

Verb valency classes in Evenki in the comparative perspective

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The subject (S/A argument) in Evenki is in the nominative, while the direct object (P/T) is in the accusative (other forms of the direct object in Evenki are Indefinite Accusative case, Designative case or Reflexive-possession markers). Agreement is possible only with the nominative subject; there is no object agreement in Evenki.

Tungusic languages (TLs) have the following **five** valency-changing categories:

Causative in -vkAn- (cf. *iče-* ‘see’ → *iče-vken-* ‘show’),

Passive in -v- (*va-* ‘kill’ → *va-v-* ‘be killed’),

Decausative (Mediopassive) in -p/-v- (*sukča-* ‘break’ (tr.) → *sukča-v-* ‘break’ (intr.),

Reciprocal in -mAt- (*iče-* ‘see’ → *iče-met-* ‘see each other’),

Resultative in -ča- (*loko-* ‘hang’ (tr.) → *loku-ča-* ‘hang’ (intr.),

1. Case inventories in TLs.

There are twelve distinct case markers in Evenki (Lebedeva et al. 1985: 44) and Even (Novikova 1960: 152). Apart from the unmarked nominative (NOM) the following case markers will be of interest here:

Table 1. Case inventories of Tungusic languages.

Table 1 summarizes case inventories in four major Tungusic languages taking into consideration only cases directly pertaining to our study:

	Evenki	Even	Nanai	Manchu
NOM (nominative)	Ø	Ø	Ø	Ø
ACC (accusative)	-vA	-v/-u/-m/-bu	-vA/-bA	-be
ACC 2 (designative, indefinite accusative)	-jA	-gA	-gA	-
DAT (dative)	-du	-du	-du	-de
LOC (locative)	-lA	-lA	-lA	----
ALL (allative)	-tki	-tki	-či	----
ABL (ablative)	-duk	-duk	----	-či /-ci
Instr (instrumental)	-d’i	-d’i	-d’i	----
PROL (prolative)	-li	-li	(-li)//---	----
ELAT (elative)	-git	-gič	-diAdi	-----

2. Valency patterns, case alternations and valency changing categories in Evenki.

2.1. Aivalent verbs (coding frame: <>)

This class includes meteoverbs, some of which do not combine with a subject at all, while others may optionally take a cognate subject:

- (5) (Udun) *udun-d’ere-n*
rain rain-PRES-3SG
‘It is raining.’

The verb in (5) counts as avalent, since it can take only a cognate (non-referential) subject, and thus can be considered as a variety of impersonal construction (Malchukov & Ogawa 2011).

Avalent verbs do not form causative (with one exception), decausative, reciprocal or resultative derivatives, and marginally form passive derivatives with the adversative meaning.

The adversative passive formed in Evenki, Even and Nanai from a few weather verbs implies an adverse effect on the subject of the passive form and the corresponding form increases verbal valency. There is a crucial semantic and syntactic difference between verbs of this type and their derivatives with the passive suffix -v: while the base verbs do not contain any 'animate' semantic roles in their predicate frames, the latter obligatorily include an animate patient, i.e. the person who is subject to a certain atmospheric phenomenon considered as adversative to this person. The group of weather verbs includes the following seven bases and derived passive forms:

- (6) a. udun- 'rain' --> udun-mu- 'be caught by the rain',
b. tygde- 'rain' --> tygde-v-/tygden-mu 'be caught by the rain',
c. imanna- 'snow' --> imanna-v- 'be caught by the snow-storm',
d. edyn- 'blow (of wind)' --> edyn-mu- 'be caught by the wind',
e. dolbo- 'become dark', 'come (about night)' --> dolbo-v- 'be caught by darkness', 'be caught by night', 'come home late at night',
f. tyrga- 'become light', 'come (of morning)' --> tyrga-v- 'be caught by sun-rise',
g. ingin- 'come (of frost)' --> ingin-mu- 'be caught by frost'.

- (7) a. (Udun) udun-djere-n (the subject is usually omitted).
(rain) rain-prs-3sg
lit. 'Rain rains', i.e. 'It is raining.'
b. Bi udun-mu-Ø-m.
I rain-pass-nfut-1sg
lit. 'I was rained', i.e. 'I got soaked in the rain.'

