subject of a passive clause, and the verb agrees with it in person and number:

- (7) *keet-w-øš-øm* *näg* *püw-öän* *pookøñ.* (WV II: 30B)
 send-PASS-PST-1SG 2SG son-DU2SG.POSS to
 ‘I was sent to your two sons.’

Sentence (7) does not include an agent constituent; the semantic agent is not specified, which occurs less frequently in my data but is possible in EM. As in (8), the agent is marked with the lative case. The verb agrees with the syntactic subject, which is a first person singular element.

- (8) *työäty-øm-nø* *sotøł-øw-øm* *tåk.* (WV I: 14B)
 father-SG1SG.POSS-LAT jugde-PASS-1SG PARTIC
 ‘I am being blamed by my father.’

The marking of the passive agent with an oblique case is also a typologically well-known feature. Siewierska (1984: 28–29, 2005) discusses the marking of the passive agent by a non-core case in several languages. The personal passive verb endings of Middle Konda are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Present tense passive suffixes in the Middle Konda dialect

	1.	2.	3.
Sg	<i>-wøm</i>	<i>-wøn</i>	<i>-wø</i>
Du	<i>-øwäämøñ</i>	<i>-wään</i>	<i>-wäg</i>
Pl	<i>-wøw</i>	<i>-wään</i>	<i>-wøt, -øwt</i>

(Kulonen 2007: 166)

An impersonal passive clause does not include a subject, and the predicate verb is always inflected in the passive third person singular form (Kulonen 2007: 176), as in (9).

- (9) *toow-øx°* *nog-w-øš* (WV II: 5)
 row-INF start-PASS-PST
 ‘They started to row.’

The same kind of passive appears in Finnish and Estonian, and its function is to emphasize the non-identified status of the agent. Regarding my study, the role of the impersonal passive is marginal because a sentence with a verb inflected in the impersonal passive cannot include any patient argument (ks. Kulonen 2006: 176).

Both in the active voice and the passive voice in EM, the use of so-called *zero anaphora* is frequent, and according to my data its appearance is connected to topicality. Zero anaphora is a concept where a referent normally expressed with a noun is not explicitly expressed but is only referred to with a verb ending. It has also been described as a gap in a phrase or clause that has an anaphoric function similar to a pro-form (see, e.g., Matthews 2007). Sigurdsson and Majling (2006) have discussed the connection between null arguments and topicality. It has been found that a typical feature of Mansi is that highly topical elements are not explicitly expressed at all (see, e.g. Skribnik 2001: 3,

235). This relates to subjects and DOs as well. Data on zero anaphora will be presented in Section 4.2.

3.2. Nominal inflection

In comparison to some other Uralic languages, Mansi has a limited case system with only six or seven cases. However, the Mansi case system seems parallel to that of reconstructed Proto-Uralic (see, e.g. Abondolo 1998: 18). There is a minor difference between the main dialects. In the Eastern dialects, there are seven nominal cases: nominative, accusative, locative, lative, ablative, instrumental and translative. There is only one paradigm of local cases and only one case suffix for the lative/dative function. One case suffix covers several functions. For example, the lative case is used as an inner local case, an outer local case and an expression of metaphorical direction. It is also the marker of the agent of a passive clause and has some grammaticalized functions.

In this study, I will concentrate mainly on the accusative case. Regarding transitivity, the most important case is the accusative, which marks the DO in certain situations. There are two paradigms of the accusative case, the absolute and the possessive. The absolute accusative comprises only a case suffix, whilst the possessive accusative also marks the possessor. The absolute accusative endings are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Absolute accusative endings

Sg	Du	Pl
-mø /-m / -øm	-iimø /-ägmø	-tmø

(Kulonen 2007: 45)

The number (Sg/Du/Pl) presented in the first row of Table 7 refers to the number of the object. In (10), there is a singular DO.

- (10) *tøtø=kar-mø* *tø* *älñ-iiløm.* (WV I: 5B)
 PRON=guy-ACC PARTIC kill-SG<2SG
 ‘I will kill that one there.’

In (11) there is a dual DO.

- (11) *luj-ootrij-äg-mø* *lo-l* *tåt-äänøl.* (WV I: 15)
 down-prince-DU-ACC horse-INSTR bring-DU<3PL
 ‘They bring horses to the two princes of the nether world.’

The possessive accusative appears only with certain singular third person forms. The possessive accusative endings are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Possessive accusative endings (Kulonen 2007: 52)

	Sg obj	Du obj
3Sg	-ääm, -øtääm	-iimø
3Du	-	-
3Pl	-	-

As seen in Table 8, the possessive accusative involves only the singular and dual objects with a possessive relationship with a third person singular possessor. In (12), there is a singular object with a third person singular possessor.

- (12) *määsnø=süxnø* *ääk-øtääm* *tø* *wot-iitø.*
 (WV I: 14B)
 reluctantly uncle-SG3SG.POSS PARTIC call-SG<3SG
 ‘He called his uncle reluctantly.’

As with the majority of Uralic languages, Mansi also has a possessive suffix paradigm. In all dialects, possessive suffixes express the number and the person of the possessor and the number of the possessee, for example, *öämp* ‘dog’, *öämp-øm* ‘my dog’, *öämp-åäm* ‘my two dogs’. There is no genitive case in EM, and a nominal or pronominal possessive attribute is not always used because the possessor is referred to with a possessive suffix. In case there is a possessive attribute, it usually stands in the nominative case: *om püw-ø* ‘my son’, *möän öäsyöäg-øw* ‘our aunt’, *syinyøng ootør püw-ø* ‘the rich prince’s son’. As observed in Section 4.4, the possessive suffixes also have a role in the system of marking DOs.

The noun case suffixes also have possessive form paradigms (see Section 3.2); the possessive forms include both case morphemes and possessive suffixes. In the Eastern dialects, there are possessive accusative, possessive lative, possessive locative, possessive ablative and possessive instrumental cases (see Kulonen 2007). Whether they could be considered portmanteaus or just combinations of a case morpheme and a possessive suffix has been under discussion. I have ended up regarding them as portmanteaus. Particularly with the possessive accusative there is a very clearly defined use area as it appears only with certain third person singular forms. A combination of an accusative and a possessive suffix cannot be applied to any other forms. That is, no possessive suffix can be combined with an accusative ending; there is no productive use but only certain complex suffixes of certain third person forms.

The accusative forms of personal pronouns either consist of a pronoun stem and the possessive suffix of the same person, or they are the same as the nominative forms. There are two paradigms of personal pronouns, the unstressed and the stressed forms. These paradigms are shown in Tables 9 and 10.

