Variation in three-participant constructions in Eastern Mansi

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The aim of my paper is to outline the variation between three different three-participant constructions in Eastern Mansi and the factors motivating the variation. In Eastern Mansi, there are two different active constructions and one passive construction used for expressing ditransitive action. The active constructions are (1) the so called PO/SO construction and (2) the so called DO/IO construction (see Dryer 1986). Also a (3) personal passive clause can contain all the same arguments as a three-participant active clause.

The variation between these three constructions is based on topicality: usually the most topical constituent (primary topic) is promoted to the place of subject (Kulonen 2007: 197, 199). Very often the primary topic is expressed explicitly only with a verb suffix.

1. **PO/SO construction: Ag[nom] - Pat[instr] - R[acc]**

In the PO/SO construction the place of the direct object is occupied by the R-argument, and the Patient is expressed with instrumental case. This mechanism is also called dative shift, and it occurs in situations where the Agent is the primary topic, R-argument represents secondary topic and the Patient is focal.

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om  nää –n  tät –qš –łom  nee –l
Sg1  Sg2-PossSg2Sg  bring-PRET-Sg<1Sg  woman-INSTR

‘I brought you a wife.’
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nää –n  tee –n –qł  wōär –qš*  nää –n  āj –n –qł
Sg2-PossSg2Sg  eat-GER-INSTR  make-INF  Sg2-PossSg2Sg  drink-GER-INSTR

wōärqš*?! make-INF

‘Should I make you something to eat, should I make you something to drink?’
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2. **DO/IO construction Ag[nom] - Pat[acc/nom] - R[lat]**

The DO/IO construction consists of a direct object and an indirect one, i. e. the Patient gets the role of secondary topic, and the focal R-argument is expressed with lative case. The occurrence of DO/IO construction is quite marginal: it is restricted to such sentences that include a recipient focus.

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om –nōän  pœl  eep –qŋ  öänø,  eep –qŋ  töäs  öät
1Sg–LAT  PARTIC  steam–ADJ  bowl  steam–ADJ  plate  NEG
wott –aat put–3Pl

‘They don’t give (in sacrifice) any steaming bowl, any steaming plate for me either.’
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3. **Passive: R[nom] - Ag[lat] - Pat[instr]**

Mansi passive is called personal passive: the predicate verb is inflected according to the number and person of the subject (i. e. the Patient). A passive clause can also contain a lative-inflected agent and an instrumental-inflected R-argument. Three-participant passive clauses appear particularly in
situations where the R-argument is the most topical constituent and needs to be promoted to subject.

nee –tään jär –øl mäj –w –øs
woman –LATPossSg3Sg scraper –INSTR give –PASS–3SG –PRET
‘His wife gave him a scraper.’

kwåtøm pøl wås eel-oolii meenk mõõ –l
Sure PARTIC PARTIC first 1DU-STRESS land-INSTR
la –w –äämøn
tell-PASS-1DU
‘Certainly we will first be provided with land.’

References:

