Indirective-secundative alternation in Kazym Khanty

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Crosslinguistically, languages vary in that either indirect or direct object can be more prominent in applicative clauses. In languages with indirective alignment, the theme (DO) bears object case (Acc or Abs) and/or triggers object agreement. In languages with secundative alignment, the IO bears object case (Acc or Abs) and/or triggers object agreement. Some languages make use of both alignments. The indirective-secundative alternation is attested in several Uralic languages - e.g. Khanty, Mansi and Nenets. Acc-marking and object-agreement can target either DO or IO. The second object is marked with Dat or Loc/Instr and never agrees with the verb. This talk concentrates on such an alternation in Kazym Khanty (1)-(2). I present novel data collected during fieldwork and suggest a minimalist analysis of this alternation.

(1)   Indirective alignment

    a.   Sub-[Nom] IO-**Dat** DO- [**Acc**] V

    b.   Kašəŋ χujat   λɵχs-əλ-a   lipət   mă-s
       Every person-[nom] friend-poss.3sg-**dat** flower-[**acc**] give-pst-[3sg]
       'Everyone gave a flower/flowers to his friend.'

(2)   Secundative alignment

    a.   Sub-[Nom] IO-[**Acc**] DO-**Loc** V

    b.   Kašəŋ χujat   λɵχs-əλ   lipət-ən mă-s-λe
       Every person-[nom] friend-poss.3sg-[**acc**] flower-**loc** give-pst-3sg>sg
       'Everyone gave a flower/flowers to his friend.'

Previous research on the Ob-Ugric argued that alignment alternation depends on topicality of the applied argument IO (Nikolaeva 1999; Dalrymple & Nikolaeva 2011; Bíró & Sipőcz 2017; Sipőcz 2015; Sosa 2017; Virtanen 2012, 2013, 2014). Kazym Khanty fits into the general picture. Secundative alignment is also preferred, if the theme is a mass noun. However, both are rather tendencies, but not requirements, since indirective alignment is never truly ungrammatical. Hence, neither topic, nor mass semantics of the theme can be used as a formal feature for a syntactic analysis. Novel data show that choice of the alignment depends on two other more robust factors:

- First, secundative alignment is only possible with themes, smaller than DP (i.e. NP or NumP).
- Secondly, indirective/secundative alternation is available in low applicative (2) and causative clauses. But high applicative clauses only allow indirective alignment.

In the talk, I propose an analysis where alignment alternation depends on optional merger of High Applicative projection (Georgala 2011; Nie 2020). HighApplP can optionally introduce a new argument, but it is also responsible for Dat-assignment, i.e. for indirective alignment. When HighAppl is merged, IO is always the closest caseless DP and gets Dative, which allows Voice to assign Acc to the theme. Secundative alignment corresponds to a structure without HighApplP where Voice case-licenses the IO, and the theme is never licensed for Case. This is possible, because small NP-themes can survive the derivation unlicensed and get a default Loc-marking.

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