Table 9: Unstressed nominative and accusative forms of the personal pronouns in the Middle Konda dialect (Kulonen 2007: 87)

	1. nom	1. acc	2. nom	2. acc	3. nom	3. acc
Sg	<i>am</i>	<i>öänøm</i>	<i>meen</i>	<i>meenaam</i>	<i>möän</i>	<i>möänøw</i>
Du	<i>näg</i>	<i>nään</i>	<i>neen</i>	<i>neen</i>	<i>nöän</i>	<i>nöän</i>
Pl	<i>täw</i>	<i>tääwø, tääwøtääm</i>	<i>teen</i>	<i>teen</i>	<i>töän</i>	<i>töän</i>

Table 10: Stressed nominative and accusative forms of the personal pronouns in the Middle Konda dialect (Liimola 1944: 42–45)

	1. nom	1. acc	2. nom	2. acc	3. nom	3. acc
Sg	<i>amk</i>	<i>amkøm</i>	<i>meenjk</i>	<i>meenköämøn</i>	<i>möäjnk</i>	<i>möäjnkøw</i>
Du	<i>nääjnk°</i>	<i>nääjnkøn</i>	<i>neenjnk</i>	<i>neenköän</i>	<i>nöäjnk</i>	<i>nöäjnkøn</i>

PI	<i>tääk°</i>	<i>tääk°tø</i>	<i>teenjk</i>	<i>Teenkøñ</i>	<i>töäjjk</i>	<i>töäjjkøñ</i>
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4. Eastern Mansi as a topicality-based DOM language

EM is a DOM language in which the marking of DOs is primarily determined by topicality. As mentioned in Section 2, the results of classifying my data according to animacy did not show any correlation between the animacy of the DO and its markedness. However, the correlation between the information structural functions and marking categories is very clear in my data. This issue has been discussed in both articles 1 and 2. In articles 1 and 2, I have observed that animate and inanimate DOs are marked equally. The sole exception is personal pronouns, which are obligatorily marked with the accusative case. While the difference between personal pronouns and other nouns is usually seen as an integral part of the animacy scale, animacy has an effect on DO marking but only for pronouns. All other nouns are marked or unmarked independently based on their degree of animacy.

In article 2, the concept of the DO is defined as follows:

In EM a direct object is a nominal or pronominal argument or a deverbal noun accompanied by an active two- or three-place verb. The predicate verb does not agree with the person of the direct object, but in case the predicate verb is inflected in the objective conjugation, it agrees with the number of the direct object. The place of direct object may be occupied by the patient or the R-argument.

Consequently, DOs are a formal category defined by syntactic and morphological means. They have a syntactic role that is not the same as the semantic definition of patient, even though it is related to expressing the patient. In many languages, a prototypical DO is one that represents the patient. In Section 5, I will discuss the fact that the semantic patient does not always appear as a DO, and the place of the DO is not always occupied by the patient. In this section, I will concentrate on the morphological marking of DOs and the factors causing its variation.

In EM, DOs are either not explicitly marked at all or may be marked with several morphological devices. When talking about DO marking, we refer to those active

constructions where the agent is always the most prominent argument, that is, the argument occupying the syntactic role of subject (for more details, see Section 5). As mentioned in the Introduction, the variation in DO marking and the whole system of expressing transitivity can be connected to the same principles, which is also noted in article 2. DO is either the secondary topic or the focus (for definitions, see Section 2). The secondary topic is always a marked function (13), whilst the focus is never marked when appearing as a DO (14) (in some other syntactic contexts, it is case marked).

Sentence (13) includes two DOs. The first is focal and unmarked. The new information given in the sentence is that the speaker has made a mistake; the mistake is brand new, unidentifiable information. The other DO, the boy, is marked accusative, and the verb is in objective conjugation because the DO is topical and already known. The boy has been present in the story for a long time, and he is also mentioned in the previous sentence. However, the first person singular agent is even more topical. The sentence is about the speaker himself and how he has acted. He occupies the place of subject, whilst the patient appears as a secondary topic, that is, a topical DO.

- (13) *jänii lyüüily wöär-s-øm, wisy=kom-mø jåt tåt-ø-s-løm.*
 (WV I: 39)
 big mistake make-PST-1SG young=man-ACC with bring-PST-
 SG<1SG
 ‘I made a big mistake when I took the boy with me.’

In (14), the DO is focal; the speaker expects the hearer not to know about the message he brings, so he is explaining that he has come to bring a message. The DO is in the nominative case, and the verb is conjugated in the subjunctive. The R-argument in this case is focal. We should also talk about sentence focus (see Lambrecht 2000); the sentence gives new information about the whole situation and not just about one of its participants.

- (14) *om lyõx tåt-s-øm näg-naan.* (WV II: 30B)
 1SG message bring-PST-1SG 2SG-LAT
 ‘I brought you a message.’

As previously mentioned, the main principle is that the topical DOs are marked while the focal ones are not. Further, there is a clear hierarchy between the verbal agreement and

the case marking that both participate in the marking of topical DOs. The possessive suffixes also contribute to the variation, although they are not markers of transitivity. With certain forms of possessed DOs, possessive suffixes predominate over accusative. Even though possessive suffixes do not mark transitivity and their function is to express possessive relationships, they still appear in active transitive sentences and under certain conditions are in variation with accusative case marking. This is why possessive suffixes are included in this study.

In the following sections, I will describe in detail how the DO marking of EM is affected by topicality. In Section 4.1, I will discuss the unmarked DOs and one very exceptional combination. In Section 4.2, I will discuss the role of verb agreement, and in Section 4.3 I will discuss the functions of noun marking. In Section 4.4, I detail how possessive marking is connected to the DO marking system.

4.1. Direct objects without verb agreement

As previously mentioned, the unmarked DOs are those that are not active or accessible. According to Lambrecht's identifiability scale, they are *unidentifiable* or *brand new*; they have not been mentioned in the immediately preceding sentences and cannot achieve active status or be coded by verb conjugation or other morphological elements. They are not included on Lambrecht's accessibility scale because they can never appear as topics. The focal DOs do not get any special morphological marking but are expressed with a nominal object constituent without case marking and are accompanied by the subjective verb conjugation. The only morphological difference between the subject and the DO is that the predicate verb agrees with the subject, whilst the DO displays no verbal agreement. In this section, I will first present the completely unmarked DOs and then will briefly discuss a very exceptional finding—an accusative-marked object without verb agreement.

Example (14) is from a story about a man living alone. At the beginning of the story, he does not see anyone else, neither women nor men. The man himself is the narrational topic (see Section 2.2.2) of the whole story and is also mentioned in the immediately preceding sentence. The man is the most topical argument, occupying the empty subject slot, and is referred to only with a verb ending. The DO refers to women in general and is also the new element brought to the discussion. It is not explicitly marked.

