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Redigunt:

Katalin Sipőcz

András Róna-Tas

István Zimonyi

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The event of “giving” and “getting” in Siberian Uralic languages¹

Katalin Sipőcz

University of Szeged

1. Introduction

This paper investigates the linguistic expression of the event of “giving” and “getting” in Siberian Uralic languages. The description is based on more aspects, it applies the criteria of language typology on the one hand, and also takes into account aspects of cognitive linguistics and cultural linguistics on the other hand. As we will see, these approaches partly complement and partly explain each other. Data from the Mansi, Khanty, and Nganasan languages are included in this paper. All three languages belong to the Uralic language family, Mansi and Khanty represent the Ob-Ugric languages of the Finno-Ugric branch, they are closely related languages, while Nganasan is one of the Northern Samoyedic languages. The Ob-Ugric and Samoyedic languages are distant relatives, but areally they all belong to the Western Siberian language area. The language data discussed in the paper are taken from digital databases and partly from native informants (Brykina et al. 2018, TDUL, DDML).

The three participants of the event of giving are the giver, the recipient and the thing transferred, its most typical verb is the verb ‘give’. In this paper I investigate the recipient side of the event, too, thus the event of getting is also included. These two processes complement each other, there is no giving without getting and vice versa.² And the two events are connected also by the fact that they are expressed by the same verb – the verb ‘give’ – in numerous languages (see sections 2 and 3). Both events are characterised by the same Thematic Roles: Agent (A), Recipient (R), and Theme (T). The most common verbs of the events are ‘give’ and ‘get’, but they can be expressed by other verbs, too (e.g. ‘pass’, ‘hand’, ‘present’, ‘sell’; ‘accept’, ‘receive’ etc.). This paper investigates only the verbs meaning ‘give’ and ‘get’, which are basic verbs in this lexical group (see section 3). Cf.:

¹ The research reported on in this paper is funded by NKFIH (National Research, Development and Innovation Office, Hungary) in the frame of the project *Ethnosyntactic Analysis of Siberian Uralic Languages* (K129186, 2018–2021) at the University of Szeged, Hungary.

² Research focusing on the event of giving and the verb ‘give’ is significantly wider. The event of getting and the verb ‘get’ received much less attention in the linguistics literature.

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coded as the Patient of the monotransitive construction,⁵ and the Recipient is marked with the lative-dative suffix or with a postposition of a similar function. Cf.:

(2) Khanty

<i>āše-l</i>	<i>pox-al-a</i>	<i>uli</i>	<i>ma-l.</i>
father-3SG	boy-3SG-LAT/DAT	reindeer	give-PRS.3SG

‘The father gives a reindeer to his son.’

(3) Mansi

<i>tōrəm</i>	<i>naḡən</i>	<i>matər</i>	<i>mi-s</i>
God	you.LAT/DAT	sth.	give-PST.3SG

‘God gave you something.’

The other is the secundative type, in which the Recipient is coded as the Patient of the monotransitive construction and the Theme argument gets an oblique marker (the instrumental case suffix in Mansi, and the locative or instrumental suffix in the Khanty dialects). Cf.:

(4) Khanty

<i>āše-l</i>	<i>pox-al</i>	<i>uli-jn</i>	<i>ma-l-li.</i>
father-3SG	boy-3SG	reindeer-LOC	give-PRS-OBJ.3SG

‘The father gives a reindeer to his son.’

(5) Mansi

<i>uwśi-m</i>	<i>tor-əl</i>	<i>mi-s-lum.</i>
sister-1SG	kerchief-INSTR	give-PST-OBJ.1SG

‘I gave a kerchief to my elder sister.’

These constructions can passivize: the passivization of the secundative alignment (moving the Recipient to the subject position) is more frequent (6-7), and it is more common typologically, too. The Recipient passivization of the construction containing the verb ‘give’, in fact, is used to express the meaning ‘get’. This is the general way of expressing the notion of getting, since there is no basic verb meaning ‘get’ in the Ob-Ugric languages.

5 There is no accusative case suffix in Khanty or in Northern Mansi (as opposed to other Mansi dialects), the object of the clause is in the nominative case, except the personal pronouns, which have an accusative form in all Ob-Ugric dialects.

(6) Khanty

*āŋki-nə*⁶ *ñēwrem* *ñāñ-a* *mə-ʌ-i*
 mother-LOC child bread-INSTR give-PRS-PASS.3SG
 ‘The child gets bread from the mother.’

