

# The Mansi Ditransitive Constructions

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The aim of this paper is to investigate Mansi ditransitive constructions from a typological point of view. Mansi has an alternation of indirective (indirect object) and secundative (secondary object) ditransitive constructions. Also passivization plays an important role in alternation. In Mansi both constructions can passivize, although the passivization of the secundative construction is more frequent. The alternation is related to topicality, the choice between the two ditransitive constructions (and the conjugation types and voice of the verb) is made in order to express the relative topicality of the arguments.

Keywords: *Mansi language, ditransitive constructions, ditransitive alternation*

## 1 Introduction

The aim of this paper is to present Mansi ditransitive constructions and to describe the universal and specific properties of transitivity alternations in Mansi. The investigation is put into a typological frame and the findings are related to typological classifications presented by Malchukov, Haspelmath and Comrie (2010).

The Mansi ditransitive constructions have been widely investigated in Uralic studies, but the term “ditransitive” has been connected to the phenomenon only recently. A characteristic feature of Ob-Ugric languages is the two ways of expressing ditransitive situations, see (1) and (2). Traditionally this has been considered an exotic feature of the Ob-Ugric languages, unknown in other related languages. In the last decades, these constructions were put in a new perspective by studies on the transitivity of Ob-Ugric languages (Nikolaeva 2001, Skribnik 2001, Szilágyi 2014, Virtanen 2011, 2013). The discussion of these constructions in a typological frame has not been done yet, the authors of the present study are the first to examine this syntactic feature of the Mansi language from a typological point of view (Bíró 2013, 2015, Sipőcz 2011, 2013, 2015a, 2015b, 2016).

- (1) a. *am nanən(n) sūp junt-ey-əm* (Mansi)  
I you.LAT shirt sew-PRS-1SG  
b. *am nanən sūp-əl junt-i-ləm*  
I you.ACC shirt-INSTR sew-PRS-SG.1SG<sup>1</sup>  
'I sew a/the shirt to you.'

- (2) a. *(ma) Juwan-a ān ma-s-əm* (Northern Khanty)  
I John-LAT cup give-PST-1SG  
b. *(ma) Juwan ān-na ma-s-ēm*  
I John cup-LOC/INSTR give-PST-SG.1SG  
'I gave a/the cup to John.'

(Nikolaeva 2001: 32)

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<sup>1</sup> We gloss the personal suffixes in the following way: first we indicate the number of the object/possession, then the person and number of the subject/possessor. E.g. DU.3SG: (1) a verb suffix agreeing with the object in dual and 3rd person singular subject; or (2) a possessive suffix agreeing with the possessum in dual and 3rd person singular possessor. In subject agreement the gloss indicates the number and person of the subject. The singularity of the possessum is not indicated according to its unmarkedness.

The paper is organized as follows: The short description of the Mansi language (1.1) and the corpus (1.2) is followed by the typological characterization of the ditransitive constructions (2.1). Then we introduce the Mansi constructions and their use (2.2). In the next parts we analyze the alternation (3) and the passivization (4) of Mansi ditransitive constructions. Finally, Section (5) concludes with a summary and statistics of our findings.

## 1.1 The Mansi language

The Mansi (or Vogul) language is one of the most endangered languages of the Uralic language family. Even at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, four dialects of Mansi were still spoken (Northern Mansi, Eastern Mansi, Western Mansi and Southern Mansi), but today only the Northern Mansi dialect is used, spoken by less than 1000 people (See Table 1). Northern Mansi is currently threatened by the process of language shift to Russian, almost all of its speakers are bilingual. Nowadays, the term Mansi is usually used as referring to the Northern Mansi dialect. In this study we concentrate only on the ditransitive constructions of Northern Mansi, all of our examples are from this dialect.

MANSI	LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY
12,269	938 (7.6%)

Table 1. *Ethnically Mansi population and language proficiency according to census data 2010<sup>2</sup>*

## 1.2 The corpus

The corpus used for this investigation consists of representatively selected 200 clauses containing ditransitive constructions. The language data are taken from a large number of written sources and extend over about a hundred years. They have been collected from older and current collections of folkloric texts (VNGy I-IV, Kálmán 1976), collections of interviews with Mansi individuals (Dinislamova 2007), and newspaper texts (LS). Certain ditransitive verbs and constructions are very common (e.g. ‘somebody gives something to someone’, ‘somebody tells, says something to someone’, etc.), these frequent examples were selected. We tried to compile our corpus so that it would include as many verbs used in several constructions and contexts as possible. In addition to this, full structures (i.e. structures with more arguments) were preferred. Although language use in the older and newer collections show significant differences as regards not only vocabulary but also many aspects of grammar (Bíró & Sipőcz 2009), changes in the ditransitive constructions in this respect is not discussed in this paper.

## 2 Ditransitive constructions

### 2.1 The typology of the ditransitive constructions

In linguistic typology, ditransitive constructions have recently become a popular topic of international research, several studies and books focus on ditransitivity (e.g. Malchukov et al. 2010). Smaller Uralic languages, however, are entirely missing from these studies.

A ditransitive construction consists of a ditransitive verb, an agent argument (A), a recipient (recipient-like, addressee) argument (R) and a theme argument (I) (Malchukov et al. 2010, 1):

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.perepis-2010.ru/results\\_of\\_the\\_census/results-inform.php](http://www.perepis-2010.ru/results_of_the_census/results-inform.php)

- (2) *Mary gave John a book.* / *Mary told John a story.*  
 A R T A R T

Ditransitive verbs are typically physical transfer verbs such as *give, send, sell, bring*, etc., but in most languages some verbs expressing mental transfers (verbs of communication) like *say, tell, show*, etc., also behave syntactically in a similar way. In some languages also the benefactive verbs like *make, cook, build*, etc. and some caused motion verbs like *throw, drop*, etc. appear in the same construction and in this case these are also listed as ditransitive verbs. The group of those verbs which appear in ditransitive constructions is particularly extended in Mansi, all of the above mentioned group of verbs take the same argument structure (Sipőcz 2015b, 2016).

The most general typological characterisation of ditransitive constructions is based on the comparison of monotransitive and ditransitive constructions. The basic alignment types are distinguished on the basis of the encoding of the T (theme) and the R (recipient) compared to the patient (P) in the monotransitive construction (Malchukov et al. 2010, 3). According to this there are three basic types:

1. the *indirect object construction* (IOC) (or *indirective alignment*), where the T and the P have the same morphological marking (it can be zero as well), but the R is treated differently from the T and P, e.g.

- (4) (monotransitive) *János könyv-et olvas.* (Hungarian)  
 János book-ACC read.3SG  
 ‘János reads a book.’

- (ditransitive) *János könyvet vesz Anná-nak.*  
 János book-ACC buy.3SG Anna-DAT  
 ‘János buys a book to Anna.’

2. the *secondary object construction* (SOC) (or *secundative alignment*), where the P and the R have the same marking and the T is treated differently. (It is also called a primary object construction.)

- (5) (monotransitive) *Uukaraaviciiz̄t̄ t̄t̄ri me-wa-zeiya.* (Huichol, Mexico)<sup>3</sup>  
 women children 3PL.NOM-3PL.PRIM-see  
 ‘The women see the children.’

- (ditransitive) *Nee tumiini ukari ne-wa-ruzeiyast̄a.*  
 I money girls 1SG.NOM-3PL.PRIM-show  
 ‘I showed the money to the girls.’

(Haspelmath 2005)

3. the *double object construction* (DOC) (or *neutral alignment*), where the P, the R and the T are encoded in the same way. This type is well-known from English, cf.:

- (6) a. *Mary saw John.* (English)  
 b. *He gave John a book.*

<sup>3</sup> Comparing examples (4) and (5) we can see that the marking of the arguments can appear on the noun (flagging: (4)) or on the verb (indexing: (5)) or on both.

Further types which are logically also possible but can be disregarded due to their minimal occurrence, are the so-called tripartitive (T ≠ R ≠ P) and horizontal (T = R ≠ P) constructions (Malchukov et al. 2010, 5–6).