- (8) a. (Edyn) edyn-djeche-n.
(wind) blow.wind-impf-3sg
'The wind was blowing.'
b. Bi (edyn-du-v) edyn-mu-djeche-v.
I (wind-dat-1sg.poss) blow.wind-pass-impf-1sg
lit. 'I was blown upon by my wind.'

- (9) a. Dolbo-ro-n.
come.night-nfut-3sg
'Night came.'/'It became dark.'
b. Bi dolbo-vu-Ø-m.
I come.night-pass-nfut-1sg
'I was caught by night/darkness.'/'I came home late at night.'

- (10) a. Ingini-l-le-n.

become.frosty-inch-nfut-3sg

'It became frosty.'

b. Ingini-v-re-n.

become.frosty-pass-nfut-3sg

'He began to feel cold.'

3.2. Mono-valent verbs (coding frame: <NOM>)

Monovalent verbs constitute a fairly heterogeneous group including verbs with both animate/agentive and inanimate/non-agentive subjects: *evi-* 'play' is representative of the first class, while *sukča-* 'break (intr)' is representative of the second group, e.g.

- (11) *Kuṇakan evi-d'ere-n*
child play-NF.3SG
'The child is playing.'

- (12) *D'av eje-re-n.*
boat sink-NONFUT-3SG
'The boat sank.'

Mono-valent verbs productively form causative derivatives, a few of them form reciprocal and resultative derivatives, but do not form passive (with two exceptions: verbs of movement *eme-* 'come' and *suru-* 'go away') and decausative derivatives.

3.3. Bivalent verbs

3.3.1. The ACC pattern.

Transitive verbs may occur in four different types of transitive structures, depending on the form of the object: <NOM -- ACC.DEF//ACC.INDEF//REFL.POSS//DES> (*d'u-va* – *d'u-ja* – *d'u-vi* – *d'u-ja-n*; plus NOM = zero form in South-Tungusic languages).

Zero form (Nominative case) expressing non-referential direct objects is frequent in Southern Tungusic languages and in Manchu but is impossible in Evenki.

Bivalent verbs characterized by the Accusative pattern productively form causative, passive and reciprocal derivatives (if the corresponding situations [States of Affairs] are available), a few dozens of them also form decausative and resultative derivatives.

3.3.2. Bivalent intransitives.

The following 7 valency types can be distinguished in this case (below I give only English translations of the corresponding Evenki verbs):

- 1) Case frame <NOM, DAT> (help, tell, answer, fit, lose, envy, get used to);
- 2) Case frame <NOM, ALL> (answer, stick to, freeze to, look at, get offended, whisper, shout to, become angry with);
- 3) Case frame <NOM, INSTR> (be afraid of, play (guitar, etc.), wave (with sth), be named, fill (with sth), need, smell (with sth), feel glad/happy (about sth), feel

contented (with sth), be angry (with sb), feel surprised (with sth), feel shy, be ill [with some illness]);

- 4) Case frame <NOM, ABL> (be afraid of, go out of, depend on, lag behind, step down from the reindeer, become angry, be different from);
- 5) Case frame <NOM, COMIT> (meet, be friends with, fight with, get acquainted with, speak with, agree with, quarrel with, converse with);
- 6) Case frame <NOM, PROL> (think of, dream of, become distressed with);
- 7) Case frame <NOM, LOC> (enter).

Bivalent intransitives form causative and marginally reciprocal derivatives, but do not form passive, decausative and resultative derivatives.

