

Hunting for Khanty X-marking

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A problem

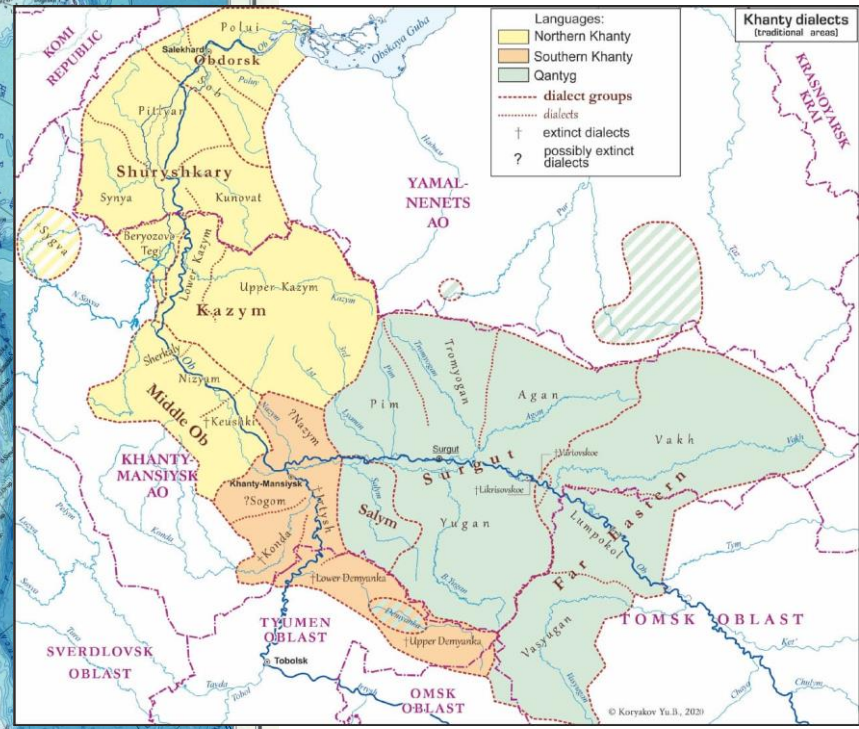
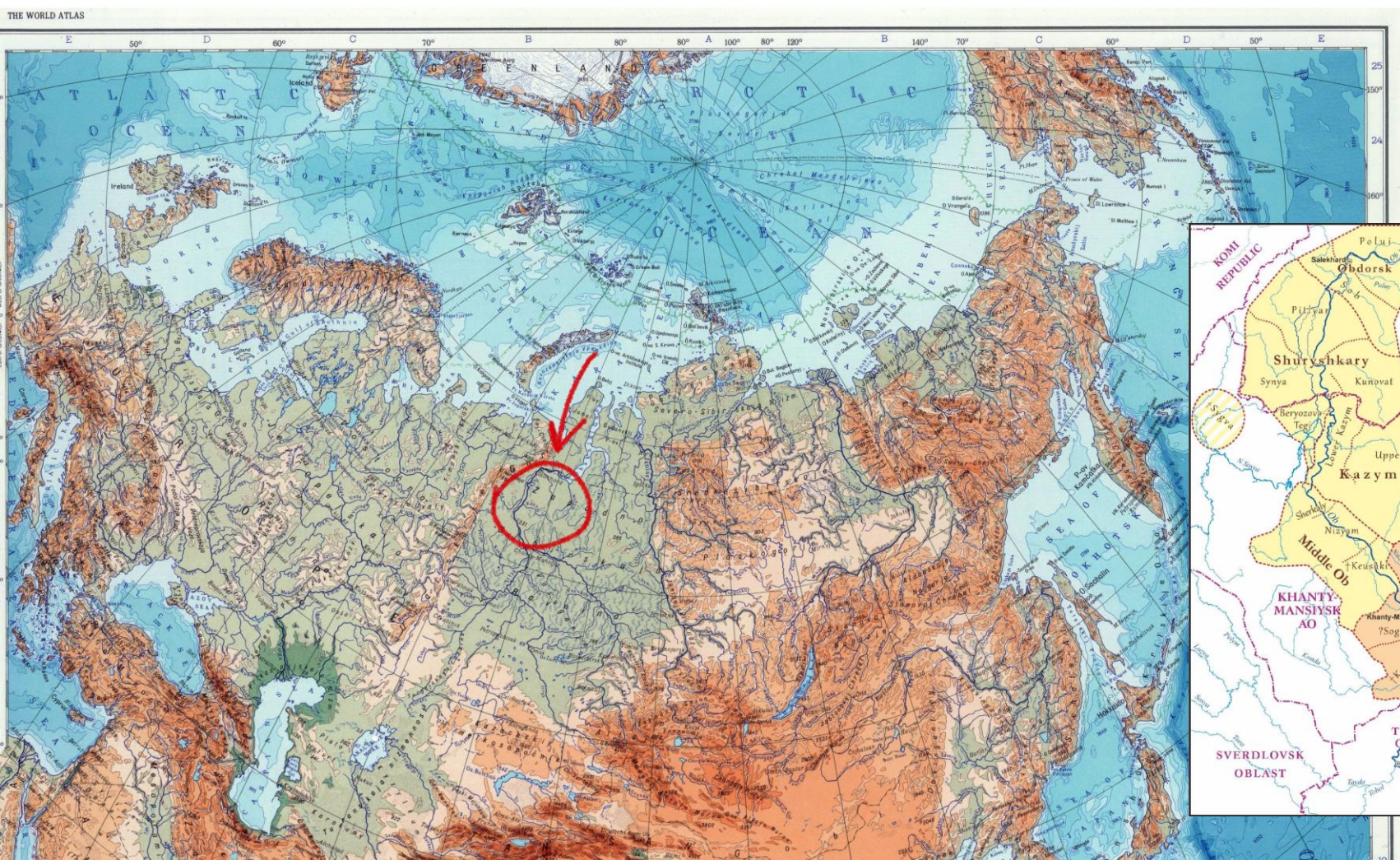
We would not expect contrafactuality to be expressed by past tense alone
at least we see no such example in the typology of CF conditionals

