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The Northern Samoyedic interrogative verbs

It is known that there is a rare type of interrogative words that behaves similarly to verbs in languages (Idiatov & Auwera 2004; Hagège 2008; a.o.). Interrogative verb(s) is/are found in many Siberian languages including the Northern Samoyedic languages. The interrogative verb-type employed by the Northern Samoyedic languages encodes the semantic category of utterance, i.e. 'say what': Tundra Nenets *xa(ʔ)man-*, Forest Enets *kođumad'*, Nganasan *kumunsa* (Tereshchenko 1973).

By showing the morphological and syntactic behaviour of the interrogative verbs in these languages, I will demonstrate that they form a compound construction, i.e. they incorporated their unknown direct objects. Semantically, they question both the act expressed by them and one of their arguments. I will show the consequences of this direct-object incorporation. Furthermore, I will argue that the discourse pragmatic use of interrogative verbs have an effect on their grammatical behaviour, i.e. it allows a partial availability for the verbal paradigm in the NS languages.

References

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- Tereshchenko, Natalia M. 1973. *Sintaksis samodiyskikh yazykov*. Leningrad: Nauka.