3.4. Trivalent verbs. Variation of Recipient Marking in Evenki (in comparison with other Tungus-Manchu languages)

There is considerable variation of Recipient (R) marking with three-place verbs in TLs expressing the meanings GIVE, FEED / GIVE TO EAT, GIVE TO DRINK, TELL, SHOW, TEACH, EXPLAIN and SEND, that is verbs whose semantic frames include Agent, Theme (either object or information given or transferred to Recipient) and the Recipient itself (R) which can be defined as a semantic actant which receives an object as a result of such ‘canonical’ three-participant events like ‘give’ and ‘send’. So, Rs are present in the semantic frames of the following Evenki verbs expressing either physical or mental transfer:

(15) alagu- ‘teach’, anii- ‘give as a gift’, buu- ‘give’, guun- ‘tell’, nuŋni- ‘show’, ulgučen- ‘tell’, ulii- ‘feed’, uŋ- ‘send’, uniye- ‘sell’, and also derived causatives dev-u-vken- ‘feed / give to eat’, um-i-vkan- ‘give to drink, iče-vken- ‘show’, and tyl-i-vken- ‘explain’ (see examples in the next section). Four cases can mark the R in Evenki (i.e. their markers are added to the R-nouns or R-pronouns): 1) Dative (see example (16)), 2) Allative (see (17)), 3) Locative (see (18)), and 4) Accusative (see (19)):

(16) Etyrken **sulaki-du** imuren-me buu-re-n.
old.man-NOM **fox-DAT** fat -DEF.ACC give-NONFUT-3SG
‘The-old-man gave the fat **to the fox**’;

(17) **Girki-tki-vi** tara-ve guu-kel.
friend-ALL that-ACC tell-2SG.IMP
‘Tell it **to your friend**’;

(18) Eni **sin-dule** ukumni-ve uŋ-che-n.
mother **you.SG-LOC** milk-ACC send-PAST-3SG
‘Mother sent **you** (the) milk’;

(19) Atyrkan **beyetken-me** ulle-t dev-uvken-deče-n.
old.woman **boy-ACC** meat-INSTR eat-CAUS-IMPF-3SG
‘The old woman fed **the boy** with meat’;

The majority of trivalent verbs form causative, passive and reciprocal derivatives (if the corresponding situations [States of Affairs] are available) but do not form decausative and resultative derivatives.

3.5. Correlation of verb valency types (VVT) and the productivity of different valency changing operations (VCO) is shown in Table 2.

While working on my book “Evenki” (Nedjalkov 1997) and two co-authored papers on the resultative and reciprocal constructions in Evenki (Nedjalkov & Nedjalkov 1988; 2007) I checked about five hundred most common Evenki verbs of different valency types and semantic classes.

- 1) Aivalent verbs comprise three lexical-semantic groups – weather verbs, verbs denoting beginning of (a) seasons of the year and (b) periods of day/night.
- 2) One-place intransitive verbs and two-place transitive verbs belong to many lexical-semantic groups (e.g. activities, mental and emotive verbs, of sound production, movement, location, physiological states, changing of states, etc.).
- 3) Two-place intransitive verbs mainly involve emotion verbs, and also activities, speech, mental verbs, movement, sense perception, lexical reciprocals, happening, etc.
- 4) Three-place transitive verbs comprise lexemes denoting giving (of objects or information), taking away, fixing, putting, covering, filling, cleaning, object-oriented reciprocals and causatives of two-place transitive verbs.

Table 2 sums up the data given above in bold. Pluses are given for cases which are not characterized by serious restrictions (in fact restrictions in various degrees characterize all the VCOs below; in brackets I give the number of verbs allowing various VCOs). ID stands for cases which include Isolated (exceptive) Derivatives.

Table 2. Verb valency types and productivity of valency changing operations in Evenki.

VCO VVT	Quantity of verbs(appr.)	Causative (-vkAn)	Passive (-v-)	Decausative (-p/-v-)	Reciprocal (-mAt)	Resultative (čA)
Aivalent verbs	40	-- (1)	--ID (7)	--	--	--
V-intr (one place)	200	+	-- ID (2)	--	-- ID (3)	+
V-tr (two-place)	200	+	+	+ (30)	+	+
V-intr (two place)	40	+	--	--	+	-- ID
V-tr (three place)	20	+	+ ID	--	+	-- ID

Examples of Evenki derivatives for various types of valency changing operations can be found in Konstantinova 1964, Nedjalkov 1992, 1993, 1997, Nedjalkov & Nedjalkov 1988, 2007.

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