- (19) *pås-øng=kåm* *jäg* *jålt-ø*s *tøtø* *syöär*, *tøtø*
 light-ADJ=manfather create-PST DEM world DEM
syüpør. (WV I: 1B)
 Siberia
 ‘The Bright Man–Father³ created this world, this Siberia.’

Based on this kind of variation, we can conclude that the difference between the subject and the DO is not expressed only with case marking or word order. Both the subject and the DO can be unmarked, that is, in the nominative case, in the same clause, and there may be variation in word order. In case the subject represents the same number and person as the DO, there is no possibility of identifying the subject by the verb ending. The hearer can only come up with conclusions based on the animacy or other features of the arguments.

Finally, it should be mentioned that in my data, the subjective conjugation also appears accompanied by accusative marking, but only in a few very marginal cases.

- (20) *näär* *sons-i* *sågrøp-mø* *sons-i*. (WV III: 7B)
 what look-3SG axe-ACC looks-3SG
 ‘Where ever he looks, he looks at the axe.’

These few examples are discussed in articles 1 and 2, and in article 2 they are explained as representing the so-called contrastive topic (see, e.g. Lambrecht 1994: 291–295; Lee 2006). The topical element is picked up from a limited group of possibilities, and it is usually in contrast to the expectations. However, this does not occur enough in the data for any relevant conclusion or hypothesis to be reached.

Moreover, according to my data, possessive marking is also possible with the focal DOs. This observation differs from the earlier studies in which the possessive suffixes are defined as always triggering the objective conjugation. Possessive suffixes and their connection to DO marking are discussed in Section 4.4.

³ The Bright Man–Father refers to a Mansi pagan god.

4.2. Verb agreement: objective conjugation

In articles 1 and 2, I touched upon the question of hierarchy between the different devices for marking the DO. Based on my data, I have concluded that verb agreement (see Section 3.1 for more details) is the primary device for marking the DO, and noun marking rather has a complementing function in EM. As observed in articles 1 and 2, the objective conjugation can be accompanied by case marking (see Section 4.4), but the most topical objects are referred to with verb agreement alone, that is, zero anaphora (see Section 3.1).

As observed in Section 4.1 and in articles 1 and 2, the main principle of DO marking in EM is that the topical DOs (secondary topics) of active clauses are marked and the focal ones are not. In other words, the objective verb conjugation is a marker of secondary topichood (for a more detailed morphological description of the objective conjugation, see Section 2.4.2). The topical or active DOs are marked with an objective conjugation ending. In terms of the identifiability scale, they are at least accessible. In (21), the capercaillie has been mentioned in the immediately preceding sentence. It is not only the secondary topic of this sentence but also one of the topics of the whole story. The man has been hunting, brought the capercaillie home, cooked it and now eats it. The DO represents the level *active* in Lambrecht's accessibility scale; its active status is realized as the objective conjugation, and the referent does not need any specification.

- (21) *kom juw=tee-s-tø.* (WV I: 12B)
man PREF=eat-PST-SG<3SG
'The man ate it (the capercaillie).'

In cases like (21), we come up with the question of why the primary topic (agent) is expressed with a nominal argument whilst the secondary topic is only referred to with a verb ending. From this point view, the DO seems more topical than the subject. However, the man also carries a very active status and a topical position, and the sentence is about the action he controls. The use of a lexical subject is likely due to emphasis, a matter that will be further discussed in Section 4.3.

The magic fire in (22) has been one of the most central elements of the whole story from the beginning. In this context, it is also an active referent. Only the man who carries the fire from place to place is more topical. The fire does not need to be identified when telling how the man blows it out.

- (22) *towøł=wojøł jål=pøsøwl-øs-tø.* (WV III: 7B)
 then PREF=blow-PST-SG<3SG
 ‘Then he blew it (i.e. the fire) out.’

In the story, example (23) relates to the nephew of an old, blind man. The nephew comes home, starts boiling water and pounces upon his uncle. The uncle asks if the nephew will kill him, but the nephew says he will not.

- (23) *öät ääliil-øł, sääm-øł wöär-iiløł.* (WV II: 29B)
 NEG kill-SG<1SG eye-ISNTR make-SG<1SG
 ‘I will not kill you; I will provide you with eyes.’

It can be recognized by the context who he will not kill; the uncle has mentioned himself (in connection with the verb ‘kill’) in the immediately preceding text. The target of the possible killing is activated and needs only to be marked with an objective conjugation ending. These kinds of clause structures that contain only a verb form and sometimes adverbials are also relatively frequent in Hungarian (e.g. *Megettem* – ‘I ate it’; *Megcsinálták* – ‘They repaired it’), one of the nearest relatives of Mansi. Both the subject and the DO are referred to only with verb endings. In an active clause, the subject slot is occupied by the primary topic, the person and number of which are coded in the verb. The secondary topic is represented by either the patient or the R-argument, and only its number is coded in the verb.

To sum up, in EM, the objective conjugation (i.e. the verb agreement) is the marker of the topicality of the DO. In my data, there is a clear correlation between the degree of topicality of the DO and verb agreement. Those arguments classified as secondary topics are also those that trigger the verb agreement. The topical DOs are obligatorily verb marked, and often they are referred to with an objective conjugation verb ending alone, that is, zero anaphora. Regarding the accessibility scale, the DOs that represent the level *active* on the Lambrecht scale are those referred to with zero anaphora (see Section 2.2.1).

4.3. Noun marking: accusative

As mentioned in 4.2, the most accessible topical DOs, those carrying a property of an active discourse referent, are referred to with the objective conjugation alone (see 4.2).

Whenever a DO is only at the level of being *situationally*, *textually* or *inferentially accessible* and cannot be recognized by context, it is also (in addition to verb agreement) expressed with an accusative marked nominal constituent. According to my analysis presented in articles 1 and 2, the accusative is a marker of topicality as well. However, it is often used in case of a lower degree of accessibility, and except for some very exceptional forms (see Section 4.1.), it is always accompanied by the objective conjugation.

In (24), the DO is inferentially accessible. The speaker is entering a house and cannot find the door. The door has not been mentioned earlier, but the house has, and it can be expected that every house has a door.

- (24) *õõw-mø* *öät* *kont-iiløm.* (WV I: 14B)
 door-ACC NEG find-SG<1SG
 ‘I cannot find the door.’

In (25), the DO is situationally accessible. The man has been shot with an arrow, and he tears the arrow out of his flank. The arrow has been mentioned four sentences earlier, but not in the very previous one; it is not active but accessible.

- (25) *täw* *toonøtäätøl* *nyõøl-mø* *k°än=mänømt-øS-tø.* (WV I: 39)
 3SG then arrow-ACC out=tear-PAST-SG3<SG
 ‘Then he tore the arrow out of him.’

