

## FUNCTIONAL PECULIARITIES OF THE VERB TĀJTI/TĀJTI ‘HAVE’ IN NORTHERN KHANTY DIALECTS (KAZYM, SHURYSHKAR AND PRIURAL)

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### ABSTRACT

The article presents research outcomes concerning functional peculiarities of the verb *tājti/tājti* ‘have’ in the northern Khanty dialects: Kazym, Shuryshkar and Priural (Obdorsk). Data for analysis – 88 texts totaling in 7046 sentences – have been elicited mainly from the text corpus of Western Khanty dialects edited by E. V. Kashkin (2012–2014), electronic publication available at <https://osf.io/uraqx/files/> and from the corpus by I. N. Nikolaeva [1], electronic publication available at <http://larkpie.net/siberianlanguages/northern-khanty>. Besides, some elicitations were obtained from I. M. Moldanova, a native speaker of the Kazym dialect. The present study is conducted within the methodology of the functional theory of grammar.

The verb *tājti/tājti* ‘have’ is a bivalent verb, its subject is the possessor and its direct object is the possessed. According to L. Stassen’s classification of the predicative strategies used to encode possession [2], the have-verb constructs a transitive possessive strategy. This strategy is the most common in the Northern Khanty. While encoding possession, the transitive have-verb is used only in the subject conjugation since it presents the possessive relation as a state. Our study of the northern dialects language data shows that the verb *tājti/tājti* ‘have’ can also take forms of the objective conjugation and passive voice. In the forms of the objective conjugation and passive voice *tājti/tājti* can be used independently or as a part of an analytical construction, wherein its possessive semantics can be lost partially or fully. Being used as an independent unit, the verb *tājti/tājti* conveys an idea of keeping, wearing, holding, etc. The analytical construction consists of the verb *tājti/tājti* in the forms of the objective conjugation or passive voice and a converb marked by the suffix *-man*. Translations of this construction into Russian and English languages show that the converb functions a notional element, while *tājti/tājti*, as a part of this analytical construction, is used like an auxiliary verb. In the analyzed data, 31 occurrences of the analytical constructions with the verb *tājti/tājti* were found and 55 occurrences of this verb in the independent use.

**Keywords:** *Khanty language, northern dialects, have-verb*

### INTRODUCTION

The northern Khanty live in north-west Siberia in the Khanty-Mansi and Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Districts that are located in the Tyumen region of the

Russian Federation. The northern dialects of Khanty are distributed in the coastal areas of the river Ob (downstream of the Ob) as well as in the basins of its major tributaries: Poluj, Sob, Synya, Kunovat, Kazym [3: 3].

Khanty is one of the Finno-Ugric languages, comprising together with the Mansi and Hungarian languages the Ugric language group, and together with the Mansi language the Ob-Ugric subgroup. Nowadays all dialects of Khanty are very susceptible to the natural process of language shift [4]. The overwhelming majority of the ethnic population speaks Russian, however, speakers of the Kazym dialect of Khanty have lost their native language less than speakers of other dialects [7].

Due to the vast area and sparse population, Khanty divides into numerous dialects. Currently, two main dialect groups are distinguished: the western and the eastern dialects. Predominantly in the scientific works of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the western dialect group is subdivided into northern and southern ones [5]. The northern group consists of a) the Priural (Obdorsk) dialect, b) Shuryshkar dialect, c) Kazym dialect, Tegi dialect, Sherkalsk (Middle-Ob) dialect [3: 3]. Tegi, the language of the settlement Tegi, is considered as a transitional dialect between Kazym and Shuryshkar [6] or as a variant of the Kazym dialect [7: 12]. The Sherkalsk (Middle-Ob) dialect is regarded as a transitional one between the northern dialects, on the one hand, and the western and southern dialects, on the other hand [8]. The division of the Khanty language into two dialectal clusters most adequately reflects the present state of the Khanty language. Southern dialects now are fully assimilated, with only Kyshikovsk variant left [7: 8]. With the assimilation of southern dialects, the opposition between western and eastern dialects has become more unambiguous. The differences between these clusters are noticeable and they hamper communication.

