

# Functioning of the Verb *tǎjti* in Kazym and Shuryshkar Dialects of Khanty

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**Abstract**—The article presents an overview of the functioning of the verb *tǎjti* ‘have’ used to encode possessive relations in Kazym and Shuryshkar dialects of the Khanty language. The analysis encompasses data obtained from a text corpus of 41 texts (3275 sentences) in Kazym dialect and a corpus of 26 texts (1865 sentences) in Shuryshkar dialect. In its major function as a means of encoding predicative possession in both dialects the verb *tǎjti* ‘have’ is used to express the main conceptual features of possession (permanent, abstract, physical, alienable, inalienable, inanimate). Besides, this verb forms combinations with other parts of speech (e.g. nouns, converbs) to help convey other semantics. As a part of such word combinations, the verb can be used in the forms of both the subjective and objective conjugation and passive voice.

**Index Terms**—Khanty language, Shuryshkar dialect, Kazym dialect, predicative possession, have-verb.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Kazym and Shuryshkar are northern dialects of the Khanty language that are distributed in the coastal areas of downstream of the river Ob and in the basins of its major tributaries: Poluj, Sob, Synya, Kunovat, Kazym, etc. [1]. The northern Khanty settle in north-west Siberia in the Khanty-Mansi and Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Districts (the Tyumen region of the Russian Federation).

Khanty is one of the Finno-Ugric languages. Together with the Mansi and Hungarian languages, it forms the Ugric language group and together with the Mansi language – the Ob-Ugric subgroup. Nowadays nearly all the Khanty are bilingual and tend to abandon their ethnic language in favour of the Russian language that gives access to greater social mobility and economic opportunities.

Due to the vast area and sparse population, Khanty divides into numerous dialects. Currently, two main dialect clusters are distinguished: the western and the eastern dialects. A few Eastern dialects (e.g. dialect of Vasyugan Khanty) are highly endangered. Dialects belonging to the western cluster have previously been distinguished as southern and northern ones [2] and are at present used unequally. The dialects formerly classified as southern ones (e.g. Priirtysh dialect) have entirely been assimilated with only Kyshikovsk variant left [3]. The northern group comprises Priural (Obdorsk), Kazym and Shuryshkar dialects, each spoken by the Khanty residing in some distant northern villages. Tegi, the language of the settlement Tegi, is considered as a transitional dialect

between Kazym and Shuryshkar [4] or as a variant of the Kazym dialect [3]. Two northern Khanty dialects – Kazym and Shuryshkar – are examined in the present study with the purpose to describe functional and semantic peculiarities of the verb *tǎjti* ‘have’, which has never been the focus in previous studies.

In the present study, functions of the verb *tǎjti* ‘have’ in Kazym and Shuryshkar dialects are analyzed from the perspective of the functional and typological approach. The methodology is based on the works by L. Stassen [5], B. Heine [6], H. Seiler [7] and others.

Language data in the Kazym dialect are obtained from various sources: 33 texts are from the text corpus of Western Khanty dialects edited by E. V. Kashkin (2012–2014), electronic publication is available at <https://osf.io/uraqx/files/>; four texts are from the text corpus “Ob-Ugric languages: conceptual structures, lexicon, constructions, categories” edited by E. Skribnik (2009–2012), available at [http://www.babel.gwi.uni-muenchen.de/index.php?abfrage=KK\\_corpus&subnavi=corpus\\_pub](http://www.babel.gwi.uni-muenchen.de/index.php?abfrage=KK_corpus&subnavi=corpus_pub); four text samples are from the edition “Kazym dialect of Khanty” by A. D. Kaksin [1]. In addition to that, 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 are examined.

The primary sources of the Shuryshkar data are twelve texts obtained from the edition “Expedition materials on the languages of the peoples of Siberia (1995–2012)” [8], eleven text samples were found in the “Ostyak Grammar and Chrestomathy” by W. Steinitz [9] and three fairy-tales were chosen from the corpus of West Khanty dialects edited by E.V. Kashkin (2012–2014). The volume of the examined corpus in Shuryshkar amounts to 1865 sentences (26 texts).