[Lazard 1998]

Claim: in Kazym Khanty past tense marks counterfactuality alone

Kazym Khanty, a dialect of Northern Khanty (Uralic>Khantic)

Russia, Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug, Kazym village



map by Yuri Koryakov

A note on data

- ▲ two deictic tenses - past(PST) and nonpast (NPST)
- ▲ no Sequence of Tense
- ▲ no regular aspectual markers

Data acquired through **elicitation** with Russian and Khanti stimuli
+ **narrative elicitation** [Burton, Matthewson 2015; Louie 2015]
(translating a whole story, not a sentence)

notion of X-marking proposed by [von Stechow, Iatridou 2020]

Conditionals

X_{ant} : [V-PST]

X_{cons} : [(λθλθn) V-PST]

O-marked:

(1) {Our dad might come home tomorrow. We contemplate our cooking plans}

aše-w χἄlewət ki juχət-ἄλ mηη χυλ ἵαῖ wεr-λ-ἄw
father-POSS.1PL tomorrow if come-NPST[3SG] we fish bread make-NPST-1PL

‘If father comes tomorrow, we will make fish pie’

X-marked:

(2) {Dad usually comes home at the weekends, but this time he is too busy at work}

aše-w χἄlewət juχət-ἄs ki mηη (λθλθn) χυλ ἵαῖ wεr-s-ἄw
father-POSS.1PL tomorrow come-PST[3SG] if we IRR fish bread make-PST-1PL

‘If father came tomorrow, we would make fish pie’

→ PST in both protasis and apodosis can be a sufficient X-marker

Temporal localization doesn't matter

X_{ant} : [V-PST]

X_{cons} : [(λθλən) V-PST]

Localization in the past:

(3) tolaj-en kinška wəjət-**s**-əλλe ki mǎn-εma (^okλθλən) λɪηət-**s**-əλλe
T.-POSS.2SG book find-**PST**-3SG>SG if I-DAT (IRR) read-**PST**-3SG>SG

'If Tolya had found a book, he would've read it for me'

→ [PST], [(IRR) PST]

Double layer of past == PST

Plusquamperfect meanings are covered by PST:

Fakepast+past = past+past

(4) anki juχət-əm-ən mašaj-en an-λ-aλ χυλιjewwa λ'υχət-**s**-əλλə
mother come-NFIN.PST-LOC M.-POSS.2SG cup-PL-POSS.3SG all wash-**PST**-3SG>NSG
'When mother came, Masha had already washed all the cups'

Localization in the present:

- (5) {Sasha and Masha are twins and they only get sick together at the same time. Sasha wants to spend her PE lesson on a bench, so she tells her teacher that she is ill. The teacher notices that her sister is perfectly healthy and replies:}

nǎŋ məšət-**s**-ən ki mašaj-en (^{OK}λθλən) pa məšət-**s**

you.SG be_ill-**PST**-2SG if M.-POSS.2SG (IRR) ADD be_ill-**PST**[3SG]

'If you were sick, then Masha would've been sick too'

→ [PST], [(IRR) PST]

Localization in the future:

(6) mojən joχ-λ-ew χǎlewət juχət-s-ət ki aśε-m (λθλən)

guest-PL-POSS.1PL tomorrow come-PST-3PL if father-POSS.1SG (IRR)

χǎlewət pewəλtχot ǎλ-s

tomorrow bath heat-PST[3SG]

'If guests came tomorrow, father would heat up the bath'

{But no guests are coming}

→ [PST], [(IRR) PST]

modal \ temporal PST ambiguity [O-marked in the past == X-marked]

(7) tolaj-en	λant_jiηk-əλ	λε-s-λə		ki
T.-POSS.2SG	soup-POSS.3SG	eat-PST-3SG>SG		if
aηke-w		aλpa	maw	λət-s
mother-POSS.1PL	POSS.1PL	perhaps	candy	buy-PST[3SG]

{**Context 1:** the speaker is on her way home and wondering whether there is something sweet at home:}

‘If Tolya ate soup, mom probably bought candy’ — **O-marking expected**

{**Context 2:** the speaker is at home and she discovers that her younger brother hasn’t eaten his soup and mom deprived him of sweets along with the rest of the family. The speaker is upset:}

‘If Tolya had eaten soup, mom would’ve probably bought candy’ — **X-marking expected**

Now what?

So, a universal modal quantifier in the apodosis and past

Why not just assume some existing analysis of counterfactual past and get it over with?

▲ a language-centered approach, not a conditional-centered approach

in Khanty non-temporal past is not restricted to conditionals

→ might need a full account of past in all of its uses

Where else?

transparent ought: [(λəλən) must-PST]

(8) {Masha has a strict mother and a pretty indulgent father. Mother says to Masha:}

nǎŋen	mosə-λ	λ'uxət-ti	an
you.DAT	must-NPST[3SG]	wash-NFIN.NPST	cup

'You must wash the dishes'

▲ PST weakens the deontic necessity

(9) {Masha then goes to her father and he says to her:}

nǎŋen	mos-əs	(λəλən)	an-λ-an	λ'uxət-ti
you.DAT	must-PST[3SG]	IRR	cup-PL-POSS.2SG	wash-NFIN.NPST
ǎnt	ki	λ'uxət-λ	at	wə-λ
NEG	if	wash-NPST[3SG]	OPT	be-NPST[3SG]

'You ought to wash the dishes, but if you won't, then let them be'

The rest of “counterfactual” marking devices?

X-marking can also include an irrealis particle $\lambda\theta\lambda\theta n$

Can we use this thing anywhere else?

Bare irrealis particle (in scope of NPST) -- conditionals

▲ **Desirability**, no X-marking:

(12) χᾶλῶwet mojən_χujat ki juχət-λ-ət aše-n λῶλῶn pewəltχot ᾶλ-ῶλ-λε
tomorrow guests if come-NPST-3PL dad-POSS.2SG **IRR** bath heat-NPST-SG>SG

'If guests come tomorrow, father will (finally) heat up the bath'

{Consultant: it feels like we want father to heat it up}

▲ not cancellable, **unfelicitous when the apodosis is not desirable**

(13) boraj-en măt-ῶλ ki aj-leŋki (*λῶλῶn) pa sí χολλῶ-ti pit-ῶλ
B.-POSS.2SG go-NPST[3SG] if small-PEJ (*IRR) again cry-NFIN.NPST become-NPST[3SG]