### **LANGUAGE DATA**

Data for analysis – 92 texts totalling in 7100 sentences – have been elicited mainly from the text corpus of Western Khanty dialects.

Analyzed texts in Kazym dialects (33 texts all in all) are included in the text corpus of Western Khanty dialects edited by E. V. Kashkin (2012–2014), electronic publication is available at <https://osf.io/uraqx/files/>. In addition to the corpus mentioned above, 4 texts in Kazym from the text corpus “Ob-Ugric languages: conceptual structures, lexicon, constructions, categories” edited by E. Skribnik (2009–2012) were examined. This corpus is available at [http://www.babel.gwi.unimuenchen.de/index.php?abfrage=KK\\_corpus&subnavi=corpus\\_pub](http://www.babel.gwi.unimuenchen.de/index.php?abfrage=KK_corpus&subnavi=corpus_pub). Besides, 4 text samples from the edition “Kazym dialect of Khanty” by A. D. Kaksin (2007) were analyzed [3] and some elicitations were obtained from I. M. Moldanova, a native speaker of the Kazym dialect. All in all, 3275 sentences from 41 texts in Kazym were examined.

Analyzed texts in the Shuryshkar dialect (12 texts) were obtained from the edition “Expedition materials on the languages of the peoples of Siberia

(1995–2012гг.)” [9], 11 text samples were from “Ostyak Grammar and Chrestomathy” by W. Steinitz [10] and 3 fairy-tales were from the corpus of West Khanty dialects edited by E.V. Kashkin (2012–2014). The total volume of the examined corpus in Shuryshkar contains 1865 sentences (26 texts).

The language data in the Priural (Obdorsk) dialect (20 texts) were elicited from an electronic publication by I. N. Nikolaeva [1], available at <http://larkpie.net/siberianlanguages/northern-khanty>, and 5 text samples came from of the “Dialectological dictionary of Khanty language” [11]. The total volume of the analysed corpus contains 2158 sentences (25 texts).

All examples are presented in the following way: in line (a) a dialect is indicated. In line (b) an example is written in the orthography accepted in the corpus. Reference to the text is mentioned in brackets and includes information about the number of the sentence in the text. The example is glossed using the Leipzig Glossing Rules in line (c). Its translation into English is presented in line (d). Examples are numbered from one (1) onwards throughout the article. For morpheme boundaries we follow glossing traditions of other authors.

## KEY NOTIONS

The present study is conducted within the methodology of the functional theory of grammar. The objective of the present article is to describe functional peculiarities of the verb *täjti/täjti* ‘have’ in three northern dialects of Khanty (Kazym, Shuryshkar and Priural). The verb *täjti/täjti* ‘have’ is a bivalent verb, its subject is the possessor and its direct object is the possessed. The have-verb is considered to be a transitive one but it features its semi-transitive nature since it denotes an action as a state. According to L. Stassen’s classification of the predicative strategies used to encode possession, the have-verb constructs a transitive possessive strategy (Have-Possessive) [2: 62]. The possessive predicative construction is similar to the English one *He has a motorbike*. The have-verb has originated from some verbs denoting physical control or handling (e.g. ‘get’, ‘seize’, ‘take’, ‘obtain’, ‘hold’, ‘carry’, or ‘rule’, ‘keep’, etc.) affected by the process of semantic bleaching [2: 63]. Connected with the gradual loss of ‘concrete’ meaning is a gradual loss of syntactic transitivity; many have-verbs do not exhibit all properties of a typical transitive verb, in that, for example, they do not have the possibility of forming a passive [2: 63]. The Have-possessive construction is the majority strategy among the Indo-European languages. Nonetheless, it is not restricted in its global occurrence [2: 65].

## RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The most common in the northern Khanty is the transitive possessive strategy with the verb *täjti/täjti* [5]. While encoding possession, the transitive have-verb is used only in the forms of subject conjugation. The transitive predicative construction is illustrated below:

(1) Shuryshkar

**ma** in ar lūxəs täj-l-em. (Mouse 183)

**1SG** now many **friend** **have-PRS-1SG**

**I have many friends** now.

Our study of the northern dialects language data shows that the verb *tǎjti/tǎjti* ‘have’ can also take forms of the objective conjugation and passive voice. In the forms of the objective conjugation and passive voice *tǎjti/tǎjti* can be used independently or as a part of an analytical construction, wherein its possessive semantics can be lost partially or fully.

Being used as an independent unit, the verb *tǎjti/tǎjti* conveys an idea of keeping, wearing, holding, taking, using, etc. All in all, 55 occurrences of the verb *tǎjti/tǎjti* in the independent use marked by the objective or passive conjugation have been found in the analyzed corpus.

(2) Priural

wan	mǎn-l-ə-t,	χūw	mǎn-l-ə-t,	śikəńśa	itta	wəs
	mōsa χuj,	kur	mōsa χuj	ńǎχ-χi		<b>tǎj-l-a</b>
	χən		jik-ə-t-na.	(Three sons 10)		
short	go-PRS-EP-3SG	long	go-PRS-EP-3SG	DET	that	town
	what man	village	what man	laughter-TRNS		<b>have-PRS-</b>
<b>PAS</b>	king	boy-EP-PL-LOC				

They go for a long or short time, the tsar’s sons **make** fun of the town person, of the village person.

(3) Kazym

ma	kōśa-j-əm-n	atm-a	<b>tǎj-l-a-j-əm.</b>	(About deer 5)
1SG	owner-EP-1SG-LOC	bad-ADV	<b>have-PRS-PAS-EP-</b>	<b>1SG</b>

The owner **treats** me badly (lit.: keeps me badly).

(4) Shuryshkar

χutəm	χǎt	jötən	<b>tǎj-s-ətə,</b>	χut-mit	ǎt -
	na				
	śuk-ə	tǎχi-ja	tu-s-te	(Nephew of a woman 8)	
three	day	at.home	<b>keep-PST-S.SG.O.3SG</b>	three-ORD	day-
LOC	grief-ADJ	place-LAT	bright-PRS-SG.3SG		

She **kept him at** home for three days, on the third day she carried him to the cemetery.

As it was mentioned above, the verb *tǎjti/tǎjti* can be used as a part of the analytical construction. In the analyzed data, 31 occurrences of the analytical constructions with the verb *tǎjti/tǎjti* were found. The construction can schematically be presented by the following model:

Model 1. Analytical construction with the verb *tǎjti/tǎjti*V-man<sup>CVB</sup> – tǎj-/tǎj-<sup>S.O.PM/PAS</sup>

The construction consists of the verb *tǎjti/tǎjti* in the forms of the objective conjugation or passive voice and a non-finite form of the verb, a converb, as a rule, marked by the suffix *-man*. Translations of this construction into Russian and English languages show that the converb functions as a notional element, while the verb *tǎjti/tǎjti* is used as an auxiliary verb. The semantics of the verb *tǎjti/tǎjti* in this construction is nearly lost. Non-finite forms of the verb are known to have no morphological category of the voice [11: 180]. The analytical construction with the verb *tǎjti/tǎjti* marked by the objective or passive conjugation in combination with the non-finite forms of the verb can be used to express a passive meaning. Examples below (5–10), elicited from the text corpus, illustrate the use of the analytical construction with a coverb marked by *-man* and the verb *tǎjti/tǎjti* marked by the suffixes of the objective conjugation (5–7) and passive voice (8–10).

## (5) Priural

moś-niŋ-iji    luŋxəl    n̄awrem-ə-l,    kǔwləŋ    n̄awrem-l  
 il    **jəwər-man**    **tǎj-l-ə-lli.** (Por and Moś 64)

mos-woman-DIM    bell    child-EP-POSS.3SG    bell    child-POSS.3SG  
 down    **wrap-CVB**    **have-PRS-EP- S.3SG:O.SG**

The Moś-woman kept her baby with little bells, **kept** the baby **wrapped up** with little bells.