In section 2 of the present article, primary function of the verb *tǎjti* ‘have’ will be described. An analysis of other functional and semantic characteristics of the verb *tǎjti* ‘have’ in the two Khanty dialects will be presented in Section 3. All examples will be given following the pattern: line (a) – a source dialect name. The text title is in brackets followed by the number of the sentence in the text; line (b) – a text example in the orthography accepted in the corresponding corpus; line (c) – glossing of the example using the Leipzig Glossing Rules; line (d) – translation of the example into English. Examples are numbered from one (1) onwards throughout the article. For morpheme boundaries we follow glossing traditions of other authors.

## II. PRIMARY FUNCTION OF THE VERB *TǎJTI* ‘HAVE’

As it is observed in other Khanty dialects, the verb *tǎjti* ‘have’ functions as a major means to encode possessive

Manuscript received May 30, 2018; revised September 6, 2018.

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relations in both the Kazym and Shuryshkar dialects [10]. To this end, the verb is used in a predicative construction known as the transitive one. Schematically, this construction can be represented as:

Modal 1. Predicative possessive construction

(Possessor) – Possessed – *täj*<sup>S.PM</sup>

The conspicuous feature of the transitive construction is the presence of the semi-transitive have-verb [5]. While expressing the possessive meaning, the verb *täjti* ‘have’ functions as a bivalent verb, its subject is the possessor and its direct object is the possessed. As an element of the possessive predicative construction, the verb *täjti* ‘have’ may be marked only by the suffixes of the subjective conjugation. The possessee never takes the possessive suffixes in this construction. The examples illustrating the use of the predicative possessive construction with the verb *täjti* ‘have’ in the Kazym and Shuryshkar dialects are:

1. Kazym (Khujtunkistan 7)

in **ike-n**                    əŋəłlak jaŋ **laraś**  
this **man-POSS.2SG** also        ten **chest**  
**täj-əl.**

**have-NPST.3SG.S**

**This man has** also ten **chests.**

2. Shuryshkar (Mouse 183)

**ma** in ar        **lūxəs täj-l-em.**  
1SG now many **friend have-NPST-1SG.S**

**I have** many **friends** now.

3. Kazym (Fieldwork 2018)

**Амп-эн**                    һăл кŷр        тăй-əл.  
**dog-POSS.2SG** four **leg**        **have-NPST.3SG.S**  
**A dog has** four **legs.**

4. Shuryshkar (The tale of the she-bear 17)

łəŋkər-əl-n                    pa **xir täj-əl.**  
shoulder-POSS.3SG-LOC but **sack have-NPST.3SG.S**  
**(He) has a sack** on the shoulder.

5. Kazym (Eagle 208)

mołti **piś**                    ki änt        **täj-l-ən**                    tāta śi  
any **cunning** if NEG **have-NPST-2SG** here FOC  
joxət-l-a-j-mən.

come-NPST-PAS-IDU.S

If **you** do not **have** any **cunning**, he will catch up with us now.

It should be noted that the possessor in this construction can denote both an animate (as in examples 1–5) and inanimate object (example 6–7).

6. Kazym (River Earth Man and Ob Earth Man 96)

śi xoras-əp                    wəŋ **nəxr-ət**  
this appearance-ADJ big **pine.nut-PL**  
**täj-əl.**

**have-NPST.3SG.S**

**It (cedar) has** such big **pine-nuts.**

7. Tegi (Winged creature 17)

śāta **jekər**                    lət        mōj **ñuorəm lət**  
there lowlnd place what swamp place  
**täj-əs**

**have-PST.3SG.S**

There **was** a **lowland**, a **swamp.**

The possessee, in its turn, can be either animate (2) or

inanimate (1), abstract (5) or concrete (4).

The predicative possessive construction with the verb *täjti* may allow a structural variant in which the possessor can be expressed implicitly. See example 4–5, 7 for illustrations.

Thus, it can be concluded that the possessive predicative construction (PR) – PE – *täj*<sup>S.PM</sup> is commonly and widely used for coding possession in Kazym and Shuryshkar dialects.

III. FUNCTIONAL AND SEMANTIC VARIANTS OF THE VERB *TÄJTI*

Along with encoding possession, the verb *täjti* in both dialects can be involved in conveying other semantics as well. In such cases, according to the obtained data, the verb *täjti* displays its polysemous nature and may be used in the forms of both subjective and objective conjugation [11]–[13]. The semantics of the verb itself is highly dependent on the word it is combined with and its grammatical behavior.

