Clause Linkage In Ket

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Scope of the study

This dissertation provides a typologically oriented description of clause linkage strategies in Ket, an endangered language spoken in Central Siberia. The notion of 'clause linkage' employed in the study pertains to the means of combining two (or more) clauses together into a single whole. In the traditional sense, it is generally associated with such notions as coordination and subordination.

The theoretical background of the present study is based on the general framework developed within the functional-typological approach. This approach puts primary emphasis on the role of functional factors at all levels of grammatical analysis (Comrie 1989; Givón 1984, 1990; Croft 1990, 1991; Langacker 1991). Contrary to the formal approach (e.g. Chomsky 1957), which generally regards grammatical structures as independent of their functions and meanings, the functional approach to grammar assumes the existence of certain interrelations between morphosyntactic structures and their semantic and pragmatic functions. These interrelationships can be generally explained in functional terms such as iconicity or economy. For example, many functionally oriented typological studies (e.g. Silverstein 1976; Haiman 1985; Givón 1980) propose the existence of an iconic correlation between the morphosyntactic representation and the semantic representation of a complex sentence. It predicts that the stronger the semantic relation between two events, the tighter the syntactic integration of the two propositions will be. These semantic-syntactic interrelations can be further organized together into a certain implicational scale or hierarchy showing semantic relations between the events and the degree of their integration. Well-known examples of such hierarchies include Givón's (1980) Binding Hierarchy, Van Valin and La Polla's (1997) Interclausal Relations Hierarchy and Cristofaro's (2003) Subordination Deranking Hierarchy.

Therefore, the main goal of the present study is not only to comprehensively describe existing strategies of clause linkage in Ket, but also to reveal the underlying functional associations between the morphosyntactic properties of clause-linking strategies and the semantics that these strategies serve to express.

1.2. Ket people and their language

Ket, also known as Yenisei Ostyak or Imbat Ket, is now the only surviving member of the Yeniseian language family. The last remaining speakers of the language reside in the north of Russia's Krasnoyarsk province (the Turuxanskij district as well as the south-west of the Èvenkijskij district) along the river Yenisei and its tributaries.

1.2.1 Yeniseian languages

The Yeniseian (Yeniseic) language family are one of Siberia's oldest language families. It consists of six known languages, of which Ket is the only surviving member today. The extinct Yeniseian languages include: Yugh († 80s of the 20th century), Kott († mid19th century), Assan († 18th century), Arin († 18th century) and Pumpokol († 18th century). Of all extinct Yeniseian languages, only Yugh was rather extensively documented, especially during the 60s-80s of the 20th century by Soviet scholars such as Andrej P. Dul'zon (and his students), Eruxim A. Krejnovič and others. The only grammatical description available on Kott is owed to the Finnish scholar Mathias A. Castrén, who managed to work with the last five speakers of Kott during his trip to Siberia in 1846-8. The linguistic information on the other three extinct languages exists only in the form of short wordlists compiled by early explorers of Siberia during the 18th century. Some scarce data (a few placenames and clan names) suggest that there probably existed other Yeniseian varieties spoken by Yarins (Buklins), Yastins, Bajkotts, as well as by some groups of Bachat Teleuts (Ashkishtims) and Kojbals (Kojbalkishtims) (see Dolgix 1960; Verner 1997: 169).

The linguonym 'Yeniseian' is connected with the name of the river Yenisei in Central Siberia, whose basin was the home to these languages at the time they were discovered. The toponymic evidence, however, suggests that the Yeniseian-speaking peoples once inhabited a much broader area. The spead of hydronyms containing the Yeniseian element for 'river' or 'water' (ket. *-ses/-sis*, yug. *-sym/-sim*, kot. *-šet/-čet*, ass. *-ul^j*, ar. *-set/-sat/-kul^j*, pum. *-tet/-tom*) indicates that the Yeniseian languages were once spoken on a vast territory stretching from the basin of the Selenga river in Northern Mongolia to the Kama river near the Ural mountains in Russia (Maloletko 2002).