## (6) Kazym

sām-əł    jǎx-t-ał-ən    joxi    **xǎj-man**  
**tǎj-l-əlle.** (The youngest daughter of the sun 56)

сердце-POSS.3SG    уходить-PTCP1.3SG-LOC    домой  
**оставить-CNV**    **иметь-PRS-S.3SG:O.SG**

When he went, **he left his** heart at home.

## (7) Shuryshkar

«**Йǎнт-ман тǎй-алэн**»,    ун    хуй-эл  
 йас-т-ə-л. (How did the surnames appear? 48)

**play-CNV**    **have-IMP.O.PL.old**    man-POSS.3SG    speech-VRBL-  
 EP-PRS.3SG

“**Have fun with him**”, the older man says.

## (8) Shuryshkar

pəjar-ət-n    pa    taś-əŋ    jəx-ən    **kerət-man**

**tǎj-l-a.** (The Tale of the Fisherman and the Fish 153)

boyar-PL-LOC and wealth-ADJ people-LOC **go.round-**  
CNV

**have-PRS-PAS.3SG**

She **is surrounded** by boyars and rich people.

(9) Priural

“pa nãŋ, law-ə-l, śimós pörmas täj-l-ə-n  
ki, jina ätti mũŋ χōtaś, law-ə-l, täta  
**sawi-man** täj-l-aj-mən nãŋ jãχ-t-an  
ewəlt.” (Fox 162).

and 2SG say-EP-PRS.3SG such means have-PRS-  
EP-2SG if DET DET 1PL how say-EP-PRS.3SG here  
**tend-CVB** **have-PRS-PAS-1DU** 2SG walk-PTCP1-  
2SG from

“If you have the means, we would really **be saved** when you came.”

(10) Tegi

ruś ime-l-ən ewi-leŋki śi kem śi  
lik-ən **et-man** **täj-l-a**  
wołi (Son of Czarevitch 7)

russian woman-3SG-LOC daughter-DIM FOC  
possibility FOC anger-LOC **leave-CNV**  
**have-PRS-PAS.3SG** entirely

His Russian wife disliked her daughter so much.

Examples 13–17 included in the analysis are field recordings of the speech in the Kazym dialect elicited as a result of questioning of the native speaker. They all illustrate the dependent use of the verb *täjti/täjti* in the analytical construction.

(11) Kazym

Щи мойлэпс-эм **шави-ман** тăй-л-эм. (Fieldwork  
2018)

this present-POSS.1SG **keep-CVB** **have-PRS-**  
**S.1SG:O.SG**

I keep my gift **wrapped up**.

(12) Kazym

Щи авкайем иса **вантыйл-ман** щи тăй-л-эм. (Fieldwork  
2018)

This hand deer **look-CNV** this **have-PRS-**  
**S.1SG:O.SG**

I watch this hand-deer. (Fieldwork 2018)

(13) Kazym

Кўр йувәр-ты сухңәлҗам така йувәрт-ман  
**тәй-л-ә-лҗам.** (Fieldwork 2018)

legs tie-INF fabric tight **wrap-CNV**  
**have-PRS-EP-S.1SG:O.PL**

I always **wear** footcloths.

(14) Kazym

Нәң вонт-ән йәңх-ты мәр-ән-ән хот-ән  
**вант-ман тәй-л-әм.** (Fieldwork 2018)

2SG forest-LOC go-INF time-POSS.2SG-LOC house-POSS.2SG  
**look-CNV have-PRS-S.1SG:O.SG**

While you're walking in the woods, I'm holding your house.

(15) Kazym

Нәң пурмәс-л-ан лупас-ән **шави-ман** тәй-л-ә-лҗам.  
 (Fieldwork 2018)

2SG thing-PL-POSS.2SG storage-LOC **keep-CNV** **have-PRS-EP-S.1SG:O.PL**

I store your things in the storage.