IV. THE VERB *TÄJTI* IN THE FORMS OF THE SUBJECTIVE CONJUGATION

Let us now consider examples in which the verb *täjti* ‘have’ is used in the forms of the subjective conjugation in both dialects to help convey meanings other than possessive. All in all, examples of this kind encompass 15 % out of all selected samples.

One of the meanings conveyed by the verb *täjti* is ‘to keep, to hold’. The idea of keeping something and holding something or somebody expressed in combination with an object and a localizer indicating the location of the object (see example 8).

8. Kazym (The boy from the side where the sun rises and the girl from the side where the sun sets 43)

toxelt pəl-a                    äŋkərt-əs                    sawnə  
thither to-DAT take.a.look-PST.3SG **maggie**  
**ñol-əl-ən**                    mołti                    wurti **pəxsə-ije**  
beak-3SG-LOC something red **big.thing-DIM**  
**täj-əl.**

**have-NPST.3SG.S**

He looked there: **a magpie holds something** red **in his beak.**

When used in the forms of the subjective conjugation, the verb *täjti* can help express the idea of giving birth to somebody or bringing somebody up. In such cases, the object is expressed by the words denoting relatives or off-springs, e.g. *ewi* ‘daughter’, *pəχ* ‘son’, *ñawrəm* ‘child’, *pośəχ* ‘cub, nestlings’ etc. Examples 9–10 illustrate this idea.

9. Shuryshkar (Beautiful crown-woman 12)

**Повəх-л-ан**                    тăй-а,                    һăң ул-а.  
**nestling-Pl-POSS.2SG** **have-IMP** **2SG be-IMP**  
**Bring up nestlings**, live by yourself.

10. Kazym (Eagle 140)

xuw wə-s-ŋən                    wan        wə-s-ŋən  
long live-PST-3DU short        live-PST-3DU.S

**pəχ täj-s-aŋən.**

**son have-PST-2DU.S**

Whether they long lived or short lived, **they gave birth to a son.**

The dependence of the verb semantics on that of an

adjacent object can be exemplified by the following sentences. In example 11, the verb *täjti* is followed by an abstract object *õš* ‘mind’, which seems to highlight the meaning of understanding conveyed by the word combination.

11. Kazym (Fieldwork 2018)

nañ möj isa õš ãn täj-l-ãn?  
2SG what always mind NEG have-NPST.2SG.S

You don't **understand**, do you?

The verb combination with an abstract object *wer* ‘affair’ conveys the idea of getting used to doing something (12), with the object *nomas* ‘thought’ – the idea of thinking (13), with *wus* ‘hole’ (14) – being unable to do something.

12. Kazym (My dog 7)

luw poršant-ti wer täj-əl.  
3SG bite-IPFV.PTCP matter have-NPST.3SG.S

It gets used to biting.

13. Shuryshkar (The tale of the priest and of his workman Balda 41)

sek-ti oli-moli nomas täj-əl.  
beat-IPFV.PTCP fool thought have-NPST.3SG.S

He thinks that Balda will beat him.

14. Kazym (A woman with children left in an empty camping-ground 85)

in ñawrẽm-ət, want-ti, ãn  
now child-PL look-IMP.2PL NEG  
noñm-ti ñawrẽm-ət moñ potært-ti  
remember-IPFV.PART child-PL whatsay-IPFV.PART  
wus täj-l-ət.

hole иметь-NPST-3PL.S

And children in fact, you see, at the age of nothing remembering children and **cannot speak**.

When the verb *täjti* combines with the object *wer* ‘affair’ and the postpositive element *χõša* ‘by, at’ or *kẽš* ‘for’, its semantics is close to ‘deal with somebody’ (see example 15).

15. Kazym (Resourceful servant 8)

ma luw kẽš-el-a i wer täj-l-əm.  
1SG 3SG for-3SG-DAT one affair have-NPST-1SG.S  
I have to **deal with him**.

The verb *täjti* marked by the subjective suffixes can participate in conveying the meaning of managing something (see example 16).

16. Kazym (Khujtunkistan 73)

šoraskiməl-a jox-t-əs i xq  
sea edge-DAT come-PST.3SG one person  
et-əs xqłam piti xoptərka  
go.out-PST.3SG three black female.deer  
täj-əl.  
have-NPST.3SG.S

He came to the sea and saw: someone is riding, **running** by three black female deer.

In summation, the examples presented in this section point to the fact that the verb *täjti* ‘have’ can form a sort of analytical combination with various nouns, like ‘to have a swim / smoke / chat’ in English, to verbalize different semantics.

