KET INFINITIVE CONSTRUCTIONS IN COMPLEX STRUCTURES

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Ket is a language isolate, now is the only survivor out of Yeniseic language family, spoken by a small scattered group of indigenous people of North Siberia.

Ket verb templatic morphology, idiosyncratic selection of agreement model in the domain of lexicon (a typologically unique situation) and valence of the matrix verb have been under detailed discussion in Ket linguistics lately due to the fact that agreement with the verb’s referents, their syntactic marking and valence decrease marking are all the functions of one and the same set of the so called verb-internal argument markers.

On the other hand Ket infinitive was described as having the semantics of event, far simpler and non-templatic morphology than a finite verb, as capable of accepting affixes of nominal morphology (esp. case suffixes). These features provided basis for different interpretation of the status of the infinitive itself and infinitive constructions.

The present paper is intended to describe the properties of infinitive constructions as capable of entering clause, core and nuclear junctures thus forming complex structures (see illustrations 1-5a, illustrations 1,2,4 refer to infinitival cores, whereas in 1 the infinitival core includes one argument, in 2c – two arguments, in 2a,b the nucleus of the matrix clause is also the argument of the subordinate core, 5b illustrates nuclear juncture within a causative verb, 3 gives an example of a subordinate clause filled with infinitive construction). In this context the single infinitive in preposition to the noun, which was considered previously as a noun modifier and assigned adjectival properties is viewed as a case of a broader phenomenon of core subordination, one of the cores filled with the infinitive (see illustrations 2a, 2b).

The analysis presented in the paper allows the logical explanation that it is not the infinitive that carries the nominal morphology affixes, but the cores filled with infinitive constructions. The nominal, adjectival properties arise from the function of the infinitival core, that is whether it fills the slot for an argument or a modifier of an argument of a matrix clause. The paper addresses the questions of argument reference (as well as infinitive valence ambiguity) and temporal overlap between the matrix clause and (co)subordinate cores filled by infinitive constructions.

Illustrations:

1. *en aтаgdober'-esa*ג b-qoj

Now 1SG mark-making(INF)-TRL 1SG.POS-wish

Now I want(=intend) to make marks (on trees)
2.a. bu uros $ke\text{t}$
   3SG be-lazy(INF) man
   ‘He is a lazy person’

2.b. bu ajtij $ke\text{t}$
   3SG insult(INF) man
   ‘He is an insulting person’

2c. ar uk ajtij-esaj $b\text{on}$ b-qoj
   1SG 2SG insult(INF)-TRL not 1SG.POS-wish
   ‘I don’t want to hurt you’

3. bu qu$s'$ kis$'a$aj $hij-es'a$aj $dutabak$
   3SG tent here put up(INF)-TRL 3SG-plan / intend
   ‘He is going to put up a tent here.’

4. buj$'i$ qu$s'$ $hij$ $de$aj $di:mbes'\text{in}$
   3PL tent put up (INF) people 3PL-PT-come
   ‘They came to put up a tent (lit. they as tent putting up people came)’

5. a) qus$'$ sujat h$\text{a}l$sij $bimrut$,
   one dress sew(INF) it-ended,
   ‘Sewing of one dress finished,’

   b) bik qun$'$s$'a$ sujat h$\text{a}l$sij$qibit$
   another dress 1SG-3 SG.INAN-PT-sewing-begin
   ‘another dress I began sewing’

Abbreviations: INF = infinitive, SG = singular, PL = plural, INAN = inanimate, POS = possessive, PT = past tense, TRL = translative.

REFERENCES