

Divergence in the distribution of applicatives and noun incorporation in Koryak and Ainu

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Koryak, one of the members of the Chukchi-Kamchatkan language family, is mainly distributed in the northern part of the Kamchatka peninsula. Itelmen, an isogenic of Koryak, is seen mainly in the south of the peninsula and continues across the Okhotsk sea into Ainu, way down south. Although Koryak and Ainu are geographically separated thus by Itelmen, they share some grammatical features that Itelmen lacks, for example, noun incorporation that causes a valency-decrease and applicatives that cause a valency-increase.

However, Koryak and Ainu differ from each other based on the existence or non-existence of the overt applicative marker, transitivity of the base, and the semantic roles of the applied object. Applicatives in Ainu are derived from both the intransitive and the transitive by means of the three valency-increasing applicative prefixes *e-*, *ko-*, and *o-*, while applicatives in Koryak do not have any overt affix; however, they are formed by promoting an oblique noun to the absolutive and conjugating the intransitive stem transitively, which is a strange morphological operation for this language.

Ainu applicatives are remarkable for the variety of semantic roles each applicative prefix assumes; not only benefactive roles, which are typologically considered the most common semantic roles of all the applied objects, but also other semantic roles including comitative, malefactive, cause, range, purpose, location, and instrument can be expressed by applicatives. Meanwhile the semantic roles of the applied object in Koryak are limited to the benefactive, which manifests in the dative case (and possibly as location in the locative case), as per available information. On the contrary, noun incorporation in Ainu is limited to the incorporation of S, P, and rarely A arguments, while in Koryak not only the core argument such as S, P (but never A), but also the oblique noun, such as the instrumental, locative, allative, prolativ, and ablative (but never the dative), can be incorporated into the verb stem. Thus, noun incorporation and applicatives in both languages interestingly show a complementary distribution.

On examining about 285 words collected by Krasheninnikov from the south

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Kamchatka, Murakami (1971) argued that the Northern Chishima dialect of Ainu was once spoken on the Kamchatka peninsula (Krasheninnikov 1755). Both noun incorporation and applicatives are features that other languages in the north do not share. Therefore, a detailed comparison of the features in both languages might be key to clarifying possible contact or some other relation between the two languages.