(7) Mansi

tōnt tax *ōs* *akw* *Buran-əl* *mi-w-et*
 then PTCL PTCL one Buran-INSTR give-PASS-3PL
 ‘They get (lit. they are given) one more new Buran (snowmobile).’

The passivization of indirective alignment (moving the Theme into subject position) is rarer, but there are examples of this, too.

(8) Khanty

mā-nə *nūŋati* *järnas* *jōnt-ʌ-i*
 I-LOC you.LAT shirt sew-PRS-PASS.3SG
 ‘A shirt was sewn for you (by me).’

(9) Mansi

ti rupata war-ne-nəl *mayəs* *tananeln* *tax* *man*
 this work do-AN-3PL for they.LAT/DAT then we
okrug-uw-nəl *akw* *Buran* *mi-w-e*
 district-1PL-ABL one Buran give-PASS-3SG
 ‘Then they were given a Buran for their work from our district.’

As we have seen in the examples above, in the Ob-Ugric languages the ditansitive alternation is a device for differentiation between the events of giving and getting through the single verb ‘give’ assigning the participants of the event different grammatical roles. In the case of the active ditransitive constructions containing the verb ‘give’, the event expressed by the verb is ‘giving’. The subject of the clause is the giver, who is at the same time the Agent of the event and usually the topic of the discourse. The event in which the giver is the Agent can be only the giving, irrespective of the fact whether the Theme or the Recipient is in the object position.

However, the passive constructions containing the verb ‘give’ allow the interpretation of both giving and getting. In the case of Theme passivization the subject of the construction is the Theme argument and, regarding the connection of information structure and clause structure, the Theme is the topic of the discourse.⁷ The event in which the Theme appears as the topical element can be either the giving

⁶ The Agent of the passive construction is marked with the locative suffix in Khanty.

⁷ By topic I mean a previously mentioned contextually or situationally given information, cf. Dalrymple and Nikolaeva (2014: 48–57).

or the getting, thus both can be stated about the Theme: it was given / it was got. In case of Recipient-passivisation the subject of the construction (and, thus, the topic of the utterance) is the recipient. The event whose topic is the Recipient is the getting and not the giving. In other words, from the perspective of the Recipient, the primary aspect of the event is the getting. From this it follows that the verb ‘give’ in the secundative passive construction is used to express the notion ‘get’.

In the Nganasan language a possessive ditransitive construction is used, which is typologically rather rare. In the example below the Recipient argument of the construction is coded on the Theme with a possessive suffix following a destinative suffix. (As if we were saying ‘I gave his/her book.’) This construction can be passivized, and as it can be seen in example (11), the passive ditransitive construction containing the verb ‘give’ expresses the meaning ‘get’, as in the Ob-Ugric languages.

(10) Nganasan

<i>mənə</i>	<i>kńiga-ðə-mtu</i>	<i>mi-śiə-m</i>
I	book-DST-ACC.3SG	give-PST-1SG

‘I gave him/her the book.’ (Wagner-Nagy and Szeverényi 2013: 28)

(11) Nganasan

<i>kiribaʔkü-ðə-mə</i>	<i>tətu-ru-bata-ðə</i>	<i>ŋuəntəə-tə</i>
bread-DST-NOM.1SG	give-PASS-INFER-SG.R	boss-LAT.SG

‘I got bread from the boss.’ (MVL_080226_TwoHorses_flks.426, Brykina et al. 2018)

3. The aspect of lexical typology

The frame for my lexical typological description is provided in a paper by Viberg (2010), which is a contrastive description of the verbs of possession in Swedish, English, German, French, and Finnish. The verbs of languages typically form an open word class with thousands of members, and with hundreds of semantic fields (e.g. motion verbs, verbs of communication, verbs of emotion, perception verbs etc.), also verbs of possession represent a semantic field. The verbs of possession express getting into possession, giving into possession, and being in possession, e.g. English *have*, *get*, *take*, *give*, *need*, *pay*, *keep*, *buy*, *provide*, *sell*, *pay*, *lack*, *own*, *send*, *reach*, and *hand*. The verbs ‘give’ and ‘get’ investigated in this paper belong to this verb class.