The function of the accusative case in (24) and (25) is what I have named the *specifying function* in article 3. The referent is accessible but only situationally or inferentially; it is not active. Another reason for expressing a DO with a case marked noun is when its function is emphasized by the speaker. This is what I call *emphasizing function* in article 3. In (26), the DO is a second person personal pronoun that belongs to the inherently accessible arguments. A shaman has brought a little boy to the forest to see what the boy has caused by dancing at the wrong time. In this context, it should be clear who or what has been brought to the mentioned place, but it is still expressed by a pronoun.

- (26) *om* *nää-n* *jorøl* *tåt-øS-løM* *tøg.* (WV I: 39)
 1SG ACC on.purpose bring-PST-SG<1SG here
 ‘I brought you here on purpose.’

To sum up, the function of case marking in the system of DO marking is to complement the verb agreement and to specify the DO. All topical DOs are referred to with verb agreement, and those that represent the state of being *accessible* or *unused* are also expressed with an accusative-marked noun. As observed in article 3, another reason for using a nominal object component is to emphasize a DO with active status. The most typical cases of emphasizing function are the use a third person pronominal object or repeating the argument that expresses the DO and that has been mentioned in the sentence immediately preceding.

4.4. The role of possessive suffixes

Possessive suffixes do not work as markers of transitivity in EM, but they still have a role in the system of marking transitivity; this is why they are included in my study. As observed in articles 1 and 2, possessive suffixes predominate over case marking. Topical but unspecific DOs that otherwise would be marked with an accusative ending are marked with a possessive suffix alone whenever there is a need for possessive marking. In connection with all first and second person and some third person forms, a possessed topical DO is marked with a possessive suffix alone. The same occurs in Finnish and Hungarian.

(Finnish, accusative)	<i>Tapa-si-n poja-n.</i> meet-PST-1SG boy-ACC 'I met a boy.'
(vs. Finnish, possessive suffix)	<i>Tapa-si-n poika-ni.</i> meet-PST-1SG boy SG1SG.POSS 'I met my son.'
(Hungarian, accusative)	<i>El-hoz-t-am egy könyv-et.</i> PREF-bring PST-1SG INDEF book-ACC 'I brought a book.'
(vs. Hungarian, possessive suffix)	<i>El-hoz-t-am a könyv-em</i> PREF-bring-PST-1SG DEF. book-ACC 'I brought my book.'

Another reason for including possessive suffixes in my study is that in recent studies (Kálmán 1989, Kulonen 2007), possessive suffixes have been said to belong to those elements automatically triggering the objective conjugation. According to my data, that statement is not true; possessive suffixes do not trigger the objective conjugation if they do not belong to a topical entity (see articles 1 and 2). This is not only new information about possessive suffixes but also new information about the objective conjugation and the marking of transitivity. Using the following examples, I will show how the verb conjugation category is dependent on topicality and also on those entities including a possessive suffix. In (27) and (28), the topical DOs are accompanied by the objective conjugation, whilst the focal ones in (31) and (32) appear with the subjective conjugation.

In (27), a singular first possessive suffix appears accompanied by the objective conjugation. The DO is situationally accessible and is a secondary topic, but it does not get a case marker because the possessive marker predominates over case marking.

- (27) *püw=syøsyk°-ø̄m* *öät* *tø* *pümønt-ø̄s-lø̄m.* (WV I : 14B)
 son=dear-SG1SG.POSS NEG PARTIC command-PST-SG<1SG
 ‘I have not commanded my dear son enough.’

The same effect appears in (28), together with a second person possessive suffix. The verb is inflected in the objective conjugation, and the nominal component gets only possessive marking.

- (28) *öätø̄m-ään* *ø̄l=äärt-s-ään,* *ø̄l=jårø̄wl-ø̄s-ään.*
 (WV I: 14B)
 human-PL2SG. POSS PREF=abandon-PST-SG<2SG PREF=forget-PST-
 SG<2SG
 ‘You have abandoned and forgotten your own people.’

As noted above, with first and second person forms the situation is very simple. Possessive suffixes predominate over case marking. With third person forms, the system is a little more complicated. As stated in Section 2.4.2, there are two paradigms of accusative, the absolute and the possessive. The possessive accusative appears only with third person singular forms, which are presented in 3.2. From the point of view of topicality, there is no difference between the cases presented above and the possessive marked DOs in the following examples, (29) and (30). The only difference is that in the

following examples, the possessive marker does not take the role of accusative ending but generates a portmanteau together with it. That is, the objects are marked for both the accusative case and possessor person.

- (29) *öäsy-tääm* *wot-äx^o* *pümt-ø_s-tø.* (WV I: 14B)
 grandfather-ACC.SG3SG call-INF start-PST-SG<3SG
 ‘He started calling his grandfather.’

- (30) *äløn=seetøp=mány-tääm* *kont-ø_s-tø.* (WV III: 7B)
 silver=yarn=ball-ACC.SG3SG find-PST-SG<3SG
 ‘He found his silver ball of yarn.’

In (29)–(30), the possessive marked DOs appear accompanied by the objective conjugation because they are topical. However, in contrast with the earlier studies (Kálmán 1989, Kulonen 2007), my data shows that the possessive suffixes do not trigger objective conjugation automatically. This is demonstrated in articles 1 and 2. Possessive suffixes mark possession, not definiteness or topicality, and they are used with both topical and focal DOs. Different from the previous studies, my data also shows that a possessed DO can be focal, as shown below in examples (31) and (32). In (31), the man is wearing one of his sacred cloths. The cloth is possessed by the man and deserves possessive marking but has not been mentioned earlier; it is not topical and does not trigger objective conjugation.

- (31) *oltøn=wity-øng,* *suurøny=wity-øng* *jälpøng*
 silver=water-ADJ gold=water-ADJ sacred
toågl-äät *nok-posyg-ø_s.* (WV I: 14B)
 cloth-SG.3SG.POSS up-wrap-PST
 ‘He wrapped his sacred cloth (i.e. one his items of clothing) woven with silver and gold on his shoulders.’

Example (32) covers a very similar situation in connection to clothing:

- (32) *ton* *k^oän=pöäl-nø* *seemøl=nyoxø_s,* *såjrøng=nyoxø_s* *jälpøng*
 PRON up=side-LAT black=sable white=sable sacred
toågl-äät *nok=posyg-ø_s.* (WV I: 14B)
 cloth-SG.3SG.POSS up=wrap-PST-3SG

‘Over it he wrapped one of his sacred cloths of black sable, of white sable.’