The question of internal classification of the Yeniseian languages remains open. The specialists agree on the existence of two separate branches – Northern (Ket and Yugh) and Southern (Assan and Kott). The scarcity of data on Arin and especially on Pumpokol complicates their classification to a great extent: while the former seems to be closer to the Southern branch, the latter can be assigned to both branches (cf. Georg 2007: 19). Verner (1997) argues that these two languages show some lexical and phonetic parallels which suggest that they might form a single group. A provisional family-internal classification is given in Figure 1.1.
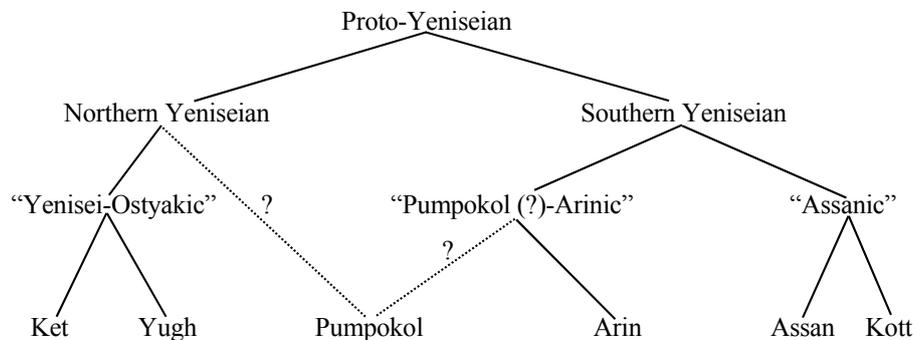

Figure 1.1. *Classification of the Yeniseian languages*

The Yeniseian family has been until recently considered as an isolate and conventionally assigned to the Paleosiberian (Paleoasiatic) group of languages.[1] The isolate status of the family gave rise to numerous hypotheses about its genetic relationships with other languages in Eurasia and North America. Among hypothetical connections most repeatedly claimed to exist are Sino-Tibetan languages, North Caucasian languages, Burushaski, and Na-Dene languages. But the evidence provided so far in support of most of these claims consists of random lexical coincidences and general typological similarity between the languages, and thus cannot be regarded as sufficient let alone convincing enough from the point of historical linguistics (cf. Georg 2007: 19). To date, the only hypothesis which has a substantial empirical

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[1] 'Paleosiberian languages' is a cover term used to classify a group of genetically unrelated language families spoken in Siberia: Yukaghir, Chukotko-Kamchatkan and Nivkh, and until recently Yeniseian. It is generally believed that they were the first among current speech communities to inhabit the territory of Siberia, but later lost ground to Altaic and Uralic languages and more recently to Russian (cf. Comrie 1981a: 238).

basis is the proposed genetic link between Yeniseian and Na-Dene (excluding Haida) in Northwest America.

The first linguist to claim a genetic connection between Yeniseian and Na-Dene was Alfredo Trombetti in 1923. Since that time, many other scientists, most notably Merritt Ruhlen (1998) have repeated the same suggestion (cf. Vajda 2001: 2). The real breakthrough came in 2008, when the American linguist Edward Vajda supplemented this hypothesis with extensive evidence stemming from both a wealth of lexical cognates and striking similarities in verbal morphology (Vajda 2008). His work received a favorable reaction from the majority of specialists in Na-Dene and Yeniseian languages such as Michael Krauss, Jeff Leer, James Kari, John Bengtson, and Heinrich Werner. In addition, a number of well-known historical linguists and typologists such as Bernard Comrie, Johanna Nichols, Victor Golla, Michael Fortescue, Eric Hamp, and Bill Poser announced their support of the methods and results provided in Vajda's work (see Dene-Yeniseic Symposium 2008). The structure of the proposed Dene-Yeniseian macrofamily is the following:
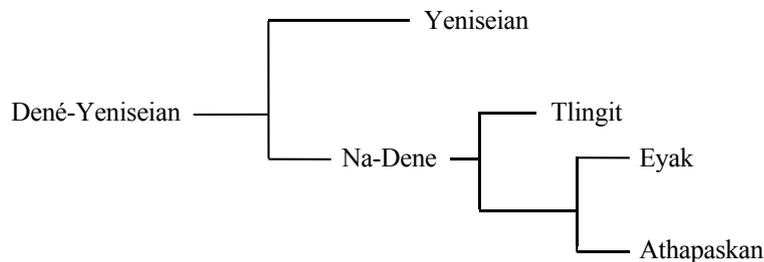

Figure 1.2. *Dené-Yeniseian macrofamily*

1.2.2 Ket

The ethnonym 'Ket' derives from the native word *keˀd* 'person'. The Kets themselves, when speaking their native language, often use the designation *òstɨk* (pl. *ostɨkan*) 'Ostyak' which was given to them by Russians. Notably, the only way to refer to 'Ket language' in Ket is to use the phrase *ostɨkanna qaˀ* 'Ostyaks' word'.[2]

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[2] The term 'Ostyak' most likely originates from a Turkic word meaning 'stranger, alien'. It was used by Russians to refer to any of the non-Turkic native inhabitants of Siberia such as the Ob'-Ugric Khanty (Ostyak proper) and the Selkup (Ostyak Samoyeds). Interestingly, many Khantys and Selkups (at least nowadays) consider the use of 'Ostyak', when referring to them, as rather insulting.

