

## Valency changing suffixes in Votic as a factor of verbal system development

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This paper analyzes verbs with valency changing suffixes in Votic (a minor Finnic language on the verge of extinction). The research is based on the field materials collected by the authors in 2001-2017.

Similarly to other Finnic languages, Votic has a number of valency changing suffixes (Laanest 1982: 281-283, Kangasmaa-Minn 1987, Kiefer & Laakso 2014: 478-479). Among the derivatives, the most numerous are the verbs with the partially “desemanticised” causative *-tt* and the reflexive/passive *-u/-ü* suffixes (Laakso 2000: 108-109). The *-tt* suffix increases the number of arguments of the predicate, e.g. *juuma* ‘to drink’ – *juuttēma* ‘to give water’, *sammuma* ‘to fade away (of flame)’ – *sammuttēma* ‘to blow out’, and also serves as a verbalizer, see a detailed analysis in (Rozhanskiy 2016). The *-u/-ü* suffix decreases the number of arguments, e.g. *pillama* ‘to spoil’ – *pillama* ‘to get spoiled’, *vääntemä* ‘to turn (transitive)’ – *vääntümä* ‘to turn (intransitive)’.

The goal of this study is to find out what influence the spread of these suffixes had on the verbal inflection, and in particular on the system of verbal classes in Votic.

We base on the verbal inflection system as described in (Markus & Rozhanskiy 2017), which is more detailed and hierarchically structured than the one offered in the grammar (Ariste 1968). Markus & Rozhanskiy (2017) distinguish between five main paradigmatic classes, including one class for monosyllabic verbs and four classes that result from a combination of two parameters: (1) the imperfect marker (*-zi* vs *-i/-j*), and (2) the number of stems (one-stem verbs that only have a vocalic stem vs two-stem verbs that have both a vocalic and consonantal stem).

On the basis of the analysis of paradigmatic classes in Votic we conclude that:

(a) Verbs with the causative suffix *-tt* form a separate subclass of the one-stem verbs with the imperfect marker *-i/-j*. This is one of the biggest subclasses, and it radically changes the ratio of the *zi-* and *i-*marked verbs. Accordingly, causative verbs distinguish Votic from its closest relative Estonian (where the *-si* marker crucially prevails over *-i*) and bring it nearer to Ingrian and Finnish (with dominating *-i*) that belong to another branch of Finnic languages.

(b) Among the two-stem verbs with the imperfect marker *-zi*, the largest subclass consists of verbal derivatives where verbs with the detransitivizing suffix *-u/-ü* prevail. A particular feature of this group is a strong tendency towards interference with one-stem verbs with a similar reflexive semantics. A number of forms in the paradigm show consistent variation: they can be built both from the vocalic and consonantal stem, e.g. *kasu-ttu* ~ *kassus-tu* ‘get.soaked-PRTPASS’.

Apparently, valency changing suffixes are among the main sources of change in the Votic verbal inflection. The productive *-tt* suffix shifted the balance between paradigmatic classes. The *-u/-ü* suffix is a source of deviation from the original paradigmatic system: the borders between verb classes become blurred because two-stem verbs start to inflect partially as one-stem verbs.

Word count: 483

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