To sum up, those secondary topics of active clauses that contain a possessive marker are marked with a possessive suffix alone, except for certain third person singular forms that are marked with a possessive accusative suffix. Different from the recent studies, my data also shows that focal DOs in a possessive position are marked with a possessive suffix. Different from the earlier studies, my data show how the possessive marking of a DO and the verb agreement are independent of each other. The verb conjugation paradigm is chosen due to the topicality or accessibility of the DO.

4.5. Conclusions

In the previous sections, I discussed how the whole system of marking the DO is based on topicality in EM. As observed in articles 1 and 2, EM is a DOM language in which topicality is the main referential factor; only topical DOs are marked. This is because the pragmatic functions are distinguished by morphological marking. The primary topic is always an unmarked position and occupies the subject slot (see Section 4.1). The secondary topic in active sentences is obligatorily marked with verb agreement and can get accusative marking, too. The secondary topics, that is, the accessible topical DOs, are obligatorily verb marked and can also be case marked for two reasons—either to specify the DO or to emphasize it.

Different from the earlier studies, I have observed how the objective conjugation is not triggered by a possessive marker automatically. Possessive suffixes mark possession, and a possessive marked DO can be either topical or focal. Possessive markers are not markers of transitivity, but they have a role in the system of expressing transitivity. They predominate over transitivity markers, that is, accusative case endings. Further, they have a connection to transitive markers in the form of the possessive accusative, which appears in connection with certain third person forms. The verb conjugation category is chosen based on the topicality of the verb, and possessive suffixes express only the possessed status of the DO. Later, the need for a case marked nominal component is due to the accessibility degree of the DO. The possessive accusative naturally appears only accompanied by the objective conjugation.

In this section, I have demonstrated the main principles of the variation, but there are still details open to question. In Figure 1 in article 1, I introduced some frequently marginal

marking combinations, the relevance of which is uncertain. In my data, there are some appearances of subjective conjugation with an accusative marked DO or objective conjugation with an unmarked object. However, their frequency is very low, and I can see no reason for their occurrence contrary to the principles. Thus, the question remains open.

5. Further forms of topicality-based variation

In the following sections, I will outline two different constructions concerning topicality-based syntactic variation connected to expressing transitivity. I will begin by describing the variation between the active voice and the passive voice. This topic was touched upon in Section 4.2.3 of article 2. Further, I will outline the different three-participant constructions and how they alternate with each other; this is what article 4 is about. Finally, I will conclude by showing how all the variation is based on the same constraints and referential factors. These two types of syntactic alternation are strictly connected to each other, and they are also connected to the variation in DO marking discussed in Section 4 based on the same principles. The grounds for discussing this kind of variation in this study are connected to information structure and the complex network of variation based on it. As already discussed in Sections 1.2 and 2.1, the three different areas, DO marking, variation between active and passive voices and variation in three-participant constructions, can be connected to each other with the same information structural principles and factors, and together they make up a complex way of expressing transitivity in EM.

The passive has often not been considered a transitive construction, but as discussed in Section 2, my approach is based on a semantic definition of transitivity that allows us to include the passive in the definition. The passive is a salient part of expressing semantic transitivity and augments the information structural outline of active transitive constructions. As mentioned in the Introduction, these three areas of variation—variation in DO marking, voice and three-participant constructions—are closely connected to each other. Often these areas overlap, have common parts or interact with each other. Together they provide a complex description based on the same factors and rules.

5.1. Pragmatic variation in voice: active vs. passive

The grounds for including the passive in my approach and to express transitivity are discussed in the Introduction to article 2 and in the analysis section of article 4. I will

connect the passive to the same network that ties together the different active constructions expressing transitivity in EM. All these devices are connected to each other by basic logical rules, and they provide a complex network by generating variation based on pragmatic reasons. The variation between active and passive is motivated by the agent's degree of topicality, whilst the variation between different active constructions is due to the degree of topicality of the other participants, the patient and the R-argument.

As observed in articles 2 and 4, according to my data the variation between the active and the passive is based on a simple correlation of syntactic and pragmatic functions. Particular syntactic functions are occupied by participants representing particular pragmatic functions; the higher in the topicality hierarchy the argument is, the higher position it achieves in the syntactic hierarchy. The most topical argument in the sentence (primary topic) always occupies the syntactic role of subject. Whenever the most topical argument is the agent, we use an active construction. In any other case, we use a passive construction.

In (33), the most topical argument is the man who the whole story is about. The man also represents the semantic agent and appears as the primary topic; therefore, he occupies the place of subject. This is why an active construction is used. The man is referred to with active verb endings alone because he is an active referent (see Table 1) and is recognizable by context.

- (33) *juw jø-s, ool-ii, uus møn-ø s køsøxt-äx°.*
 (WV I: 7)
 [to]home come-PST live-3SG again go-PST hunt-INF
 'He came home, he continues his life, and goes hunting again.'

In (34), the agent is a person talking about what she will do, referring to herself with a personal pronoun. The sentence is from a mythological story about a family; the father has disappeared a little bit earlier, and the mother tells the children that she will go and search for him. The first and second person referents belong to the inherently topical arguments (Song 2001: 170–171). Moreover, the woman is talking about her own activities. The sentence relates what she is planning to do; thus, the first person singular argument, the agent, is the primary topic of the sentence. That is why an active construction was chosen.

- (34) *om jal=tuttøl-aam työäty-ään køns-øx°.* (WV III: 9)
 1SG down=step-1SG father- SG 2SG. POSS search-INF
 ‘I will go down (to the water) to search for your father.’

In (33) and (34), an active construction was chosen because the agent represents the primary topic. In an active clause, the agent occupies the syntactic role of subject. In any other case, the predicate verb is inflected in the passive. Kulonen has stated that the passive is used in order to promote any other constituent than agent to the subject position (Kulonen 2007: 165). The most typical functions appearing as a subject are the patient and the R-argument (recipient/beneficiary), but Kulonen also outlines situations where a temporal or locational element occupies the place of subject (Kulonen 1989: 287). In the following examples (35), (36) and (37), the passive voice is chosen due to the topicality and active status (see Section 2.2.1) of the patient. In (35), the speaker is addressing the instigator of the action. The agent of the clause is focus and the topic, which the whole question is about, is the second person singular.

- (35) *näg tøg nää-r-nø tåt-w-ø-s-øn?* (WV I: 14B)
 2SG here what-LAT bring-PASS-PST-2SG
 ‘By what were you brought here?’

In (36), the context is very similar to the previous example; the speaker tells who he was sent by. The first person singular is usually inherently topical, and in this case it is the most topical argument, the one the whole sentence is about. The ‘Bright Man’, that is, the god, is the new element giving more information about him.