Another attested self-designation is *kɔ́nasked* (pl. *kɔ́nadeŋ*) which literally means 'bright / light-colored person', but it is rarely used today, mostly by the older generation. When Kets speak Russian, they often refer to themselves as *ketó* which is a vocative form of *keˀd*. This apparently was the reason why the designation *keto* was often used in Soviet passports in the column for 'nationality' (i.e. as officially recognized ethnic group).

Over the past decade, the number of Kets has been constantly decreasing: according to the census of 2010, there are 1219 people who reported themselves as ethnic Kets (cf. the census of 2002, which reports 1494 people[3]). The sociolinguistic situation is even more deplorable as language loss among Kets has been rapidly increasing, especially in recent years (cf. Krivonogov 2003: 76; Kazakevič 2006).

In the early 1990s, A.E. Kibrik proposed a five-tiered classification of numerically small nationalities of the Russian Federation ranging from moribund languages (first group) to those that continue to be used by the whole community for everyday communication (fifth group). He placed Ket in his fourth group, regarding it as a 'comparatively tenacious language' (Kibrik 1992: 78). Today we have to state that the situation has changed dramatically. The overall sociolinguistic situation is characterized by the lack of monolingual speakers and the predominance of Russian in all spheres of communication. Although in several local schools there are classes on Ket, it is however taught as a foreign language, i.e. the language of instruction is mainly Russian. Speaking from our fieldwork experience, the present-day number of competent speakers does not exceed 50 people.[4] The average age of the majority of competent speakers is above 60 years. Thus, according to Kibrik's classification, today Ket should be placed into his second group ('languages under direct threat of extinction') or even into the first group ('moribund languages') as it is no longer being passed to the younger generation, even in Kellog, the largest Ket-speaking community (cf. Kotorova 2003: 137-138; Kazakevič 2006).

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[3] The census of 1989 reports even a smaller number of Kets, namely 1089 people, which apparently can be attributed to a low-prestige status of belonging to a Siberian language minority at that time.
[4] According to the official census of 2010, only 190 ethnic Kets reported they have a command of their native language. But even this number is far from the real linguistic situation encountered by the author (cf. also Kazakevič 2006).

1.2.3 Ket dialects

Until the 80s of the 20th century, the name 'Ket' was used to refer to two dialects –
Imbat Ket and Sym Ket. At present, these varieties are considered to be two separate
languages – Ket (proper) and Yugh, respectively.

Ket (proper) distinguishes three major dialects: Southern, Central and Northern.[5] They
are further subdivided into subdialects named after the village each is spoken in.
Map 1.1 shows the location of virtually all known villages where Ket was or is still
spoken. It also indicates which general dialect a particular village belongs to.
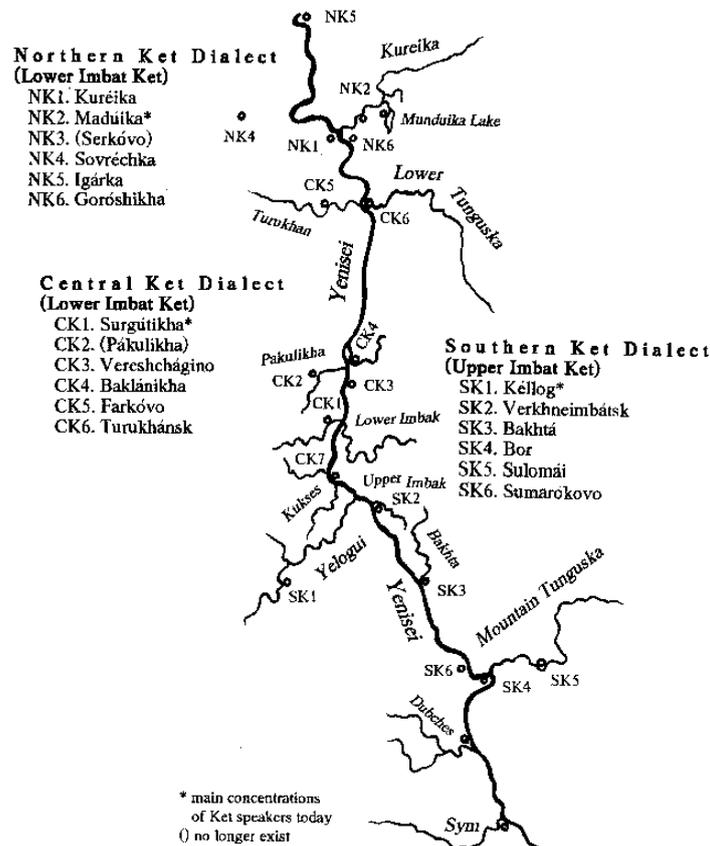
Map 1.1. Ket settlements (after 1930) (Vajda 2001)

