CONTINUITY OF INFORMATION STRUCTURING STRATEGIES IN EASTERN KHANTY.
DEFINITENESS/TOPICALITY

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The presentation addresses the issue of structural cohesion in language. Based on the analysis of discourse-pragmatic functions and propositional-semantic content of examples in the narrative, it illustrates the continuity in morphosyntactic means in the system that are used for structuring of information: case, transitivity, voice, agreement, elision, possessive marking, non-finite forms and relative clauses. Selected methodology includes contrastive contextual analysis, attending to the information structure and extra-linguistic metadata, in the general cognitive-functional framework.

Based on narrative discourse analysis of Eastern Khanty, an endangered Siberian native Finno-Ugric language, it is hypothesized, that a wide cognitive faculty facilitating the structuring of information specifies the roles and interrelations of the participants in a complex negotiation of the pragmatic features (identifiability, activation, topicality), semantic properties (agentivity), pragmatic/locutionary pressures (power/control, volition, authority) formally manifested in the choice of grammatical resources available in the system. It follows from the analysis of the host of the interrelated features of a set of constructions that specific conglomerates of the system’s grammatical resources strongly associate with specific conglomerates of pragmatic-functional and semantic properties. The holistic analysis of pragmatic-functional, semantic and structural properties of all the participants in their interaction in the narrative discourse, is viewed as particularly revealing.

1. The syntax of Eastern Khanty generally correlates to SOV word order patterns. In the discourse pragmatic organization, a new referent is activated as topic by a full NP and maintained by a free pronoun in the S/A relation and by S/A-V agreement. Once identifiable as the pragmatic center, the referent continues in this function expressed by elision and by S/A-V agreement. Whenever overt, S/A is pragmatically marked as a topic-shift or a presentational clause.

(i) In active-direct clauses verb transitivity and O-argument definiteness is marked by the O-V agreement inflection governed by the interaction of a host of the referent’s pragmatic features (identifiability, activation, topicality) and semantic properties (agentivity), as revealed in the syntactic behavior of the argument:

− word order/omissibility: the O arguments that co-occur with O-V agreement may be more flexible in its constituent position, or altogether elided, whereas the O argument not co-occurring with O-V agreement is rigid in its overt SOV position.
− O-argument focus clauses and WH-question/answer sequences: only S/A-V agreement is attested, thus proving that O-V agreement is contingent upon O’s pragmatic status, i.e. identifiability/activation, topicality.
− subject-controlled embedded participial clauses: non-finite V has co-reference agreement with the S/A referent of the non-finite clause, if this S/A referent is high on the pragmatic identifiability/activation (Lambrecht, 1994; Nikolaeva, 1999).
− relative subject agreement: – attested in sentences with the S/A-Rel expressed by a free pronoun, rather than a full NP, which correlates to the referent’s pragmatic status: identifiability/activation.
− reflexivization: – can be controlled by the S/A or O argument that co-occurs with the O-V agreement on the predicate, while the O argument without O-V agreement cannot control it. Thus, the reflexive/possessive marker on the NP possessed may refer both to the S/A and O in case of O-V agreement, whereas in case of the absent O-V agreement this affix may only refer to the S/A. Functional/structural similarity between the relative and the possessive constructions is widely attested in typological literature, as invoking a relation to one entity for identification of another (Langacker, 1993).
− possession constructions: – demonstrate agreement patterns similar to those of relative clauses, i.e. while the pronominal head-possessor triggers the agreement on the possessed NP, the NP possessor does not, manifesting, once again, the relevance of the pragmatic status of the referent: identifiability/activation.
2. The Eastern Khanty non-canonical agent-marking constructions (ergative & passive) appear a marginal construction type, describing events with more than one closely associated discourse referent with competing topicality status simultaneously occupying the stage in the narrative. The actual functional-semantic specifics of the constructions lies in the intersection of multidimensional feature-plains, the degrees of: identifiability and topicality; agentivity; activeness/control/volition; completeness and affectedness.

ii) The “ergative” clause has Loc-marked agent referent and Ø-marked non-agent/target. Verbal morphology remains “active”, demonstrating active-direct S/A-V and O-V agreement patterns, where applicable. Its functional-pragmatic motivation is representation of an event where the S/A referent, although fairly high on inherent agentivity and pragmatic identifiability, topicality (albeit parenthetical) is, however, low on activeness/control/authority status, merely mapping the locus of the event.

iii) The passive is a host of constructions unified by compatible general functional and structural specifications: identifiability, topicality of the non-agentive S referent. That is, these passive constructions prototypically exemplify the promotion of the non-agent referent to the S relation, and, in case of the agented passive, the demotion of the agent referent to a locative-marked non-S relation. It signals the deficit of authority/control and a shift in topicality, by altering the centrality of the referents in the proposition.

Actual functional specifics of the Eastern Khanty voice constructions lies in the intersection of multidimensional feature-plains: discourse pragmatic – the degrees of identifiability and topicality; semantic – activeness/control/volition and inherent agentivity; evidentiality – completeness, affectedness, reality.

Based on the above a notable continuity in the strategies of information structuring, i.e. consistency of association of certain morphosyntactic means with the set of pragmatic and semantic properties in the Eastern Khanty system is observed in the narrative discourse. The pragmatic features of identifiability, activation and topicality are consistently expressed by the grammatical features of verbal agreement, possessive/reflexive agreement, case marking, anaphora, ellipsis. The grammatical continuum NP-Prn.-Prn.Infl-Ø is seen as iconic of the pragmatic continuum New Ref.-Identif./Access.-Active-Topical. Accidentally, this correlation of the pragmatic features and grammatical means is resonant with the posited ethymological make up/ the main grammaticalazation route: Prs.Prn.-Poss.Infl-Agreement.Infl.

Data Sample:

(i) Active-direct:

```
\begin{array}{c}
\downarrow \\
1 \text{sg} \text{pike} \quad \text{fry-PR} \\
\text{F-} \\
\end{array}
```

‘(I) fried (the pike-fish) on sticks’

(ii) “Ergative”:

```
\begin{array}{c}
\downarrow \\
\text{big} \text{pike oldman} \\
\text{g-} \\
\end{array}
```

‘I cut the big pike’
(iii) Passive:

a) Agented

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'I held the dog by the legs'

b) Imper

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'After this (we) went to the woods'

Reflexivization:

a) \( \omega_\alpha \phi_\alpha \otimes \gamma_\nu \leftrightarrow \alpha \mu \pi \phi \otimes \nu \gamma_\mu \tau \alpha \quad \tau \Sigma \mu \nu \nu \tau \kappa \alpha \nu \gamma_\iota \nu \kappa \a...