Finally, we have to mention that there are two further kinds of ditransitive constructions that are impossible to fit into the aforesaid classification. These types are not based on the comparison of monotransitive and ditransitive clauses, the indirective and secundative characters are however clearly distinguishable in their cases, too. These are the serial verb construction and the possessive construction. (Malchukov et al. 2010, 11–15, Margetts & Austin 2007) In serial verb construction the marker of the T or the R is a grammaticalized verb, see the Yoruba example (7) in which the verb ‘give’ is the marker of the R argument.

- (7) Ó tà-á fún mi (Yoruba)  
 he sell-it give me  
 (a) ‘He sold it to me.’ (b) ‘He sold it for me.’

(Margetts & Austin 2007)

In the possessive construction, the R appears as the possessive modifier of the T, this can be exemplified from Nganasan where the R argument appears as the possessor of the T argument.

- (8) mənə kńiga-ðə-mtu mi-siə-m (Nganasan)  
 I book-DST-ACC.3SG give-PST-1SG  
 ‘I gave him/her the book.’

(Wagner-Nagy & Szeverényi 2013, 28)

## 2.2 The Mansi ditransitive constructions

Mansi belongs to languages having more than one ditransitive constructions. The Mansi constructions are:

(I.) *Indirect object construction*, where the theme (T) of the ditransitive construction is the syntactic object, and the recipient (R) is encoded with the lative-dative *-n* suffix (LAT). The verb can be in the subjective (9) or objective conjugation (10).<sup>4</sup> There is no accusative case in Northern Mansi except for the personal pronouns, which have a distinct accusative form. (It is very unusual, however, that in IOC the T is a personal pronoun. There is no example for this in our corpus. T expressed by a personal pronoun appears typically as the subject of passive sentences, cf. example (28).)<sup>5</sup>

- (9) Pjotr Gavrilovič ānəmn jur̄t-ane jot t̄it kassəta-γ t̄ət-əs.  
 P.G. I.LAT friend-PL.3SG with two cassette-DU send-PST.3SG  
 ‘Pjotr Gavrilovich sent me two cassettes with his friends.’

(Dinislamova 2007, 5)

<sup>4</sup> These two conjugation types, characteristic of some other Uralic languages as well, have been referred to also as *indeterminate* and *determinate conjugations*, *indefinite* and *definite conjugations* as well as *subject-verb agreement* and *object-verb agreement* (Kálmán 1976, Honti 1988, Keresztes 1998). In this study we use the terms *subject-verb agreement* and *object-verb agreement* as well as *subjective* and *objective conjugations*, since when the former conjugation type is used it means that the verb agrees only with the subject, while in the case of the latter the verb agrees with both the subject and the direct object.

<sup>5</sup> In Mansi, which has a rather strict SOV word order, IOCs containing a verb agreeing only with the subject have an Agent - Recipient - Theme - Verb order in most cases, while IOCs containing a verb agreeing with both the subject and the direct object have an A - T - R - V order in most cases. (Cf. Bíró 2015)

- (10) *akw' sup-ä kat'i-tä-n mis-tä,*  
 one piece-3SG cat-3SG-LAT give.PST-SG.3SG  
*akw' sup-ä ämp-ən mis-tä.*  
 one piece-3SG dog-LAT give.PST-SG.3SG  
 '(S)he gave one piece to his/her cat and the other one to the dog.'  
 (VNGy IV, 343)

(II.) *Secondary object construction*, where the R of the ditransitive construction is an unmarked object and the T is marked with the instrumental *-l* suffix (11). If R is a personal pronoun, it is in ACC form (12). In this construction, the verb is almost always in the objective conjugation (in more detail see section 3).

- (11) *Mañ piγ-əm nē-γəl viγ-ləm.*  
 little son-1SG woman-INSTR take.PRS-SG.1SG  
 'I will find a wife for my youngest son.'  
 (VNGY IV, 324)

- (12) *Nēnan am sópr-sonax-əl wār-i-jayəm.*  
 you(DU).ACC I silver-cup-INSTR make-PRS-DU.1SG  
 'I make the two of you a silver cup.'  
 (Kálmán 1976, 70)

### 3 Alternation

Several languages have more than one ditransitive constructions. This phenomenon is called alternation, and is well-known from English, e. g.:

- (13) a. *Mary gave a pen to John.*  
 b. *Mary gave John a pen.*

In English, the indirective and the neutral alignments alternate.<sup>6</sup> In Mansi, we can see the alternation of indirective and secundative types. This latter type of alternation is cross-linguistically more common than the alternation found in English. The alternation of indirective and secundative constructions can be found also in European languages, but it is usually limited to only a few verbs (cf. Malchukov et al. 2010, 18–19). E.g.:

- (14) IOC: *Sütemény-t és kávé-t kínál-ok a vendég-ek-nek.* (Hungarian)  
 cake-ACC and coffee-ACC offer-1SG ART guest-PL-DAT  
 SOC: *Sütemény-nyel és kávé-val kínál-om a vendég-ek-et.*  
 cake-INSTR and coffee-INSTR offer-1SG.O ART guest-PL-ACC  
 'I am offering cookies and coffee for the guests.'<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The phenomenon is also called "Dative Shift" and there is an enormous literature on this subject (Givon 1984, Beck & Johnson 2004, Rappaport & Levin 2008 among others).

<sup>7</sup> The number of those verbs which can appear in both IOC and SOC constructions is strongly limited also in Hungarian, and usually even these verbs show differences concerning the use of the preverbs, e.g. *(meg)kínál vkít vmivel* (SOC) vs. *kínál vkinek vmit* (IOC) 'offer sth to sb to drink/eat', *megajándékozik vkít vmivel* (SOC) vs. *ajándékozik vkinek vmit* (IOC) 'give a gift'.

Mansi, however, seems special typologically regarding that there is no restrictions in the use of the verbs: almost any ditransitive verb can appear in both constructions. (Cf. Sipőcz 2015b, 2016)

Concerning alternations the important question is which factors determine the choice between the different constructions. According to the typological studies several factors can be mentioned: the markedness of the arguments, the prominence differences between the T and R arguments (e.g. in animacy, nominal/pronominal status, discourse status (topicality) cf. Bresnan et al. 2007), there may be semantic difference between the alternating constructions, etc. It often occurs that the choice between the different constructions is simultaneously affected by more than one factor in a given language. In English for example, the Double Object Construction is favoured when R is more prominent than T (e.g. R is a pronoun), and/or when R is more topical than T (Malchukov et al. 2010, 20–21).

As it was already mentioned, in some languages the alternation is related to topicality. Ob-Ugric languages seem to belong to this group. The use of subjective and objective conjugations in Mansi has been discussed in detail for decades (cf. for example Lavotha 1953, Honti 1969, Skribnik 2001, Dolovai 2003) and in these studies often also the alternation of the two ditransitive constructions has been examined from a historical, morphosyntactic and functional grammatical point of view. (However, the term “ditransitive construction” was not used in these studies.) There are diverse statements about the Ob-Ugric alternation in the literature. Concerning Khanty, it has been suggested that the alienability or inalienability of the object (theme) (Honti 1999) and/or the focal status of the object (id.) influences the choice. According to Rombandeeva (1979, 99–115), the only native Mansi linguist, the choice is affected by the definiteness and by the fact how emphasized the theme is. Kulonen discusses these constructions in connection with Dative Shift and she claims that the aim of switching from one construction to the other is to promote the Recipient to direct object position, from where it could also be promoted to subject position with the help of passivization. (Kulonen 1999)

The connection between the use of different conjugations, constructions and topicality was studied by Nikolaeva in Khanty (2001), and by Skribnik in Mansi (2001). According to Skribnik (2001), the function of promoting the Recipient to direct object position is to express the relative topicality of different noun phrases within a clause. (She uses the term Dative Shift, similarly to Kulonen.) Thus the alternating constructions put either T or R into the position of the direct object, and the topicality of the direct object is indicated by the objective conjugation of the verb.

- (15) a. IOC: there is no topical object – the subjective conjugation is used

*Am tawen mōjt mōjt-ey-um.*  
 I (s)he.LAT tale tell-PRS-1SG  
 ‘I tell him a tale.’ (< ‘What do you do?’)

- b. IOC: the T is topical – the objective conjugation is used

*Am mōjt tawen mōjt-i-lum.*  
 I tale (s)he.LAT tell-PRS-SG.1SG  
 ‘I tell him the tale.’ (< ‘Who do you tell the tale to?’)

