The morpho-syntax of Voice in Udmurt: the case of the suffix *-s'k-*

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Aims: In this talk I will propose a unified account for the Udmurt verb formations marked with the suffix *-s'k-*, traditionally called as reflexive in the literature (e.g. GSzUJa1962, Kozmács 2008). The main hypothesis is that Voice syncretism can be found in Udmurt, since the suffix *-s'k-* is the phonological realization of at least two distinct syntactic voice alternations: 1. it marks active voice (reflexive, noncausative verbs), 2. it is used in a nonactive voice (middle-passive verbs).

Functions of the suffix: It is discussed in the descriptive literature (e.g. GSzUJa1962, Kozmács 2008) that the suffix *-s'k-* appears to have obtained the widest range of roles in Udmurt; it marks reflexives (1a), unergative verbs (1b), unaccusatives (1c) and passives (1d).

(1)   a.   *Pisej   korma-s'k-e.*
           kitty.NOM   scratch.herself-REF-PRS.3SG
           'The kitty scratches herself.'   (Kozmács 2008:32)
      b.   *Petyr   bakchayn   kopa-s'k-e.*
           Peter.NOM   garden.INESS   hoe-REF-PRS.3SG
           'Peter hoes in the garden.'   (Kozmács 2008:82)
      c.   *So   todmo   vrach   doryn   emja-s'k-e.*
           he.NOM   known   doctor.NOM   at   heal-REF-PRS.3SG
           'He heals at the known doctor.'   (Kozmács 2008:79)
      d.   *Perepec/-ez   si-is'k-iz   (anaj-en)*
           perepech(NOM)/-ACC   eat-REF-PST.3SG   mother-INST
           'The perepech was eaten (by the mother).'   (F. Gulyás & Speshilova 2014:9b)

Passives in Udmurt: The existence of the passive in Udmurt has been debated in the literature. One part of the literate argue that Udmurt has no distinct passive verb-form; the participle *-emyn* and the reflexive suffix *-s'k-* can be used as a passive in special cases (e.g. Bartens 2000, Kondrateva 2009), other part identifies the suffix *-emyn* as the most common passive marker in the language (Kozmács 2008, Asztalos 2010). F. Gulyás & Speshilova (2014) go further and adopt a pragmatic constraint of Siewierska (2011). F. Gulyás (2017) proposes that the constructions formed with the participle are impersonal passives and both intransitive and transitive verbs serve as the base predication for the operation and she argues that only the 3rd person singular form of the suffix *(-iśke, -iśkiz)* can be used as a passive and impersonal marker. According to native speakers in today's Udmurt the two constructions are interchangeable:

(2)   a.   *Jyrs'i   kuas'ti-s'k-iz.*
           hair.NOM   dry-NCAUS-PST.3SG
           'The hair was dried.'
      b.   *Jyrs'i   kuas't-emyn*
           hair.NOM   dry-PASS
           'The hair was dried.'

State of the art: It is widely discussed in the literature that the Voice head is not uniform across different constructions. There are three Voice related heads implicated in argument structure alternations across languages: Active, Passive and Middle Voice heads (Doron 2003, Alexiadou & Doron 2012, Alexiadou 2014).

Alexiadou & Doron (2012) argue that in languages that distinguish active and middle voice, the middle voice derives anticausative, reflexive, dispositional-middle and mediopassive verbs. For the syntactic representation of medio-passives, Alexiadou & Doron (2012) propose an approach based on Doron (2003). There are two separate non-active Voice heads: a middle Voice head and a passive Voice head (3). Middle Voice is the non-active counterpart of Kratzer's active Voice and gives rise to reflexives, passives and dispositional-middles in Greek type languages (Alexiadou 2014).

(3)   Voice
    Active   Non-active
                              1. passive
                              2. middle

Non-causative verbs: I will claim the suffix -*s'k*- is the phological realization of non-causativity (4a).
The verb marked with the suffix can appear along with a *by itself* phrase (4b) and with a non-agentive
from-phrase (4c) and the appearance together with an agentive *by*-phrase is ungrammatical (4d).

(4)   a. *Vaza   pil'i-s'k -iz.*
           vase.NOM   break-NCAUS-PST.3SG
           'The vase broke.'
       b. *Vaza   asles'tyz   pil'i-s'k -iz.*
           vase.NOM   itself.ABL   break-NCAUS-PST.3SG
           'The vase broke by itself.'
       c. *Vaza   pil'iskiz   skvozn'ak   seren*
           vase.NOM   break.PST.3SG draft.NOM   because.of
           'The vase broke from the draft.'
       d. **Jyrs'ijez   kuas'ti-s'k-iz   shundy-en*   non-causative
           hair.3SG.NOM   dry-NCAUS-PST.3SG   sun-INST
           '*Her hair was dried by the sun.'

I will argue that in Udmurt the structure of the marked non-causative verbs contain a Voice projection
(following Anagnostopulou & Schäfer 2006, Schäfer 2008, Schäfer at al. 2014, Alexiadou 2010).

(5)   [Voice (–ext. arg. –AG) [v [Root]]]

Middle-passives: The external argument is not required in middle-passives, can never surface in the
form of a *by*-phrase, but it can appear as an adjunct (see Doron 2015, Márkus 2015). In Udmurt some
verb formed with the suffix -*s'k*- can co-occur with an agentive causer as a PP:

(6)   *Ös   us't-is'k-iz   Sasha   seren*
       door.NOM   open-NCAUS-PST.3SG Sasha.NOM because.of
       'The door was opened by Sasha.'
       (Lit. The door opened because of Sasha.)

Some cases the existence of an implicit external argument in the argument structure is suggested by
the fact that the appearance of an agent oriented adverb, e.g 'intentionally' is possible (7).

(7)   *Vaza   juri   pil'iskiz*
       vase.NOM   intentionally   break.PST.3SG
       'The vase was broken intentionally.'
       (Lit. The vase broke intentionally.')

I will argue that these verb-formations are middle-passives in Udmurt.
Where is -*s'k*- – there is a non-active Voice: The facts above suggest the hypothesis for the suffix -
s'k- that in Udmurt there is an underspecified voice head and its phonetical realization is the -*s'k*-
suffix. The suffix -*s'k*- marks different verb formations in Udmurt: non-causatives, reflexives, half-
passives and passives.

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