

Relative Clause or Nominalized Clause: the evidence from Kazym Khanty

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In most of Siberian languages, participial forms are able to relativize almost any participant (Pakendorf 2012). This has been attested in different Khanty dialects as well, e. g. Northern Khanty (Nikolaeva 1999: 72) and Eastern Khanty (Filchenko 2007: 465). The current study deals with adnominal participial clauses in Kazym Khanty. The data for the study was elicited during two fieldtrips to Kazym (Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug) held in 2018–2019.

So, the list of syntactic positions accessible to relativization includes subject, direct object, postpositional argument, adjunct, possessor. Examples (1–2) represent subject relativization and locative adjunct relativization.

- (1) *woš-a män-əm təχəs-t-am*
city-DAT go-NFIN.PST friend-PL-1SG
'my friends who went to the city'
- (2) *mašaj-en tōmt-əm wont šik*
Masha-2SG get.lost-NFIN.PST forest dense
'The forest where Masha got lost is dense'.

However, there exists a construction akin to relative clause whose head does not denote any participant at all, cf. (3a–b).

- (3) a. *amp-əm aš-əm puškan est-ti sij ewəlt pät*
dog-1SG father-1SG shotgun shoot-NFIN.NPST sound from be.afraid.NPST[3SG]
'My dog is afraid of the sound when my father is shooting a shotgun'.
- b. **ma aš-əm est tām sij-ən*
I father-1SG shot.NPST[3SG] this sound-LOC
Intended reading: 'My father shoots with this sound'.

One more specific quasi-relative construction has the noun *wer*² 'deed, action' as its head. *Wer*-constructions are commonly used as sentential arguments:

- (4) *tām ewij-en nāwrem tōmät-t-əm wer-t ma wə-t-əm*
this girl-2SG child dress-TR-NFIN.PST do-3 I know-NPST-1SG.SG
'I know that this girl dressed the child'.

Our data shows that *wer*-constructions differ from relative clauses in the amount of functional structure they involve. The first argument comes from argument alternation. Kazym Khanty exhibits promotion to object and promotion to subject. The alternations are not marked on participial forms directly but reflect in argument encoding: demoted arguments get the Locative marking. In relative clauses, passivization is only possible if the pivot of relativization is direct object, as in (5):

- (5) a. *aŋk-əm tət-əm nān jiləp*
mother buy-NFIN.PST bread new
b. *aŋk-əm-ən tət-əm nān jiləp*
mother-1SG-LOC buy-NFIN.PST bread new

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² Actually, the root *wer* corresponds to the verbal root 'do'; we use the translation that seems to be more accurate and comprehensive.

‘The bread that my mother bought is fresh’.

Relativization of non-argument positions is incompatible with argument alternation:

- (6) a. *ma jaj-əm mašaj-əl imij-a wuj-əm χatł*
I brother-1SG Masha-3 wife-DAT take-NFIN.PST day
b. **ma jaj-əm-ən mašaj-əl imij-a wuj-əm χatł*
I brother-1SG-LOC Masha-3 wife-DAT take-NFIN.PST day
‘the day when my brother married Masha (lit. took his Masha as his wife)’

In contrast, *wer*-constructions exhibit argument alternations of any kind.

- (7) *kinška təχs-əm-ən wuj-t'-əm wer wə-t-əm*
book friend-1SG-LOC take-FREQ-NFIN.PST deed know-NPST-1SG.SG
‘I know that the book has been taken by my friend.’

Secondly, *wer*-construction can be modified with adverbs corresponding to the TP level (Cinque 1995), while relative clauses are restricted in this aspect. Thus, *wer*-constructions contain more verbal structure than relative clauses.

- (8) *wašaj-en jəχət tərəm tor-a janχ-əm wer-t ma wə-t-əm*
Vasya-2SG later Numto-DAT go-NFIN.PST deed-3 I know-NPST-1SG.SG
‘I know that later Vasya went to Numto.’

- (9) **aŋk-əm jəχət män-əm lapka*
mother-1SG later go-NFIN.PST shop

Intended reading: ‘the shop my mother went later to’

Finally, *wer*-constructions do not allow for adjectival modification and modification by numerals. Relativization obviously does not restrict head noun modification. Therefore, the head of the *wer*-constructions cannot be treated as full-fledged NP.

- (10) **ma wə-t-əm mašaj-en jak-ti təs wer*
I know-NPST-1SG.SG Masha-2SG dance-NFIN.NPST skillful deed
Intended reading: ‘I know about Masha’s skillful dance.’

- (11) **wašaj-en tərəm tor-a janχ-əm wet wer-t ma wə-t-əm*
Vasya-2SG Numto-DAT go-NFIN.PST five deed-3 I know-NPST-1SG.S
Intended reading: ‘I know about five Vasya’s visits to Numto.’

- (12) *jaj-əm äkt-əm wuśreməŋ mərəχ nul-s-əm*
brother-1SG pick-NFIN.PST sour cloudberry grind-PST-1SG.SG
‘I grinded the sour cloudberry picked by my brother’.

- (13) *aŋk-əm kat'aj-en jont-əm χələm jernas tinij-əs*
mother-1SG Katya-2SG sew-NFIN.PST three dress sell-PST[3SG]
‘My mother sold the three dresses sewed by Katya’.

We claim that the *wer*-construction can be approached as ‘analytical nominalization’. Kazym Khanty does not exhibit nominal ellipsis at all, and bare participles almost do not appear as nominalizations. Thus, *wer* ‘deed’ functions as nominalizer, being semantically empty. In the talk we will also argue for the differences between *wer*-constructions, relative clauses and sentences like (3a). We will show that the latter can be described as General Noun Modifying Clause Constructions (Matsumoto 1988). Finally, we will consider the structure of the constructions mentioned above.

References

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