- c. SOC: the R is topical – the objective conjugation is used

*Am tawe mōjt-əl mōjt-i-lum.*  
 I he.ACC tale-INSTR tell-PRS-SG.1SG  
 ‘I tell him a tale.’ (< ‘What do you tell him?’)

(Skribnik 2001, 228)

Our data generally supports this claim. Sentences in (16) are taken from the beginning of a Mansi tale, the sentences are quoted in the original order (as found in the tale). In the first sentence, there is no topical<sup>8</sup> direct object thus the indirective construction is used. In the second sentence, both the main hero and the arrow with the bow are actually topical. The choice of the secundative construction is motivated by the fact that the main hero is pragmatically more important as the primary topic of the tale, therefore it is put to the direct object position and indicated by the objective conjugation of the verb. The third sentence is about the main hero, who takes the role of the Recipient, the Agent is not important thus passivization is used.

- (16) a. *akəmėkw, ānəmn      nāl      wār-n,      jōwt      wār-n*  
 aunt      I.LAT      arrow      make-IMP.2SG      bow      make-IMP.2SG  
 ‘Auntie, make me an arrow, make me a bow.’
- b. *nāl-l      wār-i-ləm,      jōwt-əl      wār-i-ləm*  
 arrow-INSTR      make-PRS-SG.1SG      bow-INSTR      make-PRS-SG.1SG  
 ‘I provide you with an arrow, I provide you with a bow.’
- c. *ja-ti, nāl-l      wār-we-s,      jōwt-əl      wār-we-s*  
 well      arrow-INSTR      make-PASS-PST.3SG      bow-INSTR      make-PASS-PST.3SG  
 ‘(S)he was provided with an arrow, (s)he was provided with a bow.’

(Kálmán 1976, 68)

There are also some examples (17) where this kind of connection between topicality and the chosen ditransitive construction cannot be stated this clearly. In the corpus, there are several examples in which the use of the given construction is hard to explain. The sentences of example (17) were uttered in similar situations, the constructions were still different.

- (17) a. *Ānəm      tē-ne      matər      tot-en,      sim-əm*  
 I.LAT<sup>9</sup>      eat-PTCP.PRS      something      bring-IMP.2SG      heart-1SG  
*ētχəl-awe!*  
 starve-PASS.PRS.3SG  
 ‘Give me something to eat, my heart is starving.’
- b. *Ānəm      tēn-ut-əl      tot-eln,      sim-əm*  
 I.ACC      eat-thing-INSTR      bring-SG.IMP.2SG      heart-1SG  
*ētχəl-awe!*  
 starve-PASS.PRS.3SG  
 ‘Give me something to eat, my heart is starving.’

(VNGy I, 11)

In Table 3 (Section 5.1.), we can see the quantitative data representing the alternation of the ditransitive constructions without the passive ones. In our corpus, the IOC construction prevails. Regarding IOCs, there are twice as many examples with the verb in the subjective conjugation (the subject is the only topic), while approximately one third of these constructions contain a verb in the objective conjugation (both the subject and T are topical). In the SOC constructions, usually the objective conjugation is used. (Beside the subject, the R is also topical.) (Cf.: Tables 4 and 5) In this construction the direct object (R) is often omitted, cf. (18), (19).

<sup>8</sup> By topic(al) we mean a previously mentioned or situationally given information (cf. Dalrymple & Nikolaeva 2014, 48–57).

<sup>9</sup> The Lative/Dative suffix *-n* is often omitted when the stem ends in a nasal consonant. (See example 1.)

- (18) *Mir-əl            šöpiyt-i-ləm,            karapli-l            šöpiyt-i-ləm.*  
 people-INSTR equip-PRS-SG.1SG ship-INSTR equip-PRS-SG.1SG  
 ‘I equip you with people, I equip you with a ship.’  
 (VNGy IV, 341)
- (19) *Ńāl-əl            liy-aymēn.*  
 arrow-INSTR shoot.PRS-DU.1DU  
 ‘We (two) shoot an arrow toward the two of you.’  
 (Kálmán 1976, 64)

As it was mentioned before, the verb in the SOC is usually in the objective conjugation. This clearly follows from the fact that the SOC is used in case of a topical Recipient (taking the position of the direct object) and a topical direct object is accompanied by a verb in the objective conjugation. Nevertheless, there are examples in our corpus in which the secundative constructions contain a verb in the subjective conjugation. In each sentence the subject is 2nd (20) or 3rd (21) person while the direct object (R) is 1st person, so it stands higher in the hierarchy of prominence (1SG > 1PL > 2SG > 2PL > 3SG > 3PL).