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[5] In the linguistic literature on Ket one can often find designations *verxneimbatskij* (Upper Imbat) and
nižneimbatskij (Lower Imbat), the former refers to the Southern dialect, the latter to both Central and
Northern dialects (Vajda 2003: 4).

At present, the largest number of speakers belongs to the Southern dialect (they mainly reside in the village of Kellog), whereas the smallest number belongs to the Northern one (mainly spoken in the village of Madujka).[6]

The dialectal classification is based on geographical distribution and phonetic differences. Among the most prominent differences are, for example, truncation of the final unstressed vowel in Southern Ket (e.g. SK *sèl*, CK *sèle*, NK *sèli* 'reindeer'), rhotacism of intervocalic *d > r* in Southern and Northern Ket (e.g. CK *tì:də*, SK *tìr*, NK *tì:ri* 'root'), spirantization of *b > v* in Southern and Northern Ket (e.g. CK *dansibet*, SK and NK *dansivet* 'I think'), change of the spirant *s* to the fricative *š* in Central Ket (e.g. CK *šuˀl*, SK and NK *suˀl* 'a.k.o. salmon'). For a more detailed list of phonetic differences, see Werner (1997), Vajda (2000), Nefedov and Glazunov (2004). The existence of interdialectal variation at the lexical and morphological levels has been only occasionally addressed in the literature on Ket (e.g., Denning 1969: 64).[7] Despite the differences, the dialects are mutually understandable, though speakers of one dialect usually claim that the other dialects are "incorrect" and "not genuine".

1.3 Goals and data

The present study pursues the following goals: (i) to provide a unified morpho-syntactic account of clause-linking strategies in the Ket language; (ii) to investigate the relationship between the syntactic and semantic dimensions of complex constructions; (iii) to contribute to the research on Ket syntax; (iv) to contribute to the ongoing typological research on clause linkage with data from Ket.

The Ket data used and analyzed in the present study come from the following sources: (i) the author's own fieldwork (elicited examples and narrative texts), (ii) published studies, and (iii) Ket texts collected by other linguists (both published and unpublished).

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[6] Only a couple of competent speakers of Northern Ket were found in the village of Madujka during the fieldwork in 2004 (Nefedov and Glazunov 2004). It is likely that their number is even less nowadays.
[7] The chapter titled "Osobennosti ketskix dialektov [Peculiarities of the Ket dialects]" in Dul'zon's major work "Ketskij jazyk [The Ket language]" (Dul'zon 1968) examines differences between the Sym and Imbat varieties of Ket, i.e. between Yugh and Ket (proper), respectively.

The elicited data were primarily collected from speakers of the Southern Ket dialect (Kellog, Verxneimbatsk, Sulomaj) during several fieldwork trips within the period of 2005 – 2009 supported by the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology (Leipzig, Germany). The author's primary language consultant has been Valentina Andreevna Romanenkova née Tyganova (born 1948), a native Southern Ket speaker from Kellog. Other important Ket consultants the author worked with include the following people:

Southern Ket speakers

- Irikova (née Kotusova), Marija Maksimovna
    - Kellog, born in Kellog (1953)
- Kotusov, Aleksandr Maksimovič
    - Kellog, born in Kellog (1950)
- Žižina (née Koganova), Svetlana Nikolaevna
    - Kellog, born in Kellog (1953)
- Sutlin, Pavel Egorovič
    - Verxneimbatsk, born in Alinskoe (1948)
- Latikova (née Tyganova), Olga Vasilievna
    - Sulomaj, born in Sumarokovo (1917-2007)
- Tyganova (née Ljamič), Valentina Nikolaevna
    - Sulomaj, born in Baxta (1942)

Central Ket speakers

- Maksunova, Zoja Vasil'evna
    - Turuxansk, born in Pakulixa (1950)

The methodology used to collect the data includes both direct elicitation of sentences and work with narrative texts.