As the research data show, the analytical construction with the verb *täjti/täjti* may allow some alternations, for example, 1) instead of the converb, a verb in the form of the past participle expressing the evidential mood may be used (consider example 17), 2) instead of the converb, a verb in the form of the passive voice may be used (see example 18), 3) the verb *täjti/täjti* may be substituted by priur. *ulti/olta*, kaz. *wolti* functioning as an auxiliary one (example 19). Such variants are not numerous. Only 3 occurrences were found in the texts.

(16) Priural

pa śiti män-l, wan xūw män-l pa śikəńsa  
 imōsaj-na **wan-m-al** **täj-l-ә-lli:** wül nūrəm-na  
 jǒxət-l. (Seven knives 11)

and so go-PRS.3SG short long go-PRS.3SG and DET  
 one-LOC **see-PTCP2-3SG have-PRS-EP-S.3SG:O.SG** big  
 glade-LOC arrive-PRS.3SG

He goes for a long or short time and suddenly he sees that he has arrived at a large glade

(17) Shuryshkar

tűw man-ət šeŋk **tu-s-a** **těj-t-ətə,** tow  
 kīr-ta man-ət ǎnt esət-t-ətə, tűw sam  
 tow-ŋət-am kīrijt-t-ətə (Revolution 20)

3SG 1SG-ACC very **carry-PST-PAS.3SG have-PST-S.3SG:O.3SG** horse  
 harness-INF 1SG-ACC NEG let-PRS-S.3SG:O.3SG 3SG [sam]  
 horse-DU-POSS.1SG harness-PRS-S.3SG:O.3DU

He **treats** me well, he does not let me harness a horse, he harnesses my horses himself.

(18) Priural

Щи ведпэсла-ты хот наңк пайарт-ет элты **вер-**  
**ман ул-л-а,** ищњи тǎй-э-л... (Girls are  
 going downhill sledding 6)

DEM hunt-INF houseлиственница бревно-PL from **do-CVB**  
**be-PRS-PAS.3SG** window have-EP-PRS.3SG

This house of the hunter **is made** of larch, there are windows...

## CONCLUSION

The present study of the functional peculiarities of the verb *tėjti/tėjti* ‘have’ has focused on three northern dialects of Khanty: Priural (Obdorsk), Shuryshkar and Kazym. Overall, a corpus of 92 Khanty texts in the three dialects (totalling in 7100 sentences) has been examined. Research data indicate that the verb *tėjti/tėjti* ‘have’ is mainly used in the forms of the subjective conjugation. However, it has been revealed that the same verb can also take forms of the objective conjugation as well as of the passive voice. The verb *tėjti/tėjti* ‘have’ in the forms of the objective conjugation or passive voice can be used as an independent element or as a dependent one in an analytical construction. In both instances the possessive semantics of the verb *tėjti/tėjti* ‘have’ seems to have been partially or fully lost. Used independently, the verb *tėjti/tėjti* ‘have’ exhibits semantics close to that of the verbs ‘keep’, ‘take’, ‘use’, etc. As a part of the analytical construction the verb *tėjti/tėjti* ‘have’ tends to function as an auxiliary verb forming a combination with a converb form of another verb marked by the suffix *-man*. The verb marked by the suffix *-man* functions as a notional element of the construction and often has a passive meaning. In the analyzed corpus, the analytical construction with the verb *tėjti/tėjti* has been found in 31 sentences, while examples with the independent use of the verb have turned out to be more numerous (55 cases). Additionally, some examples of the analytical *tėjti/tėjti*-construction have been elicited from the speaker of the Kazym dialect.

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**ABBREVIATIONS**

ACC – accusative, ADJ – adjectivizer, ADV – adverbilizer, CVB – converb, DIM – diminutive, DET – determiner, DU – dual, FOC – focus, EP – epenthetic vowel, IMP – imperative, INCH – inchoative suffix, INF – infinitive, LAT – lative, LOC – locative, NEG – negative, O – objective conjugation, ORD – ordinals, PAS – passive, PL – plural, PTCP1 – present participle, PTCP2 – past participle, PST – past tense, POSS – possessive suffix, PRS – present tense, SG – singular, TRNS – translative, S – subjective conjugation, VBLZ – verbalizer.

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