- (20) *sis=jör-əl=ke            naŋ    ānəm    pin-ey-ən,*  
 back-strength-INSTR=if    you    I.ACC    put-PRS-2SG  
*mayil=jör-əl=ke            naŋ    ānəm    pin-ey-ən*  
 chest-strength-INSTR=if    you    I.ACC    put-PRS-2SG  
 ‘if you provide me with back-strength, if you provide me with chest-strength’  
 (VNGy II, 142)
- (21) *jäy-əm            səl-əm            ōln-nəl            akw            ōln-pāl-əl*  
 father-1SG gather-PTCP.PST    money-ABL    one            money-half-INSTR  
*ānəm            at            majl-əs.*<sup>10</sup>  
 I.ACC    NEG    give-PST.3SG  
 ‘He did not give me even a half penny from the wealth gathered by my father.’  
 (VNGy IV, 343)

In these sentences the animacy hierarchy can explain the use of the subjective conjugation. In some Uralic languages using objective conjugation and similarly in some Eastern-Siberian languages (e.g. Chukchi, Koryak, Kamchadal), the so-called Inverse Agreement Constraint can be observed. This constraint means that if the object is more prominent in the animacy hierarchy than the subject, the verb agrees only with the subject (É. Kiss 2010, 2013). Thus in Hungarian, in Eastern Khanty and in the Samoyedic languages, the objective conjugation is used only if the object is 3rd person (Dalrymple & Nikolaeva 2011).

Mansi, however, seems irregular in this respect since the use of the objective conjugation is independent from the person of the object (Keresztes 1998, 417, Kulonen 2007, 111, Dalrymple & Nikolaeva 2011, 196). Numerous examples support this claim, e.g.:

- (22) *ja,            at            pūw-i-te-e!*  
 yes    NEG    catch-PRS-SG.3SG-EMPH  
 ‘Yes, (s)he will not catch me!’  
 (Kálmán 1976, 144)

<sup>10</sup> It must be noted that the form *majləs* is irregular.

- (23) *Manriγ at wiγ-lən?*  
 why NEG take.PRS-SG.2SG  
 ‘Why do you not take me?’

(Keresztes 1998, 417)

- (24) *Taw naγən ērupt-i-te.*  
 (s)he you.ACC love-PRS-SG.3SG  
 ‘(S)he loves you.’

(informant’s data)

On the basis of these examples, we can claim that the Inverse Agreement Constraint does not work in Mansi. It is noteworthy, however, that our irregular examples contain an R in the first person and an A in the second and third persons.

#### 4 Passivization of ditransitive constructions

Beside the active ditransitive constructions, our corpus contains a great number of passive ditransitive constructions as well (see Table 2, Section 5.1.).

Concerning the passivization of ditransitive verbs, the question is which argument (T, R) can passivize (i.e. can be promoted to subject position). On the basis of this, three primary alignment types can be distinguished (similarly to the main alignment types of active ditransitive constructions) (Malchukov et. al 2010, 27–28):

1. Indirective passivization: T passivizes, but R does not;
2. Secundative passivization: R passivizes, but T does not;
3. Neutral alignment: either R or T can passivize.

According to the expectations, the alignment of passivization often follows the general alignment of encoding. So if a language uses secundative constructions, most probably it will use a secundative alignment in passivization as well, that is, it will have a preference for R-passivization. In some languages which have alternating ditransitive constructions, only the P-like argument (i.e. the syntactic object) can be passivized from each alignment types. For example, in Northern Khanty R-passivization seems to be possible only from the secundative construction, where R is the syntactic object:

- (25) *Petrāj-na χōp-na mōjl-ə-s-a<sup>11</sup>*  
 Peter-LOC boat-LOC give-EP-PST-PASS.3SG  
 ‘He was given a boat by Peter.’