- (36) *pås-øng=kø-m-nø keet-w-ø-s-øm.* (WV I: 15)
 light-ADJ=man-LAT send-PASS-PST-1SG
 ‘I was sent by the Bright Man⁴.’

Example (37) is from a long story about a man who eventually gets killed. The instigator is less relevant and is not mentioned at all. Although the passive sentences with an agent have a high frequency (75% in my data), the agent is not an obligatory argument in a passive clause.

- (37) *jål pøl tø wøølt-øw-ø.s.* (WV IV: 6)

⁴ The ‘Bright Man’ refers to a pagan god of the Mansis’.

PREF PARTIC PARTIC kill-PASS-PST
 ‘So he was killed.’

In (38), the secondary topic is represented by the R-argument⁵. The story tells how a man returns home, meets his wife and is then given a knife by his wife. As the protagonist of the story and as the person mentioned in the sentence immediately preceding, the man is the most topical argument. His wife—mentioned several sentences earlier but not in the one immediately preceding—who gives him a knife appears as the secondary topic. The knife, which is entirely new information, is in the focus position.

(38) *nee-tään* *jâr-øl* *mäj-w-ø.s.* (WV I: 54B)
 woman-LAT.SG3SG knife -INSTR give-PASS-PST
 ‘He was given a knife by his wife.’

In addition, some basic one-place verbs, such as ‘come’ in (39) can be a patient subject in the passive and achieve a transitive nature (in this case, the meaning ‘approach’). When an intransitive motional verb, in this case the verb ‘come’, is inflected in the personal passive, the subject of the passive clause (patient) becomes the goal of the motion. In (39), the first person plural is the primary topic, and a stock of soldiers is approaching them. This is expressed with the verb *jøw* or ‘come’.

(39) *möän* *koont-øn* *tø* *jø-w-øw.* (WV III: 7B)
 1PL.STRESS army-LAT PARTIC come-PASS-1PL
 ‘We are being approached by a stock of soldiers.’

As can be seen in (35), (36) and (38), the agent of a passive clause is always marked with the lative case in EM. In my data, 75% of all passive clauses include an agent, and in all of these clauses the agent is inflected in the lative case. The remaining 25% do not include any constituent referring to the agent. The lative is an oblique case, and as already observed in Section 4, focal arguments are inflected in an oblique case (except for focal DOs). The same principles govern not only the active voice but the passive voice as well. Passive focal arguments are always marked with oblique cases.

⁵ The three-participant constructions are discussed more comprehensively in Section 4.2.

5.2. Variation in three-participant constructions

In the following subsections, I will discuss the variation between different three-participant constructions. This aspect of the study is comprehensively discussed in article 3. This kind of variation partly overlaps the variation between the active and passive because there is also variation between the active and passive three-participant constructions, which agrees with the principles presented in Section 5.1. However, it is still relevant to discuss the three-participant constructions separately because there is also variation between the different kinds of active three-participant constructions, and the arguments of three-participant construction and their marking deserve special attention. In Section 5.2.1, I will present some general information about three-participant constructions. The active three-participant constructions in EM are discussed in Section 5.2.2, and the passive three-participant constructions in EM are discussed in Section 5.2.3.

5.2.1. General remarks

The variation between different three-participant constructions is based on the same factors as the variation between the active voice and the passive voice in EM. As observed in article 4 and the Introduction of article 2, the basic constraint is that the most topical constituent (primary topic) occupies the place of subject, the second most topical constituent (secondary topic) occupies the place of DO and the focal elements are realized as obliques. There are two possible three-participant constructions in active voice and one in passive voice; these are all discussed in article 4. In the following sections, I will present the active constructions first (Sections 5.2.2 and 5.2.3) and then the passive constructions (Section 5.2.4).

The two active three-participant constructions presented in Sections 5.2.2 and 5.2.3 are observed in articles 2 and 4. Several names are used for these constructions, depending on what point of view we want to emphasize (see, e.g. Heine & König 2008; Margetts & Austin 2007). I have chosen to apply the terminology used by Dryer (1986), *PO/SO construction* and *DO/IO construction*. The term PO/SO construction refers to the existence of a primary object (PO) and a secondary object (SO). In this kind of sentence, the recipient is promoted to PO, and the patient as an SO is inflected in the oblique case, as in examples (40)–(43) (see Dryer 1986). In DO/IO constructions in sentences with a

DO and an IO, the place of the DO is occupied by the patient, and the R-argument is inflected in the oblique case, as in examples (44)–(46) (see Dryer 1986).

The frequencies of the different constructions in my data are presented in Table 11.

Table 11: Frequencies of three-participant constructions in my data

	Abs.	%
Active PO/SO	91	45 %
Active DO/IO	39	19 %
Passive	73	36 %
Total	203	100

The numbers in Table 11 concern the data used for article 4, which comprises all three-participant clauses found in the corpus of 1200 entries. The frequencies show that among the active constructions, the PO/SO construction (45%) is much more common than the DO/IO construction (19%). The reasons are discussed in the following sections. The frequencies of active and passive three-participant clauses are equal to those in the whole corpus of this study.

5.2.2. Active PO/SO construction

As Kulonen has stated, one of the typical features of the Mansi dialects is the promotion of oblique constituents to DOs (Kulonen 1989). The construction presented in this section includes an R-argument promoted to DO. This is what Dryer calls PO/SO construction (Dryer 1986) and what can also be called *secondary object construction* (Heine & König 2008: 88). Example (40) is from a mythological story in which the Mansi god is giving land to his son.

- (40) *om nää-n loãw-øS-løm jänii=lyõõm-ø*
 1SG 2SG-ACC say-PST- SG<1SG big=bird.cherry-SG1SG.POSS
lyõõm-øng roosy-øl. (WV IV: 6)
 bird.cherry-ADJ foreland-ISNTR
 ‘I ordered you a bird cherry foreland with huge bird cherries.’

This is the most frequent three-participant construction in my data (see Table 11). According to my data, PO/SO construction is used whenever the agent is the primary topic and occupies the syntactic role of subject (see Section 5.1.) and the R-argument represents the secondary topic. Consequently, the R-argument occupies the place of the DO and, if expressed with a nominal object constituent, achieves accusative marking⁶. The patient, which is the focus, is marked with the instrumental case. The correlation between semantic and pragmatic functions is demonstrated in Table 12, which is also presented in article 4.

