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Comitative constructions in Kazym Khanty

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This paper deals with a comitative marker *piλa* in Kazym Khanty (< Ob-Ugric < Uralic), which is used (inter alia) in two constructions – with a singular verb form and with a non-singular one (dual if one refers to two items and plural otherwise):

(1) *pet'a-jen*   *wɵnt-a*   [*maša-jen*   *piλ-a*]   *măn-əs* /   *măn-s-əŋən*
   P.-P.2SG   forest-DAT   M.-P.2SG   with-DAT   go-PST.3SG   go-PST-3DU
   'Peter went to the forest with Mary'.

I will analyze these constructions, comparing them with a coordinating construction. The data come from my fieldwork in the Kazym village (Khanty-Mansi Autonomous District, Russia) in 2018.

The first construction is a genuine comitative construction – a "morphosyntactic construction, used to express a non-obligatory participant set in a given situation, such that the predicate denoting it is not repeated more than once; the individual participants are expressed separately; the expressions denoting these participants differ in structural rank" (Arkhipov 2009: 224). The second construction is an instance of a coordinating comitative construction – a construction "exhibiting some (or all) features of coordination proper" (Arkhipov 2009: 234). To compare these constructions, I used standard tests for the analysis of comitatives (see, e.g. (Dyła, Feldman 2008)).

On the one hand, the construction with a dual verb form is different from coordination. For example, in both comitative constructions the ComP can be extracted in questions (2) contrary to coordination (3), which means that in the construction with a dual verb form the central NP and the ComP do not form a constituent.

(2) [*χuj*   *piλ-a*]   *maša-jen*   *wɵnt-a*   *măn-əs* /   *măn-s-əŋən*?
   who   with-DAT   M.-P.2SG   forest-DAT   go-PST.3SG   go-PST-3DU
   'With whom Mary went to the forest?'
(3) **χuj   *pa*   *maša-jen*   *wɵnt-a*   *măn-əs* /   *măn-s-əŋən*?
   who   ADD   M.-P.2SG   forest-DAT   go-PST.3SG   go-PST-3DU
   Expected: 'With whom Mary went to forest?'

On the other hand, the construction with a dual verb form is different from the genuine comitative. For example, stative verbs cannot be used in genuine comitative constructions (4) unlike the constructions with a dual verb form (4) or coordination (5).

(4) *maša-jen*   *tɵrəm* *aś-en-a*   [*pet'a-jen*   *piλ-a*]   *ewəλ-λ-əŋən* /   **ewəλ-əλ*
    M.-P.2SG   sky   father-P.2SG-DAT P.-P.2SG   with-DAT believe-NPST-3DU believe-
NPST.3SG
    'Mary and Peter believe in God'.

(5) [*maša-jen*   *pa*   *pet'a-jen*]   *tɵrəm* *aś-en-a*   *ewəλ-λ-əŋən*
    M.-P.2SG   ADD   P.-P.2SG   sky   father-P.2SG-DAT   believe-NPST.3DU
    'Mary and Peter believe in God'.

To sum up, the construction with a dual verb form has features both of comitative and coordinating constructions, and the central NP does not form a constituent with the ComP. The question arises which element in this construction is responsible for licensing the dual verbal agreement. I claim that it is licensed by a zero associative plural marker on the central NP, which is supported by the fact that in Kazym Khanty associative plural can be expressed with a zero marker (Sokolova 2018). Similar analysis has been proposed for Tzotzil < Mayan (Aissen 1989), so the relation between associatives and comitatives is important from the typological point of view (see also (Vassilieva 2005)). In the talk, I will give a more thorough analysis and compare my data with the data of some other Uralic languages.

Acknowledgments

Abbreviations

2, 3 – 2, 3 person, ADD – additive, DAT – dative, DU – dual, NPST – non-past, P – possession, PST – past, SG – singular

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