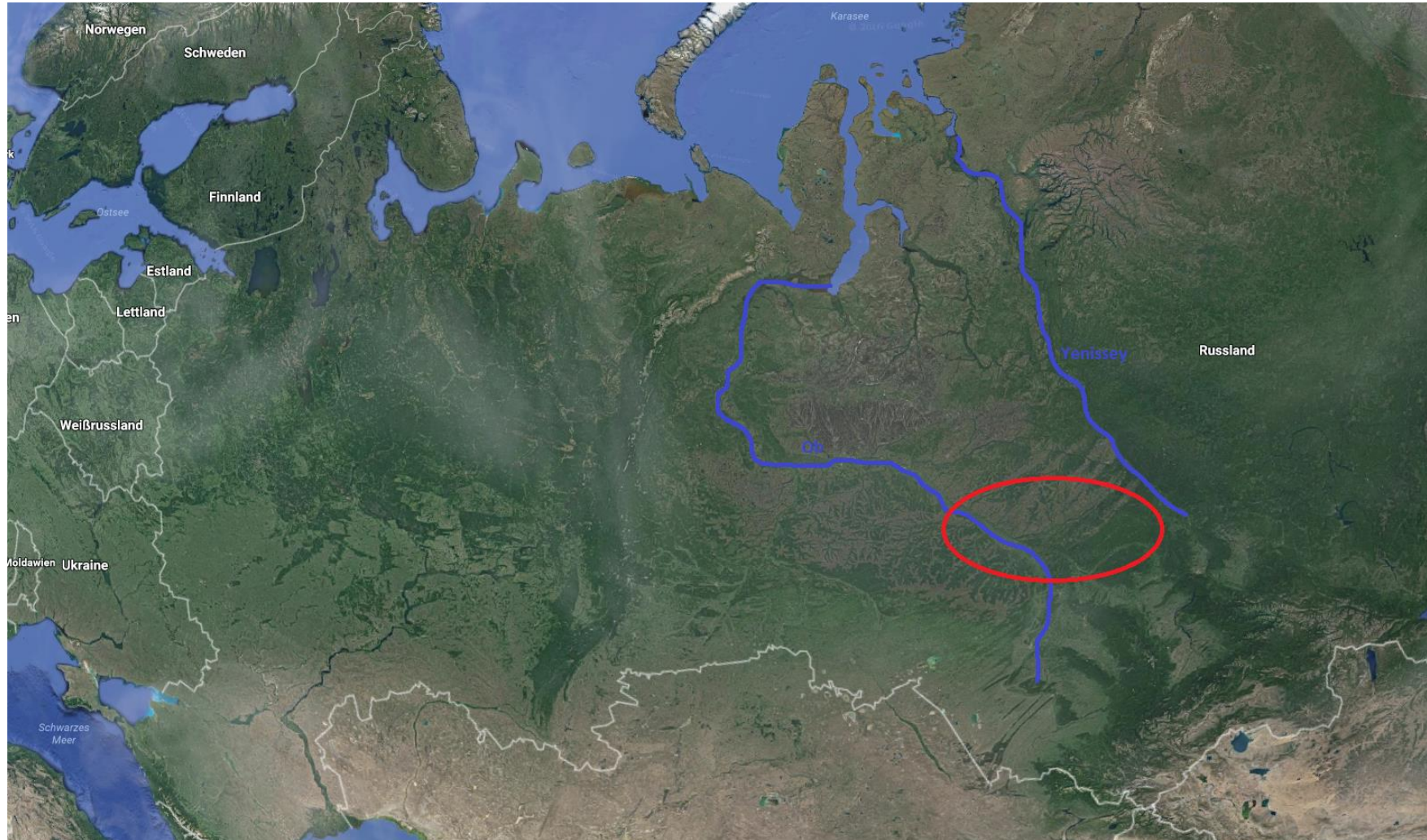


Topic and Passivization in Eastern Khanty Dialects

- Eastern Khanty
- Theoretical framework
- Passive in (Eastern) Khanty
- Passivization as topicalization?
- Summary

Eastern Khanty



Eastern Khanty

- Uralic languages
 - Finno-Ugric languages
 - Ob-Ugric languages
 - Mansi
 - Khanty
 - Northern Khanty
 - Southern Khanty
 - Eastern Khanty (Surgut, Vakh, Vasyugan)
- Khanty is spoken by approx. 10,000 people (VPN 2010); Eastern Khanty (i.e. Vakh and Vasyugan) nearly extinct
- dialectal division highly developed

Notion of ‚Topic‘

- „The topic of a sentence is the thing which the proposition expressed by the sentence is ABOUT.“ (Lambrecht 1994: 118)
- „Topic is the starting point of the sentence (*aboutness topic*). The comment is a predication about the topic.“ (Junghanns/Zybatow 2009: 688; own translation)