Table 12: Correlation of semantic, pragmatic and syntactic functions in a PO/SO construction (Virtanen 2012: 125)

Semantic function:	Pragmatic function:	Syntactic function:	Case marking:
Agent	Primary topic	Subject	Nominative (Ø)
R-argument	Secondary topic	Direct Object	Accusative
Patient	Focus	Oblique	Instrumental

The correlation observed in Table 12 can be recognized in the examples (41)–(43). In (41), a man has brought a woman to be a wife for his friend. The first and second person referents, that is, the speaker and the hearer, are inherently topical arguments and represent the active status (see Table 1). The speaker expects the hearer not to know that he is bringing him a wife until the speaker mentions her. The woman is obviously situationally accessible (see Table 1) because she is present during the discussion, but in the discourse she represents the focus, the new and unpredictable argument, while the hearer does not know that she has been brought for him as a wife.

- (41) *am* *nää-n* *tat-ø-s-løm* *nee-l.* (WV II: 29B)
 1SG 2SG-ACC bring-PST-SG<1SG woman-INSTR

⁶ According to my data, the R-argument occupies a ‘narrower space’ as a DO than the patient. The patient can be topical or focal when appearing as a DO, so it can be zero-marked or can get accusative marking, whilst the R-argument appears as a DO only when it is topical and thus gets accusative marking.

‘I brought you a wife.’

In (42), both the primary topic (agent) and the secondary topic (R-argument) are referred to with a verb ending alone. A woman prepares food and drink for a man, but as both agent and R-argument are topical elements with active status, they are not expressed explicitly. The only element that needs to be specified and expressed with a nominal component is the focus.

- (42) *äj-n-øl* *wöär-øS-tø,* *tee-n-øl* (WV IV: 6)
 drink-GER-INSTR make-PST -SG<3SG eat-GER-INSTR
wöär-øS-tø.
 make-PST-SG<3SG
 ‘She made him something to eat and drink.’

Example (43) is more complicated; it is from a mythological story in which two princes of the nether world are sent to protect people and are getting animals for sacrifice.

- (43) *luujøl⁷ kont-øng* *sunt-nøl* *mântøl* *luj-ootrij-äg-mø*
 down Konda-ADJ mouth-ABL PARTIC down-prince-DU-ACC
lo-l *tåt-äänøl,* *såwr-øl* *tåt-äänøl.* (WV I: 15)
 horse-INSTR bring-DU<3PL cow-INSTR bring-DU<3PL
 ‘From the delta of Konda, they bring horses and cows to the princes of the nether world.’

In this case, the focus is easy to define. The horses and cows that represent the patient are the focal elements, the new and less identifiable information. This is why they are marked with the instrumental. The R-argument, the princes of the nether world, is at least accessible. Its frequency in the previous eight sentences is four, so its appearance as a DO, verb agreement and accusative marking can be explained by secondary topichood. However, the agent is the people who are serving the princes, who are actually not identified as individuals. However, the agent appears as a subject. The speaker uses an active construction where the agent is referred to with a third person plural verb ending but is not specified anywhere. The agent can be considered inferentially accessible, but the topic should be an active referent.

⁷ To be more precise, *luujøl* means ‘downstream of the river’.

Can an unidentified third person referent be active? The frequency of similar third person plural subjects in the previous sentences is high; in the immediately preceding sentence, it appears twice. From this point of view, the unidentified third person plural actor is active and is the most topical argument. This kind of construction can also be compared with the Hungarian third person plural forms used in the passive function; for example, *Naponta kétszer hoznak enni* [‘They bring to eat twice a day?’] ‘You will get a meal twice a day’. The speaker is emphasizing the action of those people bringing something and not someone getting something, even though the actor is not identified.

5.2.3. Active DO/IO construction

In Mansi, a less frequent active three-participant construction is the DO/IO construction, which is also known as *indirect object construction* (Heine & König 2008: 88) or *oblique strategy* (Margetts & Austin 2007: 402–403). As discussed in articles 2 and 4, this is a construction with a patient occupying the place of DO and an R-argument marked with an oblique case. As can be seen in Table 11 at the beginning of Section 5.2.1, this is a less common construction than the PO/SO construction presented in 5.2.1.1.

- (44) *moot soon=toãgøl keeløp-mø wø-s-tø,*
 other bowl=full blood-ACC take-PST-SG<3SG
kõõp=posøm-øt püw-øtään tow=mø-s-tø. (WV II: 5)
 boat=stern-LOC son-LAT.SG3SG PREF=give-PST-SG<3SG
 ‘He took the other bowl full of blood and **gave it to his son at the stern of the boat.**’

According to my data, the DO/IO construction is used when the agent is the primary topic and the patient is the secondary topic. The agent as the most topical argument, the argument the sentence is about, occupies the place of subject, and the patient as the second most topical argument appears as a DO. The R-argument represents the focus, new information; it is marked with the lative case, the only case expressing the direction ‘to’ in EM. The correlations can be seen in Table 13⁸.

Table 13: Correlation of semantic, pragmatic and syntactic functions in a DO/IO construction.

⁸ Table 13 is an expanded version of the table presented in article 4 (Virtanen 2012: 126).

Semantic function:	Pragmatic function:	Syntactic function:	Case marking:
Agent	Primary topic	Subject	Nominative (Ø)
Patient	Secondary topic	Direct Object	Accusative
	Focus	Direct Object	Nominative (Ø) ⁹
R-argument	Focus	Oblique	Lative

As presented in Table 13, the patient can appear either in the nominative or accusative case, depending on its topicality. Whenever the patient is a focus (appearing in the nominative case), it is supported by subjective conjugation, as in (45). In (45), there is a first person singular agent that is inherently topical and that occupies the place of subject. The second person R-argument is an argument focus; the speaker tells who he is bringing messages to, and it is a surprise to the hearer:

(45) *om kurøm lyōx äk° näg-nöän tåt-s-ø̄m.* (WV II: 28B)
 1SG three message only 2SG –LAT bring –PST –1SG
 ‘I brought three messages just for you.’

(A man is knocking at the door and asks the housekeeper to let him in. The housekeeper tells him to go away, but he tries to say that he has brought a message for the housekeeper.)

In (46), the context and the predicate verb are less typical for a three-participant construction. A married couple wants to thank a young man for helping them. The husband tears off one sleeve of his smock, and his wife sews a new smock from the sleeve of the old smock to give to the young man. The couple has been talking to each other for a while, and the young man is not currently present. The sleeve of the old smock is mentioned in the immediately preceding sentence and thus it has achieved an active status (see Table 1). The young man is also mentioned a little earlier and is obviously at least situationally accessible, but from the point of view of the speaker, the young man is

⁹ In case both patient are R-argument are foci, there can be either a sentence with two foci or a predicate-focus.

the focal element. The new information given about the sleeve is that it was turned into a smock for the young man.

- (46) *ton kuuly=toot=pöäl-mø eek°ø*
 DEM smock=sleeve=half-ACC woman
wisy=kom-nø kuuly=tågl-ii junt-ø-s-tø. (WV II: 30B)
 young=man-LAT smock=full-TRANSL sew-PST-SG<3SG
 ‘The woman re-sewed the one sleeve of the smock into a full smock for the man.’