1.4 Notational format

The notational format used in the present study is to some extent unconventional both for general linguistic practice and Ketology, therefore, a few words of explanation are

in order. First of all, when citing Ket examples, we use a 4-tier representation of the data, as can be seen in (1.1).

(1.1) *kɛˀt dímɛsʲ*

keˀd	d{u}^{8}-i{k}^{7}-n^2-bes^0
person	3^8-here^7-PST^2-move^0

'The man came.'

The tiers provide the following information: 1) phonetic transription; 2) phonological transcription with morpheme breaks; 3) glossing; 4) free English translation. The separate representation of the phonetic and phonological levels is due to various morphophonological processes (mostly in case of verbs, as in the example above) which influence the actual "surface" form of Ket words. In addition, the phonetic transcription helps to capture certain peculiarities playing an important role in dialectal distinctions. These distinctions are leveled in the phonological variant of notation which can be far from what is actually heard, but is extremely useful in parsing the verbs. The list of phonemes for phonetic transcription is as follows: vowels: *a, e, ɛ, i, ɨ, o, ɔ, ʌ, ə, u*; consonants: *b* (*p*), *d* (*r*), *h, j, k* (*g, ɣ*), *l, m, n, ŋ, q* (*χ, ʁ, ɢ*), *s, t*. The list of phonemes for phonological transcription is as follows: vowels: *a, e, i, ɨ, o, ə, u*; consonants: *b, d, h, j, k, l, m, n, ŋ, q, s, t* (for more details on the phonological system of Ket, see Chapter 2). When quoting Ket examples from sources other than the author's fieldwork, the original transcription (presented in the first tier) remains unchanged.[8]

Another non-conventional feature of our transcription concerns the Ket verb. Following Vajda (2004, 2007), each Ket verb in the phonological tier is parsed into morphemes marked with superscript digits referring to particular positions they belong to, as illustrated above in (1.1) (on the position classes of the Ket verb, see Chapter 2). Other symbolic conventions used in the Ket verb's representation include:

- a </> slash sign separating functionally different morphological elements which occupy the same position slot;

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[8] If the original transcription of a Ket example is in Cyrillic, it is retranscribed using the corresponding phonetic symbols from our IPA-based transcription.

- <{}> curly braces marking paradigmatically present morphemes (or parts of morphemes) which are truncated or elided due to morphotactic, morphophonological or phonological rules.

Non-morphological epenthetic elements as well as special morphotactic separators which do not occupy positions of their own are not indicated in the verb's phonological form (i.e. in the second tier).

When cited as lexical entries in the body of the text, Ket verbs are given in a special formulaic format adopted from the Comprehensive Dictionary of Ket (Kotorova and Nefedov, forthcoming). According to this format, the verb lemma is represented by a special hyphenated stem formula. The formula consists of lexical morphemes marked by superscript numerals indicating position class, e.g.: *ikbes^7-a^4-[l^2]-bed~ked^0* 'come (*iter.*)'. Morphemes that remain unchanged in all grammatical forms are the basis of each formula. Allomorphs are separated by (~), as in *bed~ked*, where *ked* appears in the imperative and 2nd person indicative and *bed* appears elsewhere. Elements that sporadically appear or disappear across the stem's conjugated forms are placed in parentheses. Square brackets enclose morphemes belonging to slots P4 or P2 that are regularly used in alternating combinations to mark tense-mood forms, e.g.: *assano(k)^7-a^4-[l^2]-bed^0* 'hunt (*iter.*)'.

The reason for using such a non-conventional citation format is due to the absence of any other citation form which could appropriately refer to the actual morphological structure of each particular Ket verb (see, for example, discussion of citation formats used for Ket verbs in Kotorova and Nefedov 2004). The transcription used for representing lexical elements in the formulaic format is phonemic. Ket words other than verbs, when quoted in the text, are given in their phonemic form as well.

Glossing in the third tier in general follows the lines of the Leipzig Glossing Conventions (available online at http://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/resources/glossing-rules.php, accessed on 2015-02-16), with some additions specific for Ket (see List of abbreviations).

1.5 Organization of the study

This dissertation is composed of eight chapters. Chapter 2 provides a grammatical sketch of the Ket language sufficient for the understanding of the language data used in the study. It covers basic facts of phonology, morphology and syntax in Ket. Chapter 3 gives a general overview of various theoretical approaches to the problem of clause linkage. Chapter 4 is concerned with strategies used to code coordination relations. Chapter 5 considers strategies employed to code complement relations. Adverbial relations and the strategies coding them are considered in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 describes strategies used to code relative relations. Finally, in Chapter 8 we consider Ket complex constructions in the areal context.