SYNCHRONY AND DIACHRONY IN KET INCORPORATION

BACKGROUND

- Verbal morphology is the most striking feature in Ket
    - Has been studied extensively (e. g. Georg 2007; Vajda 2003, 2004, 2015, 2017a, 2017b, 2020a; Werner 1997)
    - Previous studies have focused on morphosyntax and on semantics of single bases
- Aims of this study
    - Study of the semantic roles of incorporates in Ket
        – What semantic roles do the incorporates express in general/with certain verbs
    - Reconstruction of meanings of semantically general Ket verb bases
        – Is it possible to asses the original meaning of semantically general Ket verb bases by using the knowledge of semantics of incorporates?

KET LANGUAGE

- The last Yeniseian language

  - Other known Yeniseian languages are Yugh, Kott, Arin, Assan, and Pumpokol

- Spoken by few dozen elderly speakers (Vajda 2015)

- Traditionally spoken on the middle reaches of Yenisei River an its tributaries in Central Siberia

- Typologically distinct from the neighboring languages

  - Tones, templatic verbal morphology, case and possessive clitics

  - Yeniseian languages have undergone typological accommodation to the neighboring languages (Vajda 2020b)

VERBAL MORPHOLOGY IN KET

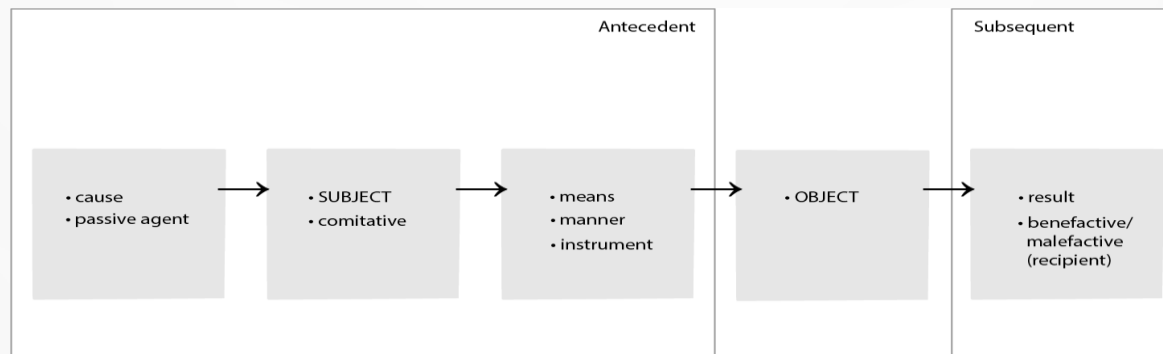| P8	P7	P6	P5	P4	P3	P2	P1	P0	P-1
sbj person agr	incorporate	obj or sbj agr	thematic consonant(s)	3 anim agr + tense/mood portmanteau	3 inan agr	TAM	1, 2 sbj or obj agr or stat/res prefix	base	anim pl sbj agr

Ket verbal template following Vajda (2020b). The slots are conventionally called P8–P-1.

- Ket has templatic verb morphology
  - The template is a lexical property of the verb → different verbs use different positions
  - The same base can appear in different templates
  - Not all positions are used in a single verb
- P0, P5, and P7 host lexical material

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

- (Semantic) frame

  - Knowledge associated to a linguistic element by speakers

  - General information about an element (e. g. prototypical participant roles, information of aspectual properties etc. for a verb)

  - Information about typical usage contexts, as well as more speaker-specific associations

- Causal chain model

  - Describes the participants of an event and their interaction

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DATA

- 500 first verbs exhibiting non-productive incorporation in Kotorova & Nefedov (2015b)

- Meanings of bases and incorporates have been checked from Kotorova & Nefedov (2015a), Vajda & Zinn (2004), and Werner (2002)

  - Some elements did not have meaning in sources → meaning deduced from other elements

- Incorporates were classified according to which semantic role they exhibit

  - Definitions from Croft (1991)

Role	Patient	Result	State	Instrument (+ manner)	Stimulus	Direction	Other	Total
All instances	38	238	8	47	30	136	3	500
Action nominal	1	195	3	3	28	2	0	232

SEMANTIC ROLES (SEMANTICALLY SPECIFIC BASES)

(1)   DIRECTION

$hel^7-t^5-a^4-b^3-[n^2]-daq^0$

down-THE-TAM-PRS-TAM-go.once

'smn slips, slides down'

(2)   DIRECTION (semantic extension)

$e^7-k^5-[s^4]-[n^2]-daq^0$

up-THE-TAM-TAM-let.go

'smn gets sober'

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(3)   PATIENT

$haŋa^7-t^5-a^4-[n^2]-do^0$

aspen.trunk-THE-TAM-TAM-scrape

'smn hollows out an aspen trunk (to make a single-seater boat)'

(4)   RESULT

$ha(d)^7-[s^4]-[n^2]-do^0$

cut[ANM]-TAM-TAM-cut

'smn cuts smn/smth; smn mows smth'

(5)   INSTRUMENT

$don(aŋ)^7-t^5-a^4-[l^2]-do^0$

knife+PL-THE-TAM-TAM-stab

'smn stabs smth with a knife'

(6)   DIRECTION

$al^7-d^5-a^4-[n^2]-do^0$

in.woods-THE-TAM-TAM-cut

'smn hits, beats smn; smn cuts down, fells smth (trees)'

SEMANTIC ROLES (SEMANTICALLY GENERAL BASES)

(7) PATIENT

al/dal^7-t^5-a^4-[l^2]-(d)aq^0

tendon-THE-TAM-TAM-single.action

'smn undoes smth (a seam)'

(8) RESULT

eq^7-[s^4]-[l^2]-aq^0

hear[ANM]-TAM-TAM-single.action

'smn listens to smth'

(9) INSTRUMENT

ek^7-[s^4]-[n^2]-aq^0

iron-TAM-TAM-single.action

'smn strips smth off (the skin)'

(10) DIRECTION

at^7-t^5-[s^4]-[l^2]-aq^0

up-THE-TAM-TAM-go.once

'smn walks uphill'

RECONSTRUCTING THE ORIGINAL MEANING OF BASES

- Three meanings

  - *aq* I 'marker of single active action in some verbs', *aq* II 'go (once)', (*aq* III 'rot, decay')

- Frame of *aq* I includes a volitional AGENT, a PATIENT, and an action with a RESULT and possibly a DIRECTION

- Frame of *aq* II includes a volitional AGENT, and a DIRECTION

- The semantic chain of both include a volitional AGENT and a RESULT

  - DIRECTION equals RESULT in a coerced causal chain (Croft 1991)

- The extension of meaning can be described as '(volitionally) go to one direction' > 'volitionally do an action with a direction-component' > 'do a single active action'

CONCLUSIONS

- Incorporates in unproductive incorporation in Ket express inanimate semantic roles

  - Middle and end sections of causal chain

  - Most typical roles are result and direction, instrument, stimulus, and patient are less frequent

- What semantic roles the incorporate exhibit can be infered from the meaning of the base

  - Property of the frame of each verb

- By comparing present-day meanings of verbs and semantic roles of their incorporates it is possible to reconstruct a frame and a putative meaning for an older form of the verb

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