'If Borya goes away, his sister cries'

Bare irrealis particle (in scope of NPST) -- optatives

(14) juχi aλ mǎn-əλ

home PROH go-NPST[3SG]

‘Let him not go home!’ → **an order**

(15) {Children leave their dog near the shop entrance}

juχi λəλən aλ mǎn-əλ

home **IRR** PROH go-NPST[3SG]

‘I hope he won’t go home’ → **a wish**

Past:

- ▲ can be temporal,
 - ▲ can X-mark – domain widening: conditionals
 - ▲ can X-mark – shifting the modal base: weak necessity(?), optatives
- modal functions only in the presence of another modal

λθλən:

- ▲ *can be* part of X-marking,
- ▲ can convey desirability (only with other modals)

Why does desirability go away under past?

(as with other languages where x-marking is made up of pst+modality)

But PST with modality is not always X-marking or localization of the embedded p in the past

there is more

With epistemic modals it can mark:

- ▲ modal perspective in the past
- ▲ uncertainty (marginally)

▲ temporal perspective – the time at which the modal is evaluated [Condoravdi 2001; Rullmann & Matthewson 2018]

Present perspective:

(16) {Sasha sometimes leaves some candy in the closet.

She and her friend are having tea, but there are no sweets on the table

S: Look in the closet

Fr: Why?}

śāta	maw	wəλ-ti	wɛr	wə-λ
there	candy	be-NFIN.NPST	deed	be-NPST[3SG]

C: ‘There must be some candy in there’

Past perspective:

(context as in [von Fintel, Gillies 2010])

(17) {Sasha sometimes leaves some candy in the closet.

She and her friend are having tea. Sasha suddenly gets up, rummages in the closet, and then comes back clearly disappointed.

Fr: Why did you search in the closet?}

šāta	maw	wəλ-ti	wɛr	wə-s
there	candy	be-NFIN.NPST	deed	be-PST[3SG]

C: ‘There must’ve been some candy in there’

+ present perspective and **uncertainty** – for some speakers

‘There might be some candy in the closet (now)’

The same is marginally possible for English epistemical *had to* [Rullmann & Matthewson 2018]

- a) can be temporal (embedded p is before t_0)
- b) domain widening: conditionals
- c) weakening: weak necessity(?), epistemic necessity
- d) shifting the modal base: weak necessity(?), optatives
- f) shifting the perspective of the modal to past

A single PST semantics for all these functions?

Somehow specified for each modal case?

Under past-as-past approach b) and d) could be united, but others?

in epistemics past both shifts the perspective and marks uncertainty – is the second pragmatically derivable from the first?

Now then, how about checking for the cancellability of counterfactual meaning and looking at something more fine-grained to find the precise semantics?

The ultimate problem:

“Khanty don’t think like that. It’s Russians who think like that – what could’ve been or what couldn’t... We’re not like that.

We don’t do empty talk”

hence no Anderson-cases and such

--- no way to pragmatically justify that in the field

+ consultants get confused and tired

▲ need a way to build up semantic without such complex tests

??pragmatically valid, “ecological” contexts

No empty talk!

Links

1. C. Condoravdi. Temporal interpretation of modals-modals for the present and for the past // *The construction of meaning*. 2001.
2. O. Dahl. The relation between past time reference and counterfactuality: A new look // *Amst. Stud. Theory Hist. Linguist. Sci. Ser. 4*. John Benjamins BV, 1997. P. 97–114.
3. K. von Fintel, S. Iatridou. Prolegomena to a theory of X-marking // *Ms. under review for Linguistics and Philosophy*. 2020.
4. K. Von Fintel, A.S. Gillies. Must... stay... strong! // *Natural language semantics*. 2010. Vol. 18. N° 4. P. 351-383.
5. G. Lazard. L'expression de l'irréel: essai de typologie // *Typology of Verbal Categories / eds. L. Kulikov, H. Vater. De Gruyter*, 1998. P. 237-248.
6. H. Rullmann, L. Matthewson. Towards a theory of modal-temporal interaction // *Language*. 2018. Vol. 94. N° 2. P. 281-331.