In many Uralic languages (Finnic languages, Hungarian), the DO/IO construction is at least the most frequent or the only active three-participant construction, but in EM it is clearly the least frequent (see Table 11). This low frequency is mainly due to the inherent nature of the participants. The R-arguments tend to be humans or for other reasons topical; this is why they are not often foci in EM where—as shown in this study—this kind of syntactic variation is directed by topicality. As can be seen in (46), the patient can achieve a more accessible status than the R-argument, but the appearance of such cases is less frequent because the R-argument tends to contain properties (human, animate) that easily lead to active or given status.

5.2.4. Passive three-participant constructions

The information provided in this section is closely related to the information provided in 5.1. As mentioned in 5.1.2, the passive appears in those contexts where some constituent other than the agent represents the primary topic. A three-participant passive construction is used whenever the R-argument is the primary topic. The patient appears as the focus and is marked with the instrumental case. The agent represents either the secondary topic or the focus and is marked with the lative case, as the passive agent always is.

Table 14: Correlation of semantic, pragmatic and syntactic functions in a three-participant passive construction

Semantic function:	Pragmatic function:	Syntactic function:	Case marking:
Agent	Focus Secondary topic	Oblique	Lative

Patient	Focus	Oblique	Instrumental
R-argument	Primary topic	Subject	Nominative (Ø)

‘Give’ is a very typical verb in this connection. One example with the verb *give* was already presented in Section 5.1. In (47), the protagonist and the topic of the sentence in question is the boy who is given a skin by his father.

- (47) *jäg-øtään* *ontør=jaak-øng* *jälpøng*
father-LAT3SG stomach=skin-ADJ sacred
toågl-øl *mäj-w-øð.*
cloth-INSTR give-PASS-PST (WV II: 28B)
‘He was given a cloth of abdominal skin by his father.’

In (48), the predicate verb *löäwi* or ‘say, speak’ appears. This is typical in these kinds of clauses and can mean ‘order’ or ‘give orders’.

- (48) *k°åtøm* *pøl* *wås* *eel=oolii* *meen-k*
sure PARTIC SUPERL before 2DU-STRESS
mōō-l *låw-w-äämøn.* (WV I: 15)
land-INSTR tell-PASS-1DU
‘Certainly we’ll first be provided with land.’

Further, one could expect that kind of three-participant construction to appear where the patient is the primary topic. However, in my data there is none. Whenever the patient is topical, it is either a secondary topic of an active clause or a primary topic of a two-participant passive clause. However, it is possible that examples could be found in a much larger data source. The biggest problem when examining dead languages is that we cannot just gather more data when needed.

5.3. Conclusions

Based on the data presented in the previous sections, I can conclude that all the different sentence structures expressing semantic transitivity can be connected to each other by simple pragmatic factors. The variation between different voices and constructions is due

to the fact that the pragmatic functions correlate with syntactic functions; this is so for both two- and three-participant constructions. The first constraint is that the most topical argument always occupies the place of subject. The subject position is always zero-case marked. The second constraint is that the second most topical constituent of an active clause occupies the place of DO. Secondary topics are marked with verb agreement and/or case marking or possessive marking. In a three-participant construction, both the patient and the R-argument can be realized as a DO, depending on which of them is the secondary topic of the clause. Except for the focal DOs, focal constituents occupy the oblique positions and are marked with oblique cases, both in the active and passive voice. Further, the morphological marking of one of the pragmatic functions, the secondary topic, varies according to the referent's degree of topicality.

6. Summary and conclusions

Expressing transitivity is complicated in EM, but all variation can be derived from the same principles. The whole system is based on the fact that there is a correlation between the syntactic and pragmatic functions (see Section 5). The higher position an argument has in the pragmatic hierarchy, the higher position it gets in the syntactic structure. The data discussed in this study show very similar results to the study of Khanty by Nikolaeva, Kovgan and Koškarëva (1993). The primary topic always occupies the most prominent syntactic function and is zero-marked, and the secondary topic occupies the second most prominent syntactic function, which is always a marked position. Focus is either explicitly unmarked (focal DOs) or marked with an oblique marker. In other words, the marking of an argument is always dependent on its degree of topicality and accessibility. Topicality and accessibility are mental properties connected to each other, and both affect the variation between different transitive constructions in EM, including the passive, which is not considered formally transitive.

Based on a semantic definition of transitivity, I have built a model in which passive voice is included. From a formal point of view, the passive voice is not considered a transitive construction, but semantically, the passive voice can be connected to other transitive expressions with the same constraints that affect the whole variation. Including passive construction in this study does not change the semantic definition of transitivity, but its appearance among the transitive constructions is explained by pragmatic reasons.

Besides the syntactic variation, the variation in morphological marking of secondary topics (DOs) is also caused by pragmatics, that is, information structure. From the point of view of the syntactic category of DOs, this means that only topical DOs are explicitly marked. From the point of view of the pragmatic category of the secondary topic, secondary topic is a marked category that achieves obligatory verb marking and case marking in certain cases. The case marking is more likely to complement verb agreement and to mark specificity.

This study also gives some new information about the role of possessive marking in expressing transitivity and possessive markers' relationships to other morphological devices. The question of possessive marking is included in my study partly because in recent studies (Kálmán 1989, Kulonen 2007), possessive suffixes have been connected to the use of the objective conjugation. My data gives different information from that provided in the above-mentioned studies. Different from earlier studies, possessive suffixes do not trigger objective conjugation automatically when appearing connected to DOs. Possessive suffixes do not mark topicality or definiteness. They are markers of possessivity, and their role in expressing transitivity is only that in some cases, they predominate over transitivity markers.

There are still some interesting open questions, all of which would require a detailed survey based on specified data. For example, the different focus types and the detailed description of focus marking are excluded because they are only partly connected to the topic of this study and cannot be outlined using the data gathered for the purpose of expressing transitivity. However, a further study of focus marking could refine the results of this study.

Abbreviations

ACC – accusative	EM – Eastern Mansi
ABL – ablative	GER – gerund, deverbal noun derivational suffix
ADJ – denominal adjective derivational suffix	INDEF – indefinite article
DEF – definite article	INF – infinite
DEM – demonstrative pronoun	INSTR – instrumental
DER – denominal verb derivational suffix	KM – Middle Konda dialect
DU – dual	LAT – lative

LOC – locative	POSS – possessive suffix
NEG – negation particle	PREF - prefix
PARTIC - particle	PST – past tense
PASS – passive	SG – singular
PL – plural	STRESS – stressed form

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