Viberg selected the basic verbs of possession on the basis of their frequency. Regarding their frequency, verbs can be divided into a small number of basic verbs and a large number of non-basic verbs. Basic verbs are the most common and most extensively used verbs of the given semantic fields. On the basis of frequency investigations it can be stated that the usage of basic verbs makes up the majority of verb uses. In European languages, the twenty most frequent verbs tend to cover almost

half of all the occurrences of the verbs in running text, and these verbs show great cross-linguistic similarities with respect to their meaning. Within the basic verbs Viberg distinguishes the nuclear verbs, which tend to be realized as basic verbs in all languages, thus they are universals. But at the same time the nuclear verbs can have language specific features, too. Nuclear verbs are usually polysemic, and their polysemic patterns can vary in different languages. According to Viberg, the group of nuclear verbs is an important category for L2 learners since they tend to favor them (Viberg 2002, 2010). Similar tendencies can be found regarding language acquisition, too (De Villiers and De Villiers 1978: 143).

Based on word frequency tests, Viberg listed the following verbs as the basic verbs of possession: ‘have’, ‘get’, ‘take’, and ‘give’, of which ‘give’ and ‘take’ are nuclear verbs. Further possession verbs – even the most common ones – show significantly rarer usage. The basic verbs of possession can be characterized by polysemy in addition to their frequency, they are typically short lexemes, often with irregular inflection. Furthermore, these verbs are often source verbs for several grammaticalization processes. Historically the basic verbs of possession have been usually derived from physical action verbs related to movements and manipulations with the hands, e.g. English *have* < PIE **kap* ‘grasp’, Swedish *få* ‘get’ < ‘catch’ (Viberg 2010). Regarding their semantics, the meaning of basic verbs is simpler than the meaning of non-basic ones. E.g. the verbs ‘give’ and ‘take’ differ from the verbs ‘sell’, ‘pay’, and ‘buy’ in the respect that ‘give’ and ‘take’ have only the component transfer of possession where the transfer is initiated by one of the interactors, and only the direction of the transfer differs depending on who the initiator of the transfer is; the verbs ‘sell’, ‘pay’, ‘buy’ etc. have other semantic components, too (e.g. notion of obligation to transfer money)⁸ (De Villiers and De Villiers 1978: 143).

Table 1 summarizes the semantics of the basic verbs of possession: regarding the role of the subject and the direction of the transfer, ‘give’ is opposed to ‘take’ and ‘get’. The dynamic system distinguishes Causative, Inchoative, and State verbs.⁹ The source-based pair of ‘get’ in the empty space would be a verb meaning ‘lose’, but verbs with this meaning cannot be considered as basic according to the criteria of basicness. (“The space is left empty because those verbs do not reach a very high frequency and do not have characteristics which justify calling them basic to the same degree as the four verbs included in the table. Each of the basic verbs serve as the

⁸ This is parallel to Dixon’s notion of nuclear and non-nuclear verbs. Nuclear verbs cannot be defined in terms of other verbs, but non-nuclear verbs are semantically more complex and can be defined referring to other verbs (Dixon 1972: 293).

⁹ This kind of semantic characterization applies to other verbs, too. Verbs are stative or dynamic types (cf. *have – get* or *know – realize*), and dynamic verbs can be inchoative or causative (cf. *lose – steal*, *die – kill*). (Viberg 2002:129)

superordinates of a number of hyponyms, whereas a superordinate term is lacking for the empty space in the grid.” (Viberg 2010) Because of the focus of this paper and the languages investigated, the meaning ‘have’ is not relevant, only the description of the verbs ‘give’, ‘take’, and ‘get’ is needed.

<i>Dynamic meaning</i>	Source based	Goal based
causative	‘give’	‘take’
inchoative		‘get’
state	‘have’	

Table 1. The basic verbs of possession (Viberg 2010)

We have seen above (in section 2) that in Khanty, Mansi, and Nganasan the meaning ‘get’ is expressed by the verb ‘give’ in a passive construction (examples 6, 7, and 11) (cf. Table 2). This phenomenon is not rare as it can be seen from the following Swahili example and its English translation:

(12) Swahili

a.

Halima a-li-m-pa zawadi Fatuma.
 Halima she-PST-HER-give gift Fatuma
 ‘Halima gave a gift to Fatuma.’

b.

Fatuma a-li-p-ew-a zawadi na Halima.
 Fatuma she-PST-GIVE-pass gift by Halima
 ‘Fatuma was given a gift by Halima.’