(Nikolaeva 1999, 31)

The fact that only the P-like argument can be passivized from the alternating patterns also shows that there is a connection between the general alignment of encoding and the alignment of passivization (Malchukov et. al. 2010, 28).

However, the alignment of passivization does not follow necessarily the encoding: there are languages with neutral encoding which use a secundative alignment in passivization (it is very common, cf. English examples (26a) and (26b)), and also languages with indirective encoding and a neutral alignment in passivization. One combination is unattested: it seems that there is no

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<sup>11</sup> In Khanty both the Agent of the passive sentence and the Theme of the SOC construction are indicated with the Locative-Instrumental case.

language which has secundative encoding and strictly indirective passivization. (Malchukov et. al. 2010, 29–30)

- (26) a. *The children were given sweets.*  
 b. ? *The sweets were given children.*

(Malchukov et. al. 2010, 29)

R-passivization is generally more frequent than T-passivization. The reason for this can be found in the function of passivization, namely the promotion of the topical object. Since in a ditransitive construction R tends to be more topical than T, it is understandable that R-passivization is generally favoured more than T-passivization. (Malchukov et. al. 2010, 30)

In Mansi ditransitive constructions, the ratio of active and passive sentences is far more balanced than in monotransitive ones. Although passive is used in Mansi very frequently, the ratio of passive constructions was under 10% in one of Skribnik's surveys containing 2000 transitive clauses (Skribnik 2001). In our corpus, this ratio was considerably bigger: 39% (see Table 2). It could follow logically from the fact that in a three-argument construction there are two arguments which can rival for the subject position. From a syntactic point of view, in ditransitive constructions the number of the arguments which can be passivized is bigger, while from a pragmatic point of view, there are two arguments which can occupy the topic position. Our corpus still shows that in Mansi mainly the secundative construction is passivized (R-passivization) although there are examples for the passivization of the indirective alignment as well (T-passivization). Preferring R-passivization over T-passivization corresponds with the cross-linguistic evidence (see above).

As it is attested typologically, also in Mansi only the P-like argument can be passivized from both alignment types. Thus passivization of the Mansi secundative construction results in R-passivization (27) and passivization of the indirective construction leads to T-passivization (28).

- i) R-passivization from a secundative construction:

- (27) *Rajonə-t-t            ol-ne            pūhica-t    jomas*  
 district-PL-LOC    be-PTCP.PRS    hospital-PL    good  
*terp-il                tāstu-wē-s-ət.*  
 medicine-INSTR    prepare-PASS-PST-3PL  
 'Good medicine was prepared for the hospitals in the districts.'

(LS 2012/22, 4)

- ii) T-passivization from an indirective construction:

- (28) *jārm-ən            ta-ke            maj-we-s-əm*  
 poverty-LAT    that-PTCL    give-PASS-PST-1SG  
 'It is poverty that I was given to.' ['It is poverty that I was made to experience.']

(VNGy IV, 330)

Concerning passivization, we also have several examples in our corpus which do not correspond to the expectations based on the information structure (i.e. the most topical element is passivized since the most important function of passivization in Mansi is keeping an important, topic-like element in the subject position c.f. Kulonen 1989, 41, 288). The R-

passivization occurs also quite frequently only because the agent of the verb is indefinite or general and in many of these cases R can not be considered topical.<sup>12</sup>

- (29) *Ań sāv nāwram-əŋ koltäyl-ət kol üntt-ən*  
 now many child-ADJ family-PL house build-PTCP.PRS  
*māyəs mā-lomt-əl mi-we-t.*  
 for land-piece-INSTR give-PASS.PRS-3PL  
 ‘Now a plot of land is given to the families having many children in order to build a house.’

(LS 2015/24, 2)

T-passivization appears far more rarely than R-passivization, due to the reason mentioned above: R generally tends to be more topical than T. The motives behind the use of T-passivization seem to be a lot less clear than those guiding the use of R-passivization. There are also such sentences in the corpus, where T-passivization seems to have an emphasizing function, it appears that passivization is used in order to put an extra emphasis on the Theme.<sup>13</sup> See for example (30):

- (30) *Sverdlovski oblast’-it mansi mir-n nemater notmil*  
 Sverdlovsk region-PL Mansi people-LAT nothing help  
*at majl-awe.*  
 NEG give-PASS.PRS.3SG  
 ‘For the Mansi people of the Sverdlovsk region is given no help at all.’