#### V. THE VERB *TÄJTI* IN THE FORMS OF THE OBJECTIVE CONJUGATION OR PASSIVE VOICE

The verb *täjti* may be marked by the suffixes of the

objective conjugation or passive voice. In the examined corpus of texts, the number of examples of this type is around 20 %. It should be noted that the verb *täjti* in the forms of the objective conjugation or passive voice can occur as an independent element or in combination with the converb form of another notional verb.

First, let us consider sentences with the notional verb *täjti* used independently. In such examples, it tends to combine with an animate or inanimate object to express the meaning of keeping or preserving something or treating somebody (see example 17–18). The indication of the localization of the object is obligatory. Examples 17, 19 illustrate the verb *täjti* in the forms of the objective conjugation, example 18 – in the form of the passive voice.

17. Shuryshkar (Nephew of a woman 8)

χutẽm χãtł jõtãn täj-s-ət, χut-mit  
three day at.home keep-PST-S.SG:O.SG three-ORD  
ãtł-na súk-ə täχi-ja  
day-LOC grief-ADJ place-LAT  
tu-s-te.

bright-NPST-S.3SG:O.SG

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

18. Kazym (About deer 5)

ma kõša-j-ẽm-n atm-a  
1SG owner-EP-1SG-LOC bad-ADV  
täj-l-a-j-ãm.  
have-NPST-PAS-EP-1SG

The owner treats (keeps) me badly.

Combining with an inanimate object, the verb helps convey the meaning of being situated somewhere (example 19).

19. Kazym (River Earth Man and Ob Earth Man 46)

in ñoxãs soxəl luw täj-l-əlle mæt  
this sable skin 3SG have-NPST-S.3SG:SG right  
luw olãm-s-əlle.  
3SG steal-PST-S.3SG:O.SG

This sable **skin is located at him**, he stole it.

In the meaning ‘to take somebody for somebody or something’ the verb *täjti* combines with the object marked by the dative suffix (example 20).

20. Tegi (Son of Czarevitch 46)

pa jastə-l-ət ne ki  
and say-NPST-3PL.S woman if  
apši-j-a täj-l-əw  
younger.sister-EP-DAT have-NPST-S.1PL:O.SG.  
xuo ki pa apši-j-a  
man if ADD younger.brother-EP-DAT  
täj-l-ew.  
have-NPST-S.1PL:O.SG.

If you are a woman, say, we'll **take you for a younger sister**, if you're a man, we'll **take you for a younger brother**.

In the form of the objective conjugation or passive voice the verb *täjti* can combine with the objects denoting clothes or shoes and convey the idea of wearing something (examples 21–22).

21. Kazym (Three wise words)

mõj wer-ti lop-əs  
what do-IPFV.PART say-PST.3SG.S  
kõša-j-ət tõt nañ sɔpek-ŋəl-ãn

owner-EP-POSS.3SG just 2SG **boot-DU-POSS.2SG**

səra **tāj-s-alən.**

quickly **have-PST-S.2SG:O.DU/PL**

What to do, the owner said, you **boots** quickly **wore out**.

22. Kazym (Three wise words 14)

nəməs-əl ja səpek möj xuw tāj-l-a.

think-NPST PRTC **boot** whatlong **have NPST-PAS**

He thinks if it is long to have **boots worn out**.

Secondly, let us turn to the sentences in which the verb *tājti* forms an analytical construction with the converb. The verb *tājti* in the forms of the objective conjugation or passive voice can be used as a part of the analytical construction in combination with a converb marked by the suffix *-man*. The construction can be schematically presented by the following model:

Model 2. Analytical construction with the verb *tājti*

V-man <sup>CNV</sup> – tāj-S.O/PAS.PM
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The semantics of the construction depends on the non-finite form of the verb marked by the converb suffix. Non-finite forms of the verb are known to have no morphological category of the voice in analyzed dialects [13]. But in the construction with the verb *tājti* the converb form expresses a passive meaning while the verb *tājti* conveys the idea of keeping. Examples below (23–25), elicited from the text corpus, illustrate the use of the analytical construction with the verb *tājti* marked by the suffixes of the objective conjugation (23–24) and passive voice (25).