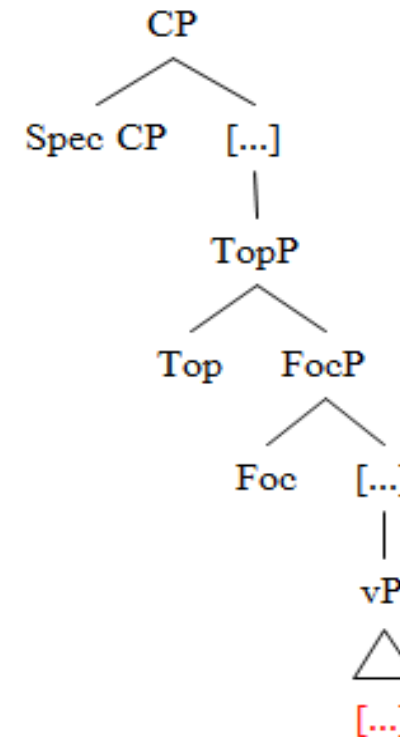
(1)	<i>Henry</i>	<i>cuddles the old woman.</i>
	topic	comment

Leipzig Model of Information Structure (LM)

- developed in 1990s/2000s in Leipzig and Göttingen
- developed for Slavic Languages
- framework: generative syntax, minimalist program
- notion of ,topic': *aboutness topic* (see above)
- notion of ,focus': piece of information which is regarded as important by the speaker in the given context

Leipzig Model of Information Structure (LM)

- two layers of information structure:
 - topic-comment
 - focus-background
 - topic [TOP] resp. focus [FOC] is salient; comment and background are derived subtractively
- [TOP] and [FOC] are generated in the functional super-structure of the sentence



Passive in Khanty

- inflectional category
- suffix *-Vj-* + personal ending, e.g. chanSh. *kŭtərmə-s-ij-əm* ,beat-PST-PASS-1SG' = ,I was beaten.'

(2) *[...] śoras joχna tusa tăjsa.*
 śoras joχ-na tus-a tăj-s-a
 traders-LOC fair-ADV treat-PST-PASS.3SG
 ,[He] was treated fairly by the traders.'
 (Kha_Sh_MaKI_MeinVater_1.10)

Passive in Khanty

- everything (i.e. patient, theme, recipient, location etc.) can be passivized
- reason for passivization → topicalization
- agent can be omitted
- overt agent marking with Loc → focus

Passive in Eastern Khanty

(3) *Titi qulən jiγəl sayi mənli.*

(Filchenko 2010a: 269)

titi	qulən jiγəl	sayi	mən-l-i
DEM	Kulen-Yogal	way	go-PRS-PASS.3SG
'So they go along the river Kulen-Yogal.'			
topic		comment	

(4) *t̃ʃu sarna män qat̃ʃ kəmlaytəyal.*

(Filchenko 2010b: 40)

t̃ʃu	sart-nə	mä-n	qat̃ʃ	kəmlaytə-yal.
DEM	pike-LOC	1SG-ACC	almost	turn.over-PST1.3SG
,The pike almost got me out of [the boat].'				
topic		comment		

Passive in Eastern Khanty

- passive constructions occur, but significantly less than in other dialects (Kulonen 1989: 301)
- reason: „ergative“ resp. „locative-agent“ constructions
- agent [NOM] – patient [NOM/ACC] – verb [ACT] → active construction
- patient [NOM] – (agent [LOC]) – verb [PASS] → passive construction
- agent [LOC] – patient [NOM/ACC] – verb [ACT] → LocAgent-construction

Passive and topicalization?

- sentence-initial position = topic position
 - in other dialects: few cases (no grammatical cases), therefore word order (strict SOV) is important for the proposition of the sentence
 - in eastern dialects:
 - more cases, therefore word order can be used more easily for information structure
 - abstraction of the locative marker as marker for the agent even in active sentences → disambiguation of agent and patient

(5) *qaqijmən tiyrana qayrimtiyasta.*
 qaqi-j-mən tiyra-na
 younger.brother-EP-1DU tiger-LOC
 ‚Our younger brother was caught by a tiger.‘
 topic | comment

(Filchenko 2010b: 119)

qayrimti-yas-ta
 catch-PST3-3SG.OBJ

Contrastive topics

(6) $\overline{t\dot{s}u}$ qəsinə nuɣ joɣlil jöyänä $\overline{t\dot{s}ut\dot{s}imtə-tə}$.

$\overline{t\dot{s}u}$	qəsi-nə	nuɣ	joɣl-il	jöy-ä-nä	$\overline{t\dot{s}ut\dot{s}imtə-tə}$
DEM	man-LOC	up	bow-3SG	3SG-EP-LOC	raise-PST0.3SG.OBJ

,That man aimed his bow at him [the eagle].‘

topic.contr | comment

(7) köröynə oyil il mäyn^jimtətə.

köröy-nə	oy-il	il	mäyn ^j imtə-tə
eagle-LOC	head-3SG	down	incline-PST0.3SG.OBJ

,The eagle got his head down.‘

topic.contr | comment

(8) qəsinə nuɣ joɣlil jüynämə pərtäy wəjtə.

qəsi-nə	nuɣ	joɣl-il	jüy-näm-ə	pərtäy	wəj-tə
man-LOC	up	bow-3SG	3SG-REFL-INSTR	back	take-PST0.3SG.OBJ

,The man put his bow down.‘

topic.contr | comment

(all Filchenko 2010b: 50)

Summary

- topics are associated with the sentence-initial (subject) position in Khanty
- most Khanty dialects use passivization in order to topicalize non-subject constituents
- Eastern Khanty dialects know passivization, but it is not used that frequently as a mean of topicalization
 - SOV word order not that strict like in other dialects
 - disambiguation of agent and patient by locative marking of agent
- locative marking of agent in subject position can be used to denote contrastive topics

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Thank you for your attention!