(Malchukov et al. 2010: 22)

The system of the verbs of possession in the Uralic languages examined in this paper can be seen in Table 2. (The verbs ‘have’ are listed for completeness’ sake only.) The verb ‘get’ is absent in all three languages, this meaning is expressed by the verb ‘give’. In the Nganasan language the verb ‘take’ is also absent. This meaning is represented by several verbs, but they are semantically specific and thus cannot be considered basic, cf. *ńakələsi* ‘take, take away, obtain’, *mintələsi* ‘take, take away; drag’, *kamə-* ‘catch’ (Sipőcz and Szeverényi 2019).

a) Mansi

<i>Dynamic meaning</i>	Source based	Goal based
causative	<i>mi-</i>	<i>wi-</i>
inchoative		
state	<i>ōńś-</i>	

b) Khanty	
<i>Dynamic meaning</i>	
causative	Source based Goal based
inchoative	<i>mǎ-</i> <i>wu-</i>
state	<i>taj-</i>
c) Nganasan	
<i>Dynamic meaning</i>	
causative	Source based Goal based
inchoative	<i>misji</i> -
state	<i>tətud'a</i> ¹⁰ <i>honsi</i>

Table 2. The basic verbs of possession in Mansi, Khanty and Nganasan

Languages represented in Viberg’s paper showed the greatest variety regarding the verbs meaning ‘get’. In languages having a basic verb with this meaning usually the verb ‘get’ is etymologically old, and in connection with its oldness this verb has complex polysemy and several grammaticalized usage, and it is typically one of the most frequent verbs of the given language (cf. English *get*, Swedish *få* or Finnish *saada* as modal or causative auxiliaries). In languages without a basic verb ‘get’, this meaning can be expressed by the passivization of the verb ‘give’ or by other basic verbs of possession. This phenomenon can be seen in Viberg’s following tables (Tables 3–4).

¹⁰ In Nganasan there are two basic verbs meaning ‘give’ whose distribution depends on the person of the Recipient: *tətud’a* is used if the Recipient is 1st or 2nd person, *misji* is used if the Recipient is 3rd person (cf. examples 10 and 11) (Wagner-Nagy and Szeverényi 2013). A similar suppletive split appears also in other languages, e.g. Saliba, Kolyma Yukaghir (Margetts and Austin 2007).

		English		German	
<i>Dynamic meaning:</i>		Source-based	Goal-based	Source-based	Goal-based
Causative		give	take	geben	nehmen
Inchoative			get		bekommen/ kriegen
State		have		haben	

		French		Finnish	
<i>Dynamic meaning:</i>		Source-based	Goal-based	Source-based	Goal-based
Causative		donner	prendre	antaa	ottaa
Inchoative					saada
State		avoir		Locational possessive	

Table 3. The basic verbs of possession in English, German, French, and Finnish (Viberg 2010, Table 11.)

Even these genetically and/or areally related five languages show differences (the 5th language in Viberg’s description is Swedish): while in Finnish (and also in Swedish) there are four basic verbs of possession, in English ‘give’ also functions as ‘get’ in a passive construction, in German the verbs *bekommen* and *kriegen* share the meaning ‘get’, and in French *donner* and *avoir* appear in this function.

In non-European languages the differences can be greater. While in Chipewyan there are no basic verbs of possession, in Sango the direction of transfer is not relevant and ‘get’ is expressed by a verb meaning ‘find’, in Turkish the causative possession verbs express the meaning ‘get’, and in Swahili ‘get’ is expressed by the passive use of the verb ‘give’ (see also example 11).

	Chipewyan (Dene Sų́łíné)		Sango	
Dynamic meaning:	Source-based	Goal-based	Source-based	Goal-based
Causative	No basic verbs of possession		mû 'give=take, transfer'	
Inchoative			wara 'find'	
State			With-Possessive	

	Turkish		Swahili	
Dynamic meaning:	Source-based	Goal-based	Source-based	Goal-based
Causative	vermek	almak	-pa	-chukua
Inchoative	Genitive schema		With-Possessive	
State				

Table 4. Basic verbs of possession in Chipewyan, Sango, Turkish and Swahili (Viberg 2010: Table 13)

In the investigated Uralic languages, it can be seen – mainly in newer sources – that in addition to the passive use of the verb ‘give’ the verb ‘take’ is also acquiring the function of ‘get’ (cf. section 5 below). I intend to display the cognitive and sociocultural background of this phenomenon in the following sections.