23. Kazym (The youngest daughter of the sun 56)

sām-əl jāx-t-a-ən joxi  
heart-POSS.3SG go.away-EVID.NPST-3SG-LOC at.home  
**xāj-man tāj-l-əlle.**

**leave-CNV have-NPST-S.3SG:O.SG**

When he went, he **left his** (he kept his heart left) heart at home.

24. Shuryshkar (How did the surnames appear? 48)

«**Йант-ман тāj-а-лэн**», ун  
**play-CNV have-IMP-S.DU/PL:O.SG** old  
хуй-эл йас-т-эл.  
man-POSS.3SG speech-VRBL-NPST.3SG.S

“**Have fun him (keep him played)**”, the older man says.

25. Shuryshkar (The tale of the fisherman and the fish 153)

pəjar-ət-n pa taś-əŋ jəx-ən  
boyar-PL-LOC and wealth-ADJ people-LOC  
**kerət-man tāj-l-a.**

**go.round-CNV have-NPST-PAS.3SG**

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

Examples 26–30 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 *tājti* in the analytical construction.

26. Kazym (Fieldwork 2018)

Щи мойлэпс-см **шави-ман**  
this present-POSS.1SG **keep-CNV**  
**tāj-л-см.**

**have-NPST-S.1SG:O.SG**

I **preserved** my gift (keep my gift preserved).

27. Kazym (Fieldwork 2018)

Щи авкайсм иса **вантыйл-ман** щи  
this hand deer **look-CNV** this  
**tāj-л-см.**

**have-NPST-S.1SG:O.SG**

I **watch over** this hand-deer (I keep this hand-deer watched over).

28. Kazym

Күр йувэр-ты сухялам така **йувэрт-ман**  
legs tie-IPFV.PTCP fabric tight **wrap-CNV**  
**tāj-л-э-лам.** (Fieldwork 2018)

**have-NPST-EP-S.1SG:O.PL**

I always **wear** footcloths (I keep legs wrapped).

29. Kazym (Fieldwork 2018)

Нāj вонт-эн йājх-ты мār-эн-эн  
2SG forest-LOC go-IPFV.PTCP time-POSS.2SG-LOC  
хот-эн **вант-ман тāj-л-см.**

house-POSS.2SG **look-CNV have-NPST-S.1SG:O.SG**

While you're walking in the woods, I'm **holding** your house (I keep your house guarded).

30. Kazym (Fieldwork 2018)

Нāj пурмэс-л-ан лупас-эн **шави-ман**  
2SG thing-PL-POSS.2SG storage-LOC **keep-CNV**  
**tāj-л-э-л-лам.**

**have-NPST-EP-S.1SG:O.PL**

I **store** your things in the storage.

Thus, it can be inferred that the verb *tājti* can be used in the forms of both subjective and objective conjugation, and combine with nouns and other notional verbs in the converb form to encode a wider range of meanings as compared to its key possessive semantics.

## VI. CONCLUSION

In Kazym and Shuryshkar dialects of the Khanty language the verb *tājti* ‘have’ can be used in the forms of the subjective and objective conjugation and passive depending on the intended semantics. In the forms of the subjective conjugation the verb primarily encodes possessive relations or forms an analytical combination with nouns in the function of the object to convey a more concrete meaning of holding, keeping, thinking etc. In such combinations the meaning of the verb is affected by the semantics of the object-noun.

In the forms of the objective conjugation and passive voice the verb is used to convey a wider range of meanings due to the fact that it combines with another notional verb in the converb form. It is the semantics of the other verb in the combination that is conveyed while the verb *tājti* functions as an auxiliary element.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This paper was financially supported by Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation (grant No. 14.Y26.31.0014.).

## ABBREVIATIONS

ADJ – adjectivizer, ADV – adverbilizer, CNV – converb, DAT – dative, DIM – diminutive, DU – dual, FOC – focus, EP – epenthetic vowel, IMP – imperative, LAT – lative, LOC – locative, NEG – negative, NPST – non-past tense, O –

objective conjugation, ORD – ordinals, PAS – passive, PM – personal markers, PL – plural, IPFV.PTCP – present participle, PRTC – particle, PST – past tense, POSS – possessive suffix, SG – singular, S – subjective conjugation, VRBL – verbalizer.

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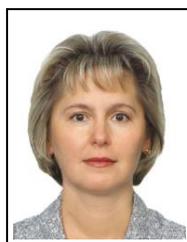
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