Enets conditional converb of the verb ‘say’ as conditional clause marker

1. Introduction

1.1. Enets: general facts

- Genetic affiliation: Samoyedic < Uralic
- Taymyr Peninsula, Northern Siberia, Russia
- Two dialects: Forest (15-20 speakers), Tundra (5-10 speakers)

1.2. Data

- Corpus of oral texts in Forest Enets (appr. 215 000 words):
  - archive recordings (1970–1990s) ≈ speakers born in 1910s–1930s

1.3. Object of the study

- Conditional converb (CVB.COND) of man ‘say’ as conditional clause marker:

  (1) ɔlaj-za ma-b tone,
      leftover-NOM.SG.3SG say(pfV)-CVB.COND there_is(ipfv).3SG.S
      kudaxaa-d n/i kanus
      for_a_long_time-DAT.SG NEG.3SG.S leave(ipfv).CONN
‘If it has leftovers, it does not go far away’.

- The main function of CVB.COND is to mark the verbal head in protasis clauses:

  (2) spidola-xaru tone-bu? sajdbc na-? n/i-u?
      radio_set-EVEN there_is(ipfv)-CVB.COND good_exist(ipfv)-CONN NEG-3SG.S.CONT
‘If there was a radio set “Spidola”, it would be fine, after all’.

- Lexical use of CVB.COND of man ‘say’ denoting the event of speaking in protasis:

  (3) dįsi-j? ma-bune-da kan-ʔ?
      grandfather-NOM.SG.1SG say(pfV)-CVB.COND-OBL.SG.3SG leave(pfV)-2SG.S.IMP
      mod/ kan-ta-ʔ?
      I leave(pfV)-FUT-1SG.S
‘If my grandfather says: “Go”, I will go’.

- Lexical uses are much less frequent than the use as conditional clause marker: 3 to 91 occurrences in the corpus.
- The uses of man ‘say’ as conditional clause marker make up about 10% of CVB.COND uses in the corpus: 91 of 891 (no frequency differences between the two generations of speakers).

Areal perspective on conditional converb of ‘say’ as conditional clause marker:

- among the languages of Siberia attested only for Enets [Matić, Pakendorf 2013]
- of the two dialects of Enets exists only in the Forest variety
1.4. Aims of the study
- to show that CVB.COND of man ‘say’ as a conditional clause marker is a recent development
- to trace the changes in the use of CVB.COND of man ‘say’ over time
- to propose the possible path of grammatical development of this function

2. The use of CVB.COND of man ‘say’ by the two generations of Forest Enets speakers

2.1. Phonological form and possessive marking
- CVB.COND has several allomorphs and can be used with or without possessive marking referring to the subject of the clause:
  - -bune — always with possessive marking (3)
  - -buʔ — with (4) or without possessive marking (2)
  - -b (5) — only without possessive marker

(4) kudaxaa-ja  d’a-xan  diri-bu-ta
for_a_long_time-ADJ place-LOC.SG live(pfv)-CVB.COND-obl.sg.3sg
sge-da
spend_the_night(pfv)-fut.3sg.s
‘If she lives far away, she would stay for a night’.

(5) texe  sira-da  kaʔa-b
there(loc)  snow-obl.sg.3sg  come_down(pfv)-CVB.COND
yul kezeru-t  tʃi  oka  ɛ-ubi
very  wild_reindeer-obl.pl.2sg  here  many  be(ipfv)-hab.3sg.s
‘When the snow falls down, the wild reindeer tend to be very numerous’.

- The choice between these variants is largely free — statistically it is associated with the type of construction, specific verbal lexemes, generation of speakers, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YoB</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>-bune-POSS</th>
<th>-buʔ-POSS</th>
<th>-buʔ</th>
<th>-b</th>
<th>Ratio of -b</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>before 1940</td>
<td>‘say’ CCM</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>other</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after 1940</td>
<td>‘say’ CCM</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28</td>
<td><strong>0.6</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>other</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Formal changes in the use of CVB.COND of man ‘say’ as conditional clause marker:
  - the speakers of older generation (born before 1940) predominantly use the -buʔ-POSS to mark man ‘say’ in conditional clauses (6)
  - in the texts by the speakers born after 1940 the variant -b becomes much more frequent (1), (7)
- The possessive marker used with CVB.COND of man ‘say’ is always 2SG:

(6) ma-bu-t  tʃi-ju  tʃi-jʔ,  aya,
say(pfv)-CVB.COND-obl.sg.2sg  that-restr.adj  reach(pfv)-m-3sg.m  yeah
tezə  d’eri  d’oda
now  day  middle
‘If, say, it [the sun] moved there, yeah, now it is the middle of the day’.

