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Enets conditional converb of the verb 'say' as conditional clause marker

1. Introduction

1.1. Enets: general facts

- Genetic affiliation: Samoyedic < Uralic
- Taymyr Peninsula, Northern Siberia, Russia
- Two dialects: Forest (15-20 speakers), Tundra (5-10 speakers)

1.2. Data

- Corpus of oral texts in Forest Enets (appr. 215 000 words):
  - archive recordings (1970–1990s) ≈ speakers born in 1910s–1930s
  - modern recordings (2005–2016) ≈ speakers born in 1940s–1960s

1.3. Object of the study

- Conditional converb (CVB.COND) of *man* 'say' as conditional clause marker:

(1) *ɔlaj-za*   **ma-b**   *tɔne,*
leftover-NOM.SG.3SG   **say(pfv)-CVB.COND**   there_is(ipfv).3SG.S
kudaxaa-d   *nʲi*   *kanus*
for_a_long_time-DAT.SG   NEG.3SG.S   leave(ipfv).CONN
'If it has leftovers, it does not go far away'.

- The main function of CVB.COND is to mark the verbal head in protasis clauses:

(2) *spidɔla-xaru*   **tɔnie-buʔ**   *sɔjza ŋa-ʔ*   *nʲi-uʔ*
radio_set-EVEN   **there_is(ipfv)-CVB.COND**   good   exist(ipfv)-CONN   NEG-3SG.S.CONT
'If there was a radio set "Spidola", it would be fine, after all'.

- Lexical use of CVB.COND of *man* 'say' denoting the event of speaking in protasis:

(3) *dʲisi-jʔ*   **ma-bune-da**   *kanʲ-ʔ,*
grandfather-NOM.SG.1SG   **say(pfv)-CVB.COND-OBL.SG.3SG**   leave(pfv)-2SG.S.IMP
modʲ   *kan-ta-zʔ*
I   leave(pfv)-FUT-1SG.S
'If my grandfather says: "Go", I will go'.

- Lexical uses are much less frequent than the use as conditional clause marker: 3 to 91 occurrences in the corpus.
- The uses of *man* 'say' as conditional clause marker make up about 10% of CVB.COND uses in the corpus: 91 of 891 (no frequency differences between the two generations of speakers).

- Areal perspective on conditional converb of 'say' as conditional clause marker:
  - among the languages of Siberia attested only for Enets [Matić, Pakendorf 2013]
  - of the two dialects of Enets exists only in the Forest variety

1.4. Aims of the study

- to show that CVB.COND of *man* 'say' as a conditional clause marker is a recent development
- to trace the changes in the use of CVB.COND of *man* 'say' over time
- to propose the possible path of grammatical development of this function

2. The use of CVB.COND of *man* 'say' by the two generations of Forest Enets speakers

2.1. Phonological form and possessive marking

- CVB.COND has several allomorphs and can be used with or without possessive marking referring to the subject of the clause:
  - *-bune* — always with possessive marking (3)
  - *-buʔ* — with (4) or without possessive marking (2)
  - *-b* (5) — only without possessive marker

(4) *kudaxaa-j*   *dʲa-xan*   **dʲiri-bu-ta**
for_a_long_time-ADJ   place-LOC.SG **live(ipfv)-CVB.COND-OBL.SG.3SG**
sɛga-da
spend_the_night(pfv)-FUT.3SG.S
'If she lives far away, she would stay for a night'.

(5) *tɛxɛ*   *sira-da*   **kaʔa-b**
there(loc) snow-OBL.SG.3SG **come_down(pfv)-CVB.COND**
ŋulʲ kezeru-t   *tʃi   oka   ɛ-ubi*
very wild_reindeer-OBL.PL.2SG here many be(ipfv)-HAB.3SG.S
'When the snow falls down, the wild reindeer tend to be very numerous'.

- The choice between these variants is largely free — statistically it is associated with the type of construction, specific verbal lexemes, generation of speakers, etc.

Table 1. Distribution of formal variants of CVB.COND wrt function and generation of speakers

YoB	Function	*-bune*-POSS	*-buʔ*-POSS	*-buʔ*	*-b*	Ratio of *-b*
before 1940	'say' CCM	0	43	1	2	0.04
	other	29	269	17	28	0.08
after 1940	'say' CCM	0	17	0	28	**0.6**
	other	138	295	5	19	0.04

- Formal changes in the use of CVB.COND of *man* 'say' as conditional clause marker:
  - the speakers of older generation (born before 1940) predominantly use the *-buʔ*-POSS to mark *man* 'say' in conditional clauses (6)
  - in the texts by the speakers born after 1940 the variant *-b* becomes much more frequent (1), (7)
- The possessive marker used with CVB.COND of *man* 'say' is always 2SG:

(6) **ma-bu-t**   *tɔ-ju*   *tɔɔ-j-zʔ,*   *axa,*
say(pfv)-CVB.COND-OBL.SG.2SG that-RESTR.ADJ reach(pfv)-M-3SG.M yeah
teza   dʲeri   dʲoda
now   day   middle
'If, say, it [the sun] moved there, yeah, now it is the middle of the day'.

(7) *sej-za*   **ma-b**   *nʲi-ʔ*   *buzder-ʔ*   *kaʔa*
eye-NOM.PL.3SG **say(pfv)-CVB.COND** NEG-3PL.S move(ipfv)-CONN die(pfv).3SG.S
'If its [reindeer's] eyes don't move, it died'.

2.2. Position in the clause

- The CVB.COND of *man* 'say' can be located at the clause periphery, more frequently clause-initially (6), sometimes — in the clause-final position (8), or inside the clause, often after the first constituent (7), (9).

(8) ɛtɔ, pɔnʲiŋa-ʔ   sɔjza malʲtʃa   kasa entʃeu-ʔ   **mabut**
    so   do(ipfv)-3PL.S   good overcoat   man person-PL   **say(pfv)-CVB.COND-OBL.SG.2SG**
    'Well, they wear good overcoat if they are men'.

(9) bi-ta   **ma-b**   dʲɔri,   mu,
    water-NOM.SG.3SG   **say(pfv)-CVB.COND**   deep   PLC
    oka   poga   mɔʒnɔ   tʃi-ʃ
    many   fishing_net   it_is_possible   install(pfv)-CVB
    'If the water, say, is deep, one can install many nets'.

Table 2. Position of CVB.COND of *man* 'say' in the conditional clause

YoB	Position		Ratio of uses inside the clause
	Clause periphery	Inside the clause	
before 1940	32	16	0.3
after 1940	17	23	**0.6**

- In the texts by the speakers born after 1940 the CVB.COND of *man* 'say' is used inside the clause more often than in the texts by older speakers.

2.3. Semantic and discourse functions

- Conditional constructions with CVB.COND of *man* 'say' usually describe relations between generic or habitual situations, cf. (10) and examples (6)–(9) above:

(10) prɔdukti-z   **ma-b**   tara-ʔ
     foodstuff-NOM.PL.2SG   **say(pfv)-CVB.COND**   necessary(ipfv)-3PL.S
     mu-d,   kan-ta-d   tɛxɛ,   pensii-d   nɔʔɔ-da-d
     PLC-DAT.SG   leave(pfv)-FUT-2SG.S there(loc)   pension-OBL.SG.2SG   grasp(pfv)-FUT-2SG.S
     'If, say, you need food, you would go there and get your pension'.

- In some contexts, the clause with CVB.COND of *man* 'say' is loosely integrated with apodosis clause (11) or not followed by the apodosis clause at all performing a scene-setting function (12)

(11) kutuj-r   **ma-bu-t**   ke-za   bɔɔ,
     some-NOM.SG.2SG   **say(pfv)-CVB.COND-OBL.SG.2SG**   side-NOM.SG.3SG   bad
     tʃike-r   kaʔa-da
     this-NOM.SG.2SG   die(pfv)-FUT.3SG.S
     'Of some of them, say, body is bad [i. e. they are skinny], such will die'.

(12) sira-za   **mɔ-b**   ɛu   dʲodʲi-d   ŋa-j,
     snow-NOM.SG.3SG   **say(pfv)-CVB.COND**   here(dir)   time-DAT.SG   exist(ipfv)-3SG.S.IMP
     ɛu   dʲodʲi-d   ŋa,   ed sira nʲiʔ   ed   pudar   tɔr
     here(dir)   time-DAT.SG   exist(ipfv).3SG.S   so snow on(dir)   so   put(pfv)-FUT-2SG.SOsg   so
     'Say, let the snow be till here, it is till here, you will put it [an iron trap] on the snow so'.

3. Discussion

- Formal change — the loss of the last vestiges of converb, development into a discourse particle:
  - loss of possessive marking, spread of the most phonologically reduced form
  - integration into the clause

- Supposition as the source of conditional meaning:
  - Grammaticalization of 'say' to conditional marker includes the stage where it functions as discourse marker of suggestion or supposition [Van Olmen 2013; Chapell 2017].
  - In Enets, supposition can be expressed by CVB.COND in independent clauses (13).

(13) *peri*   *ʃiʔ*   ***kada-bu-ta***   *ŋo*
     always   I.ACC   **take_away(pfv)-CVB.COND-OBL.SG.3SG**   even
     'Maybe she will take me away even forever'.

- Thus, in Enets, the meaning of supposition can be attributed both to the lexical source, the verb *man* 'say', and to its grammatical form, CVB.COND.
- Path of development hypothesized for Enets CVB.COND of *man* 'say':
  'supposing you say' > discourse marker in scene-setting clauses > (conditional conjunction)
- This path explains the use of 2SG possessive marker in the older texts.
- Generic or habitual situations are more compatible with the semantics of suggestion ('supposing…') and scene-setting contexts than singular/episodic events.
- The use as discourse particle in scene-setting clauses is still partially retained.
- Conditional morphology in CVB.COND of *man* 'say' originates not from its use in complex conditional constructions, but from one of its functions in independent clauses.

Glosses

1, 2, 3 — 1st, 2nd, 3rd person, ACC — accusative, ADJ — adjectivizer, COND — conditional, CONN — connegative, CONT — contrastive TAM series, CVB — converb, DAT — dative, EVEN — marker meaning 'even', FUT — future, HAB — habitual, IMP — imperative, LOC — locative, M — middle indexation series, NEG — negative verb, NOM — nominative, OBL — oblique, P — possessive marker, PL — plural, PLC — placeholder, RESTR — restrictive, S — subject indexation series, SG — singular, SOsg — subject-object indexation series for singular object

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