Valency operators in Kamas

Gerson Klumpp, University of Tartu
klumpp@ut.ee

1. Kamas (Uralic, Samoyed, South Siberia, extinct) had two productive valency operators, one which increases argument places (\(-T_a\)), and one which decreases them (\(-\tilde{O}\)). They may occur in combination in the order “increase-decrease” (\(-T-\tilde{O}\)) as in (1c), but not vice versa. The aim of the paper is to give a structured account of the functional range of the two markers (with a side glance on other languages of the Sayan area).

2. The first operator derives transitive from intransitive, and causative from transitive verbs as in (1a–b) and (2a–b). The second operator derives intransitive from transitive verbs, e.g., anticausatives like \(\text{ardadәr}=\tilde{O}\) ‘perish, go bad’ from \(\text{ardadәr}=-\tilde{O}\) ‘spoil, damage’ (KW:6a), reflexives—cf. (1c), (3a, b)—, or reciprocals. In addition, probably departing from pairs like \(\text{edә}=-\tilde{O}\) ‘hang up (tr.)’ : \(\tilde{e}d\tilde{d}=\tilde{O}\) ‘hang (itr.)’, the intransitivizer acquired the function of specifying durative state-of-affairs, ending up with intransitive verbs as, e.g., \(i\ bә-\ \text{liö}\) down, lie’ : \(i\ b\tilde{O}\) ‘lie’ (KW:21–22).

(1) a. \(\text{köz } \text{bü-na } \tilde{u}z\tilde{a}-bi\)  
coal water-LAT fall-PST
‘the coal fell into the water’ (KW:88)

b. \(\text{selә-ne } \text{pi-m } \text{bü-na } \tilde{u}z\tilde{a}-bi-em\)  
sharpen-PTC stone-ACC water-LAT fall-TR-PST-1SG
‘I dropped the grindstone into the water’ (KW:85)

c? \(\text{θuna-na } \text{te me-žә } \tilde{u}z\tilde{a}-\tilde{a}-bi\)  
cliff-LAT rope-INS fall-TR-REFL-PST
‘with a rope he let himself down into the cliff’ (KW:93)

(2) a. \(\text{tәn } \text{simә-l } \text{tazәr-la-dәn}\)  
you eye-2SG cure-FUT-3PL.DOC
‘They will cure your eye’ (KW:99)

b. \(\text{mәn } \text{simә-mtәzәr-dә-la-m}\)  
I eye-1SG cure-CAUS-FUT-1SG
‘I will have my eye cured’ (KW:99)

(3) a. \(\text{kәjә-m } \text{sәbәj -bi, } \text{pa -bi}\)  
brain-ACC pull.out-PST cook-PST
‘she pulled the brain out and cooked it’ (KW:97)

b. \(\text{aspa } \text{ed - , } \text{? ubә-j } \text{si}l \text{ pad-ә-}\)  
cauldron hang-IMP2SG meat-ADJ fat cook-REFL-IMP
‘Cauldron, hang up [yourself], meat and fat, cook yourself!’ (KW:96)

3. In examples (1–3), the valency operators may be understood as verb derivation suffixes proper, i.e. verbs derived with the suffixes \(-T_a\), \(-\tilde{O}\), and their combination \(-T-\tilde{O}\) are considered new lexical entries. The functional range of these suffixes, however, covers also occurrence in combination with participle and converb endings. With the participle in \(-N\tilde{A}\) (\(-nә \sim -nә \sim -tә \sim -te\), which itself is unspecified for voice, the argument place decreaser \(-\tilde{O}\) occurs quite regularly with transitive verbs in order to specify object orientation, i.e. a passive reading of the participle, cf. (4a–b). The
argument place increaser -Tә, on the other hand, in combination with non-finite forms, has a variety of causative readings, and qualifies also as a marker of controlled activity. In (5) it occurs with a converb in the causative-reflexive reading; note that the combination of the base verb dür-‘disappear’ with causative -Tә does in no way specify the reflexive component (‘makes itself disappear’), leaving this interpretation up to the context. The causative-permissive reading (cf. Nedjalkov & Sil’nickij 1969: 39) is found in (6a) (all examples in (6) are formed with the participle in -NTA). In (6b–c), the causative-instrumental function can be found: the suffix occurs with NPs which are used in a function specified by the base verb. The selectional criteria are unclear, other instruments do not need the suffix, cf. the grindstone in (1b) (selә-ne not **selә-dә-ne pi ‘sharpening stone’). Examples like the herder in (6c) correspond to what is known as the characterizing aktionsart in Selkup (a language closely related to Kamas), which is derived by the etymologically cognate suffix -ty as, e.g., in töm-ty- ‘be a merchant’ (from tömy- ‘buy’) (Xelimskij et al. 1980: 233). The characterizing function is a possible reading also in (6d). In general, as with the Kamas designation of the second month in autumn in (6e), the exact reading of the suffix may be ambiguous.

(4) a. amor-ô-na ine
eat-PASS-PTC horse
‘eaten horse’ (KW:178)

b. saj ńe bd-ô-ne sazәn
off tear-PASS-PTC paper
torn up paper’ (KW:57)

(5) na b bũ-nә tür-dә-j pā -lu -lia
duck water-LAT disappear-CAUS-CV immerge-MOM-PRS
‘the duck plunged into the water’ (KW:53b)

(6) a. mekker-dә-ne kuza
cheat-CAUS-PTC man
‘man who gets cheated (who permits [his own] being cheated’ (KW:39a)

b. tũ̈ til-dә-ne baza
ground dig-CAUS-PTC iron
‘plough (lit. iron made digging the ground)’ (KW:16b)

c. mal kadar-dә-na kuza
cattle herd-CAUS-PTC man
‘herder (lit. person made herding the cattle)’ (KW:37b)

d. orar-dә-na men
bark-CHAR-PTC dog
‘barking dog (lit. dog making itself bark, i.e. a dog which barks a lot)’ (KW:49b)

e. samaj-dә-na ki
hunt in the forest-CAUS/CHAR-PTC month
‘second month in autumn’ (KW:57a)
‘month which allows to hunt in the forest’ (causer attribute)
‘month which is used for hunting in the forest’ (causee attribute, instrument)
‘month in which people usually hunt in the forest’ (characterizing aktionsart)

Abbreviations
ACC accusative case, ADJ adjective derivation, CAUS causative voice, CHAR characterizing aktionsart, CV converb, FUT future tense, IMP imperative mood, INS instrumental case, LAT
lative case, MOM momentaneous aktionsart, OC objective conjugation (object agreement), PASS passive voice, PRS present tense, PST past tense, PTC participle, REFL reflexive, TR transitive

References