(Dinislamova 2007, 8)

## 5 Conclusions

### 5.1 Statistical findings

The following tables summarize our findings. As it can be seen from Table 2, passive constructions are fairly frequent also in ditransitive patterns.

Active	122 (61%)
Passive	78 (39%)
<i>Total</i>	<i>200 (100%)</i>

Table 2. *Active and passive ditransitive constructions in Northern Mansi*

Table 3 shows that indirective constructions seem to dominate. We assume, however, that this data should be treated with caution since our further investigation based on a larger database does not show the dominance of IOCs. It is worth mentioning, that a similar statistics on

<sup>12</sup> Although using a passive construction in case of a generic, unknown or unimportant agent is quite common cross-linguistically, this function of the passive is not typical of Mansi (nor Khanty). One of the unusual properties of Mansi passive is that “Agent demotion or suppression is rather a peripheral function – the Agent is often present in the sentence.” (Skribnik 2001, 224) In modern Mansi texts (especially in the newspaper), however, it seems that passive has obtained this cross-linguistically common function, too.

<sup>13</sup> While our selected corpus of 200 ditransitive clauses used for this study contains only 6 examples of T-passivization (cf. Table 6), it is important to note that in our whole, extended corpus there are several other clauses with T-passivization. Thus the statements about the use and the function of T-passivization are based on this extended corpus.

Eastern Mansi ditransitivity shows the dominance of the secundative constructions (Virtanen 2011).

Indirective (IOC)	76 (62,3%)
Secundative (SOC)	46 (37,7%)
<i>Total</i>	<i>122 (100%)</i>

Table 3. *Active ditransitive constructions in Northern Mansi*

Table 4 indicates that in the majority of indirective constructions the object-verb agreement is lacking.

IOC + subjective conjugation	51 (67,1%)
IOC + objective conjugation	25 (32,9%)
<i>Total</i>	<i>76 (100%)</i>

Table 4. *Active indirective ditransitive constructions (IOC) in Northern Mansi*

In SOCs the object-verb agreement is decisive what is in correlation with the pragmatic role of this pattern (Table 5).

SOC + subjective conjugation	3 (6,5%)
SOC + objective conjugation	43 (93,5%)
<i>Total</i>	<i>46 (100%)</i>

Table 5. *Active secundative ditransitive constructions (SOC) in Northern Mansi*

Similarly the dominance of R-passivization is in accordance with its pragmatic role (Table 6).

R-passivization (passive SOC)	72 (92,3%)
T-passivization (passive IOC)	6 (7,7%)
<i>Total</i>	<i>78 (100%)</i>

Table 6. *Passive ditransitive constructions in Northern Mansi*

## 5.2 Summary

The analysis of ditransitive constructions in a typological frame showed that:

In Mansi ditransitive constructions there is an alternation between indirective and secundative constructions which is a common phenomenon cross-linguistically.

Alternation is controlled primarily by topicality, this is a general phenomenon also cross-linguistically.

Mansi ditransitives prefer R-passivization, this kind of passivization is also the most frequent one in languages.

Our findings thus show that Mansi ditransitive constructions are not unique typologically – as opposed to the previous statements (cf. 1). Although general tendencies prevail also in Mansi, there are contradictory examples the use of which we intended to explain in our paper (cf. examples 20–21 and 29–30), some of them, however, still remains unexplained (cf. example 17).

## Abbreviations

A	agent of a (di)transitive clause
ACC	accusative
ADJ	adjective marker
ART	article
CO	coaffix
DAT	dative
DIM	diminutive
DOC	double object construction
DST	destinative
DU	dual
EMPH	emphatic element
EP	epenthetic element
INSTR	instrumental
IOC	indirect object construction
LAT	lative
LOC	locative
NAR	narrative
O	objective conjugation (in Hungarian)
PASS	passive
PL	plural
PRS	present
PST	past
PTCL	particle
PTCP	participle
R	recipient
SG	singular
SOC	secondary object construction
T	theme
V	verb

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