4. The perspective of cognitive linguistics

‘Giving’/‘getting’ is one of our most common activity, it is a “basic act occurring between humans” (Newman 2002: 79). According to Viberg, the verb ‘give’ is a nuclear verb, this meaning tends to be lexicalized in all languages. The verb ‘get’ is a basic verb “only”, and in many languages its meaning is not lexicalized as a basic verb

(and has thus no specialized meaning) (see the examples in 3). Khanty, Mansi, and Nganasan also belong to this latter group of languages.

The phenomenon is worth examining from a cognitive perspective. The figure-ground organization of clause structure widely investigated in Cognitive Grammar can be detected in give clauses, the grammatical subject of the clause is in connection with the figure-ground perspectives. All three participants of the event may function as grammatical subject (cf. *Mary gave a book to John. John got a book from Mary. This book has changed hands.*). Nonetheless it is very common that speakers tend to describe the event of giving so that the source of the action occurs as the grammatical subject. In an experiment where speakers had to describe different physical transfers, they preferred to put the giver into the subject position. Other clause structures are also possible, since the use of the different structures in an utterance is always determined by the given situation and by which constituent is pragmatically emphasized, but from a cognitive perspective the most basic way is featuring the giver as a grammatical subject (Newman 2002: 79–81).

The notion ‘get’ is a kind of abstraction. It is supported by several conditions. The lexicalization of this notion is not as universal as the lexicalization of ‘give’ or ‘take’ (see section 3 above). If a language has a basic verb with this meaning, etymologically this verb originates in more concrete meanings denoting actions done with hands, e.g. Swedish *få* ‘get’ < ‘catch’ (Viberg 2010), Finnish *saada* ‘get’ < **saye* ‘come, catch, reach’ (UEW 429), Hungarian *kap* ‘get’ < an onomatopoeic verb with the meaning ‘snap’ (EWUng 684–5). In addition, the syntax and semantics of the verb ‘get’ display a kind of controversy. The event of getting involves an actor who is not the subject of the verb (in active voice), and the subject is not an actor. Thus, in the case of the verb ‘get’ the syntactic subject is the Recipient. Cognitively this may explain the “unstable” status of this verb within the group of the basic verbs of possession, and the use of other, cognitively “more stable” verbs to express this event.

5. The perspective of ethnosyntax¹¹

It is a well-known fact that languages reflect on the world around most visibly in the lexicon, but also the grammar of a language can display features reflecting the aspects of the speakers’ environment and culture. A good example of it is the nominal classification system found in some languages which represents both cultural and grammatical features. According to Wierzbicka (1973: 313) “every language embodies in its very structure a certain world view, a certain philosophy”.

Dixon writes about the possible connections between culture and the linguistic expression of the event of giving in Dyrbal (1973). He claims that while several ‘give’

¹¹ For the term ethnosyntax and its “narrow and broad sense”, see Enfield (2002: 7-8).

type verbs are used in English with specialized commercially oriented meaning (like *sell, rent, lend, pay, award* etc.), the verbs belonging to the same lexical field have different semantic characteristics in Dyirbal: they have semantic components related to position, movement and kinship obligation relations. (For instance, a different verb is used depending on what movement is involved in the transfer, or whether the transfer involves relatives etc., cf. Dixon 1973: 206-210.)

Newman investigated the ethnosyntactic correlations of give-type clauses in one of his papers (2002). He distinguishes between languages in which the linguistic expression of the ‘give’ event reflects cultural circumstances on the one hand, and languages in which the structure of the give clause shows language-specific features, but these features do not reflect greater cultural, non-linguistic values. The Japanese language provides a good example of the connection between the linguistic expression of transfer and certain cultural and social circumstances. Politeness phenomena are relatively well-known features of the Japanese language, since respect is an inherent characteristic of Japanese society. Japanese language use is fundamentally determined by the relative status of the interlocutors and the subordinate/superordinate status of the speakers in the hierarchy of rank. This is also evident in the expression of ‘give’ events: the choice of the verb is dependent on the relative status of the giver and the recipient in the hierarchy as well as on the given situation, that is, whether the speaker is the giver, the recipient, or neither (Newman 2002: 82–84).