(7) sej-za  ma-b  niʔ  buzderʔ  kaʔa
eye-nom.pl.3sg  say(pfv)-CVB.COND  neg-3pl.s  move(ipfv)-conn  die(pfv).3sg.s
‘If its [reindeer’s] eyes don’t move, it died’.
2.2. Position in the clause

- The CVB.COND of man ‘say’ can be located at the clause periphery, more frequently clause-initially (6), sometimes — in the clause-final position (8), or inside the clause, often after the first constituent (7), (9).

(8) eto, pən/iɣa-? saʃza mal/tʃa kasa entʃe-u-? mabut
so do(ipfv)-3PL.S good overcoat man person-PL say(pfV)-CVB.COND-OBL.SG.2SG
‘Well, they wear good overcoat if they are men’.

(9) bi-ta ma-b dɔri, mu,
water-NOM.SG.3SG say(pfV)-CVB.COND deep PLC
oka poga mɔʒnɔ tʃiʃ
many fishing_net it_is_possible install(pfv)-CVB
‘If the water, say, is deep, one can install many nets’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YoB</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Ratio of uses inside the clause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clause periphery</td>
<td>Inside the clause</td>
<td>inside the clause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before 1940</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after 1940</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- In the texts by the speakers born after 1940 the CVB.COND of man ‘say’ is used inside the clause more often than in the texts by older speakers.

2.3. Semantic and discourse functions

- Conditional constructions with CVB.COND of man ‘say’ usually describe relations between generic or habitual situations, cf. (10) and examples (6)–(9) above:

(10) prədəki-tə ma-b tara-?
foodstuff-NOM.PL.2SG say(pfV)-CVB.COND necessary(ipfv)-3PL.S
mu-d, kan-ta-d texe, pensii-d nɔʔ-da-da
PLC-DAT.SG leave(pfv)-FUT-2SG.S there(loc) pension-OBL.SG.2SG grasp(pfv)-FUT-2SG.S
‘If, say, you need food, you would go there and get your pension’.

- In some contexts, the clause with CVB.COND of man ‘say’ is loosely integrated with apodosis clause (11) or not followed by the apodosis clause at all performing a scene-setting function (12):

(11) kutuʃ-r ma-bu-t ke-za bɔɔ,
some-NOM.SG.2SG say(pfV)-CVB.COND-OBL.SG.2SG side-NOM.SG.3SG bad
tʃike-r kaʔa-da
this-NOM.SG.2SG die(pfv)-FUT.3SG.S
‘Of some of them, say, body is bad [i. e. they are skinny], such will die’.

(12) sira-za ma-b eu dɔdʃi-d ɣa-ʃ,
snow-NOM.SG.3SG say(pfV)-CVB.COND here(dir) time-DAT.SG exist(ipfv)-3SG.S.IMP
eu dɔdʃi-d ɣa, ed sira niʔ ed pudar tɔr
here(dir)time-DAT.SG exist(ipfv).3SG.S snow on(dir) so put(pfv)-FUT-2SG.SOsg so
‘Say, let the snow be till here, it is till here, you will put it [an iron trap] on the snow so’.
3. Discussion

- Formal change — the loss of the last vestiges of converb, development into a discourse particle:
  - loss of possessive marking, spread of the most phonologically reduced form
  - integration into the clause

- Supposition as the source of conditional meaning:
  - Grammaticalization of ‘say’ to conditional marker includes the stage where it functions as discourse marker of suggestion or supposition [Van Olmen 2013; Chapell 2017].
  - In Enets, supposition can be expressed by CVB.COND in independent clauses (13).

(13) \( peri \quad fi? \quad kada-bu-ta \quad yo \)
always 1.ACC take-away(pfv)-CVB.COND-obl.sg.3sg even
‘Maybe she will take me away even forever’.

- Thus, in Enets, the meaning of supposition can be attributed both to the lexical source, the verb man ‘say’, and to its grammatical form, CVB.COND.
- Path of development hypothesized for Enets CVB.COND of man ‘say’:
  ‘supposing you say’ > discourse marker in scene-setting clauses > (conditional conjunction)
- This path explains the use of 2SG possessive marker in the older texts.
- Generic or habitual situations are more compatible with the semantics of suggestion (‘supposing…’) and scene-setting contexts than singular/episodic events.
- The use as discourse particle in scene-setting clauses is still partially retained.
- Conditional morphology in CVB.COND of man ‘say’ originates not from its use in complex conditional constructions, but from one of its functions in independent clauses.

Glosses
1, 2, 3 — 1st, 2nd, 3rd person, ACC — accusative, ADJ — adjectivizer, COND — conditional, CONN — connegative, CONT — contrastive TAM series, CVB — converb, DAT — dative, EVEN — marker meaning ‘even’, FUT — future, HAB — habitual, IMP — imperative, LOC — locative, M — middle indexation series, NEG — negative verb, NOM — nominative, OBL — oblique, P — possessive marker, PL — plural, PLC — placeholder, RESTR — restrictive, S — subject indexation series, SG — singular, S0sg — subject-object indexation series for singular object

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References