Newman describes as an example of the second type, that in some languages the recipient is expressed as the syntactic object, in contrast with other languages where the transferred thing occupies this position. (In the typological framework presented in section 2, these construction types correspond to the indirect and secundative alignments.) In Tuggy’s 1998 terminology, the two construction types correspond to the Human Interaction and Object Manipulation perspectives: the syntactic object is the recipient in the former, and the transferred thing in the latter. These perspectives can also be manifested in other aspects of grammar: for instance, in the Nahuatl and Zulu languages they are represented in the causative and applicative constructions also, in addition to ditransitives. But there is no reason to suppose that these features of grammar have any cultural motivations (Newman 2002: 91-93).

As we have seen in section 2, the Ob-Ugric languages employ both the Human Interaction and Object Manipulation perspectives for expressing ‘give’ events. This can be regarded a language specific feature, but without being associated with any cultural or social characteristic. From the typological perspective it is important to add that the use of both of these construction types is found in many languages of the world. Another language specific phenomenon is the absence of the basic verb meaning ‘get’ in the investigated Uralic languages. As we have seen, this is not a unique phenomenon either, it is typical of several languages (see section 3), and

presumably is in connection with the cognitive background of the notion ‘get’ (see section 4). No cultural or social characteristic is associated with it, since there is no reason to believe that Siberian Uralic people, for instance, regard ‘giving’ as a more important thing than ‘receiving’ – this, again, is just a language specific phenomenon.

However, we can also observe in the case of the Ob-Ugric languages that recently – typically in the newer sources – beside the passive use of the verb ‘give’ also the verb ‘take’ appears with the meaning ‘get’. As we could see above (section 3), it is not unprecedented, the verb ‘take’ can have this function also in other languages. When I asked my Khanty informant to translate the sentence ‘I got this book from you’ into Khanty, she said “It is impossible to say in Khanty that I got something. It is in Russian”. Finally, after some hesitation she chose the verb *wu-* ‘take’ (12). I had a similar experience with my Mansi informant who used the verb ‘take’ when she tried to translate Russian sentences with the verb ‘get’.

(13) Khanty

<i>ma</i>	<i>nǎŋ</i>	<i>elten</i>	<i>tǎm</i>	<i>nepek</i>	<i>u-s-em</i>
I	you	PP	this	book	take-PST-1SG

‘I got this book from you.’

This lexical change – namely, the extension of the meaning of the verb ‘take’ – can be traced in the dictionaries. “Modern” Russian–Mansi dictionaries contain the verb *wiy* ‘take’ as the Mansi equivalent of the Russian verb *получать* ‘get’ (Rombandeeva 2005, Rombandeeva and Kuzakova 1982). Dictionaries based on earlier collections do not mention this meaning of the verb *wiy* (Munkácsi and Kálmán 725–726, Kannisto 137–139). Nor does the Khanty dictionary based on older texts and collections mention the meaning ‘get’ of the verb *wu-* ‘take’ (DEWOS 1549). In modern Russian–Khanty dictionaries either the verb *получать* ‘get’ is translated with a non-basic verb (like ‘catch’, ‘capture’ etc.) or they do not contain the entry ‘get’ (Syazi and Skameyko 1992, Solovar 2006, Tereshkin and Solovar 1981, Volkova and Solovar 2016). In some Khanty–Russian dictionaries the verb *wu-* is translated by the Russian word *получать* ‘get’ in addition to the lexemes *взять* and *брать* ‘take’ (Syazi and Skameyko 1992). The following Mansi sentence pair is from the same newspaper article, the sentences express the same situation, but the verbs are different. In (14) the passive construction containing the verb ‘give’ is used, in sentence (15) the same meaning is expressed by the verb ‘take’.

(14) Mansi

<i>Kit-it</i>	<i>mesta-l</i>	<i>Nižnewartowskij ūs-t</i>	<i>ōl-ne</i>
two-dx	place-INSTR	Nizhnevartovsk town-LOC	live-PTCP.PRS
<i>xantə-t</i>	<i>maj-we-s-ət.</i>		
Khanty-PL	give-PASS-PST-3PL		

‘Khanty people from Nizhnevartovsk got second place.’

(15) Mansi

Os xūrmit mesta ħeftejuganskij rajon-t
 and third place Neftejugansk district-LOC
ōl-ne xōtpa-t wi-s-ət.
 live-PTCP.PRS person-PL take-PST-3PL
 ‘And people from Neftejugansk took/got 3rd place.’
 (LS 2016/13: 9)

In recent Nganasan sources we can observe a similar phenomenon with a different lexical solution. In example (16) we can see an active clause structure to express the situation of getting by using the Russian verb *получать* ‘get’:

(16) Nganasan

pr'emə polut'i-ir-ü kə müdü-tü
 award.ACC get-FRQ-PRS.[3SG.S] fut[STAT]-PRS[3SG.S]
 ‘(We were competing, who arrives first to Volochanka), that person will get the award.’ (KTD_MyLife_nar.exb, Brykina et al. 2018)

The examples above demonstrate that probably due to the influence of bilingualism in Russian among the speakers of Siberian Uralic languages today, a new clause structure has emerged for expressing the notion ‘get’. In addition to the previous passive construction with the verb ‘give’, the speakers have also started to apply an active construction for expressing the event of getting which was not previously used in these languages. And this change is connected to the social and cultural circumstances of the speakers, namely, to the predominant bilingualism of Ob-Ugric and Samoyedic people appearing rapidly in the last few decades. This is an example of the phenomenon where language contact is manifested not in the lexicon but in a structural change. It cannot be named unambiguously an ethnosyntactic phenomenon (not in the narrow sense of ethnosyntax), but it is undoubtedly in connection with the speakers’ conditions. Table 4 demonstrates this modified system of the basic verbs of possession in Mansi, Khanty, and Nganasan.

a) Mansi

<i>Dynamic meaning</i> causative inchoative state	Source based		Goal based
		<i>mi-</i>	<i>wi-</i>
		<i>ōńś-</i>	
		<i>ōńś-</i>	

b) Khanty*

<i>Dynamic meaning</i>	Source based	Goal based
causative	<i>mǎ-</i>	<i>wu-</i>
inchoative		
state	<i>taj-</i>	

c) Nganasan

<i>Dynamic meaning</i>	Source based	Goal based
causative	<i>misji</i> <i>tətud'a</i>	-
inchoative		(+ Russian <i>получать</i>)
state	<i>honsi</i>	

Table 4. The basic verbs of possession in recent Mansi, Khanty and Nganasan

6. Conclusion

In this paper I have investigated the event of giving and getting from different theoretical perspectives in three Uralic languages spoken in Siberia, namely, Khanty, Mansi, and Nganasan. From a syntactic perspective we could see that the verbs meaning ‘give’ and ‘get’ are used in constructions which are typologically attested in other languages, too, and in all three languages the notion ‘get’ is expressed by a passive construction containing the verb ‘give’. This is a common phenomenon from the perspective of lexical typology, too. The meaning ‘get’ does not lexicalize as a basic verb in numerous languages, and very often other basic verbs of possession express it. Probably this phenomenon is in connection with some cognitive features of the event of getting. On the one hand, the syntax and the semantics of the verb ‘get’ display a kind of controversy: in clauses with the verb ‘get’ the syntactic subject – regarding its Thematic role – is the Recipient, not the Agent. On the other hand, the meaning ‘get’ is a result of abstraction, which is confirmed among other things by the etymology of ‘get’ verbs, which originally denoted concrete actions done with hands (grabbing, grasping, catching etc.). In recent language usage a new structure has appeared in the investigated languages which is absent in earlier sources. In this structure the event of getting is expressed by an active clause, in the Ob-Ugric languages the verb ‘take’ is getting acquire the function of ‘get’, and in the Nganasan language the Russian verb meaning ‘get’ appears in this function. Behind this change

we can see the intensive influence of Russian and the rapidly developed bilingualism of the speakers.

With this complex analysis of the event of giving and getting I have aimed to demonstrate that in analysis of a given language phenomenon different approaches (syntactic, lexical, cognitive, and cultural linguistic) may be interconnected in complex ways and can provide a more comprehensive description.

Abbreviations

A	agent of a (di)transitive clause
ABL	ablative
ACC	accusative
AN	action nominal
CAUS	causative marker
DU	dual
DEST	destinative suffix
DX	derivational suffix
FRQ	frequentative DX
FUT	future
INFER	inferential
INSTR	instrumental
LAT/DAT	lative-dative
LOC	locative
NEG	negative particle
PASS	passive
PL	plural
PP	postposition
PRS	present
PST	past
PTCL	particle
PTCP	participle
R	recipient
SG	singular
T	theme

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